

## DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

### Looping and moving-image media: opening up a queer feminist space in performance

Ridge, Claire

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# **Looping and moving-image media: opening up a queer feminist space in performance**

**By**

**Claire Ridge**

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***A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the University's requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy***



## **Certificate of Ethical Approval**

Applicant:

Claire Ridge

Project Title:

The Loop and The Cut: Chronopolitical Strategies in Practice-Led Research

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# Abstract

How might time be experienced in ways that challenge and offer alternatives to classical modernist understandings of time, the subject, and knowledge? This is a question significant to choreographers representing and manipulating time in performance. It is also important to those who have been marginalised through particular temporal regimes underpinned by Western notions of progress and development.

There have been recent discussions within queer theory on performance practices which challenge regressive and entrenched temporalities and explore alternative relations to time and history. This discourse has parallels with a concern within performance theory on the potential of suspensions, breaks, and simultaneities in ‘digital performance’. Through my practice-as-research of looping I think through what it might mean to apply a queer feminist lens to alternative temporal experiences that emerge through looping in performance. This project sits within a context of performance practices exploring digital strategies, post-internet aesthetics, and/or looping temporalities. Its primary inquiry is the question: how can temporalities and aesthetics of looping and its effects on ways of seeing be generative for a queer feminist chronopolitics?

This practice-as-research was presented in the performance work *The Night is Red* (2019). I explore how looping which reiterates a dominant, limiting, non-linear post-modern temporality might also produce the seeds for more generative alternative temporalities. I reflect on my experience as maker-viewer of *The Night is Red*, and how I am invited to experience a destabilising corporeal experience of stasis and the affective potential of a present brimming

with a multiplicity of possible pasts and futurities. I also consider how particular practices of looping characterised by ‘temporal drag’ and ‘retranslations’, invite the viewer to look askance and anew at familiar dominant cultural texts and highlight potential queer desires that travel through images; while also obfuscating meaning. I ask, how might these strategies be desirable and useful as alternative modes of knowledge production?

I also reflect on the ambivalence and uncertainty I have around my proposition that *The Night is Red* opens up a space in performance that can generate a queer feminist chronopolitics. I suggest that by proposing that *The Night is Red* opens up a queer feminist space in performance I call the reader/viewer to take up the invitation afforded by the artistic mechanisms in the practice. I explicitly invite a dissenting reader to this thesis to disagree, make alternative interpretations, or find moments where we may coalesce, as a way to inspire a continuing discussion and continue the multiple possibilities of the practice.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

To loop is to start again, again, and again, ostensibly from the same place. Through practice-as-research I explore practices of looping reappropriated from digital image-based media and post-internet aesthetics. Looping in this PhD project can be characterised using the terms: returns, circuits, recurrences, reiterations, repetitions, copying, retranslations, and cross temporalities. Here, in this written component of my PhD project I critically reflect on my practice which was presented in the performance work *The Night is Red* (2019) at the Centre for Dance Research, Coventry University.

I propose that practices of looping in *The Night is Red* can reiterate a dominant post-modernist representation of time which reinforces a sense of a-historicity, un-productive stasis, and lack of change; while also producing more generative alternative temporalities. I consider what it might mean to explore these temporalities of looping through a queer feminist lens. This inquiry is significant for choreographers working with non-linear temporalities and new media in performance and/or those working with structures of looping, for whom queer feminist strategies are important.

My work builds on queer feminist artist and scholar Renate Lorenz's (2014) call for artists to pursue a "radical chronopolitics": to produce breaks, interruptions, and other rhythms in artworks to push against concepts and institutions that are "temporally reactive, conservative, or regressive" (2014: 13). She suggests that queer chronopolitical art practices which engage with 'opacity' to produce visible but only semi-readable images, can challenge the epistemic violence of reduction, objectification, and essentialism that have been inflicted on queer lives.



Through practice-as-research I explore how strategies of looping produce temporal experiences for the viewer which contribute to a sense of opacity, confusion, and ambiguity. I call attention to the possibilities of these experiences, and their distinctive effects, tensions, and overlaps. I propose that particular practices of looping in performance that produce alternative temporalities and confound meaning can open up a space for semi-intelligible, ephemeral ‘queer’ knowledges to emerge.

Lorenz’s suggestion on the possibilities of alternative temporalities in arts practices can be put in productive relation to an inquiry within the field of digital performance (which my practice sits within). ‘Digital performance’ is an umbrella term I borrow from performance theorist Steve Dixon (2007) to describe live performance or art installations which stage digital strategies, moving images, and multi-screen media. Performance theorists have questioned how digital performance can open up alternative ways of seeing that disrupt the logic of the theatre or gallery space and pose alternative relations to time and history (Dixon 2007; Ross 2008; Bay-Cheng et al., 2010; Bay-Cheng et al., 2015). However, amidst a proliferation of performance practices exploring digital strategies and temporalities, there have been largely under-explored emergent questions on what the specific temporal effects of looping in digital performance could be, and what it means for these temporal experiences to be generative (and for whom).

It is also important to note that within queer theory, ideas of ‘generativity’ and ‘productivity’ have been complicated and challenged. Anti-relational queer theorists, notably Lee Edelman (2004), argue that all politics subscribes to the notion of building ‘a better future for our children’, and therefore ‘the future’ can only be understood in relation to reproductivity. For Edelman (2004), *queerness* lies in ‘no future’, the unproductive, refusal, negativity, the here

and now, and jouissance. In some ways my practice-of-looping which disrupts linear, chronological time and produces stasis, engages with Edelman's queer 'non-politics' of unproductivity. However, my practice-as-research departs from Edelman's theory when I consider how stasis can ('ungeneratively' for queer lives) entrench dominant temporalities and reinforce a "logic of consumer capitalism" (Jameson 1982: n.p.). I also move away from Edelman and his "assertion that the future is the province of the child and therefore not for the queers" (Muñoz 2009: 11). Queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz's (2009) reclaiming of the possibility of queer futures enables me to consider how particular temporal experiences (including a corporeal experience of stasis) in my practice might be generative for thinking about time, the subject, and knowledges differently and potentialize queer relations.

The artistic and theoretical contexts that I have briefly discussed highlight the importance of exploring how looping re-appropriated from digital image-based media can contribute to understanding on the potential of alternative temporalities in performance. These contexts provide the milieu for my research question:

- In what ways are the temporalities and aesthetics of looping and its effects on ways of seeing generative for a queer feminist chronopolitics?

Within this inquiry my aims are to:

- Investigate the potentials and limits of representing and challenging dominant temporal structures through looping in digital performance.

- Explore what the specificity of “‘queer’ might be in relation to non-linear temporality since not all non-linear temporalities can be understood as queer” (Dinshaw et al., 2007: 187).
- Examine what it might mean to apply a queer feminist lens to practices of looping in performance reappropriated from digital image-based media.

When considering what it means to apply a queer feminist lens to the alternative temporal experiences which emerge through a practice of loops, other questions emerge. Queer theorist Carla Freccero’s query is pertinent. She asks, what is “the specificity [...] of ‘queer’ in relation to temporality, since not all nonlinear chronological imaginings can be recuperated as queer” (Dinshaw et al., 2007: 187). I consider how temporalities of looping might ‘queer’ modernist ideas of time and the subject, in ways that put the past in productive relation to the present, and open up alternative knowledges. I propose that the viewer of *The Night is Red* is invited to experience a destabilising corporeal experience of stasis and the affective potential of a present brimming with a multiplicity of possible pasts and futurities. I term these temporal experiences ‘frisson’ and ‘being drawn into the loop’. I propose that *The Night is Red* illuminates how looping which reiterates a dominant, limiting, non-linear post-modern temporality coexists alongside temporal experiences which invite alternative and generative ways of thinking about time, the subject, and knowledge. I suggest that this research illustrates queer theorist Howard Chiang’s proposition that it is important for those interested in queer strategies to be aware that whatever one is “deconstructing, denormalising or denaturalising” cannot be “somehow conceptually sealed” from its “simultaneous constructions, normalisations and naturalisations” (2008: 61).

I also propose that the effects of particular practices of looping in *The Night is Red* which I term ‘looping-as-temporal drag’, and ‘retranslations’, invite queer readings of cultural texts (images of Dusty Springfield, Maria Callas and from *Marnie* (Hitchcock 1964) and *The Red Shoes* (Powell, Pressburger 1948)). I borrow the term “temporal drag” from queer theorist Elizabeth Freeman (2010) to describe performances that drag anachronistic temporalities rather than gender. I suggest that the viewer is invited to read images on the surface – how they connect with other things, their proximal relations, and the way that they figure queer desires. I suggest that these artistic mechanisms in *The Night is Red* evade the idea of deep meanings and internal content (which problematically undermine the radical potential of ‘queerness’). I reflect on how the foregrounding of uncertainty, ephemeral knowledges, confusing meanings, and ‘opaque’ figurings of queer desire in *The Night is Red* may be particularly generative (useful and desirable) for queer knowledge production.

Through practice-as-research I have gained insight into the uncertain nature of making propositions about what an arts practice can do. I have found that the framing of my practice-as-research within the PhD has at times led me to come into the studio with limiting assumptions about what I expect and want to see in the practice. Despite these insights which have led me to a certain ambivalence around the idea that my practice creates a queer feminist space, I do take a standpoint and propose particular interpretations of the work. I propose that the temporal experiences afforded by practices of looping in *The Night is Red* open up a queer feminist space in performance in ways that are useful for a queer feminist chronopolitics. I suggest that this proposition does something generative. It calls the reader/viewer into a potential experience, a potential for the reader/viewer to take up or not. By articulating my propositions I aim not to close down and reduce the possibilities of the practice, but to invite

‘a dissenting reader’ into further discussion. I aim for this thesis to elicit alternative interpretations, dissent, and moments where we may agree.

Through this practice-as-research PhD, I contribute to knowledge significant for feminist/queer artist-choreographers working with non-linear temporalities in performance. Through a rigorous practice of exploring loops and loops and loops, I offer new ways of thinking about what it might mean to apply a queer feminist lens to performances of looping.

## IMAGES

Certain images and figures recur again and again in this written exegesis and in *The Night is Red*. When I use the term ‘image’, I mean moving images from films, and reproductions of these images through live performance. I also understand images to be, using queer cultural theorist Antke Engel’s articulation:

Individual fantasies as well as cultural imaginaries, celebrated, conventional, marginal(ized) or forgotten public imagery as well as metaphors that permeate language with visuality and the visual with words. (Engel 2011: np )

I loop images of pop icon Dusty Springfield (during her heyday in the 1960s); opera diva Maria Callas; the character of Marnie, the ‘blonde bombshell’ thief, in Alfred Hitchcock’s *Marnie* (1964); Lermontov, the ballet impresario in The Archers film *The Red Shoes* (1948), and images from the Werner Rainer Fassbinder film *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant* (1972) and of 80s punk poet and writer Kathy Acker. These images, taken from recorded film or from popular cultural imaginaries, appear in different incarnations in *The Night is Red*, and I talk about them in this thesis. These images have circulated in different ways within my work, and in culture more generally. They are primarily known for their place within dominant cultural

narratives and histories. However, they have also circulated within queerer collective narratives. For instance, Dusty inspired many gay and lesbian fans despite her image being primarily understood within more heteronormative histories of the ‘Swinging Sixties’. And Dusty Springfield biographer Lucy O’Brien has suggested that her image, career trajectory, and personal life “embodied the camp pop sensibility” (2019: 157).

I experience a sense of pleasure and curiosity in these images from the past and a sense of compulsion to work with them again and again. The pleasure I take in looping them over and over is partly because I can never get a handle on any deep or inherent meaning. The more I loop them the more their meanings appear slippery, ungraspable and complex. Eminent queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick suggests that she, like other queer scholars, developed attachments to cultural objects which appeared to resist heteronormative codes, and had “excessive” or “mysterious” meanings (1994: 3): “we needed for there to be sites where the meanings didn’t line up tidily with each other”, and she adds, “we learned to invest these sites with fascination and love” (ibid., 3). For many queer scholars within a heteronormative world, attachments to specific cultural objects and texts “became a prime resource for survival” (ibid., 3). I explore the pleasure I have found in looping images of Dusty Springfield, Maria Callas, Marnie (*Marnie* 1964), and Lermontov (*The Red Shoes* 1948) over and over and consider the ways that looping them might expand (or close-down) the possibilities that these images might generate.

## **METHODOLOGY AND METHODS**

I explore my research questions and aims through artistic practice-as-research, scholarly writing, performative writing, and mini case studies of other artworks. I use mini case studies

of particular performances to help me define what my practice of looping produces, and the possibilities and limits of engaging with contemporary digital culture's temporalities. The mini case studies help me to differentiate the temporal effects of the practices of looping in my practice from those of other performances using new media, alternative temporalities, or looping or repetitional structures. Queering as a methodology and its overlaps with feminist research methods has also informed my project. I critically reflect on my practice in relation to queer theory, feminist theory, and philosophies of time, to further articulate and contextualise the insights that emerge from my practice. Here, I introduce the methods that I primarily use, such as artistic practice-as-research, the methodological position that I take as 'maker-audience member' in my writing, and queer feminist strategies.

The primary method I use in this PhD is artistic practice-as-research. The parameters of artistic research have been debated in the UK and other European countries over the last 20 years, in concert with an increase in practice-as-research PhDs within the academy. The term artistic research has also been used to describe various qualitative methods, forms, and methodologies. To define artistic practice-as-research in this PhD project I take from arts researcher Henk Borgdorff and queer feminist artist and scholar Renate Lorenz who have both notably contributed to how we can understand what artistic research can do. In Borgdorff's book *The Conflict of the Faculties* (2012) he describes artistic practice-as-research as, "research in and through the arts" (ibid., 24). He suggests that this closeness to the "object" of the research means that "the work of art, the creative process, and the signifying context themselves all become constituent parts of the research" (ibid., 24). Borgdorff suggests that the insights that emerge from artistic work are, in part, tacit, embodied, "non discursive" knowledges (ibid., 53, 68-69). For Borgdorff, the insights that emerge through the creative process are materially embodied in the artistic outcome(s) of the research and therefore are essential to

communicating the research (ibid., 68-69). He also underscores the importance of critical reflection in practice-as-research PhD's as a way to contextualise the research in relation to a research community (ibid., 25). I propose that my practice-as-research PhD contributes to a community of artist-researchers working with non-linear temporalities and digital strategies in performance, and those working with feminist/queer methods.

In my creative practice, I explore different ways of looping images through live performance in relation to live feeds, screens, and film. I reflect on the experience of creating and viewing these different processes of looping and my participation in the assemblage of loops produced in the space. Through journaling, thinking, and writing, I reflect on what touches me or makes me think differently or anew. I also reflect on the discussions I have with my performer-collaborators, supervisors, peers, colleagues, and others on their experiences of the performance. The outcomes of this research are the performance *The Night is Red*, and this written exegesis. Following Borgdorff's definition of artistic research, I propose that knowledges unfold in various ways from my PhD research: through tacit, embodied knowledges and alternative ways of thinking afforded by the performance, *The Night is Red*; through processes of critical writing about the performance in relation to other art works (through mini case studies) and theoretical discourses; and through the circulation of the performance and thesis "in and through criticism encountered in the artistic and academic research environment" (2012: 172).

Another key scholar whose work frames my understanding of artistic research in this PhD, is queer feminist artist and theorist Renate Lorenz, leader of the practice-as-research doctoral programme at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Lorenz suggests that artistic research undoes binaries between subject and object, practice and theory, art and politics and this opens



up the potential for other possible knowledges to come to the fore (web., n.d.). She argues that the methodological specificity of artistic research is how it privileges wandering off path, being open to surprises, unpredictable experiences, and new questions. She suggests that artistic research upholds “curiosity, inquiry, openness” (2017: 31), and involves “curiously following a line of desire instead of the rationality of a work plan” (ibid., 33). Borgdorff also highlights the “erratic nature of creative discovery” (2012: 165). This methodological approach – in parallel with the artwork as process and outcome which highlights tacit, embodied knowledges and the potential for a multiplicity of different perspectives – moves away from the idea of a research project starting with questions which lead to certain answers. Borgdorff proposes that artistic research “creates room for that which is unthought, that which is unexpected” (ibid., 124). He suggests that this approach to research invites us to “unfinished reflection” (ibid., 173). The value of artistic research thus can be perceived to be how it reveals the precipice of not knowing, of uncertainty, and unfinished questions (ibid.).

I have found taking on the propositions of Lorenz and Borgdorff complex in practice. This is why it has been important for me to keep methodological questions foregrounded throughout the thesis. In Chapter 5: Conclusion, I discuss the complications that arise between being open to uncertainty and surprises in my practice. In particular I consider how the attempt to follow ‘a line of desire’ can be problematic when this desire determines the framework for the tasks I plan for the practical sessions and how I ‘read’ the performances that happen in the studio. I think through how, at times, my approach to the practice became limited by my desires, propositions, and hopes for what the outcomes may be. I have also found it complicated to articulate my findings within the form of an exegesis-as-outcome of the PhD, while maintaining the possibilities and uncertainties that emerged from the creative practice. I reflect

on how my writing practice closes down or continues to open up these possibilities in Chapter 5: Conclusion.

I write about my practice primarily from a methodological position as ‘maker-audience member’. Writing from this position is often used within performance studies and is akin to the established social sciences qualitative method of being a ‘participant observer’. This involves collecting data from the group of performers that I am working with, their awareness of participation in the research project, and my role as both observer and participator. I write as if I am ‘a member of the audience’, with the awareness that this stance is implicitly tied up with my participation in the process of the practice and my desires and identifications. I find this approach useful for articulating my experiences of *The Night is Red* through a queer feminist lens. However, the standpoint I take is neither stable nor fixed. I propose that the artistic mechanisms of looping in *The Night is Red*, in unique and particular ways, generate mutable, uncertain and multiple potential readings, which result in unfinished reflections. I suggest that these unfinished reflections are also reflected to some extent in the writing in this thesis. Scholarly writing, discursive writing on the performance, and a cut-up script derived from *Marnie* (1964) and *The Red Shoes* (1948) that was performed by actresses in *The Night is Red* are interspersed and sit alongside each other in the thesis. I use different fonts and formatting to signal and differentiate these distinctive forms of writing.

Cutting up different pieces of text and putting them in relation to one another is a method that can be seen within fiction literature such as William Burroughs’ notable text *The Soft Machine* ([1961] 1995). Burroughs’ writing cuts up and rearranges pieces of text, placing simultaneous and multiple narratives together to move between different ‘worlds’. This thesis does not go as far as Burroughs’ destabilisation of language, structure and genre in *The Soft Machine*.

However, the method, structure, and form of the writing in this thesis is performative. Critical communications theorist Della Pollock (1998) highlights how one can make “writing perform” (ibid., 79). She highlights the use of performative writing in the fields of feminism, performance theory, and anthropology, as a form of discursive writing that is “evocative”, “subjective”, “nervous”, “citational”, and “consequential” (ibid., 80-96). I suggest that the performative writing in this thesis illuminates how the outcomes of this research project are imbued with many different ‘voices’, and how the position of ‘maker-audience member’ is an assemblage of different imagined positions.

These different voices can be seen in the way the performative texts slip between first, second, and third person accounts of the performance, and between the different forms of writing (discursive, scholarly, and performative) that point to different temporal proximities to the performance. I suggest that the effects of this method indicate how I am, in Lorenz’s words, “incomplete, happily inadequate, and intoxicated by others against the idea of the artist as an able agent” (2017: 31-32). Furthermore, the different texts in the thesis muddy the linear flow of a narrative or thesis argument. The interruption of scholarly writing with other forms of writing is an invitation to return to the performance differently. I want the dissimilar texts to jolt the reader into different times. They signify a sense of the different temporalities and perspectives of returning to the performance. This strategy attempts to continue the possibilities of the artistic research, by highlighting the multiple returns I make as the ‘maker-audience member’. It undoes a sense of the artist-researcher subject as stable and coherent or that the research is “unidirectional” (Lorenz web., n.d.). It points to the impossibility of a definitive interpretation of the practice, and serves to continue its potential for excess, unfinished reflection, and questions.

My project has also been informed by queer and feminist methodologies. Although ideas of ‘queer’, ‘queering’, ‘feminist’ research methods, and ‘queer feminist’ have been used to describe different methods, practices and intentions and do not have singular definitions; there are some particular lineages from which I understand and use these concepts in this PhD. I use the appendage ‘feminist’ to the term ‘queer’ to point to the shared histories of both feminist strategies and the methodology of ‘queering’ to deconstruct, reveal and challenge visual cultures. Queer feminist art historian Amelia Jones succinctly articulates how feminist visual theory has illuminated and challenged representational structures, in particular the way images are produced, seen, presented and “given value in our culture” (Jones 2012: n.p. ‘Chapter 5: Queer Feminist [...]’). She highlights how:

Feminism has, whether intentionally, explicitly, or not, *slowed down* the quick super-glue certainties of art criticism and its related discourses, durationally complicating the fixing of meaning by exposing the bodies and investments inevitably playing a role in any interpretation, no matter how seemingly neutral or disinterested. (ibid.)

She links these aims to the development of queer theory which she suggests underscores the “unknowability”, “undecidability”, and “durationality”, at the core of making meaning (ibid.). Queering as a methodology (emerging within academia in the 1990s) has parallels with a tradition of feminist strategies within feminist visual cultures (largely developing from the 1970s). Both queer and feminist methodologies, reveal, critique, and deconstruct representational structures that produce and maintain unequal power-relations. They both “centralise the experiences of people marginalised under racist, sexist, heterosexist, patriarchal, and imperialist conditions” (Erol, Cuklanz 2020: 211).

However, where feminism and queer theory differ, is that feminist theory has at times led to essentialist thinking on particular identities and standpoints. Queer adds to feminism the impossibility of stable identities and fixed subject positions. Seminal queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1994) articulates how queer can refer to a number of different things and it doesn't denote a singular meaning, or meanings that "organise into a seamless and univocal whole" (1994: 8). She suggests that when queer is used in relation to sexuality and gender it refers to:

The open mesh of possibilities, gaps, overlaps, dissonances and resonances, lapses and excesses of meaning when the constituent elements of anyone's gender, of anyone's sexuality aren't made (or *can't be* made) to signify monolithically. (ibid., 8)

She emphasises the trickiness of the term. She highlights the way that it can trouble the idea of a singular standpoint or identity label and its expansive possibilities to denote more than queer sexualities and gender identities. Yet she argues that to "disavow" its meanings in relation to non-normative sexual practices and gender identities, "would be to dematerialise any possibility of queerness itself" (ibid.). Queer historiographer Elizabeth Freeman also emphasises how "'queer' cannot signal a purely deconstructive move or position of pure negativity" otherwise we "risk evacuating the messiest thing about being queer: the actual meeting of bodies with other bodies and with objects" (2010: 21).

However, both Sedgwick and Freeman, and many other queer theorists, have explored the expansive possibilities of 'queer'. 'Queer' within queer theory often refers to that which is odd, strange, uncanny, or inappropriate. Sedgwick suggests that (in her contemporary moment in the 90s when the potential of 'queer' began to be explored in much depth in the academy), that the 'exciting' work around queer theory was how it:

Spins the term outward along dimensions that can't be subsumed under gender or sexuality at all: the ways that race, ethnicity, postcolonial nationality criss-cross with these *and other* identity-constituting, identity fracturing discourses, for example. (1994: 9)

Queer theorist Judith Butler emphasises the political potential of queer, where queer is “never fully owned, but always and only redeployed, twisted, queered from a prior usage and in the direction of urgent and expanding political purposes” (Butler 1993 cited in Probyn 1996: 14). And queer theorist Elspeth Probyn also underscores the possibilities of queer when it isn't based on a “static”, “inclusive” essentialist sexual identity, but rather as a movement propelling non-normative relations (1996: 13). For Probyn, asking what ‘queer’ can *do* rather than what it *is*, is a more interesting question. In more recent discussions within queer theory on queer temporalities, queer theorists critique temporal normativity and explore how time can be ‘queered’ in ways that open up alternative relations to time, bodies, desires, histories and knowledges in generative ways for queer and minoritarian subjects. I discuss this trend and how it frames my research in more detail in Chapter 2: Field Review.

This understanding of ‘queer’ as a verb manifests as a method in my practice. I follow from influential queer theorists such as Sedgwick (1994), Freeman (2010), Jones (2012), Muñoz (2009), Halberstam (2011) and others, to consider what alternative temporalities in performance might *do*, and what ‘non-normative relations’ may be generated. I think through how *queering* time might *reveal* and *challenge* delimiting dominant temporal structures and generatively *put the past in productive relation with the present*. My use of the term ‘queer feminist’ in this PhD, is expansive, slippery. It indicates that which is on the margins that ‘queers’ and ‘troubles’ what is at the centre: heteronormativity, patriarchy, and other hegemonic normalisations. However, I suggest that being aware of the material effects of

‘queer’, and the way the term attaches to particular non-normative identifications, while also allowing for the expansive possibilities of removing queer from “from its transparent attachment to sexuality” (Liljeström 2019: 31), becomes a constant negotiation for me in this PhD project. I slip between exploring the messy, slippery, possibilities of queer to generate denormalising affects, destabilise a coherent sense of self, and offer alternative experiences of time; and considering how looping particular images invite me to figure my queer desires and engage with collective queer histories.

## THESIS OVERVIEW

In the next chapter, Chapter 2: Field Review, I introduce the fields of discourse and arts practice my project engages with: digital performance, queer temporalities, and looping in performance. Using mini case studies of the performance project *Operation Infinity* (Vincenzi 2007-2016) and the dance film *Mariachi 17* (La Ribot 2009), I address why it is pertinent to explore through performance, looping reappropriated from digital strategies. In Chapter 3: Looping-as-stasis and Queer Effects, I propose that *The Night is Red* produces a metaphor of post-modern time-as-stasis alongside more radical alternative temporal experiences. I propose that the viewer experiences a sense of ‘frisson’ (an affective sense of thrill that the present can be actualised in multiple unexpected ways), a sense of temporal attentiveness, decenteredness, and being ‘drawn into the loop’. In Chapter 4: Looping and Queer Ephemeral Knowledges, I look specifically at the images I loop in *The Night is Red* to consider how the past might be put in generative relation to the present in ways that contribute to alternative modes of knowledge generation and transmission. In Chapter 5: Conclusion I summarise my propositions and reflect on my contributions. I review how my research project opens up new ways of thinking about

the temporal experiences that can emerge from looping reappropriated from digital media in performance.



## Chapter 2: Field Review

In this chapter, I introduce the fields of discourse and emerging questions that my project addresses. I divide this chapter into sections on ‘Digital performance’, ‘Performances of looping’, ‘Queer temporalities’, and ‘Operation Infinity & Mariachi 17’. In ‘Digital performance’ I explore a late-twentieth- / early-twenty-first-century trend in performance to appropriate and explore post-internet aesthetics and digital strategies. I address and critique broad claims made by performance theorists about digital performance and non-linear temporalities. I suggest that they often over-generalise and undermine the specific differences between widely various practices. I suggest it is important to investigate claims made that non-linear temporalities in digital performance are primarily generative (Dixon 2007), “post-optical” (Ross 2008: 128) or subvert hierarchical structures of time and space (Bleeker 2010). In the section ‘Performances of looping’ I trace some significant dance practices that use principles of looping and distinguish them from the kinds of looping I look at in this project. I examine how the practices of looping I am interested in, reappropriate prevalent digital strategies underpinned by structures of looping. In ‘Queer temporalities’ I introduce a discourse within queer theory on queer temporalities and radical chronopolitics which frames how I understand the insights that emerge from my practice. In the section ‘Operation Infinity & Mariachi 17’, I use mini case-studies of the performance project *Operation Infinity* (Vincenzi 2007-2016) and screen-dance film *Mariachi 17* (La Ribot 2009) to highlight how the fields of digital performance, performances of looping, and queer temporalities might productively come together when thinking about particular artistic mechanisms in performance. These mini cases highlight for me how aesthetics of looping and/or returning to images again and again through practice-as-research may be worth exploring further. Here, in this chapter I set the

scene for the questions I explore in the following chapters in this thesis, what a practice of looping may *generate*, and what applying a queer feminist lens might mean.

## **DIGITAL PERFORMANCE**

There has been a trend within performance to explore the temporalities of digital image-based media inspired by the rapid technological advances of digital culture and post-internet aesthetics, see Dixon (2008); Bay-Cheng et al., (2010); and Chatzichristodoulou (2016). The ‘post’ in post-internet does not mean ‘after’ the internet, rather post-internet refers largely to art practices which appropriate the ‘look’ and strategies of the internet (Wallace 2014). Post-internet art is more likely to be found in the gallery or used to describe any number of art mediums which incorporate a networked, hyperlinked, hypermedia aesthetic. Much contemporary multi-media performance work that is focused on the digital and its temporalities can be described as engaging with post-internet aesthetics.

There has been considerable discourse and practice exploring the potential of new media in performance and installation settings to challenge a modernist ‘linear’ conception of time, and engage with a post-modernist spatialised, flattened and non-linear representation of time. I follow from performance theorists such as Steve Dixon (2007), Sarah Bay-Cheng (2010), Piotr Woycicki (2014), Maiike Bleeker (2010, 2017); art historian Christine Ross (2008); and practitioners such as, Catherine Sullivan (2005), Troika Ranch (2009), Simon Vincenzi (2007-2016), Sheena McGrandles (2018) and others; who have explored the perceptual and temporal implications of performance using moving-image media, or post-internet aesthetics and strategies reappropriated from the digital. Often the exploration of the digital within performance has resulted in the staging of multi-media within the performance space, which

has altered traditional modes of perception in the institutions of the theatre and gallery e.g., *10 Backwards* (Blast Theory 1999), *Poor Theatre* (The Wooster Group 2008), and *The Town hall Affair* (The Wooster Group 2016). Further to this, linear conceptions of time have been disrupted by a variety of digital practices such as: presenting live-feed and film during the performance; modifying the work digitally as it is happening; or making visible online spaces which happen in conjunction with the performance.

Performance theorist Maaïke Bleeker suggests that performances which stage digital media “trouble established modes of perception” (2010: 39). She cites the philosopher Alva Noë (who uses phenomenology informed by Maurice Merleau Ponty) to argue that perception “is not a process in the brain, but a kind of skilful activity on the part of the animal as a whole” (Noë 2004: 2). Bleeker follows that perception is therefore something we do, not that which is imposed on us. However, she highlights how this “active engagement” is also shaped by “culturally specific modes of perceiving”. This can be seen in the “conventional theatre set up” (Bleeker 2010: 38). As Bleeker puts it:

The audience in the dark in front of a brightly lit stage confirms modes of perceiving of the so-called disembodied I/eye, the (supposedly) passive observer of a world existing independently from her perceptual engagement with it. The aesthetic logic of the dramatic theatre (characterised by Lehmann (1999) as logocentric and teleological) supports a sense of the world that exists as a perceptual unity independent of our perception of it. (ibid., 38)

Philosopher Jaime del Val also depicts how bodies are invited into ways of seeing, and understanding time, through specific perspectival structures. He highlights the parallel

emergence of linear time, Renaissance perspective<sup>1</sup>; and Euclidean space<sup>2</sup>, and argues that they are inextricably interrelated:

The linear and circular perceptions of agriculture and the city, geometry, spectacular Greek theatre architecture, Renaissance perspective [...] have produced over millennia a multi-layered kinetic and perceptual alignment of bodies without which the fiction of linear time would be unthinkable. (del Val 2014: np)

We have expectations of performance spaces within the institutions of the theatre that are heavily determined by these representational structures (Renaissance perspective, Euclidean space, and linear time).

The gallery space has also been increasingly used to stage performance works, for example the Tanks Tate Modern London, devoted to performance and installation (Wookey 2015). And the relationship between modernism and the gallery space has also been discussed within art history (Bois, Krauss 1997; O'Dougherty 2000; Lepecki 2006). The 'white cube' of the gallery space eschews noise, and produces a supposed 'neutrality' and emptiness, which perhaps is analogous to Walter Benjamin's homogenous empty space that linear, forward moving time of nations, marches through (Benjamin 1968). Because of the inextricable link between spatial perspective and representations of time in the institutions that performances take place in, performances which confound perception through troubling these perspectival structures, may also interrupt a sense of time as linear and teleological.

Art historian Ross suggests that the "perceptual strategies" (2008: 127) of new media art (she looks at specific multi-film-screen installation works) are unique from those of older avant-

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<sup>1</sup> Lines of perspective connecting to a central vanishing point, and a disembodied, objective and singular viewpoint.

<sup>2</sup> A metric space which is linear, symmetrical, and finite-dimensional.

garde practices in the way that they create suspensions from historical time. She looks at how new media art produces images which slow down, extend, or speed up “the perceptual experience of the artwork” and rejects linear progressive time (2008: 125). She argues that these strategies produce a “temporal critique” which is also “perceptual critique” (ibid., 128). By putting the viewer’s perception into crisis, a suspension of time is experienced which challenges “the conventions of historical time of classical modernity — the subordination of time to space and movement, time as equal flow, the permanence of the monument, together with the notion of history as progress, project, and *telos*” (ibid., 125-126). Ross suggests that although parallels can be made between new media art and avant-garde art in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century seen in dada, surrealism, constructivism, and other interruptive montage techniques (ibid., 127); new media art “does not have the intensity of the avant-garde ‘act’ described by Alain Badiou, the aesthetic rupture by which the avant-garde seeks to dissociate itself from the past by creating something radically new” (ibid., 127).

Also, what is distinguishable about new media in art is that it portrays the dominant temporality of the current era, which she suggests, is a suspension from historical time (ibid., 127), where the past, present, and future are conceptualized as simultaneous rather sequential. Post-modernist philosophers have theorized the ‘end of linear time’ in the post-modern era. For example, Michel Foucault has argued that the postmodern era is the “epoch of simultaneity” ([1967] 1984). Frederic Jameson theorized that post-modern culture and consumerism had led to a sense of the present as perpetual (1982). Paul Virilio highlighted the acceleration of time induced by new technologies ([1977] 2007), and Edmond Couchot has suggested that linear historical time was being torn apart by the “Uchronic” time of machines (2014). Ross argues that new media art is more generative than this dominant temporality suggests, in the way that it suspends historical time, it makes possible “alternative forms of temporality through this

very suspension: simultaneity, extended instants, anachronisms, returns, delays in real time, and lateralized *longues durées*” (ibid., 128).

Ross gives the example of a new media film installation, Melik Ohanian’s work *Seven Minutes Before* (2004), which she argues suspends linear time in order to open up an alternative mode of interpreting history. The work is in an installation of seven large screens that show seven camera views of a valley in the French Vercours. The films are shown simultaneously in 21-minute loops. For Ross, the effect “inscribes the viewer in a perceptual impossibility” (ibid., 130) as the viewer is unable to take in the simultaneity of multiple coexisting times “all at once” (ibid., 130). She suggests that time is no longer understood as a “progression but as a lateral display of temporal multiplicities in *one* moment in time, which suggests a contemporaneity of different times but one that can never be grasped as a whole” (ibid., 130). Ross underlines that the simultaneity of the films represent a multiplicity of times, and this decentres the viewer. Ross’s reflection on Ohanian’s work motivates me to ask; what if the film’s continual looping specifically underscores a sense of time as non-progressive?

It is important to underline that not all installation and performance works which use new media disrupt linear time and sequence in ways that help us to reinterpret entrenched and restrictive temporal experiences. The use of digital media that ruptures a sense of Euclidean space in performance does not automatically produce what may be experienced as a suspension of linear, progressive and historical time. Performance theorist Sarah Bay-Cheng (2010: 89) highlights this in her description of George Coates’ (1994) work, *Nowhere NowHere*. The piece used webcams with feeds from different places around the world, with the aim of simulating a sense of a ball bouncing from one screen to another within one performance space. The effect disoriented the sense of space, but because there was no allusion to the different locations from

which the film feeds were coming (nor their different time zones) the viewers' experience of time as a series of presents following one another sequentially was not disrupted (2010: 89).

I also suggest that some theorisations of digital performance and the suspensions it produces can be critiqued for *inadvertently* underscoring the dominance of progressive, linear time. Dixon's (2007) idea of 'extratemporality' brings together digital performances with different strategies and temporal experiences and suggests that they suspend linear time and engage with a sacred, mythical time. He looks at digital multi-media performances *Jet Lag* (The Builders Association, Diller + Scofidio 1998), *Zulu Time*, (Lepage, Ex Machina 2001), *Film* (Uninvited Guests 2000). He argues that such performances do not merely slow or speed up time but produce a temporality "outside of time" (ibid., 522). He suggests that they highlight an 'extratemporality' which he links to a 'mythic atemporality' (ibid.) which was the dominant temporality pre-industrialisation. He suggests that:

The extratemporal relates back to prehistoric (as well as some modernist notions of time, in the way, for example, that Claude Levi-Strauss conceptualised societies that 'refuse to accept history' as operating with reference to a mythic order that is itself *outside time*. (ibid., 522)

He concludes that these multi-media performances offer a way to step outside of the speedy progressive time of late capitalism:

As civilization's temporality appears to be running helter-skelter into the jaws of the abyss, the dialectical twin pulls the other way, putting a brake on the tempo to pull it back to the center. (ibid., 537)

Dixon's refers here to "extratemporality" as "the dialectical twin" to an increasingly fast, ostensibly progressive, linear time. I question how useful it is to link the suspensions of linear

time that digital performance produces with a temporality dominant pre-industrialisation, where time was considered to be mythical, sacred, and whole.

Queer historiographer Elizabeth Freeman, following philosopher Julia Kristeva, argues that a cyclical, renewable, sacred, whole, mythical time is correlated with “Woman, as a cultural symbol” (Freeman 2010: 5). She highlights how this sacred, mythical temporality and ‘suspension’ from time, was inculcated in the everyday lives of people in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It divided home space from workspace. Returning to ‘natural’, ‘whole’, ‘cyclical’ time was linked with the domestic sphere where men could have renewal and suspension from work in:

The early nineteenth century, when “separate spheres” were above all temporal: the repetitions and routines of domestic life supposedly restored working men to their status as human beings responding to a “natural” environment, renewing their bodies for re-entry into the time of mechanized production and collective national destiny. (ibid., 5)

To understand the domestic as a suspension from ‘worktime’ and restoration for bodies “for re-entry into the time of mechanized production and collective national destiny” (ibid., 5) one needs to efface the labour of women’s work— childcare, cooking, cleaning. I argue that Dixon’s theory of ‘extratemporality’ engages with the “illusion that time can be suspended” (ibid., 6) without considering what this might produce nor critiquing the idea of a mythical sacred temporality. Furthermore, Freeman (using Kristeva) argues that a sense of natural time and suspension from time, *depends on* and *strengthens* the idea of progressive linear time (ibid., 6). Considering the particularities and differences of the performances that Dixon has selected, I wonder about other temporal experiences that these performances may produce. How might they highlight alternative temporal modes other than a dominant 19<sup>th</sup> century concept of a



dialectic between cyclical, sacred mythical time and the linear, progressive time of nation-states?

I suggest that it is imperative to carefully examine the different kinds of temporalities that emerge from the exploration of digital media and post internet aesthetics. It is important not to assume that digital media performance disrupts linear time in ways that open up alternative relations to time, bodies, histories and knowledges in generative ways for marginalised subjects. There is still much to productively explore. For instance, as I discussed earlier, Ross's description of Melik Ohanian's work *Seven Minutes Before* (2004) opens up a way of thinking about the potential alternative temporalities in digital performance may have for exploring histories differently. The effect of the multiple screen installation set up and continual asynchronous loopings contributes to my specific interest in looping rhythms and tempos specific to digital and post-internet aesthetics in performance.

## **PERFORMANCES OF LOOPING**

In this section, I introduce the kinds of looping I am interested in and how they are related to strategies of looping in digital image-based media. I also reflect on performances and arts practices that explore structures of repetition and/or looping in order to discern them from the practices of looping I explore. There are vast and various iterations of what can be considered performances of looping, and consequently there are potentially a wide range of histories of looping. The hypermedia aesthetic of the world wide web has a particular relation to aesthetics and strategies of looping which I suggest impels a certain way of engaging with images. Viewing images online involves scrolling fast paced through newsfeeds which loop or recalibrate with content. Scrolling through algorithmically curated feeds produces a looping

quality, with the repetitive slide of the finger and the return of similar themes. Images recur again and again differently like memes or GIFs that circulate through various processes of production. Short animated GIFs invoke pleasure in their looping over and over. Loops create quick cuts that can also maintain viewer interest and a sense of excitement through rupturing the expected movement and timing of an image, and this affective quality has been commercialized. Sports montage is an example of this, where the scoring of a goal is repeated over and over from different perspectives. The moment is expanded as it is returned to again and again differently, extending and intensifying its affect.

It is important to note that looping has also been a constituent part of earlier visual cultures. As media theorists Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin have pointed out in their book *Remediation* (1999), the aesthetics and strategies of digital media (such as looping) remediate those of the book, magazine, cinema, and television in new ways; and those older ‘technologies’ have correspondingly developed new ways of viewing influenced by digital trends. For example, the loop was inherent to viewing images in early cinema in the late 1800s before the advent of linear narrative film. In Eadweard Muybridge’s pioneering work *The Horse in Motion* (1878), a sequence of images capturing the split-second movements of a horse galloping, enabled the viewer to see ‘moving images’ prior to the technological advances of cinema. Muybridge invented a device called the Zoopraxiscope (1879) with the images drawn onto transparent tape which ran in a circular motion. Through Muybridge’s zoopraxiscope the spectator could view a ‘moving image’ of the horse in a continuous loop. The Lumiere brothers’ film loops were also viewable through the peephole of Thomas Edison’s invention the Kinetoscope (1897). These early technologies can be seen as predecessors of digital GIFs and the visual pleasures of watching images looping and quivering with motion.

In contemporary digital culture, the loop is a common device. New media theorist Lev Manovich, in his book *The Language of New Media* (2002) highlights the specificity and importance of the loop in computer technology. It is pervasive in the control of data flow in computer programming, seen in the looping of sequences until a programmed instruction is met. These are called ‘for’ or ‘while’ loops, where a condition is programmed such as ‘for this many repetitions do this’, or ‘while this condition is true do this’. In the computer-user interface, early computer animation and games software were all coded to loop (Manovich 2002: 259). Software such as QuickTime departed from DVD movie playback, in the way it added the function of ‘looping’ the film from the start, to play, pause, fast-forward, rewind, and play backwards (ibid., 259). In the current day, all video-based post-production software, such as Adobe Premiere Pro and After Effects, give this option where you can select a small portion of the linear timeline of the film, and the section selected will loop (this is done by default in After Effects). When using contemporary digital technology to watch film, the use of the term ‘rewind’ seems redundant, instead we are more likely to use the term ‘go back’ or ‘skip back’. Now films are automatically looped on Instagram and Tik Tok and films can be looped at the click of a button on YouTube or Vimeo.

In early computer game software, looping animations produced a sign of life in online virtual worlds (ibid.). Examples of this can be seen in *The Sims* or in 90s Tamagotchis. This looping aesthetic can also be seen in the popularity of animated GIFs (now simply known as GIFs). Cultural theorist Anna McCarthy, in her article ‘Visual Pleasure and GIFs’, suggests that GIFs appear everywhere, from social media platforms to electronic devices within our homes that “supply our needs” and “solicit our attention” (2017: 116). For example, we can see them in the displays of a coffee machine when waiting for a cup of coffee to be ready. Online, GIFs are often sampled from popular culture including films, television shows, and other online

content. Their seamless loops make animations and film appear like pulsating images. Sometimes it takes several viewings for the viewer to fully comprehend their subject matter, due to their “mesmerising repetitions and beguiling shortness” (ibid., 118). There is something about watching an image over and over that can be pleasurable. It has something in common with the pleasurable affect elicited in looping edits used in commercials or sports montages.

Another kind of pleasure emerges as images loop again and again creating the potential for different meanings to materialize. A ‘good’ GIF leaves meaning open so that, in combination with different pithy captions, they produce what McCarthy calls “skilful visual one-liners” (ibid., 113). GIFs tend to return again and again differently. We know that a GIF will reappear again somewhere on the internet, and when it does it will appear transformed somehow. Perhaps with an added piece of text, animation, change in sizing or context, or “encrusted with memes” (ibid., 114). McCarthy suggests that part of the functioning of a GIF is that it keeps on “GIFFING” (ibid., 113), creating new meanings as it circulates. Small transformations in a GIF’s presentation, meaning, and value can be seen as it returns again and again at somewhat unexpected times, bearing traces of its previous iterations (ibid., 113-114).

Like GIFs, other images also circulate online through processes of production. Since tech companies such as Google and Facebook have become invested in user interactivity and participation, we have become increasingly accustomed to viewing media online by scrolling through fast-paced newsfeeds which loop or recalibrate with new content. Looping underscores how social media algorithms organise content. For example, on Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and Facebook feeds, algorithms pick up on our engagement with particular images or profiles. As we scroll, we are offered more of what the algorithms predict will be similar to what we’ve engaged with before. We can see this in the social platform TikTok whose dedicated ‘for you’

feed offers an endless scroll of ever more individualized content similar to that which the user ‘liked’ or engaged with before.

Temporal loops are also inextricably tied to hypermedia aesthetics seen on the web. We are used to clicking through hyperlink to hyperlink as opposed to viewing images or information linearly. Since the advent of the computer, we have become accustomed to viewing disparate media across multiple ‘window’ frames, as cultural theorist Anne Friedberg has put it, we:

As the beholders of multiscreen “windows,” [...] now receive images – still and moving, large and small, artistic and commercial – in spatially and temporally fractured frames. This new space of mediated vision is post-Cartesian, postperspectival, postcinematic, and posttelevisual, and yet remains within the delimited bounds of a frame and seen on a screen. (Friedberg 2009: 7)

This mode of viewing images has moved on from older cable TV models where there may have been multiple frames of media on one screen, but unlike the internet we were not able to personally curate a journey through this media. The internet has provided a new level of speed and access to multiple media and networks, that departs from the media seen in TV, film, magazines and the book. Online we scroll through feeds of non-linear image information from different times and places. And access to the past is also made speedier through the online digitization of archives.

We can see the potential for this aesthetics to alter our sense of time in David Lynch’s digital film *Inland Empire* (2006). Lynch uses post-internet aesthetics of internet hyperlinks and a network of temporal points which appear to overlap. Cultural theorist Anne Jerslev argues that Lynch uses the aesthetics of internet hyperlinks and the ‘network’ so that the viewer has “to adjust to ever-new points of view” (Jerslev 2012: n.p.). She argues that this produces a sense

of the past and present as blurred, and “allows time to implode within the diegesis, simultaneous with the constitution of space as a web of overlapping screens” (ibid., n.p.). Within *Inland Empire*, the hyperlinked network of screens produces temporal loops and wormholes that confuse linear time. Such confusion can be seen in a section of dialogue where one protagonist says to another, “It’s a story that happened yesterday, but I know its tomorrow” (Lynch 2006).

The digital strategies of looping I have discussed in this section have particular characteristics, some of which I have attempted to appropriate, explore and challenge in my practice as a means of exploring their temporal potentialities. For instance, a post-internet aesthetics of multiple screens and looping images which may confuse one’s sense of time. Or pleasurable short GIF-like loops that reoccur with slight changes or in different contexts. Other examples of the reappropriation of these strategies through performance can be seen in the seemingly endless production and discarding of images, retranslations, copying, remediation, and conditional instructions given to the performers in *The Night is Red* (2019), which inform whether they copy from a screen, another performer, or loop the movement they are doing. My practice explores looping rhythms and tempos specific to digital and post-internet aesthetics and has a relationship to other intermedial performances using digital media.

These practices of looping have similarities with some performance work using repetition, particularly those in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Within the field of performance there has been much work that has explored the temporality of repetition, and the term *repetition* can be used to describe many different practices that share aesthetic and temporal similarities. For example, in the 1960s, a period in which many artists were exploring time in their work due to the social changes wrought by the advent of computer and information technologies (Lee

2004), choreographer Yvonne Rainer explored the temporality of repetition in her work. Performance theorist Eirini Kartsaki highlights how Rainer explored repetition as a way of making the ephemera of dance “more object-like” (Rainer cited in Kartsaki 2017: 37). The reiteration of gestures over and over was intended to make the dance more visible, like sculpture. In the 80s, amidst a trend within dance-theatre of works using repetition, choreographer Pina Bausch’s *Café Muller* (1978) staged repetitions of falling, and other gestural repetitions between male and female protagonists. She used repetition to reiterate over and over the power relationships between men and women. Performance theorist Adrian Heathfield articulates Bausch’s reiterations as conjuring “a set of relations where the psychological, emotional and phenomenological qualities of relationship are privileged as content” (2006: 190).

Practices which can be described as using structures of looping can overlap with, parallel, and follow from those which use repetition. For example, Yvonne Rainer’s work *Parts of Some Sextets* (1965a), appears to be a precursor to some of the practices of looping I have explored which produce a sense of stasis experienced in post-modern, post-digital society. In *Parts of some Sextets* dancers had a score of different actions and movements to repeat every 30 seconds. The result was a choreography which did not conform to development, theme and climax common to many dance works at the time. Rainer was aware of the effects this particular relationship to progression may have had on the audience:

Its repetitions of actions, its length, its relentless recitation, its inconsequential ebb and flow all combined to produce an effect of nothing happening. The dance ‘went nowhere’, did not develop, progressed as though on a treadmill or like a 10-ton truck stuck on a hill: it shifts gears, groans, sweats, farts, but doesn’t move an inch.

Perhaps next time my truck will make some headway; perhaps it will inch forward

– imperceptibly – or fall backward – headlong. (Rainer 1965b: 178)

Kartsaki emphasises how Rainer uses repetition in *Parts of Some Sextets* (1965a) to produce a ‘static’ dance which gives rise to a particular kind of experience. She highlights how this sense of the dance not going anywhere but making some ‘headway’ was reiterated by a reviewer at the time, Jill Johnston, who suggested that this type of repetition produced a force which could be described as “static” (Kartsaki 2017: 36). Kartsaki builds on Johnston and Rainer’s reflections to suggest that these kinds of repetitions produce a force on the spectator and give rise to an experience of “coming and going, but not going anywhere” where the viewer is “invited to come closer, while being pushed away” (ibid., 39). Kartsaki suggests this results in the spectator coming closer to see in more detail the “careful nuances of movement” (ibid., 37) insisted on through repetition. She argues that the force of repetition invites, “the spectator to lean in, to experience the shape of movement and its texture, almost like an object. It offers the audience the opportunity to ‘see’ the movement again and again” (ibid., 37).

Rainer and Johnston’s emphasis on the ‘static’ nature of the performance parallels to some extent the feeling of stasis that emerges from the performances of looping seen in works such as *The Chittendens* (Sullivan, 2005) *Loop Diver* (Troika Ranch, 2009) and my work *The Night is Red*. In Chapter 3: Looping-as-stasis and Queer Effects, I explore the specificities of the sense of stasis that emerges from these performances of looping. I look at how *Loop Diver* (2009), *The Chittendens* (2005), and *The Night is Red* portray a post-modern time envisioned by Frederic Jameson as perpetual present (1982). And I consider how practices of looping-as-stasis may also produce more generative effects on the viewer that I articulate as ‘frisson’ and being ‘drawn into the loop’.



## QUEER TEMPORALITIES

I find it apt and useful to use queer theory on queer temporalities and radical chronopolitics to reflect on the particular temporal experiences afforded by practices of looping in *The Night is Red*. I delve into why these discussions are particularly useful and generative when reflecting on my practice in the next few chapters. Here I briefly trace some of the key discussions on queer temporalities and radical chronopolitical arts practices that inform my reflections in this thesis.

The queer theorists that I engage with (primarily in Chapter 4: Looping and Queer Ephemeral Knowledges) explore why queering a modernist conception of historical time as linear and progressive might be important for minoritarian subjects. These queer scholars have conceived of this model of time under different names: “straight time” (Muñoz 2009), “chrononormative time” (Freeman 2010), or “reproductive futurism” (Edelman 2004). Linearity has been a dominant mode of representing and spatializing time in the West since the Enlightenment and retains traction despite post-modern critiques arguing for its ‘end’. A linear sense of time can be seen in contemporary life, in politics, corporate management, science, academia, and in the arts, as we focus on “aims, events, progress, and linear time management” (Lorenz 2014: 15), and on a national scale seen in language such as ‘developing’ nations which posits some nations as ‘backwards’ in the pursuit of forward moving linear progress (e.g., 1<sup>st</sup> v 3<sup>rd</sup> world nations). Queer theorists have pointed out how the continued dominance of an everyday and classical understanding of time as linear and progressive has led to the formulation of certain subjects as backward in the frame of progress. They have argued that a Western linear progressive developmental conception of time that looks to the future is “perfectly synchronised with hegemonic structures: heteronormativity, neo-liberalism, and ‘Western progress’” (Thal 2011:

n.p.). Queer artist and curator Andrea Thal (2011) highlights that temporal notions of progression and development can be oppressive to particular subjects. She argues that:

The dismissal of certain subjects as ‘backward’ or ‘without prospects’ is merely a telling example of this — an example with distinctly political overtones, considering the widespread insistence on the tax-paying, nuclear family as a synonym for future, the pressure to ‘keep up,’ the stigma that still attaches to clinical depression, and the increase in ever-new manifestations of racism and ensuing security and control measures. (ibid. n.p.)

Thal advocates for an exploration of queer temporalities that operate as times out of joint, and for reading linear narratives of progress as “temporary, complex and mobile constellations” (Thal 2011: n.p.).

Queer historiographer Elizabeth Freeman has been significant in the turn to time within queer theory. In her widely discussed book *Time Binds* (2010), she discusses how “chrononormativity” is “bound” into “naked flesh” (2010: 3). She argues that technologies implant temporal regimes so that they come to feel like “somatic facts” (ibid.). The link between institutions and their regulation of bodily temporalities into tempos which cohere to historically specific regimes (del Val 2014), has been termed “chronobiopolitics” by queer historiographer Dana Luciano (Luciano 2007). Freeman uses Luciano’s chronobiopolitics to explain how technologies such as calendars, clocks, watches and Greenwich Mean Time re-organise the body’s micro-temporalities and arrange populations in relation to one another through temporal regulation. As Freeman articulates it, these technologies and institutions have long been used to:

Inculcate what the sociologist Eviatar Zerubavel calls ‘hidden rhythms,’ forms of temporal experience that seem natural to those whom they privilege. Manipulations

of time convert historically specific regimes of asymmetrical power into seemingly ordinary bodily tempos and routines, which in turn organise the value and meaning of time. (Freeman 2010: 3)

Freeman also uses the example of Cinema, a technology which uses images to invoke a particular form of attention in the spectator. With the advent of Hollywood Cinema in 1910, moving images began to portray linear narratives and fed into a sense of time as linear, progressive, and homogenous. As an institution, the cinema was inextricably linked to the organization of time within industrial capitalism. Freeman points out that the institution of cinema adapted to new forms of work culture post-industrialization. When workers ‘clocked off’ from their working hours, they could use the relatively new concept of ‘leisure time’ to go to the cinema. As a result, cinema produced specific time durations of the two-hour film and the matinee (ibid., xviii). Freeman argues that this organization of spectatorship socialized the viewer’s gaze and produced a “shared temporality” (ibid.) by: “setting limits on how long the spectator can dwell on any one object or experience” (ibid.).

Thus, Freeman makes the case that “to pause on a given image, to repeat an image over and over, or to double an existing film in a remake or reshoot become productively queer ways to ‘desocialize’ the gaze and intervene on the historical condition of seeing itself” (ibid., xviii). Queer artist and scholar Renate Lorenz also suggests that one might “challenge orderly and rigid temporal concepts and their effects on bodies and the social” by developing “breaks and different rhythms or produce collapses in the connection between time and meaning” (2014: 15). She calls for artists to pursue a radical chronopolitics through artistic practice. Freeman, in the prologue to Lorenz’s book *Not Now! Now!* asks how time can be made to appear “so as to manipulate it or our understanding of it” (2014: 12), without spatialising it and turning it into something “static”, “eternal” or “homogenous” (ibid.). Lorenz’s response is that artists

may do so by working with a temporality of ‘Not Now! Now!’ which is “a particular non moment in time, a possible break in the temporal order” (Lorenz 2014: 16).

Queer theorists such as Muñoz have also pointed out the potential of queer temporalities for alternative epistemologies. Muñoz (1996) underlines how the historical conditions in which queerness has existed in dominant culture has led to an inextricable relationship between queerness and ephemeral knowledge transmission. He highlights how:

Queerness is often transmitted covertly. This has everything to do with the fact that leaving too much of a trace has often meant that the queer subject has left herself open for attack. Instead of being clearly available as visible evidence, queerness has instead existed as innuendo, gossip, fleeting moments, and performances that are meant to be interacted with by those within its epistemological sphere – while evaporating at the touch of those which would eliminate queer possibility. (1996: 6)

Queer theorist Ann Cvetkovich (2003) parallels Muñoz’s argument. She points out that much queer sub-cultural and sexual life can be considered to be embodied and ephemeral and is thus easily lost to a dominant mode of archiving that overlooks these modes of documentation. She looks at how feelings and memories cohere around objects and cultural texts, which are repositories for affective experience, and which form cultures (2003: 285). Where Cvetkovich looks predominately at how trauma and shame have formed queer cultures, Freeman considers the value of pleasurable ephemeral knowledges. Freeman considers how chrononormative time might be disrupted by queer pleasures – and how erotics can be a mode of queer historiography. Her study suggests that what accompanies historical material not only consists of traumatic hauntings (as theorised by Freud) but also pleasurable ones. She argues that when the viewer comes into “contact with” this “historical material” it:

Can be precipitated by particular bodily dispositions, and that these connections may elicit bodily responses, even pleasurable ones, that are themselves a form of understanding. It sees the body as a method, and historical consciousness as something intimately involved with corporeal sensations. (Freeman 2010: 95-96)

She argues that it is through the body's engagement with these pleasures that we can 'touch' the past and follow an alternative method of understanding histories.

These discourses underscore the importance for queer lives of exploring alternative temporalities in arts practices. In this thesis I propose that particular looping strategies in *The Night is Red* (2019) are generative for a queer feminist chronopolitics. I reflect on the potential of exploring times 'out of sync' through a queer feminist chronopolitical artistic practice for alternative ways of knowing. I consider how through strategies of looping I develop "breaks and different rhythms or produce collapses in the connection between time and meaning" (Lorenz 2014: 15), and how these strategies are distinctively useful for ephemeral knowledge transmission.

I use the term generative in my thesis to describe how my practice is generative for a queer feminist chronopolitics. However 'generativeness' as a concept has a complicated history within queer theory. Queer theorist Lee Edelman, a significant contributor to the anti-teleological, anti-social discourse within queer theory, proposes that generativeness is linked to a heteronormative temporality which he calls "reproductive futurism" (2004). 'Reproductive futurism' is an understanding that the future can only be conceived in relation to 'the Child'. Edelman makes the case that all politics, even politics which intends to subvert the dominant political order, does so in the framework of 'fighting for a better future', and "fighting for the children" (2004: 3). He suggests that identity formation, meaning, and linear chronology are

all attached to this assumption of ‘reproductive futurism’, and therefore queerness can only be found outside of the social. Edelman invokes a figure whom he calls the “sinthomosexual”.

The “sinthomosexual”:

forsakes *all* causes, *all* social action, all responsibility for a better tomorrow or for the perfection of social forms. Against the promise of such an activism, he performs, instead, an act: the act of repudiating the social, of stepping [...] beyond compulsory compassion, beyond the future and the snare of images keeping us always in its thrall [...] the *sinthomosexual* stands for the wholly impossible ethical act. And for just that reason the social order .... proves incapable of standing him.

(ibid., 101)

He argues that in order to resist “the cult of the child” (ibid., 31), whereby the child’s ‘innocence’ is held up as the arbiter against subversive sexual practices, one needs to embrace ‘no future’, jouissance, the death drive and non-identity. In this framework, queerness exists in the non-productive, negative, nonsensical, and refusing the future.

Edelman’s commitment to the ungenerative in a heteronormative world is not necessarily at odds with my use of the term generative. I understand ‘generative’ effects in my practice as those which interrupt, challenge and explore alternatives to an assumption of ‘linear chronology’ where ‘History’ and ‘Knowledge’ are transmitted in a ‘straight’ line from generation to generation. In my work I explore how some looping strategies produce effects which call the viewer’s attention to a heterogenous present and the possibility of the past ‘touching’ the viewer in the now. In my practice-as-research, linear chronological imaginings are disrupted. This undermining of modernist illusions of time, history and knowledge parallels Edelman’s anti-teleological polemic. My practice corresponds with Edelman’s theory more closely in the ungenerative stasis-like representation of time that emerges from looping. A non-

productive dissonant sense of stasis emerges as the performers enact looping repetitions which wear away and disintegrate sequential language and gesture, suspending meaning and verging on the nonsensical and unintelligible. These effects can be read through Edelman's thesis to offer a response to the question that his work offers – what could a 'non-politics' which refuses meaning, productivity, and the future, look like?

However in Chapter 3: Looping-as-stasis and Queer Effects, I examine how the ungenerative stasis which emerges in *The Night is Red* can in fact bolster a "logic of consumer capitalism" (Jameson 1982: n.p.) and does not challenge but reinforces dominant and problematic temporalities. In Chapter 4: Looping and Queer Ephemeral Knowledges, I find it more useful and pertinent to move away from Edelman's proclamation that the future is only for the child and "not for the queers" (Muñoz 2009: 11), and think through the generative possibilities of queer effects in my practice. Muñoz's theory in *Cruising Utopia* (2009) that "queer aesthetics map future social relations" (ibid., 1), offers a framework for considering the radical possibilities of queerness in my work. Muñoz criticises some scholars use of anti-relational, anti-social theses and suggests that they have "been stunted by the lull of presentness and various romances of negativity and thus have become routine and resoundingly anticritical" (ibid., 12) to the point that "they cannot see futurity for the life of them" (ibid., 12). Muñoz doesn't denounce Edelman's polemic but suggests that negativity as a queer strategy might in fact become "a resource for a certain mode of queer utopianism" (ibid., 13). He offers an alternative idea of queerness which he argues is beyond the present: "we must dream and enact new and better pleasures, other ways of being in the world, and ultimately new worlds" (ibid., 1). He suggests that this horizon of queerness can be located in the "queer aesthetic" which he suggests "frequently contains blueprints and schemata of a forward-dawning futurity" (ibid., 1). This framework is helpful for considering the queer possibilities of looping in *The Night is*

*Red* which invite the viewer to look askance and differently at familiar cultural texts – images of Callas, Dusty, Lermontov, Marnie, and others.

In conclusion, my use of the term ‘generative’ in this thesis, is not a validation of ‘reproductive futurism’. In fact, in some ways Edelman’s thesis on the queerness of the ungenerative offers a way of seeing looping as a ‘generatively’ queer practice of dissonance, disruption and disintegration. However, what I am most interested in my practice-as-research is how strategies of looping might be generative as a queer feminist chronopolitical artistic practice opening up alternative ways of knowing.

## **OPERATION INFINITY & MARIACHI 17**

My engagement with the performance project *Operation Infinity* (Vincenzi, 2007-16), in particular its website *Operation Infinity: A Fugue State of Theatre Hosted on the Internet* (2016), and the dance film *Mariachi 17*, (La Ribot 2009) frame the particular ways I have been thinking about the possibilities of looping and alternative temporalities. I use them both as mini case studies here, in order to illustrate why I bring together different fields, ‘digital performance’, ‘looping in performance’, and ‘queer temporalities’, and why I believe that this thinking warrants further investigation through practice-as-research. I think through the ways that *Operation Infinity* uses structures of looping, which I argue invites an experience of temporality evocative of the temporalities of digital media technology. I also propose that *Mariachi 17*’s structure engages with a post-internet aesthetics which invites a looping mode of viewing. Both works leave impressions and unanswered questions which have inspired my practice-as-research.



*Operation Infinity (OI)* according to Vincenzi is a production outfit with nefarious aims (personal communication 27<sup>th</sup> Oct 2017). It presented the performances *The Infinite Pleasures of the Great Unknown* (2008), *King Real Against the Guidelines* (2013), *Club Extinction* (2010), and *Luxuriant: Within the Reign of Anticipation* (2010), all of which are performed by a dance company named ‘Troupe Mabuse’ controlled by the evil fictional character Dr Mabuse. Dr Mabuse also exists elsewhere, first seen (?) in Fritz Lang’s films *Dr Mabuse, The Gambler* (1922), *The Testament of Dr Mabuse* (1933) and *The Thousand Eyes of Dr Mabuse* (1961). In *OI*’s metafiction, Troupe Mabuse continue Dr Mabuse’s aims to hypnotise and distract audiences as a form of control in order to bring about societal and economic ruin. *Operation Infinity*’s metafiction extends over vast expanses of time. For instance, on Vincenzi’s personal website, a quote states that *The Infinite Pleasures* “was thought to be first reviewed as far back as 1922” (web., n.d.). This allusion implies that the *OI* project exists over an extended temporality and its performances reappear over decades.

The construction of the website *A Fugue State of Theatre Hosted on the Internet* (2016) also engages me in *OI*’s stretched temporality. The text displayed on the home page is evocative of the way one has to navigate the site:

Deep inside this live lost universe, a network of rooms opened onto other rooms, corridors unto corridors, windows looked onto windows. Knock and the door will open, seek and you will find. Respond to and process data. The Host was no longer a location, no longer an origin, but riddled with black holes of lenticular flesh that sucked the light [...]. (Vincenzi 2016)

Every time I visit the website I try to find the right navigational path to find ways into its increasingly obscure parts. Navigating *A Fugue State of Theatre Hosted on the Internet* isn’t easy, I get lost clicking through hyperlinks, I lose where I started, how to ‘go back’, where to

find the performance I want to see. Vincenzi's site extends the possibilities of world wide web aesthetics and uses them to confuse the viewer and disturb a sense of mastery.

The website interface heightens and extends what is common to the aesthetics of the 1990s world wide web. New media theorist Lev Manovich highlights how "the World Wide Web model" organises data in a "flat non-hierarchical network of hyperlinks" emphasising "that every object has the same importance as any other, and that everything is, or can be, connected to everything else" (2002: 47). In this model, history becomes flattened in a horizontal plane where all histories can be retrieved in the present. *A Fugue State of Theatre Hosted on the Internet*'s aesthetics highlight this model of time. The flattened hierarchy of the performances are now retrievable at any time by tapping on a hyperlink. The construction of the site and the fiction that they are being performed 'live', invites a sense that the performances are unfolding and looping in a time parallel to each-other. In *A Fugue State of Theatre Hosted on the Internet*, *OI*'s metafiction is extended by the impression created that the performances *The Infinite Pleasures of the Great Unknown*, *King Real Against the Guidelines*, *Club Extinction*, and *Luxuriant: Within the Reign of Anticipation* are looping over and over infinitely. The idea of the work continuing forevermore being live fed from a basement club or theatre somewhere, is constantly reiterated. For instance, in a press release for its launch (2016) the site is described as "the live web portal through which the work of *OI* can now be viewed", and the films playing back offer looping feeds apparently "Now showing" (2016). This temporality not only mirrors *OI*'s metafiction, but also the time of the actual art project itself which has lasted over an extended period of time from 2007 to 2016, or to the present as the website is still accessible as an extension of the project.

My experience of the website has provoked me to think about looping and its potentials. I think about what the excesses of looping might be. The performances (as I view them on the website) cannot be simply dismissed as distraction (which are the apparent aims of Dr Mabuse). Their glitching moments of repetition that regularly interrupt the movement of the action appear as knotty hysterical actions. The movement looks uncanny – incomplete gestures or intentions of movement – the propulsion to go somewhere which is stilted and stopped midway to repeat the movement or do something else. In addition to the labyrinth of loops between the performers, the screen, and me viewing on the laptop, I am left with impressions that I can't quite work out. People running in circles, trying to get away or go somewhere but just rotating around in a circle, circling back and forth in an agitated manner. A man semi-naked with a black bag over his head – makes me think of the Abu Ghraib torture images that were leaked in 2003/2004. There are references to security and surveillance – cameras and policemen, security guards, kettling, controlling and recording. Uncanny singers in a spotlight separated from the noise of everyone else on stage that emerge like a wormhole in the piece.

The metafiction, website construction, and choreography of *OI* appear to work with structures of looping in different ways which effect my sense of time and make me think about the messiness of looping and what it might drag along with it unwittingly or not. Images and memories come and go and make me want to return to them or explore them myself more tangibly in the studio. Possession, the screen as a mirror or a tight loop, reappearances; the uncanny, horrifying, pleasurable experience of looping; the present dilated, being in a trance.

La Ribot's film *Mariachi 17* (La Ribot 2009) is another work which has framed my studio practice-as-research. I find that the structure of *Mariachi 17* invites me to re-watch the film over and over and I pleurably engage with the film time and again. In *Mariachi 17*, we are

taken on a journey through a camera held at the belly, in a theatre under construction. Perspective becomes disorientated as the body-camera spins and 'dances' throughout the space. It is filmed in a one shot, and the camera work is spatially disorientating as we are taken at speed in journeys between secondary images and films within films. The film passes and lingers on images that include architectural drawings that are moved, a bunch of artificial flowers, a woman with a gun, a screen showing a clip from Sam Raini's film *Crimewave* (1985), and a clip from Powell and Pressburger's film *The Red Shoes* (1948). The film's structure invites me to loop the film over and over to take new narrative trajectories and make new meanings in subsequent journeys.

Within the film's journey among objects and images, the camera comes upon screens built into the set showing clips of the films *Earthquake* (1974) and *Crimewave* (1985). These films appear like holes that extend outside of *Mariachi 17*, to display their own logic and time. I become curious to look them up to understand what meanings they bring with them. In doing so, I follow their own minor histories, for example the cult movie status of Sam Raini's film *Crimewave* and how it flopped and went straight to DVD in the interlude between his hit *Evil Dead* film series (1981, 1987). I also trace a path through layered dance histories in my journey from the film clip of Victoria Page dancing in *The Red Shoes*, to flowers strewn on the floor, to book spines with household dance names written on them, 'Pina Bausch', and the pirouetting feet of the camera-operator. I am drawn to the histories of La Ribot's own dance works. The stacks of cardboard in the film stand in for the cardboard that reappears again and again in her work. Other journeys I take through the film are layered with histories of cinematic representation and the fetish, and of animal, man and theatre.

Watching *Mariachi 17* on my laptop, I am drawn into a complex process of making meanings

which accumulate, and I also become aware of how my own desires, memories, identifications and disidentifications are implicit in this process. I propose that *Mariachi 17* invites the viewer into a queer feminist durational encounter with it. Jones's model of 'queer feminist durationality' ignites the multiple histories of a work and activates a sense of the materiality of its making. She argues that art works that solicit us

To participate through a synaesthetic visual process in an embodied and cognitive knowledge of their having been made in the past [...] propose a specifically political mode of (in Lauren Berlant's words) 'dehabituating the phenomenology of the political sensorium', providing new ways of being political in the world that do not involve fixing or identifying in final form, but rather sparking moments of 'disidentificatory ... being together'. (Jones 2012: n.p. 'Chapter 5: Finale [...]')

Queer feminist durationality is a way of looking which counters the idea of "renaissance to modern conceptions of the subject as implicitly disembodied, standing in one empowered place legislating meaning, freed from the messy vicissitudes of desire" (Jones 2006: 21). The "embodied and cognitive knowledge (of the artwork) [...] having been made in the past" (Jones 2012: n.p. 'Chapter 5: Queer Feminist [...]') can be found in what Simon O'Sullivan, calls the work's "latency" (2006 cited in Jones 2012: n.p. 'Chapter: Finale [...]'). This is the trace of the artist's struggles with his-her materials, present in the work itself. I suggest that *Mariachi 17*'s latency can be perceived in the embodied movements of the camera-operator seen in the frame of the film, and in the affect of the constant motion of the one-shot. The disorientating, decentring effect of the film is part of a strategy which makes tears in cinematic representation's attempts to spatially objectify subjects and fix meanings. *Mariachi 17* achieves this through its synaesthetic effect, which touches the viewer. This touch is the touch between the artist's body in the past, and its affect on the viewer's body in the present. In *Mariachi 17* it can be felt in the affective surprise of seeing an eagle fly perfectly choreographed across the set. This 'touch'

opens me up to the *struggle* involved in art making, felt viscerally as a trace of the labour and rehearsal it took to capture the eagle's movement within an unedited one shot. I suggest that *Mariachi 17*'s spatial disorientations invite the viewer into a queer feminist durational experience of the touch of the artists body in the past. I think about these possibilities and how such artistic mechanisms could be explored further to challenge and extend their possible temporal effects on the viewer. This is a query which I bring into my practice-as-research.

*Mariachi 17*'s structure and artistic mechanisms invite me into a particular mode of viewing, where I return to the film again and again. In the process of returning, I notice new things. Moments which I otherwise might have missed such as the eagle take on resonance. As I re-watch *Mariachi 17* and the disorienting effect of the movement of the camera jolting between secondary films on small screens and disparate objects, I begin to form alternative associations. I haven't yet exhausted its possibilities. This generative experience of looping leads me to consider what the potentials might be of a looping mode of viewing when applied to other films, images, cultural texts that have been 'sticky' for me. In the studio I explore what emerges from looping particular images over and over and over and in the next chapters I reflect on what arises from this practice.

## Chapter 3: Looping-as-stasis and Queer Effects

*Tech, lights, projectors, wires, tripods, cameras, and TVs are piled and condensed into an area which is a stage, or a film set, perhaps both. Women are hemmed in amongst the equipment, in thrall to the screens in front of them. They wear wigs and perform gestures over and over becoming stuck in loops. In a flat plane of unceasing reiteration, women become repositories for gestures, performing and discarding them on the surface. Possessed by screens they become hollowed out. Their eyes switch between a laptop screen at their feet, a TV here, a TV there. Every movement is in relation to footage unseen by the audience that provides their instruction, and the cameras that record their movement. They move closer to the screen for a close up or further away for a long shot. Their movements from other iterations of the performance are played back on monitors and re-embodied.*

In the previous chapter (Chapter 2: Field Review), I highlighted how challenging a modernist linear conception of time can be important for marginalised subjects. I also considered how particular approaches to disrupting linear time in performance can be generative in highlighting alternative relations to time, history, knowledge and perception. In this chapter I articulate the ways looping in performance, and its disruptions of linear time and sequence, can in fact be limiting while also producing the potential for more generative, queer temporal effects. I propose that the practices of looping I explore in *The Night is Red* engage with a temporality dominant in late-capitalist culture and common to the digital world we live in. I suggest it produces a metaphor of post-modern time which is non-linear, simultaneous, homogenous, and resembles stasis and “a perpetual present” (Jameson 1982: n.p.). The charge often made against

a representation of time as perpetual present and stasis, is that it reduces a sense of potential for ‘change’ and ‘the new’ in the future. However, I argue that the experience of time as ‘perpetual present’ and stasis is not dichotomous from temporal effects which are more generative than the dominant post-modern temporality they appear to represent. I reflect on this proposition by considering the queer possibilities of looping-as-stasis in *The Night is Red*. I reflect on and analyse my practice-research *The Night is Red* (2019) as a form of looping-as-stasis. The chapter has four parts: ‘Looping-as-stasis’, ‘Frisson’, ‘Drawn into the loop’, and ‘A queer feminist space?’.

In the section ‘Looping-as-stasis’, I refer to the philosophies and ideas of Frederic Jameson (1982: n.p.), Mark Fisher (2009) and phenomenological film theorist Vivian Sobchack (2016) to think through how contemporary performances, *Loop Diver* (Troika Ranch, 2009), *The Chittendens* (Sullivan 2005) and my work *The Night is Red*, explore strategies of looping in ways that stage a metaphor of post-modern time-as-perpetual-present and stasis. Jameson discussed what he argued to be a temporality distinct to post-modern society in a lecture at the Whitney Museum of American Art (1982). He argued that post-modern time could be understood as a “perpetual present” (Jameson 1982). Although seemingly dated, conceived of in the 80s; his ideas appear to be prescient to experiences of time within the digital world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Fisher (2009) highlights this in his use of Jameson to elucidate how digital culture produces a sense of time-as-stasis and passivity. Sobchack (2016) also uses Jameson to look at how what she calls “the electronic world”, which she proposes produces a particular kind of “weakly temporalized” presence (Sobchack 2016: 19). I consider how particular strategies of looping within the performances *Loop Diver* (2009), *The Chittendens* (2005) and *The Night is Red* (2019) illustrate these critiques of post-modern time.



In the next sections of this chapter, I analyse the effects of particular practices of looping in *The Night is Red*. I propose that *The Night is Red*'s staging of a metaphor of post-modern time-as-stasis, also works as a device to invite the viewer into particular kinds of temporal attentiveness. In the section titled 'Frisson', I reflect on a section in *The Night is Red* which focuses on a performance of small snippets of text from Kathy Acker's *Blood and Guts in High School* ([1984] 1994) mediated through a looping machine. In the Collins Dictionary online, 'frisson' is described as "a sudden, passing sensation of excitement; a shudder of emotion; thrill" (Collins n.d.). It is a sensation that violates the expectations of the viewer in a pleasurable way. I bring my practice in relation to Gertrude Stein's poetry in *Stein* (2001) in order to think about how frisson, and the abstractions of meaning that emerge alongside some experiences of stasis, call attention to a Bergsonian (via philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Brian Massumi) experience of time as "pure duration" (Bergson 1910). I further examine the specificities of frisson in *The Night is Red* using Massumi's text 'The Autonomy of Affect' (2002), to articulate the emergence of an affective sense of the potentiality of the present which is full of possible futurities and virtual pasts.

In the section 'Drawn into the Loop', I look at how the viewer is drawn into a disorientating and destabilising corporeal experience of stasis through the overlaying of different kinds of loops and the capturing of the audience within a live film feedback. I use art historian Jonathan Katz's (2011) reflections on Agnes Martin's repetitional grid paintings in conjunction with film theorist Jennifer Barker's analyses of temporally decentering experimental film work *Mirror* (Tarkovsky 1975); in order to parse how structures that produce stasis in art may also draw the viewer into a close attention to queer effects. Following from and expanding on Katz (2011), Barker (2009), and Luciano (2011), I propose that structures of looping within *The Night is Red* draw the viewer into paying close attention to a corporeal experience of stasis-

like oscillations, textures of time, and destabilisations. I propose that this bodily state of confusion may be generative of experiencing one's subjectivity differently. I reflect on how the 'temporal attentiveness'<sup>3</sup> elicited from the viewer of *The Night is Red* generates a corporeal sense of 'spatiotemporal' dissonance and a sense of the present brimming with other possible pasts and futural potentialities.

In 'A Queer Feminist Space?' I consider the effects of both 'frisson' and being 'drawn into the loop' and propose that they open up a queer feminist space in performance. This is a space where the viewer experiences uncertainty and decenteredness. It is also a space where the audience is invited to experience the affective potential of a present full of possible pasts and futurities that could be actualised in multiple unexpected ways.

*The camera dances in close ups and blurred movement which is projected onto flat vertical planes. The light of coloured pixels is blocked against the surfaces of the white cube, and the walls become screens. Live figures perform in a strictly frontal perspective. They appear static, stuck in place and position, using their arms in gestures and walking to and fro in a line. I am also stuck, sitting in my position on the edge of the set, or theatre proscenium, there is no invitation to break this positionality and move around the scene in the way that the hand-held camera does. There is a TV screen at the front, which goes from no signal to camera feed. Its images are clear and defined with precision HD, and the bright light in the dark room compels my focus. The looping of gesture and its reproduction on screens*

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<sup>3</sup> I borrow the term from art historian Jonathan Katz (2011).

*makes me attentive and draws me in. On the TV, the viewfinder moves in and out and pans across the scene, shaky and hand-held, it moves over the audience.*

## LOOPING-AS-STASIS

*The Night is Red* presents multiple images looping on TVs, projections, and through performers movements. I suggest that this produces an overall image of a heterogeneity of pasts spatialised and subsumed in an ‘perpetual present’. I derive the term ‘perpetual present’ from Frederic Jameson, who argues that “our entire contemporary social system has little by little begun to lose its capacity to retain its own past’ and ‘has begun to live in a perpetual present” (1982: np). Jameson argued then that post-WWII new late-capitalist modes of production and consumption emerged that substantiated a sense of a continual present. He lists these as:

An ever more rapid rhythm of fashion and styling changes, the penetration of advertising, television and the media generally to a hitherto unparalleled degree throughout society; the replacement of the old tension between city and county, centre and province, by the suburb and by universal standardization; the growth of the great networks of superhighways and the arrival of automobile culture. (ibid.)

Jameson’s understanding of post-modern time appears to be even more relevant with the advent of the internet and mobile technology. It appears that everyday time has become condensed due to the speed at which we can communicate with others across time-places, and the speed of media consumption and news items. We are also able to access representations of the past with a click of a button or the tap or swipe of a screen. We *lose* time through endless clicking and scrolling, so that it creates a sense of stasis. These contacts with the past have become an inherent part of getting lost on the internet, contributing to an increasing sense of a present tense. Furthermore, a *feeling* of stasis is reinforced by the looping of images online, as they

return again and again in unending but slightly different ways, seen for example in the multiplicity of animated memes that pop up on different platforms and feeds.

Jameson expounds an understanding of post-modern time which aligns to a large extent with those of other significant theorists who explore late-capitalist temporalities. The emergent post-modernist time of digital culture has also been naturalised as “human time” (Heathfield 2000) through a myriad of technologies. Performance studies theorist Adrian Heathfield has argued that, particularly since the advent of the digital age, “the time of technology becomes habituated as human time, merged into social and physical rhythms” (ibid). This temporality has not fully superseded the linear, teleological, forward moving, time of classical modernity and popular imagination. However, the sense of an ‘expanded present’ appears to sit within the logic of time as moving forward in space, where the ‘expanded present’ is visualized as suspended, ‘out of time’ or a ‘non-time’ (Ross 2008). Helga Nowotny argues that socio-economic changes in late capitalism have led to a shrinkage of the past and future (1989). Paul Virilio points out that the “stasis” of computer technologies in both leisure and work produce “a permanent present, an unbounded, timeless intensity” (1991: 15). This temporality has also been described as: “accelerated time” (Virilio [1977] 2007), an “epoch of simultaneity” (Foucault [1967] 1984), a “perpetual present” (Jameson 1982), and “24/7” time (Crary 2014). What they have in common is a sense of the present as expanded and non-linear, breaking away from a modernist understanding of time as linear and progressive.

Post-modernist philosophers and cultural theorists have attempted to account for the trends, including technological advances, that have contributed to a non-linear sense of time in the late-capitalist era. Communication technologies, and digital interfaces contribute to, and are indicative of, huge changes since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in consumer culture, communications,

transport, globalization and representation. In contemporary culture, the speed of internet communication means that we are connected across vast geographical space. The use of mobile technology adds to this availability. Heathfield makes the link between global capitalism, a sense of “worldwide simultaneity”, and the value given to the speed of communication technologies:

Global capitalism institutes international links between its diverse agents, which require productive exchange, which in turn presses work life and then social life towards world-wide simultaneity [...] increased speed becomes the primary value in technological change, and communication itself is increasingly subject to acceleration. (Heathfield 2000)

Constant 24/7 access to communication technology, and seemingly seamless access to image-information on smart phones and other devices means we are able to work flexibly, flattening the division between leisure and work time, and consequently domestic and workspace. This is a big shift away from rhythms of Fordist work culture with its breaks and set working hours. Jonathan Crary (2014) highlights how the attention economy is inextricably linked to neoliberal work patterns. He describes how images on our devices are produced by large companies such as Google and Facebook to undermine “the separation between the personal and professional, between entertainment and information — all overridden by a compulsory functionality of communication that is inherently and inescapably 24/7” (2014: 75-76). We can see how digital media technology has been used to organise and temporally regulate bodies within late capitalist, neo-liberal society through the mass use of screens which means we are almost consistently hooked into the network. These technologies and their effects on bodies contribute to an experience of time accelerated and the present stretched.

In the last few decades, along with technological developments, there has been an increased and pervasive control over the organisation of bodily temporalities for commodity purposes. Cultural theorist Jaime del Val calls this “control field” the “panchoreographic”, which “aligns and choreographs bodies at the minutest scales of movement-matter” (del Val 2014: n.p.). He gives the example of commercial music, which he argues is an “affective technology” which controls the micro-temporalities of the body through rhythm and “repetitive musical affects” (ibid., n.p.). He argues that this has led to “a liberation culture of the ‘cool’, of the design technologies for ubiquitous music production (that have made Apple into the largest corporation by market capitalisation in the world” (ibid., n.p.). This large-scale “affective technology”, del Val suggests, is part of a regime where, “ubiquitous interfaces, transport and architecture technologies, image and music technologies” are “perceptual and affective technologies that disseminate contagious effects worldwide, a complex immersive network that choreographs bodies at molecular, social and planetary scales” (ibid., n.p.).

Feminist phenomenological film theorist Vivian Sobchack (2016) and philosopher Mark Fisher (2009) (who both follow closely from Jameson), also make convincing arguments for the ways in which bodies are affected by digital temporalities. In the article ‘The Scene of the Scene: Envisioning Photographic, Cinematic, and Electronic “Presence”’ (2016) Sobchack expands on Jameson by focusing on the three specific historical moments he defined in relation to the terms; “realism”, “modernism” and “postmodernism” (ibid., 6). Sobchack suggests that these moments have not just contributed to a “specific technological revolution within capital but also in a specific perceptual revolution within the culture and the subject” (ibid., 6), which she terms “the photographic, the cinematic and the electronic” (ibid.). She reflects on how we are remade by our “microperceptual” encounters with electronic media (ibid., 4), which she elucidates in relation to Jameson’s thesis on a post-modern cultural logic which alters “our

sense of existential [...] presence” (ibid., 19). She highlights that “this new electronic sense of presence is intimately bound up in a centerless, network-like structure of the *present*, of instant stimulation and impatient desire, rather than in a photographic nostalgia for the past or cinematic anticipation of a future” (ibid., 19). This kind of presence has parallels with Fisher’s (2009) expansion on Jameson’s argument that last-capitalist post-modern culture solicits the viewer into a sense of a ‘perpetual present’ where the future and the past seem diminished and subsumed. Fisher considers how students (of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century) have become addicted to and hooked into a pervasive “entertainment matrix” (2009: 24) encompassing the internet, gaming, and TV. He argues that it embroils students into a lack of focus, demotivation, an aimless pursuit of pleasure, and an “inability to synthesise time into any coherent narrative” (ibid., 24). He suggests that digital media represents time as a series of instant, unrelated presents (ibid., 25), and that generations born into this “ahistorical, anti-mnemonic blip culture”, have experienced time as always “ready-cut into digital micro-slices” (ibid., 25). Fisher highlights how a-historical time leads to a sense of stasis and passivity.

Some contemporary performances such as Troika Ranch’s *Loop Diver* (2009), *The Chittendens* (Sullivan, 2005), and my work *The Night is Red* (2019) engage with images depicting a post-modern register of time as ‘perpetual present’ and ‘stasis’ through focusing on looping typified in digital technologies. The performance *Loop Diver* (2009) is based on a finished 6-minute piece that is filmed and then put through the software ISADORA to create sections of loops, so that it is transformed into a 60-minute show and re-performed live. The performers execute repetitions of dance material in computer-generated rhythms of looping, with an almost mechanical precision. There is an impression that looping is a method of controlling the performers bodies, as suggested by viewer Deborah Jowitt that they are performing in “prisons of repetition” (2007: n.p.). Jowitt observes that, as the performers move in and out of stasis,

they appear to be “numbly replaying the embedded residue of crises” (2007: n.p.). Through being compelled to perform repetitions, breaking away, and then returning, they appear to enact a metaphor of historical time as repeated cycles of crises, rather than progressing dialectically.

*The Chittendens* (2005) is another performance which reappropriates the device of the loop from electronic media and evokes an ‘extended present’ characterised by stasis. Catherine Sullivan’s film uses ‘the loop’ with the effect of providing “a register of our world” (Wood 2011: n.p.). The camera pans across what looks like TV/film set versions of office spaces and board rooms from different eras. There is sparse furniture, and one room is a dishevelled space with papers littering the floor. Attention is focused on the people that populate the room, each one a different archetypal character in a costume denoting a ‘look’ we have seen on screen, perhaps a period film or a *Dynasty* style sitcom. The camera pans past each character as they perform repetitive sequences which are non-narrative and appear to be a hysterical articulation of their archetype’s movement repertoire. The actors seem to be stuck looping their assigned sequences over and over, in an agitated allusion to the history of film and TV. Tate curator Catherine Wood describes the scene as “about the possession of flesh by technology”, where “the human subject is represented as being drawn and quartered across the surface of the moving image” (ibid. n.p.). She writes that the performers “loop back, again and again, toward an imprisoned state, their energy [...] channelled into a dissonant, drone-like quality” (ibid.). She suggests that the performers appear to conjure up an image of television-viewing which is characterised by a superficial engagement with images. In the cable-TV era viewers flicked between multiple channels, and the rhythm of commercials interrupted TV programmes to break-up flows of narrative. Furthermore, the programmes themselves were edited in such a way so that:



Gestures, images, lighting effects, repeat so often ... they apparently are received more as a rhythm than a coherent statement. Flashes of information must be highly abbreviated, so familiar to the viewer that only an outline or a phrase is needed.

(Norman M. Klein 1991 cited in Wood 2011: n.p.).

The ‘superficial’ engagement of viewing images on cable TV, can be seen as a precursor to how we view images online. Wood suggests that the actors in the film are ‘possessed’ by technology and perform a metaphor for the superficiality with which we engage with images in the postmodern world. Wood argues (2011: n.p.), using Fisher’s thesis, that the performers enact a “twitchy, agitated interpassivity” (Fisher 2009: 24) and “digital fidgeting” as a result of being “hooked into the entertainment matrix” (ibid.).

When the audience enter the studio for *The Night is Red*, they see a practice already in progress. At the apparent end of the performance, when the audience are invited to leave, the practice continues in the studio. An impression emerges of a practice of loops which repeat and extend, surpassing the moment of the performance, so I imagine the audience senses that this practice has been ongoing for some time. This is underscored by the screening of films from other time-places on TVs and projections in the space, some of which appear to capture the performance’s alternative iterations. As the performers perform loops between themselves and screens, there is an emerging sense of a lack of beginning, middle and end, and a deficit of progression or climax. The overall impression created by these strategies is an image of time which reduces and flattens the past into the present and evokes qualities of flatness and stasis.

The image of time portrayed in *The Night is Red* aligns in some ways with Sullivan’s and Troika Ranch’s works. Although at times the looping ‘insists’ on a certain gesture, piece of text, or film clip, enacts an attachment to certain images, or invites the viewer to read them

differently, at other times the repeated loops *abstract* images from meaning. At these moments of ‘abstraction’, the confluence of performers and films looping becomes less about making meaning from the content (and convergence) of the source materials. Instead, an image emerges of women ‘caught up’ by the rhythms and loops of digital image-based media, which bears a resemblance to images conjured up by the performers looping in *Loop Diver* (2009) and *The Chittendens* (2005). There are occasions when the performers become ‘stuck’ in loops. An example of a loop that emerges between the performers and screens can be seen when one of the women (Giselle Nirenberg) in *The Night is Red* mirrors the protagonist’s gestures from the film *Marnie* (1964) on her laptop screen; she is then instructed by text on her screen to copy from a live feed of another performer (Rebecca O’Brien), who is in turn copying from an earlier recording of Nirenberg. A loop emerges between them which becomes apparent to the audience when the performers become stuck on one gesture and loop it over and over. At times these loops shorten so that they appear to resemble the “mesmerising repetitions” and “beguiling shortness” of animated GIFs (McCarthy 2017: 118). These devices halt movement from progressing in a linear fashion; instead, there is an impression of images reverberating and recurring, generating a sense of frisson.

As technicians click remote controls at certain times and turn images on and off different screens. I also start to see the dancers as being in thrall to their laptops or the TVs in the space (I engage in the conceit of examining my experience of *The Night is Red* as if I were a member of the audience as discussed in Chapter 1: Introduction). Parts of images appear to flow over and through them, as they rapidly copy gestures live from the screens. Their movement is determined by what is happening on the screens. They appear in a flow state, semi-embodying gestures and regularly switching to copying from other screens and films to build up loops and replace them with others. Their negotiation of the space is restricted to remaining in individual

rows from which they do not step outside and they remain primarily in a frontal position. I propose that this semi-passive taking on and discarding of gesture produces a metaphor for the unreflective engagement with screens that Fisher argues is common to contemporary digital culture and bears a resemblance to Sobchack's description of the "spectator/user" caught in a "spatially decentered, weakly temporalized and quasi-disembodied (or diffusely embodied state)" (2016: 19). The suspension of progression of the continual copying from and looping of the performers movements and their shifts between looking at one screen then another and back again nods to the "soft narcosis" (Fisher 2009: 23) of clicking between and scrolling through TikTok and Instagram feeds, YouTube and TV, Google searches and webpages, live news updates, shopping, images, memes, and Twitter threads. In this way the performances of the women in *The Night is Red* can be compared to Wood's description of the actors in *The Chittendens*. Both appear to enact a metaphor of "digital fidgeting" (Wood 2011: n.p.).

The question that emerges is what are the potentials of arts practices that represent post-modern temporality and its effects as depicted by Jameson and developed by Fisher and Sobchack? Jameson questions whether post-modern arts practices that replicate or reinforce "the logic of consumer capitalism" (where time is represented as "perpetual present"), can *resist* its "logic" (Jameson 1982: n.p.). He expresses doubts on the "critical value" of post-modern art and compares it unfavourably to the revolutionary potential of modernist art during the era of high modernism (ibid.). Wood also asks where a movement vocabulary which evokes stasis and represents "a state of exhaustion of cultural and political sterility" (2011: n.p.) can go? The danger in just reproducing and replicating a sense of time as 'perpetual present', is that it promotes a sense of the future as out of reach. Heathfield argues that when the future become subsumed within the 'now', this leads to a foreclosing of its possibilities (Heathfield 2000: n.p.). This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy, promoting non-action, passivity, and apathy

when the possibility for societal and political change seems out of reach. Fisher expresses, in a similar way to Heathfield, that a post-millennial generation of young adults have an “inability to synthesise time into any coherent narrative” (Fisher 2009: 24), and this undermines a sense of the past affecting the present or a change in the future. Instead, we are locked in a perpetual present which leads to a “depressive hedonia” (ibid., 21). Here Fisher describes what he means by ‘depressive hedonia’ (2009: 21): “Depression is usually characterised as a state of anhedonia, but the condition I’m referring to is constituted not by an inability to get pleasure so much as it is by an inability to do anything else *except* pursue pleasure.” (ibid., 22) However, I propose in the following sections of this chapter that the strategies of looping that replicate a metaphor of time as ‘perpetual present’ and ‘stasis’ in *The Night is Red* (which I use the term *looping-as-stasis* to describe) can also work as a device to draw the viewer in and open them up to other temporalities.

## FRISSON

*Rock n roll is rock n roll*

*Rock n roll is rock and roll.*

*The night is red. The night is red.*

*The streets are deserted. The streets are deserted.*

*The children in the city are going insane*

*The children in the city are going insane.*

*Rock n roll is rock n roll*

*Rock n roll IS rock n roll*

*The night is red*

*The streets are deserted*

*The children in the city are going insane*

*Rock n roll is rock n roll*

*The night is red*

*The streets are deserted*

*The children in the city are going insane*

*Rock n roll IS rock n roll*

*The night is all around me and its black*

(Acker [1984] 1994: 96)

A woman (Rebecca O'Brien) recites the above quote from the text *Blood and Guts in High School*, invoking its writer, punk diva Kathy Acker. Acker's text is borrowed and transformed, in the vein of Acker's own borrowing of Arthur Rimbaud and Jean Genet's writing in *Blood and Guts in High School* ([1984] 1994). In Acker's novel the segment of text, that I call 'Rock and Roll IS Rock and Roll...', is 'handwritten' and the script is presented in rough columns. In *The Night is Red*, 'Rock and Roll IS Rock and Roll' is translated and transformed by being spoken aloud and looped through computer software. Repetitions of phrases amplified through technology give the impression of an incantation that accumulates and dissipates. It is a movement between pleasurable and unexpected rhythms and repetitions, and an overloading of overwritten text which becomes noise. As awareness is shifted from meaning to the materiality of the woman's voice, I become mindful of the pleasurable rhythms and resonant timbre of her voice, and her emphasis. The present becomes peppered by past enunciations, and meaning is abstracted. The computerised software records and plays back the woman's

reading of the text in random durations of looped words and phrases. The algorithm's looping occurs differently each time, leading to unpredictable interruptions and repetitions with every iteration. These pleasurable and unexpected rhythms and repetitions affect the viewer and draw them into a temporally attentive engagement with the performance.

A precursor of this work is American avant-garde writer Gertrude Stein's writing. Like 'Rock and Roll IS Roll and Roll', Stein uses repetitive structures in her poetry. In her writing, words and phrases are repeated over and over but with subtle differences. Stein calls these variations differences in 'emphasis'. Stein doesn't use the term repetitive in relation to her work as she argues that there is never any repetition, only themes which return again and again differently, with varying emphasis. She argues that when we are:

Expressing anything there can be no repetition because the essence of that expression is insistence, and if you insist you must each time use emphasis and if you use emphasis it is not possible while anybody is alive that they should use exactly the same emphasis. (Stein 2001: 288).

Stein gives the example of a bird singing, which sounds like repetition but when we listen closer, we can hear the differences in emphasis. She argues that this is inherent to human expression too, when we say the same things over and over "we all insist varying the emphasising" (ibid., 288). An example of her approach can be seen in this fragment of poetry:

They are what they are. They have not been changing.

They are what they are.

Each one is what that one is. Each is what each is.

They are not needing to be changing.

One is what she is. She does not need to be changing.

She is what she is. She is not changing. She is what she

is.

She is not changing. She is knowing nothing of not  
changing. She is not needing to be changing.

What is she doing. She is working. She is not needing  
to be changing. She is working very well, she is not  
needing to be changing. She has been working very  
hard. She has been suffering. She is not needing to be  
changing.

She has been living and working, she has been quiet  
and working, she has been suffering and working, she has been watching and  
working, she has been waiting, she has been working, she has been waiting and  
working, she is not needing to be changing.

(Quote from poem *FOUR DISHONEST ONES*, Gertrude Stein 2001: 300)

Reading *FOUR DISHONEST ONES*, the text appears to reiterate over and over the outlines of a person, and perhaps that person's tempo for living. With the insistence and different emphasis on the themes "she is not changing" and "she has been living and working" I get a strong sense of the repetitive labour of "living and working" and "not changing". Stein's treatment of language produces a sense of affect around the text, produced by abstractions of meaning and rhythm that open us up to the materiality of the text and our embodied memories.

Where 'Rock and Roll IS Rock and Roll' and Stein's repetitions differ, is that Stein's repetitional structures are considered and deliberate compared with the seeming randomness of the computer algorithm's loops in *The Night is Red*. In addition, the performance of 'Rock and Roll IS Rock and Roll', takes up a longer duration than that of reading the text as it appears in *Blood and Guts in High School*. The looping over and over, evokes a sense of stasis, a sense

that the text doesn't progress. This is indicative of a dominant sense of temporality within *The Night is Red* as a whole, where the performance doesn't have a climax. Images constantly replace one-another, and the tenor of the performance remains at a similar level throughout. Despite these distinguishing features and differences from Stein's work, her reflections on her writing are insightful when considering what we encounter when language recurs again and again.

Performance theorist, Eirini Kartsaki argues that Stein's repetitions constitute an "overwriting", where the text produces something more than its parts (2017: 70). These are the impressions and affects that are invoked around the words and phrases. The repetition of text in Stein's poem has a similar effect to Jameson's example of a child repeating a word over and over, when eventually the words become abstracted from their original meaning (1982: n.p.). Jameson suggests that through the breaking apart of the signifier from its signified, language can be "transformed into an image" (ibid. n.p.). In *the Night is Red*, the punk rock diva's amplified words 'Rock and Roll IS Rock and Roll...' rupture the image of women performing gestures. The repetitions in the text itself, and the consequent loopings through the computer software, produces a sense that meaning "float(s) over and behind the text" (Jameson 1982: n.p.). The meanings which 'float' over and across the performance appear open and durational, as my attention is called to the rhythm of the voice looped and interrupted.

The fact that the text is spoken aloud, invites a closer attention to the sense of tempo (rhythms) that the loops create. Performance theorists Daniella Aguiar and Joao Queiroz describe how scholars who have examined Stein's work "frequently highlight the orality of Stein's texts", due to "how rhythm modulates the process of signification and the feeling of time through the reading" (2015: n.p.). The suggestion is that by reading this kind of writing aloud we have a



more heightened perception of rhythm and time. The practice of reading the text aloud in *The Night is Red* heightens our attention to the cadence and rhythm used to deliver Acker's written text and ends up taking precedence over its meanings. This contributes to a sensual engagement with text which is wrapped up with an attention to the increasing materiality of the words.

The looping software's algorithm records O'Brien's performance then replays it back in a loop; this is replaced by a subsequent looped recording, and the process goes on with continuous variation. Perhaps this has a similar effect to reading Stein's text which appears to open up into something else, while lingering and insisting on something already read. This appears to be an application of the philosophy of Stein's mentor, William James. James expounded the idea that "consciousness and its temporal succession are presented as a continuous stream" (Teixeira, 2011: 1), in a continuous present tense. Philosopher Maria Teixeira analyses how James's philosophy aligns with philosopher Henri Bergson's idea of 'pure duration' (1910). She argues that "for Bergson, as well as for James [...] the present is not an instant without duration. The present has thickness; it endures and thus relates to the past" (2011: 1). Stein's work appears to circumvent measured and spatialised time through her strategy of 'insistence', which generates an experience of time as a continuous present. Stein argues that this generates a sense of being "intensely alive" (Stein 2001: 290).

Like Teixeira, Kartsaki (2017) links the experience of Stein's repetitional structures in her writing to philosopher Henri Bergson's example of 'pure duration'. Kartsaki brings Stein and Bergson together to reflect on Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker's choreography *Fase: Four Movements to the Music of Steve Reich* (1982). I find Kartsaki's analysis useful when thinking through the experience of seeing and hearing the looping performance of text in *The Night is Red*. De Keersmaeker's choreography appears to be intricately related to the rhythms of Steve

Reich's compositions. The choreography is a set of movements repeated, which follow the course of the music and shift and change accordingly. However, as Kartsaki notes when she writes about one of the sections in the work, 'Piano Fase', the repetitions of movement and music shift in and out of sync. She suggests that this shifting in and out, "resembles the effect of listening and talking at the same time" (2017: 91) which is how Stein describes the insistence apparent in her writing. Kartsaki uses the language of Stein to argue that specific movements in *Fase* are 'insisted on' through repetition. She makes the argument that:

Repetitive movement here enables an emphatic focus on each moment, a leaning in towards the screen (in my case), a holding on to that moment, attentively. This affective experience could be thought of as resembling the Steinian insistence; it is too much, an experience of intensity, taking place *now*. (2017: 76)

She relates the 'intensity' the viewer of *Fase* experiences to Bergson's example of how we perceive a shooting star:

Henri Bergson suggests that when experiencing a shooting star, although the star traverses an immense space, the trajectory that the star covers is felt in a different way; we do not experience the star going through space, but we synthesise all positions it traverses and experience that as intensity. (Kartsaki 2017: 76)

Kartsaki speaks of 'Piano Fase' as producing an experience of "intensity" that is "too much" taking place now (2017: 89). She opens up a way of thinking about the affective potential of the repetition in *Fase* where time is experienced as pure flow and "a particular type of temporal unfolding that gives rise to an overwhelming experience" (ibid., 90). Both *Fase*'s choreography of repeated movement and O'Brien's performance of 'Rock and Roll IS Rock and Roll' in *The Night is Red* appear to heighten an experience of intensity, of time's flow and continuity. However, I suggest that the strategies of looping in *The Night is Red* add something other than

the experience of ‘too much’ taking place now, and time felt as pure duration, that Kartsaki identifies in her experience of *Fase*.

In *The Night is Red* we are moved to experience past enunciations over and again as they are looped and broken apart at the same time as taking in O’Brien’s ‘live’ performance. The overlaying of loops through the random selection of the looping machine move between an overwhelming noise of loops, and moments when singular phrases can be heard or peppered with a word or two from a past enunciation. The effect of the random looping of the machine highlights the materiality of text and the resonance and pleasurable rhythms of O’Brien’s amplified voice. The affective experience of ‘insistent’ reiterations of words and phrases evoke a sense of a ‘continuous present’. However, the recorded loops that pop up again as she speaks, constantly reference the recent past in a way that intensifies a sense of interruption and the present as heterogenous. Consequently, an experience of the present as continuous flow is (at times) interrupted by the more singular staccato eruptions of text that intensify a sense of the heterogeneity of the past impinging on the *now*.

*They perform for cameras over and over. They are working, this is a laborious effort to perform a gesture accurately as they’ve seen it played to them on screens that we can’t see. The woman on FaceTime repeats very small gestures to the point of stasis. They are translators, they mirror the image and are filmed. There is also another woman, she’s holding a camera and filming the scene. We only glimpse her once via a screen within the film and then she moves out of the frame. The scene is a film studio for a budget DIY film, condensing the production of many films at one time. Everything is set up transiently, so that there can be swift character, backdrop, and costume changes. The costumes are tacked on, an ill-fitting wig,*

*gaffer tape holding up a sheet which becomes a makeshift gown – the performers don't fully become their characters. Like the gestures they embody, the costumes are attached on the surface – they become the image through these small acts. There is an overload of equipment, screens, cameras, wires, lights, and tripods within the frame. I think of this as a Brechtian gesture to show the workings of the production of the image. On monitors there are choruses of other women. Ballerinas, suspended and weightless, dance across a theatre. Their effort and work transcended through their technique. Like the nameless others before them, they tread the stage. A pool of them stuck in a loop.*

I suggest that interruptions to the flow of meaning and sequence of language in *The Night is Red* produces a sense of intensity, which is heightened by the *live* assemblage of different moving parts that make up its looping structures. I imagine that in *The Night is Red*, the audience becomes aware that the studio has become a production room. Everyone has a part to play, including themselves. The live feeds in *The Night is Red* will at some point, either in the performance itself, or in a later assemblage, be fed back into a continuous production of loops. These different loops either coexist or replace one another. Each action within the performance, from a television being switched on, to a live camera feed starting, to the particular screen that a performer copies from, is predicated on precise timing. But it is a pragmatic timing, where each instruction depends on the previous one. So, when an instruction takes longer than expected or fails, the production of the image of that particular loop fails. This heightens a sense of the present moment for those involved in the looping (myself as choreographer-viewer, the performers, camera handlers, and technicians). This isn't uncommon for live performance or events. However, I suggest that in *The Night is Red* the workings behind producing the image are made visible rather than hidden in 'backstage' areas as in traditional

theatre or dance performances, and therefore the sense of possible failure in the complex live construction and assemblage of the work becomes highly visible to the audience. In addition, at times the audience becomes ‘part of the loop’ as their image gets fed from a live feed to the screens in the performance. I imagine that for the audience there is an intensified sense of the loops being produced live and unfolding in the present.

*The Night is Red* is made up of loops which are dependent on all parts of the assemblage; of camera feeds, performers copying from screens, precise editing of recorded film, and timing. The *production* of these loops is at times highlighted to the audience and at other times hidden. They are hidden for example when the women perform from screens following instructions not made visible to the audience. One performer, Nirenberg, copies live from her laptop. She performs a sequence of singular operatic gestures taken from YouTube videos of Maria Callas’s live performances and wears a wig resembling Callas’s. O’Brien and Sara Paz both appear to copy Nirenberg’s gestures with their eyes flitting from two TV screens turned towards them. The image of the loop between the performers, a laptop, and a live feed, is dependent on O’Brien switching on the TV and playing back a recorded film at the exact same time as Nirenberg presses play on the same film on her laptop. The live feed is revealed as a fake when the film loops back to the beginning and Nirenberg continues copying from her film which doesn’t loop. This planned failure highlights the loop’s artifice and assemblage.

There is a difference in quality when loops are planned to fail and when the performers in *The Night is Red* slip in and out of successfully performing their loops. At times, the performers slip up in their attempts to embody previously unseen sequences of movement from the protagonists of films, *The Red Shoes* (1948) and *Marnie* (1964). When they take on gestures at a fast pace, attempting to embody them at the speed of the film’s trajectory, they are overloaded

with rules as they negotiate which screens to follow and which fellow performer to loop. The instructions at each reiteration of the performance mean they have to work out quickly whether to come close to the screen or further away, or to the right or left. The sections of film and instructions are adjusted with each iteration of the performance, so the performers don't get used to the same material. As they attempt to follow the shifts in instructions onscreen, the women slip between successfully copying from their screens with poise and precision and failing in their attempts. I propose that these interruptions produce almost imperceptible cuts in the 'arc' of the performers' movements, heightening the performance's overall sense of 'instability' and 'liveness'.

Process philosopher Brian Massumi's writing on the 'autonomy of affect' (2002) is helpful when thinking through how the performers' movement between successful embodiment and failure in performing the 'arc' of a gesture *The Night is Red* produce a specific kind of intensity. Massumi looks at the potentialities generated by US president Ronald Reagan's movement and speech in his public speeches. He makes the claim that Reagan was extremely popular, not in spite of, but because of his verbal and gestural "incoherence" (ibid., 40). He suggests that Reagan was a "communicative jerk" (ibid., 41), indicative of the "bad actor" that he was. Reagan cut the continuity of his gesture and speech into "a potentially infinite series of submovements punctuated by jerks" (ibid. 40). In doing so Reagan "politicised the power of mime" (ibid. 40). This is despite the fact that Reagan may not have consciously intended to 'perform' his speeches using the power of mime. Elucidating his concept, Massumi argues:

A mime decomposes movement [...] At each jerk, at each cut into the movement, the potential is there for the movement to veer off in another direction [...] for just a flash, too quick really to perceive but decisively enough to suggest a veer. This

compresses into the movement under way potential movements that are in some way made present without being actualized. (ibid. 40)

Massumi argues that a cut into the “arc” of a “movement-event” produces a “flash of virtuality” (ibid., 41). “For just a flash” (ibid., 40) the potential of all the other possible movements that *could* be actualised are felt as intensity. This affective experience is a surplus of what Massumi terms the “virtual” seeping into the “actual” (ibid., 30-39). Bergson’s (1910) articulation of the experience of time as ‘pure duration’ underpins Massumi’s concept of the ‘autonomy of affect’. For Massumi, the ‘flashes of suspension’ brought about by looping strategies in the work, time as pure experience, not thought of, spatialised or measured, is felt in the body. The ‘virtual’ is all of the possible pasts and potential futures of an event that coexist with what is actualised in the present (Massumi 2002: 31). Cuts in the flow of a movement-event, for example, produce a “critical point, a singular point, a bifurcation point” (ibid., 40), that opens up the potential for a veer in another direction, another movement, and an alternative meaning. The seep of the ‘virtual’ into the ‘actual’ is actualised as the pleasurable intensity of potentiality. A sense emerges that something different or new could emerge, which is a feeling of pleasure, vitality, and confidence (ibid., 43). According to Massumi, Reagan was able to politicise both pleasurable intensity and the ‘seep of the virtual’, to instil confidence in his leadership. Furthermore, the way in which his speeches were transmitted through different media apparatus meant that the incoherency of his movement-speech could be cut up and delivered in a multitude of different ways, so that he could mean many things to different people.

In *The Night is Red*, the performers’ flow of movement is ‘cut’ into. Like Reagan’s movement-speech, there is a doubling of cuts in the meaning of language alongside interruptions in the arc of movement. This occurs when O’Brien performs ‘Rock and Roll IS Roll’ at the same time as the other performers continue copying the protagonists’ gestures from the films *The*

*Red Shoes* and *Marnie*. Their live copying, which entails quickly taking on and discarding gestures, bears some resemblance to the idea of mime-like gesture that Massumi describes: “a mime decomposes movement [...] At each jerk, at each cut into the movement, the potential is there for the movement to veer off in another direction, movement, for just a flash” (2002: 41). In *The Night is Red* the incoherency of language and gesture doesn’t descend into pure confusion and meaningless, which may produce a sense of detachment in the audience. Rather, there continues to be a semblance of meaning alluded to, ‘floating’ around the scene but not pinned down. And the looping of text also becomes pleasurable to listen to as it is incorporated within a live soundscape of looped sounds composed by sound designer Joe Harmsworth. The overall affect is a sense of frisson. However, despite the differences in context, intention, and presentation between Reagan’s speeches and *The Night is Red*, they share similar effects due to their shared decomposition of movement and speech. Reagan holds these ‘decompositions’ together with the pleasurable timbre of his voice and *The Night is Red* with the pleasurable rhythms of electronic music. I argue that both ‘performances’ work to open up the potential of the affective seep of the virtual in the actual, producing a feeling of pleasure and vitality. The potential of such intensity is that it can generate a sense that the present is brimming with potential meanings, movements, and events, and it can ‘veer off’ in any direction. Before I reflect further on how I understand the effects of ‘frisson’ in *The Night is Red* as queer, I would like to reflect on other parts of *The Night is Red* that also indicate the queer potential of looping-as-stasis. I examine these under the rubric being ‘drawn into the loop’ in the next section.

## **DRAWN INTO THE LOOP**

*The actors in the scene; audience members, performers, understudies, technicians, a director; are called into a loop. There is a static tension as images are*



*constructed and deconstructed: a projected renaissance painting on the wall, a camera lingering with a sensual focus on gestures. The camera pans the audience, and the audience can see themselves fed back. A touch on the shoulder and a look away, the image buffers. I imagine the two women are locked in a push and pull that evokes desire. But it doesn't go anywhere for a while.*

I propose that being 'drawn into loop', engages with a temporality of stasis in ways that do more than just replicate or reinforce a register of our time as passive "digital fidgeting" (Wood 2011: n.p.); and invites a mode of viewing which potentializes queer effects. I distinguish and analyse the specificities of being drawn into and out of the loop in *The Night is Red*. I propose that drawing the viewer into the loop queers modernist myths of time as linear and progressive and a sense of the subject as individualised and centered. I find it useful to refer to art historian Mieke Bal's (2000) concept of 'sticky images', and art historian Jonathan Katz's (2011) reading of artist Agnes Martin's grid paintings as their articulations resonate to some extent with my experience of the collage-like loops in *The Night is Red*. Katz's reflections on his experience of the sensual effects of the repetition and 'tense stasis' in Martin's grids help me to articulate similar effects at play in *The Night is Red*. I propose that the performance's structures, like Martin's grids, invite a close attention to a sensual, stasis-like experience of viewing. I argue that *The Night is Red* draws the viewer in and out which heightens a sense of temporal attentiveness and renders the subject decentred and uncertain. I explore the decentring effects of this experience by using the phenomenologically influenced film theorist Jennifer Barker's (2009) analysis of experimental film *Mirror* (1975).

I find that *The Night is Red* invites a way of seeing that has resonances with Bal's description of David Reed's painting #261 (1987-1988) as a "sticky image" (Bal 2000), and Katz's

articulation of his experience of Agnes Martin's grid paintings. It may seem odd to compare the temporal experiences of viewing a painting and watching a performance. Performance, like film in the cinema, has a duration. It has a beginning and ending and takes up a specific amount of time. This is distinguishable from viewing an image in an exhibition, which within traditional art history has often been understood as inviting a more fleeting gaze, where the image is to be looked at as an object. Art historian Mieke Bal's writing (2000) on what she calls 'sticky images' muddies this distinction between the time of performance and the time of a still image. 'Sticky images' draw the viewer into a slowed down temporality, where it takes time to 'read' the image. She uses the example of Reed's #261 (1987-1988) and suggests that it takes time to take in this painting. It disturbs "the quick glance" (Bal 2000: 82) and acts more like a text or a film, by inviting a 'slowed-down temporality' (ibid., 82). She argues:

It is simply too wide to be taken in at a single glance. Like film it scrolls by, like film it takes time. In a sense, even more time than a film would. The lack of a third person narrative makes it difficult to decide where to start 'reading' – at the left or the right, in the upper half or the lower – so you do both. The sharp divisions of the painting's surfaces – the disks, the brush strokes, the ribbons going upwards or downwards – the chosen starting point decided the effect of what follows [...] From the right one is led outside the image; from the left, one is led into it, enticed to want to lie down in it. Colour and light both divide and bind these surfaces so that one doesn't have an easy time making sense of what the eye encounters. (ibid.)

Bal determines that this abstract painting is too wide to take in all at once, with no direction in how to 'read' the work. In addition, the use of colour, light and direction and texture of the brush strokes invite a slowed down temporality. Furthermore, she suggests that this slowed down temporality, is a result of a particular rhythm of the gaze which she describes as erotic:

The glance surveys, then takes off, is pulled back again; a more time-consuming interaction begins to take place. To see this image for what it is – not a blurred impression of colours in an abstract surface but a divided collage of various surfaces and various spatialities, a shifting sense of depth and a variety of tactile textures- one must fall for its pull, take the time for it. (ibid., 83).

Bal proposes that Reed's painting calls for an "erotic rhythm" (ibid.) of viewing which draws the viewer in and intensifies the experience of time. She suggests that the longer one takes with the painting, the more its collage-like surface, can be viewed in a similar way to a "multilayered stage set" (ibid.). It induces what she describes as a participatory and "theatrical" experience for the viewer which departs from the traditionalist modernist art historical approach of viewing a painting as if from a disembodied gaze (ibid., 87).

In *The Night is Red*, an intermedial set-up of GIF-like films and performances draws the viewer in. The audience is directed to sit at the front facing the performance, where they view images looping on screens and on the three walls of the proscenium, and forward-facing performers. There is a sense of the painterly in some parts of the performance, for example a focus on a body part performing a gesture in a projected close-up which is replicated by the performers on stage. This gesture becomes magnified and atomised as it is looped in a myriad of ways: by performers, close-ups on screen, and again in projections on walls. It reminds me of the sensual focus on body parts and gestures seen in renaissance painting. This is emphasised when another image appears – the painting, Nicolas Poussin's *Midas and Bacchus* (1629-1630), projected in a film featuring a secondary film, *The Bitter Tears of Petra von Kant* (1972), which features the painting as its prominent backdrop. This projection of a painting within a film within a film, colours the performance for a few moments. Like Bal's description of Reed's painting, time is needed to take in *The Night is Red* and it is hard to take in in one go or from a wider 'whole'

perspective, as different simultaneous focal points constantly invite attention. When I watch from the front and try to put myself in the place of a ‘detached’ observer, I find the scene overwhelming. Attention is called to a gesture *here*, its repetition (differently) on film *there*. I highlight these painterly aspects within *The Night is Red* to frame why I find Bal and Katz’s discussion of specific paintings relevant and useful when attempting to understand and articulate the effects of my performance work. Despite the differences in form between Reed’s painting #261 (1987-88) and *The Night is Red*, I begin to see correlations between them. Like #261, *The Night is Red* is an overwhelming visage without a singular narrative, sense of development, or a distinctive way *in*. Furthermore, both foreground a sense of tactility and texture.

I propose that similarly to Bal’s description of Reed’s #261, *The Night is Red* activates a close ‘temporal attentiveness’ through (using the language of Bal) activating a “bodily awareness of duration, a variable rhythm that enforces temporal awareness” (2000: 88). I suggest that this is manifest in *The Night is Red* where a tactile, haptic effect is produced by the simultaneous looping of an image via different textures – such as different qualities of screen surface, sizes, perspective, and the juxtaposition of live performers and their recorded counterparts.

*A woman performs gestural loops out of sync, this image recurs on a screen and then on another screen within a screen. A close-up of a hand performing a gesticulation is screened on the smooth flat surface and brightly saturated pixels of a TV. The same image is looped again as a shaky, unsteady handheld camera surveys the space capturing the TV in a live feed and projecting it in a faded and diffused image on the wall.*

These varying textures are highlighted as images are fed back and looped through different surfaces. Queer theorist Renu Bora argues that texture “is always implicitly eventful, calling one’s attention to the temporal nature of perception” (1997: 98-99). I propose, following Bora, that at times these artistic mechanisms at play in *The Night is Red* tune us to the perceptual event of being drawn in and affected by the sensual effects of the materiality and temporalities of these textural layers.

*She reaches her arms out with her hands held together, embodies the languid movement, and opens up and twists her fingers into a pose which becomes a sign. It quivers through its duplications and takes on a painterly appearance. An intense focus on a gesticulation, a body stuck in movement, like that seen in a Caravaggio. She twists her hands and points, she curls her fingers, it means something, yet the image loops in stasis.*

In addition to the sensuality of the material effects of *The Night is Red* and the sense of a slowing down and attention to temporality it invites; I propose that the performance evokes a *particular* rhythm and temporal experience. I suggest that the specificity of the rhythm and temporal variance that *The Night is Red* generates has much in common with the sensuous temporal effects of Martin’s grid paintings. Martin began painting grids, such as *The Tree* (1964), while she was living in an artist community with other queer artists such as John Cage and Robert Rauschenberg. In these often hybrid painting-drawings, Martin drew horizontal and vertical grid pencil lines over a painted square, in an aim to “lighten” its “weight” and “destroy its power” (Guggenheim 2021: n.p.). Katz in his article ‘The Sexuality of Abstraction: Agnes Martin’ (2011), describes the effect of Martin’s grid painting *Gray Stone II* (1961), where “every element stands in such perfect equilibrium that the painting oscillates before the eye as

it if were breathing, alive” (ibid., 107). He suggests that Martin’s knitting together of vertical and horizontal lines engage with the binary of vertical and horizontal while simultaneously generating a sense of suspension from those oppositions (ibid., 106-107). As they are knitted together, a sense of stasis and equilibrium emerges. Katz underlines that the repetition of the horizontal and vertical lines in Martin’s grids diminish the possibility for “resolution”, he suggests that “there is only experiential duration, the acceptance of a permanent and irresolvable cycle” (ibid., 112). He proposes that we can read in Martin’s paintings tracings of her queer sexuality:

If we come to see Martin’s sexuality as a kind of standpoint epistemology, we will find that this understanding not only can go a long way towards contextualising her multiple renunciations, her idiosyncratic theories on art, on Zen, on personal and collective politics, but, it can also, and most rewardingly, help us to see what gives her paintings their power: that tense equilibrium, as in *Night Sea*, instantiated but never reconciled, between opposing pictorial terms. (ibid., 98)

As art historian Amelia Jones notes, in her discussion of a lecture given by Katz on Martin’s grids; Katz “convincingly” conveys the grids as “a kind of metaphor or aesthetic enactment of the precarious state of being a lesbian in the New York art world from the 1950s onward” (Jones 2012: n.p. ‘Chapter 5: Activating Queer [...]’). Katz’s argument can be critiqued in the way that it points to an essentialist conception of a ‘lesbian experience’. However, although he does lean on her biography and identity he avoids succumbing completely to a problematic notion of Martin’s grids as an expression of an inner essentialised queerness. As Jones notes, Katz’s analysis of Martin’s grids highlights the queer effects of “a redemptive seduction” (Jones 2012: n.p. ‘Chapter 5: Activating Queer [...]’), and the “slow accumulation of a lush physicality” (ibid.). In his description of *Night Sea*, he highlights the wavering trace of Martin’s hand seen in the repetitive hand drawn horizontal and vertical lines over watercolour and

articulates the “slow surprise” (Katz 2011: 93) of the illusion that emerges when looking at the painting. His vision flips so that instead of focusing on the “tremelo” (ibid., 106) trace of the artist’s white lines over blue, he sees the blue foregrounded as an “emerging thicket of painstakingly painted small blue rectangles” (ibid., 93). As he takes time with Martin’s grid painting, he is drawn into an oscillation between the white grid and the blue rectangles. Katz argues that “the painting oscillates before the eye as if it is breathing, alive” (ibid., 107), and invites the viewer into “a committed temporal attentiveness” (ibid., 106). I propose that *The Night is Red* similarly invites an oscillatory gaze which invokes a bodily experience of stasis. However, I depart from Katz to suggest that the ‘tense stasis’ of the ‘ocular oscillations’ that I experience when watching *The Night is Red* is less a product of optical illusion but more a result of a decentering sensual engagement with the work. The viewer is invited to experience a stasis-like ocular oscillation between being outside the work and being drawn into the loop.

This oscillatory sensual engagement of being drawn in and out of the loop edges towards film theorist Barker’s depiction of her decentering experience of *Mirror* (1975). Barker (2009) describes how she is pulled in and off balance and led into an ambivalent kind of attention where she is drawn in and out of the film (ibid.). She suggests that the filmic techniques Tarkovsky uses in *Mirror* challenge identification with the characters on screen and are ‘discomfiting’ for the viewer. For her, this is due to the changes in perception produced by the camera view in *Mirror*. She highlights moments when there are “extreme close ups, intensely felt camera movements and cuts” (Barker 2009: 7), and when “the camera’s path of attention” (ibid., 6) takes us in and further away from the scene. She gives the example of the opening scene in *Mirror*. A therapist tells a boy to look into her eyes. The therapist motions with her finger while the camera pans in a different direction. The boy also moves in an opposite direction, as Barker articulates it:

Something in this set of movements is physically and perceptually disorientating. At the moment that camera and boy cross paths, it is difficult to tell the difference between his movements to the left and the camera's movement to the right. This is not unlike the experience of being seated on an eastbound train, looking out the window at a westbound train and, when one train lurches into motion, being unable to tell who is actually moving "us" or "them". (ibid., 5-6)

She argues that moments like this in the film, produce a sense of being 'off balance' being drawn here or there, in or out. She reflects that this:

Complicates the notion of character identification and 'objective' observation by calling into question, without entirely collapsing, the boundaries between 'here' and 'there', and between 'us' (the viewers), 'them' (the characters), and 'it' (the film). (ibid., 7)

There are obvious differences between watching one film unfold on a screen within a darkened cinema, or from a laptop or TV at home; and watching multiple films unfold and loop, along with performers copying live from films, lit up in a darkened studio. Perhaps these 'gestures' appear less disruptive or affective when going to see an experimental multi-media performance with certain expectations about what we'll see in the studio, than in a darkened, quiet cinema with a large screen which invites an expectation of a particular duration and temporal unfolding (i.e. played back, pre-recorded). I propose that an intermedial performance practice, such as *The Night is Red* to some extent reflects the ways of seeing that have emerged in late capitalism, seen explicitly in the contemporary moment where our eyes vacillate between different windows and on web pages with post-internet hypermedia aesthetics. This staging has become less of a rupture in the post-modern age, especially with the advent of hyper-media aesthetics<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Hypermediacy is a term used to describe multiple modes of media viewed together in one space.



used in performance arts practices alongside the development of digital image-based technologies. I propose that it is specifically the structures of looping staged between screens and performers, and the different kinds of loop that are produced within *The Night is Red*, that appear to be generative in producing embodied effects which decentre and destabilise the viewer.

When I watch *The Night is Red*, I experience the ambivalence of being drawn into the loop and being at other times outside of it. Sometimes I am outside looking in, such as when I view the performers from the edge of the proscenium. They copy from screens and I am prevented from seeing what they see on their laptops. At other times, I'm drawn into the loop, destabilised and confused. For example, when my image is captured by a cameraperson circuiting the scene. They take time to linger on individual performers, projection and TV screens, and the audience. And the audience sees themselves in the live feed played back on the TV. This small gesture draws me in. Seeing myself on screen decentres the role I positioned myself in, as being outside and detached from the performance. I am drawn off kilter and disorientated as I don't recognise my surroundings in the shaky handheld camera view and brightness of the TV screen. This constant movement between being drawn in and out of the loop, renders an uncanny uncertainty in my position in relation to the performance. For instance, at moments where my image is captured and played back on the live feed I feel as if I have become a participant in the complex loops which make up the performance. However, I am drawn into a constant motion between the destabilising effect of being disorientated and drawn into the non-linear heterogenous and looping time of the performance; and viewing the reverberating loops as a quivering image to be viewed as if through a window. These vacillations between being drawn in and out of loop result in not only a *representation* of time-as-stasis, but a corporeal *experience* of stasis.

I suggest that the oscillating gaze that is invited plunges the viewer into a suspended stasis which heightens the viewer's attention to a decentring temporal experience. Using visual cultures professor Simon O'Sullivan's (2010) important ideas on 'the art encounter', I propose that the decentring experience of being drawn into the loop invites the viewer to experience their subjectivity differently. O'Sullivan uses Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the rhizome (1987) to argue that art as a mode of experimentation with material and new forms of expression has the potential to produce affective breaks with the typical, habitual structures that life is organised within. O'Sullivan suggests that art offers the opportunity for deterritorializations (a Deleuzian-Guattarian term) from "dominant regimes and habitual formations and in so doing actualises other durations, other possibilities for life" (2010: 205). However, he suggests that "one has to be open to the deterritorializing power of art, its molecularity, or affective power, operating 'beneath' its molecular 'appearance'" (ibid., 205). The idea that O'Sullivan proposes is that some artwork solicits the potential for the viewer to be affected in such a way as to afford opportunities for "other durations and other possibilities for life" (ibid.). He proposes that artworks, like us, are "specific combinations of affect", and if we understand this to be case we can understand how "such practices might also operate to break a certain model of subjectivity" (ibid., 199) and reflect back to us new models of subjectivity. For example, forms of subjectivity which depart from the modernist idea of the subject as centred, individual and with an individuated body and mind (similar to that of the idea of art as the materiality of the artwork and the inner meaning it conveys) (ibid., 199). I propose that *The Night is Red's* looping-as-stasis manifests the possibilities that O'Sullivan poses. The viewer is drawn into a temporal attentiveness which is as disorienting as it is potentializing. Where one is decentered in (linear) time and engaged in a bodily experience of

suspension and stasis. I propose that the result is a keen and durational experience of uncertainty in one's self and one's position to the artwork.

*On a flickering screen Lermontov (The Red Shoes, 1948) holds a statue of ballet pointe shoes. He closes his eyes then opens them and looks at Julian Craster, his antagonist. The image loops back to the beginning. Lermontov holds the statue, again and again. A woman in a beehive wig copies Lermontov's gesture, closes her eyes and mirrors the inflection of his hands caressing the statue in the empty space in front of her. She closes her eyes, then looks at the screen. Her double appears reading from a text, "The night is red, the night is red. The night is red and the children in the city are going insane, the children in the city are going insane. The children in the city are going insane" (Acker [1984] 1994). Other women with beehive wigs arrive. They take on Lermontov's gesture, prolonging, multiplying and reiterating it. I find the air thick with stasis and movements out of time. They close their eyes then look at the screen. "The night is red, the night is red. The night is red and the children in the city are going insane, the children in the city are going insane. The children in the city are going insane" (ibid., [1984] 1994).*

## **A QUEER FEMINIST SPACE IN PERFORMANCE?**

As I proposed earlier, *The Night is Red* engages with a register of time that (as Wood (2011) and Fisher (2009), using Jameson (1982) have suggested) underpins contemporary digital culture. Where one becomes resigned to an extended present, and the future becomes subsumed in the 'now', foreclosing its possibilities (Heathfield 2000: n.p.). In many ways *The Night is Red* offers a representation of time typical of late-capitalism and digital culture which flattens

the past and the future into the present, limiting the potential for generative relations with the past and change in the future. I suggest that these limitations are manifested through the quality of the looping performances and films on screens in *The Night is Red*, which similar to Sullivan's performance *The Chittendens*, generate a sense of "twitchy, agitated interpassivity" (Fisher 2009: 24) and a drone-like dissonant stasis (Wood 2011). Wood, in her writing on *The Chittendens*, suggests that the performers "loop one question to the point of negation: what can we do, and where can we go, with this new movement vocabulary?" (ibid. n.p.). This chapter examines the way my practice-as-research explores this question.

This writing also addresses the difficulty of another question posed by queer theorist Carla Freccero. She asks of the recent turn to queer temporality within queer theory "what is the specificity [...] of 'queer' in relation to temporality, since not all nonlinear chronological imaginings can be recuperated as queer" (Dinshaw et al., 2007: 187). As discussed in Chapter 1: Introduction and Chapter 2: Field Review, within queer theory the notion of queer is not fixed to one meaning, and it has been used expansively. Particularly within discourses of queer temporalities, 'queer' has been used to describe temporalities which deviate from or challenge what are understood as normative temporalities. In particular, time experienced as non-linear, out of sync, non-progressive (as opposed to teleological, developmental and linear time) has been explored in relation to *queer* desire, memory, knowledge production, and subjectivity. However, the use of the term 'queer' can become deradicalized and meaningless when it is used to describe any non-linear and interrupted temporality, whether or not it 'queers' hegemonic structures or opens up alternative, more equitable, possibilities. Often there are over-generalising and reductive claims made about the shape, potentials and limits of non-linear and/or queer temporalities. Queer theorist Howard Chiang makes this critique of some queer theorists in the discourse on queer temporalities. He argues that often the assumption is

made “that whatever queer theorists are deconstructing, denormalising or denaturalising [...] can somehow be conceptually sealed from their simultaneous constructions, normalisations and naturalisations” (Chiang 2008: 61).

Following Chiang’s proposition, I argue that the looping devices in *The Night is Red* highlight a non-dichotomy between what can produce normalising and arguably more limiting habitual experiences of time in the digital world, while also generating alternative temporal experiences. I have argued that more generative alternative temporal effects – ‘frisson’ and being ‘drawn into the loop’ – emerge alongside (and as a result of) looping devices which present a metaphor of time as stasis and perpetual present. I suggest that the viewer of *The Night is Red*; a performance-art installation underpinned by a structure of different loops; is faced with a reflection of their subjectivity as disoriented, decentered, multiple, connected, interconnected, and ‘queer’ (odd, strange, uncanny). Furthermore, I propose that the performance’s temporal effect of frisson underlines a sense of uncertainty, as the present moment is experienced as teeming with the possibility to veer off in any direction. I suggest that the possibility for the viewer to take up the denormalising and dehabitualising potentials that these alternative experiences of time offer, is what opens up a queer feminist space in performance.

## Chapter 4: Looping and Queer Ephemeral Knowledges

In Chapter 3: Looping-as-stasis and Queer Effects, I explored my experience of the looping text ‘Rock and Roll IS Rock and Roll...’ in *The Night is Red* (2019) where the intensity of the rhythms of the loop were foregrounded and meaning was increasingly abstracted. I also considered the decentring effects of the collage-like intermedial set up of the performance and the looping feed-back of live feeds in the space. I reflected on how these strategies created temporal attentiveness for the viewer – ‘frisson’ and being ‘drawn into the loop’ – which emerged alongside a temporality of stasis. I proposed that these alternative temporal experiences created uncertainty for the viewer while generating an affective sense of potential that the present could be actualised in unexpected ways.

Here in Chapter 4, I explore different practices of looping in *The Night is Red* which have similarities and parallels with those I discussed in Chapter 3, but which also have differences and specificities which help me to consider these practices as a mode of queer knowledge production opening up queer ephemeral knowledges. I look specifically at two practices of looping that I call temporal drag’ and ‘retranslations’. I also focus on particular images that I loop in *The Night is Red*; those of Dusty Springfield, Maria Callas, *Marnie* (1964), and *The Red Shoes* (1948), and some other more fleeting images. The images I have chosen to loop have been read as heteronormative within dominant canons but have also persistently circulated within queer communities and across time. I reflect on the looping re-enactment of these images in *The Night is Red* in relation to discourses on queer temporalities within queer theory. In the section ‘Temporal Drag’, I look particularly at the work of queer historiographer Dana Luciano (2011) on ‘queer attachment’, and how such attachments produce relations across

time, and leave traces (alternative archives) that indicate the sustenance, queer survival, and community, that attachment to such objects, figures, and texts have forged. I also look at the idea of temporal drag proposed by queer historiographer Elizabeth Freeman (2010) and used by queer theorist Jack Halberstam (2011). They put forth the argument that some queer performances perform temporal drag which is a crossing of time on the body rather than gender. They suggest that performing an attachment to a figure/s or objects from the past can open up the past in the present in potentially generative ways.

I consider the extent to which the performance of Dusty Springfield by performer Weronika Cegielska in *The Night is Red* illustrates the potential of Luciano, Freeman, and Halberstam's theories. I explore particularly the ways in which the pleasurable loops of Cegielska's performance, which engages with the pleasures of 'dragging' Dusty while atomising her movement into discrete repetitive gestures; is particularly useful for engaging with histories of lesbian 'camp' performance. I also turn to queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz who proposes how alternative modes of evidencing 'queerness' or reading queerness can be more aptly found in ephemera such as in the gesture which 'atomises' movement, rather than in traditional understandings of "what counts as proof" (2009: 65). Muñoz's theory helps us to think about the possibilities of gesture as a vast archive of queer histories and alternative knowledges. I consider how Cegielska's 'temporal drag' of Dusty's gestures might highlight ephemeral traces of queer histories as they are atomised into "precise acts" (2009: 67) and looped over and over again. I propose that it is through the 'atomisation' of Dusty's camp mannerisms into repeated and out of time gestural sequences, that Cegielska's performance produces a particular and generative relationship with the past.

In the section, ‘Retranslations’, I look at the re-performance and retranslation of scenes from *Marnie* (1964) and *The Red Shoes* (1948) in *The Night is Red* by performers Paz and Nirenberg. I propose that this section manifests a Deleuzian understanding of images put forth by queer theorist Elspeth Probyn (1996), where images do not have underlying meanings but are understood as surfaces by which queer desires, and imaginings may travel through (or not) at different times, in different ways depending on their reception and context. I suggest that through the looping retranslations of scenes from *Marnie* and *The Red Shoes*, small details slip away from their place within dominant narratives, for example, a blonde wig, a passionate attachment to a horse, a queer relationship, or red shoes. I propose that the artistic mechanisms enabled by ‘retranslations’ highlight the ephemerality, ambiguity, and performativity of queer knowledges. I also propose that they invite the viewer to make alternative connections and queer readings.

## TEMPORAL DRAG

In *The Night is Red* ‘Dusty’ stands on a cheap piece of silver material, her ‘60s’ sparkly dress is from Topshop, and she wears an ill-fitted wig. The ‘putting on’ of this image of Dusty is also indicated when Cegielska stops performing as Lermontov (*The Red Shoes*), and on stage she is speedily ‘transformed’ into Dusty through a quick costume change. This image of Dusty engages with the instantly recognisable persona of Dusty Springfield when she was at the height of her fame in the 60s. Within the contemporary moment, this image has been largely consigned to the past, associated with Dusty’s place in the history of British pop culture. It has fed into heteronormative narratives, fitting into dominant cultural histories which do not address Dusty’s queerness or have had a normalising function. For example, she is often recounted in histories and narratives of the Sixties. She encapsulated the high glamour and



beehive hairstyles of the 60s blonde bombshell; and has been considered an icon of the 'Swinging Sixties' or the 'Queen of the Mods'. However, I am interested in the ways that this dated image of Dusty can also be considered as a site for queer narratives and queer desires. Feminist scholar Adele Patrick, in 'Defiantly Dusty: A (Re)Figuring of Feminine Excess' (2001), makes reference to the lesbian attachments that Dusty inspired. For example, lesbian fan Valerie Moffatt's discussion of her collection of Dusty Springfield memorabilia:

The prize of my collection had been a double-page spread from Fabulous magazine. She was wearing hot pink her favourite lipstick shade. Her hair was glossy platinum with perfect kiss-curls and she was smiling wickedly, as though sharing a naughty secret with me. (Valerie Moffatt cited in 2001: 370)

And in a contemporary interview (2018) with Katie Goh for Dazed magazine, Patrick highlights the strong attachments that Dusty inspired when she describes one of her favourite items handed in to the Womens Library Lesbian Archives in Glasgow – a fan scrapbook devoted to Dusty. She says:

It's obviously from a lesbian who was besotted with Dusty and has kept a beautiful scrapbook. I imagine how it must have been if you weren't out, and you saw Dusty in all her glory come out, and how that impacted young women who didn't have the internet or maybe lived in some remote place in Scotland. These artefacts can reveal so much' (Goh 2018: n.p.).

These examples illustrate how Dusty's image was a figure of queer desire and contributed to a sense of queer identity in the face of a heteronormative dominant culture. I find Dusty, a semi-forgotten lesbian icon and a figure from a time other than my own contemporary moment, fascinating, excessive, affected, and ambiguous. Dusty is a figure that I have connected my own queerness to and drawn inspiration from, like other characters and texts that I have been captivated by since childhood. My attachment to Dusty has been a motivator for my continual

looping of and return to her image. Before I explore the re-encountering of the image of Dusty in *The Night is Red*, I would like to introduce the thinking of Luciano, Freeman and Halberstam on performance and attachment as alternative historical method and knowledge production. I propose that this thinking is helpful in framing how the looping re-enactment of Dusty's image in *The Night is Red* might put the past in productive relation with the present.

Luciano's use of the term *attachment* is related to queer historiographer Ann Cvetkovich's work on affective archives (2003). Cvetkovich argues that "gay and lesbian cultures often leave ephemeral and unusual traces" (ibid., 8). This is due to the way that these cultures emerge as a result of "sexuality and intimacy, and hence forms of privacy and invisibility that are both chosen and enforced" (ibid. 8). She suggests that such ephemeral traces might be found in odd places, in documents which have an affective charge and invoke memories – such as collections of zines, women's festival tickets, or forms of fan production etc. These ephemeral objects are significant due to the affects that cohere around them, for example those of shame or pleasure. Luciano's (2011) concept of 'queer attachment' follows from Cvetkovich's idea of 'affective archives'. However, she argues that the "language of attachment" (2011: 125) is more useful to mark "the relational matrix that queer history seeks to preserve and recreate" (ibid., 125). For Luciano, attachment:

Marks a site between the psychic and social, invested in both but proper to neither. It locates itself both within and beyond the individual: we might describe it as an intimate affinity (taking a number of affective forms, not all of them "positive") between two subjects, or a subject and a beloved object (for when your affinity for an object, a place, a thing is passionate enough to be described as attachment, you imagine that the thing loves, (or ought to love you back). (ibid., 126)

Luciano is interested in attachments “that go against more proper attachments” (ibid., 129). For example, extra-familial queer bonds, attachments to objects or figures that are out of reach, or attachments which mark queer desire.

She gives the example seen in queer attachments to Oscar Wilde, manifested in lipstick kisses that mark his gravestone in Paris. These are kisses from those who have visited the grave over the years marking the queer energies of Wilde’s fans, “their presence and their complicity” (ibid., 121). Wilde’s ancestors have attempted to erect barriers around the gravestone and remove the fat stains of the lipstick traces from the stone. But they have failed in their efforts to stop the visitors and their kisses. Luciano points out that the familial attachments of Wilde’s ancestors, which are “usually granted the presumption of durability that ‘blood’ family bonds enjoy” (ibid., 122), differ from the kind of attachment of those who leave their kisses to “activate a memory” (ibid., 122). The attachments of these fans and the traces they leave suggest ephemerality yet “the scandalous kisses persist” (ibid., 122). Luciano suggests the traces of the lipstick stains on stone:

Don’t trace a timeline, a narrative of descent, between Wilde and those who made them; rather they bend time through the location of partial affinities, pressing up against a presence from the past, the present-ness of this being-otherwise. They kiss into being an expansively queer now. (ibid., 123)

She highlights that these attachments make visible “a different form of contact with the past” (ibid., 123), and this is what makes them ‘queer’. Luciano makes clear the distinction between these more joyous attachments that linger over time, and the ‘melancholy’ verse which is written on the back of the stone which fits with the tragic circumstances of Wilde’s death. Luciano points out that mournfulness, which highlights loss and emptiness, marks time very differently from “the exultation of the outcast” (ibid., 123) (seen in the audacious lipstick

traces) which “brings that otherwise present into being, charging it with a mingled sense of consummation and expectation – just as a kiss can do” (ibid., 123). For Luciano, queer attachments have “a lingering force” where “the scene itself is history, but the time of queer attachment remains” (ibid., 129). Luciano emphasises the messy meanings and temporalities of queer attachment; where particular objects, documents, figures are made significant in unpredictable and partial ways, and by engaging with those objects their affective force can be actualised in the present.

Luciano’s discussion of the lingering and messy temporality of queer attachments to objects from the past; has resonances with Freeman and Halberstam’s discussion of queer performances of ‘temporal drag’. I suggest that temporal drag can be considered a form of ‘queer attachment’. Freeman borrows the term ‘drag’ from the queer tradition of gender drag performance and cross dressing; and suggests that temporal drag is a mode of queer performance which crosses historical time rather than gender. She considers how ‘temporal drag’ can be seen for example in expressions of lesbian ‘butch’ and ‘femme’ identity through the wearing of vintage clothing: Freeman points out that:

For many committed to, say, both butch-femme and feminism, this kind of play on the flesh with “tired” models of gender performs just the kind of temporal crossing that registers a certain queerness irreducible to simple cross-dressing. And crucially, dressing circa some other decade, flaunting outdated feminine norms, has been one important way to signal femme identity. (2010: 70)

For example, a woman in the present might perform her queer identity by wearing clothes from the 50s indicating an outdated femininity, or wear clothes that represent an outmoded image from the 70s women’s lib era. Freeman describes artwork which drags the past for dominant culture’s cast offs that have an affective charge in the present. She suggests that the imperative

to take up discarded objects, faded figures from the past, or “obsolete cultural signs” (ibid., 68), whilst demonstrating an attachment to such objects not only “partake(s) in a temporality crucial to queer performance” (ibid., 68) but also a turn to the past to explore the queer afterlife of dominant culture’s castoffs. Like Luciano, she emphasises how some attachments to objects from the past *queer* time. I suggest that by attempting to ‘become’ the figure that one feels a “fierce attachment” (ibid., 68) to, by taking on their out-dated gestures, song, or clothing; one may engage with the past in a similar way to those who leave lipstick marks on Wilde’s grave. Maybe the affective charge of attachment to these objects and the consequent act of re-engaging with them in the ‘now’, might (like Luciano suggests of the kisses on Wilde’s grave) manifest a past which messily and generatively rubs up against the present.

I propose that Halberstam’s portrayal of the band Lesbians on Ecstasy’s cover versions demonstrates how their particular performance of temporal drag manifests their sincere attachments to the originals; and in doing so, puts the past in generative relation with the present. Halberstam argues that Lesbians on Ecstasy’s messy, attached and sincere dance cover versions of out-dated lesbian songs lie “at the heart of a lesbian aesthetic and differ from performances which adopt irony [...] and critical distance” (2011: 337). She makes the case that although cover versions are common and not necessarily queer, ‘the cover version’ can be ‘queered’. Halberstam suggests that LoE have a “stubborn identification” (ibid., 341) with the songs they cover by artists such as Tracy Chapman, Melissa Etheridge, that used to be popular lesbian anthems; and perform their cross identifications and attachments to the originals (ibid., 335). She argues that LoE retain a sense of sincerity and identification as they “inhabit the sensibility” (ibid., 335) of these originals while they also cut up and reperform them using turntable techniques. As Bernie Bankrupt from LoE describes it, “maybe part of being feminists, women and lesbians is that we can’t really escape our sincerity. We kinda like the

songs too” (ibid., 337). Halberstam suggests that instead of using parody to re-perform these original songs from the category of “dyke drama music [...] casting it as maudlin, folksy” (ibid., 336); they reproduce the work for new audiences with sincerity and “creative reinvention” (ibid., 337). They “rework” (ibid. 337) the original songs for new audiences by cutting and creatively reinventing them through electronic dance music. LoE “recycle” sections, “a bass line here, a chorus there, a lyric fragment, a sentiment, a concept” (ibid., 337). She argues that in this way they do not try to recreate “what has been lost to history [...] but instead embrace the ecstasy of finding earlier grammars for the articulation of rage, rave and revolution” (ibid., 342). In doing so, Halberstam argues, they engage with and resituate “the political messages” of the original songs “for a new political context” (ibid., 336). By performing an affective connection with these “earlier grammars” (ibid., 342) from the past they (using the words of Freeman) may “write the poetry of a different future” (Freeman 2010: 68).

*Marnie is riding her horse Forio and her face is bouncing rhythmically against the edges of the screen. In the background Dusty is performing a dance. A pale imitation of the scene is projected to the left. The camera gradually zooms in closer on Marnie riding, while Dusty persists in repetitive movements. This time Dusty is in a red dress, she snaps her head, frames her face, flicks her wrist, and raises her hands. The loop of the ‘live’ projection is slightly delayed, and they perform at different rhythms. On TV someone does karaoke to You Don’t Have to Say You Love Me with the volume turned down.*

I propose that Cegielska’s performance of Dusty in *The Night is Red* can be viewed through the lens of Luciano’s queer attachment and in relation to LoE’s temporal drag. I suggest that

Cegielska stages a queer attachment to Dusty – a faded star from the past – through a performance of temporal drag. Cegielska's enactment of Dusty's movement differs from the performances of the other performers in the same space. These other women appear to be semi-detached from what they embody. They have to keep up with the rapidity of the gestures that they are copying live from screens, and this is paralleled by their surface-like characterisations – it is only through the wigs that they wear that there is a reference to the images of 'blonde bombshells', Dusty Springfield, Marnie, or Maria Callas. Cegielska is distinguished from them by her entrance where she arrives on the scene in the middle of the performance from outside the studio and brought in with the help of stage technicians who place her on an elevated platform. The other women's performances take on an appearance of backing dancers or stand-ins, while Cegielska is front and centre, at the apex of the performance. I see her loops as a hypnotic other-worldly dance or a spectral image rather than an irrelevant and repetitive taking on and dismissal of movement. Cegielska's performance remains close to the original as she takes on every slight gesture. In her silent re-enactment, the rhythm of the song 'You don't have to say you love me' (1966) is not heard but underpins the cadence of the performance and provides the tempo for the looped gestural sequences. Despite an ill-fitted wig and costume which doesn't quite fit, Cegielska's embodiment and commitment to the excessive, extravagant nature of the gestures of Dusty indicates pleasure, enjoyment, and a sincere investment in an outdated, out-moded pop icon.

In some ways the pleasure and enjoyment in Dusty's image has resemblances with those female fans of Dusty who took on her image. In the article 'Defiantly Dusty. A (Re)figuring of Feminine Excess', Patrick (2001) describes interviews she had with working class women in Glasgow and the north of England for whom Dusty's image became a productive and subversive form of rebellion:

Dusty was the height of decadence; she was grown-up, but not in the boring way most adults were; Dusty's adulthood suggested all sorts of unknown indulgences and pleasures, including the intensely contradictory, confusing experience of sex and romance. (Greig 1989: 97, cited in Patrick 2001: 365)

Dusty's presentation of feminine excess was replicated by women who went to hairdressers to get a bleach blonde beehive and put-on heavy kohl makeup around the eyes inspired by Dusty's "panda-eyes" (ibid., 365). Patrick explains that becoming Dusty was a way of performing femininity to excess in ways that subverted "the prevailing idealised representations of femininity" (ibid., 365):

Rather than producing an image that conformed with social and cultural expectations of women to be attractive to men, Dusty described her aim in self-fashioning at this point as to 'try to be as unsexy as possible' (O'Brien 1999: 80 cited in Patrick 2011: 365)

Copying Dusty's image became a form of experimentation and subversion of popular feminine ideals. Although Cegielska's performance similarly engages with the pleasures of taking on Dusty's image, it doesn't produce the same effects. Taking on Dusty's image and staging a sincere attachment to Dusty in the contemporary moment appears anachronistic and out of date. Dusty, despite enjoying a resurgence of popularity in the 1980s, has been largely considered 'dated' post the 1960s. 'Dragging' Dusty 'now', highlights an outmoded performance of femininity. I suggest that this anachronism, in conjunction with the care, flamboyance, and sincerity with which Cegielska takes on Dusty's gestures; produces an image which represents a 'longing for' a cultural figure from a time not of one's own, exteriorised on the body. I suggest that *The Night is Red's* engagement with out-dated figures from the past can be more precisely understood as temporal drag rather than, for example, a performance of parody which has more in common with spoof, satire, and irony. Often in parodic performances, the comedy lies in the



differences between the time of the ‘original’ and the ‘cover’. For instance, French and Saunders comic sketch of Dusty Springfield (1996) fondly parodies Dusty and features her familiar use of gesture. However, I suggest that the comic sketch invites us to view Dusty and the attachments the other characters have to her, as comically passé rather than politically generative in the present.

*A woman is wearing a synthetic wig and a black gown attached with gaffer tape. She is performing small gestures and movements to a camera and is accompanied by another woman in non-theatrical black clothes, who could be her understudy.*

*One is ‘Maria Callas’, and the other is ‘Dusty Springfield’. Dusty tilts her head slightly to the left, she repeats herself. Callas whips around, catching her figure in the frame. Dusty adjusts her camera so that the TV screen behind her appears in her camera view finder. Another woman phones in on facetime from her bedroom in Beirut. She is also wearing black and she performs for the webcam in small staccato gestures that loop. Her presence affects the women in the studio. I’m not sure whether she is performing for us or them. As her image appears on the TV in the studio, and I imagine that in another studio somewhere else this performance is projected.*

I propose that both LoE and Cegielska’s performances of temporal drag manifest sincere attachments to the originals while also creatively reworking them in ways that generatively put the past in relation to the present. As pointed out earlier, Halberstam argues that it is LoE’s *creative reinvention* of dated but lovingly remembered songs from the lesbian past, that puts the past in productive relation to the present. She argues that rather than engaging with the

originals within their traditional genre of “dyke drama music [...] casting it as maudlin, folksy” (Halberstam 2011: 336); LoE use the techniques of turntable culture to reengage and resituate the political messages of the originals in productive ways. Like LoE, Cegieska’s performance in *The Night is Red* uses digital technology to edit and modify the source material. While LoE uses the cutting and editing of electronic dance music; *The Night is Red* uses film editing techniques to produce gestural loops derived from YouTube clips of Dusty’s recorded performances – which Cegielska embodies. LoE’s open discussion of the work that they attempt to do with the covers, their proclaimed lesbian identities ‘Lesbians on Ecstasy’, and their covers of classic lesbian anthems; invite a queer audience who might gain sustenance from LoE’s re-enactment of “earlier grammars of rage, rave and revolution” (2011: 342). And the structure of an LoE gig enables their fans to be in close proximity to one another, opening up a sense of queer community. Thus, Halberstam’s suggestion that LoE engage the past in ways that are generative ‘now’ may also be dependent on the desire of their fans for reading what is opened up by the cutting up, reappropriating, and reinventing of Tracy Chapman, Mellissa Etheridge’s, and others’ songs.

In contradistinction, *The Night is Red* is not explicitly framed as queer (I’m using the term here as an identity label). Rather, it is more perceptibly a space of experimentation inviting a multiplicity of readings. One may slip and shift between reading Cegielska’s careful depiction of Dusty’s movement and commitment to the dynamic quality of her gestures as a homage or nostalgic rendition of Dusty, a signifier of fashion from the 60s, a pleasurable celebration of an old-school Diva, an attention to an excessive and old-fashioned femininity; or other readings depending on the desires of the viewer. However, I suggest that the specificities of the creative re-working of Dusty in *The Night is Red* also invite a reading of the performance as ‘camp’ – generatively opening up the possible ephemeral histories of queer feminist ‘camp’. Thus, rather

than engaging with political messages from the past and resituating them for new audiences, which Halberstam suggests is the work that LoE's cover versions do, I propose that the looping gestural sequences of Cegielska's performance engage with the past in the present differently.

Cegielska's rehearsed choreography focuses the audience's gaze on gesture. Working from edited films of Dusty's live performances cut into looping sequences, Cegielska aims to capture the essence of Dusty's performance while also precisely embodying the digital edits. I find that with each loop, Dusty's gestures start to become more and more recognisable and specific, while they appear ever more uncanny and overly elaborate. I propose that their looping gives us time to take with them to consider their shape, their possibilities, their potential histories, and also their particularly 'camp' quality. Queer performance theorist Muñoz's (2009) idea of queer ephemeral knowledges resonant in queer dance and gesture helps me to consider the possibilities that Cegielska's performance of temporal drag produces. Muñoz argues that gesture is different from, and "atomizes", the flow of the moving body (2009: 67). He explores this through the example of queer performance artist Kevin Aviance. Muñoz suggests that Aviance is a master "of the historically dense queer gesture" (ibid., 67). He suggests that 'precise acts' can be understood as gesture, for example "the tilt of an ankle in very high heels, the swish of a hand that pats a face with imaginary makeup" (ibid.). Muñoz proposes that:

In his moves we see the suffering of being a gender outlaw, one who lives outside the dictates of heteronormativity. Furthermore, a story about being black in a predominately white-supremacist gay world ruminates beneath his gestures. Some of his other gestures transmit and amplify the pleasures of queerness. (ibid., 74).

Muñoz suggests that Aviance's performances of voguing in a queer club dance floor predominately made up of white, masculine presenting homonormative gay men; can be read for more than an "approximation of high fashion glamour" (ibid., 80). Thus, paying close

attention to gesture can create other stories that such gestures may hold. Muñoz references a private correspondence he had with North American poetry scholar Katie Kent who recommended “that we read with queerness as an expectation” (Muñoz 2009: 72), because through “small gestures, particular intonations, and other ephemeral traces, queer energies and lives are laid bare” (ibid., 72). Paying particular attention to gesture as a repository for potential queer histories, becomings, and affects can be a way of engaging with ephemeral queer evidence that is “hard to catch” (ibid., 81). I suggest through looping which atomises the flow of Dusty’s and Lermontov’s (from the film *The Red Shoes*, 1948) movements into discrete gestures which reoccur, that Dusty’s gestures are highlighted. Following Muñoz, I suggest that Cegielska’s performance opens up ephemeral histories of lesbian ‘camp’ performance.

Cultural theorist Patricia Juliana Smith (1999) who has studied Dusty’s image during the heyday of her career in the 60s, argues that Dusty’s gestures in her performances emulated queer male camp gesture. Pre-1970s, a lesbian identity and aesthetic was fairly invisible in comparison to male homosexuality, and “virtually no lesbian ‘femme’ aesthetic existed” (1999: 113). Smith suggests that Dusty performed “camp masquerades” in a similar way to the way queer scholars have argued that queer performances have appeared in other art forms, such as literature (ibid., 106). She suggests that Dusty’s image as ‘camp masquerade’, developed in accordance with the increasing speculation over her private life and “rumour, innuendo, and consequent public pressure regarding her ‘sexual inclinations’” (1999, 106). During the 60s Dusty didn’t address her sexuality despite much interest from the press, however in 1970 Dusty gave an interview to Ray Connolly from the *Evening Standard* addressing her bisexuality. This was quite a bold act in 1970, a time when homophobia still led many public figures to not disclose their queer sexual identities. She is quoted as saying “a lot of people say I’m bent, and I’ve heard it so many times that I’ve almost learned to accept it...I know I’m perfectly as

capable of being swayed by girl as by a boy. More and more people feel that way and I don't see why I shouldn't" (Connolly: 1970 n.p.). Smith suggests that Dusty increasingly identified with other 'outsider' identities at the time, partly as a way of performing her "unspeakable queerness" (1999: 106). For example, she identified with black female Motown singers; emanating in the way she took on the image of beehive hair and make-up associated with groups such as The Ronettes or The Crystals; along with her musical output becoming heavily influenced by and identified with Motown. Smith also argues that Dusty's increasingly excessive performance of femininity was influenced by drag queens. Dusty herself said that she got her inspiration for her trademark black kohled eyes and blonde beehive from drag queens at the time. And Dusty's image, in turn proliferated outwards as drag queens started to *do* Dusty through wearing the blonde beehive wig. Smith suggests that Dusty's:

Adoption of drag allowed her a mode of purely lesbian expression in a context in which no lesbian 'femme' aesthetic existed. At a time when mini-skirts and revealing bodices were the standard attire for fashionable women particularly those constantly in the public eye, Springfield effectively deflected the heterosexual male gaze through her elaborate and concealing guise of gowns, wigs, false eyelashes, and cosmetics. (ibid., 113)

In addition to this self-presentation as drag, Smith suggests that Dusty also took on a camp sensibility. This can be seen in her performance of 'You don't have to say you love me', which was an original Italian song, translated into English and which Dusty performed with melodrama and "sheer tragedy" (ibid., 114).

*Looping cuts the movement into signs, repeats and re-emphasises them. As the loops tighten and repeat, I see gestures punctuated, articulate. She appears fluent in this language, and the others tail after her, glitching, not sure of themselves or*

*what they should be doing next. A head tilt, a snap of the hand, a flick of the wrist.*

*Time is out of joint, and I look anew – again, again, and again.*

In her notable essay ‘Notes on Camp’ (2018), Sontag proposes that there are different kinds of camp, but she describes a shared notion of camp as a “love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration [...] Camp is esoteric– something of a private code, a badge of identity even” (ibid., 7). Historically, camp is generally associated with queer men and as a mode of queer survival, a private code to indicate one’s queerness in an oppressive dominant culture. However, Sontag unhooks homosexuality from camp in her descriptions about what a camp sensibility may be. She asks, “when does travesty, impersonation, theatricality acquire the special flavour of Camp?” (ibid., 11). In one of her answers to this question, she suggests that it is “only that which has the proper mixture of the exaggerated, the fantastic, the passionate and the naïve” (ibid., 15). She suggests that passionate attachment and sincerity are important to camp; “without passion, one gets pseudo Camp – what is merely decorative, safe, in a word, chic” (ibid., 16). She highlights that camp is a “relish” for excessive mannerisms, and “performances of gender”, for example, “the great stylists of temperament and mannerism, like Bette Davis, Barbara Stanwyck, Tallulah Bankhead, Edwige Feuillère” (ibid., 11). For Sontag, camp isn’t purely ironic, it is about being invested in, passionate, attached to something, while also putting it in “quotation marks” – as a way of understanding “being-as-playing-a-role” (ibid., 11). Histories of lesbian camp have often been overlooked within queer theory. Queer cultural theorist Elly Jean Nielsen has argued that there are oft overlooked histories of lesbian camp in her article ‘Lesbian camp: an unearthing’ (2016). Nielsen traces the histories of high-femme camp through a focus on the queer performativity of female stars. Following Sontag and other queer theorists, she makes clear that camp is about a particular style hinged on “artifice”, “exaggeration”, and an association with queer culture; “classic camp involves an

elaborate style that, on the surface, appears superficial but reveals an unspoken subtext” (Nielsen 2016: n.p.). She subdivides instances of what she calls lesbian camp into categories “erotic”, “classic” and “radical”, and finds examples of lesbian camp in; her queer mother who performed “impromptu imitations of over-the-top, old Hollywood stars such as Judy Garland, Mae West, and Marlene Dietrich” (ibid., n.p.). Nielsen also looks at the performances of KD Lang, Dusty Springfield, and butch-femme aesthetics. She argues that as lesbians were often erased within dominant culture it was inevitable that “camp – as a clever act of subterfuge – would be an essential mode of expression for lesbian women” (ibid. n.p.).

I understand that the framing of Dusty’s gestures as ‘camp’ is heightened with Cegielska’s performance of the queer character Lermontov from *The Red Shoes*, immediately prior to her performance of Dusty. When Cegielska first arrives in the performance she is wearing a white shirt and black trousers with her hair gelled and tied back while a TV in the background is playing a scene of Lermontov in *The Red Shoes* (1948). Although within the narrative of *The Red Shoes* Lermontov’s sexuality is never discussed, the character can in many ways be read as queer. Within a coterie of an entirely male creative team, he enacts an intense adoration for the prima ballerinas that he works with. Emeric Pressburger and Michael Powell have suggested that Lermontov was modelled on real ballet impresario Sergei Diaghilev, and Lermontov’s attachment to Victoria Page is akin to Diaghilev’s queer relationship with ballet star Vaslav Nijinsky. Actor Anton Walbrook also took on a camp sensibility in his performance of Lermontov. In *The Night is Red*, Cegielska performs an amalgamation of Lermontov’s gestures in looping sequences. Then stagehands *transform* her from Lermontov to Dusty by dressing on her stage in a blonde beehive wig and 1960s style dress. Amidst many other looping performances in the background, Cegielska’s atomisation of Lermontov and Dusty’s

movement into gestural sequences that loop, and her lingering, lovingly portrayed, campy performance put these figures in relation to one another.

*There is a looped film clip of Lermontov stroking a phallic statue of a ballet shoe.*

*A woman conveys the image of Lermontov along with others who loop the gestures*

*of Maria Callas. She enacts the caress, the closed eyes, the lingering hold, and*

*without the referent she presents a different kind of pleasure.*

I suggest that Cegielska's performance generatively puts the past in relation to the present. Cegielska's loops reiterate Dusty's performance out of time and sequence so that time can be taken with the familiarity, uncanniness, and campiness of Dusty's image and gestures in the present. I propose that this temporality and disruption of linear sequencing that looping-as-temporal-drag makes possible, invites the viewer to engage with the ephemeral knowledges that are transmitted through queer attachments.

Muñoz highlights the importance of the particular kinds of knowledges that can emerge through queer dance. He suggests that such dance can be a source of sustenance, and it can offer a mode of knowledge which is ephemeral but which "matters" (2009: 81). He proposes that queer dance:

Takes on a vast material weight for those of us who perform or draw important sustenance from performance. Rather than dematerialize, dance rematerializes.

Dance, like energy, never disappears; it is simply transformed [...] we must understand that after the gesture expires, its materiality has transformed into ephemera that are utterly necessary. (ibid., 81)



Following from Muñoz, I suggest that temporal drag in *The Night is Red*, ‘queers’ time in a way that ‘matters’ for those of whom might take sustenance and pleasure in engaging with its possibilities for transmitting queer ephemeral knowledges.

## RETRANSLATIONS

*Why do you want to dance?  
Why do you want to live?  
Well, I don't know exactly why,  
but... I must.  
That's my answer too.  
Come with me.  
My dear Miss Page if I accept an  
invitation to a party, I do not  
expect to find myself in public.  
**Come with me.**  
Where to?  
We are going to have a little talk.  
**Where to go?**  
But I don't think I want to talk to  
you.  
**We are going to have a little talk.**  
Don't you worry. I'll do the  
talking.  
You said you didn't trust horses.  
**But I don't think I want to talk to  
you.**  
I don't, but they trust me.  
**Don't you worry. I'll make the  
conversation**  
Which brings us directly to our  
relationship  
Is that your real name?  
You said you didn't trust horses.  
And you're blonde.  
I don't, but they trust me.  
You'll save time and make for  
better  
feeling if you tell me the truth.  
Is it your real name?  
**What are we doing***

***Is that your real name?**  
**You said you didn't trust horses.**  
**And you're blonde.**  
I'm fighting a powerful impulse  
to beat the hell out of you.  
**You'll save time and do better I  
feel all around if you tell me the  
truth.**  
**Is that your real name?**  
At last we communicate.  
**I'm fighting a powerful boost to  
hit you**  
Now, for the third and last time,  
is that your real name?  
**Finally we communicate.**  
**Now, for the third and last time,  
is that your real name?**  
And don't bother to lie to me.  
I'll check you out in every detail.  
Yes.  
Where are you from?  
**And don't bother to lie to me.**  
**I'll check you all the details**  
California.  
Where in California?  
**Yes.**  
Los Angeles.  
**Where are you from?**  
Now what have you thrown  
good money away on?  
**California.**  
Oh, you shouldn't spend all your  
money  
on me like you do.  
**Where in California?***

*I send you plenty of money.  
 You don't have to be a baby-sitter*  
***The Angels.***  
*Whoever said I did have to?  
 It's my pleasure. That smart little  
 ol' Jessie.*  
*Marnie, if you could just hear  
 some of the things that she says.*  
***Now what you played good  
 money?***  
***Oh, you shouldn't spend all your  
 money***  
***in me as you do.***  
*Oh, but I do. Seems I get a report  
 in exhaustive details  
 on all the bright sayings of ol'  
 Jessie Cotton.*  
*What's more, every time I come  
 home, she's roosting here.*  
***I send you lots of money.***  
***You do not have to be a nanny***  
*I see that you've lighted up your  
 hair, Marnie.*  
***Whoever said he had to do this?***  
***The pleasure is all mine. This  
 little flea Jessie.***  
***Marnie, if you could just hear  
 some of the things he said.***  
*A little. Why? Don't you like it?*  
***Ah, but I did anyway. It looks like  
 I'm getting a detailed report  
 of Jessie Cotton.***  
***Besides, every time I come home,  
 she's perched here.***  
*No.*  
***I see you straightened your hair,  
 Marnie.***  
*Too-blond hair always looks like  
 a  
 woman's tryin' to attract the man.*  
***A little. Because you do not like***  
*Uh, Marnie, I've been  
 thinking seriously about asking  
 Miss Cotton and Jessie  
 to move in here with me. Miss  
 Cotton is a real nice woman.*  
***Do not***  
***Too much blond hair always  
 looks like the woman tries to  
 attract the man***

*She's decent. A hard-working  
 woman  
 with a little girl to raise.*  
***Marnie, I've been  
 seriously considering asking Miss  
 Cotton and Jessie  
 Living here with me Cotton is a  
 very good woman.***  
*Come on, Mama, why don't you  
 just say what you mean?*  
***She's decent. A hard-working  
 woman  
 with a girl to raise.***  
*What you want is for Jessie  
 to come live with you.*  
***Come on, Mama, why not  
 you just say what you mean?***  
*Marnie, you oughtn't let yourself  
 act  
 jealous of a little ol' kid like that.*  
***What you want is for Jessie  
 to come live with you.***  
*She don't bother me none.  
 And we could always use  
 the extra money.*  
***Marnie, you shouldn't let yourself  
 play  
 Jealous of such an old man***  
*Why don't you love me? I've  
 always wondered why you don't.  
 You never give me one part of the  
 love you give Jessie.*  
***She doesn't bother me.***  
***And we could always use  
 the extra money.***  
***Why do not you love me? I've  
 always wondered why you do not.***  
***You never gave me love for Jessie.***  
*We are going to have a little talk.  
 Where to go?*  
*But I don't think I want to talk to  
 you.*  
*Don't you worry. I'll do the  
 talking.*  
***We are going to have a little talk.***  
*You said you didn't trust horses.*  
***But I don't think I want to talk to  
 you.***  
*I don't, but they trust me.*

***Don't you worry. I'll make the conversation***

*Why do you want to dance?*

*Why do you want to stay?*

*Well, I don't know why,  
but I have to.*

*This is also my answer.*

*come with me*

*Miss. My dear page, if I accept the  
invitation to the party, I will not be  
in public.*

***come with me***

*Where is it?*

*Let's talk a little.*

***Where to go***

*But I don't think I want to talk to  
you.*

***Let's talk a little.***

*Do not worry. I will speak*

*You said you don't trust horses.*

***But I don't think I want to talk to  
you.***

*I don't know, but they trust me.*

***Do not worry. I will have a  
conversation***

*Which brings us directly to our  
relationship*

*Is it your real name?*

*I'm fighting a powerful boost to hit  
you*

*Now, for the third and last time,  
is that your real name?*

***Which brings us directly to our  
relationship***

***is that your real name?***

*Finally we communicate.*

***I fight my body to hit you***

*Now, for the third and last time,  
is that your real name?*

(Fragments of text looped and re-arranged in *The Night is Red* from *The Red Shoes*, Powell and Pressburger 1948, and *Marnie*, Hitchcock 1964)

In *The Night is Red*, two performers act out scenes from *Marnie* (1964), and *The Red Shoes* (1948) in out of sync loops. This part of *The Night is Red* involves practices of looping which I term ‘retranslations’. I argue that the specificities of these practices afford another way of generating and transmitting queer ephemeral knowledges.

I find it useful to reflect on the effects of ‘retranslations’ in relation to queer theorist Elspeth Probyn’s (1996) theory of desire and images. Probyn thinks about how images might reconnect and “throw us forward into other relations of becoming and belonging” (1996: 59). Probyn’s understanding of desire is distinguished from a psychoanalytic understanding of desire which is based on lack within a subject and longing for an object. Instead, she follows from Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of desire (1987). For Deleuze and Guattari, the social is a play of forces made up of singularities which through desire form machinic-assemblages, such as a body or an image. For Deleuze the “milieu” is “a dynamic arena of social action” (1996: 49) and is the ground of desire “that must be rendered in the very detail of its singular qualities” (1996: 50). Deleuze gives the example of the milieu of the street, which is made up of the materiality of “its paving stone, its animals like the horses yoked, its dramas (a horse slips, a horse falls, a horse is beaten [...])” (Deleuze 1993: 81, cited in Probyn 1996: 49-50). Probyn argues that rather than attempt to examine the internal meanings of images, we can start to look at how “within certain millieux at certain times”, images may be “pried loose from more conventional moorings” (1996: 55).

Probyn demonstrates the possible movements of singular lesbian desires that particular reconnections of images can initiate. She looks at the vast swathe of images that figure girls’ attachments to horses: see *National Velvet* (Brown 1944); *My Friend Flicka* (Schuster 1943), *Marnie*

(Hitchcock 1964) etc. She looks at particular examples where images of horses and women, and women and women, transport singular lesbian desires. For instance, writer Colette in her book *La Chatte* ([1933] 2014), has a chapter named ‘Le Chevalier’ where she writes of a “horsy set” of “Parisian butches” – a generation of aristocratic women, who “joined their taste for women with an appreciation of horseflesh” (Probyn 1996: 57). Probyn also draws attention to a poem by Ruthann Robson, which describes a “stampede of wild horses”, which she suggests “carries the narrator forward into a realisation ‘that what you want is to become’. And what she wants to become is caught up in the image of ‘two women without berets...two mares at the river’” (Probyn 1996: 59). Probyn underlines that that these images cannot be queer in and of themselves, but only in the way that they connect and reconnect relations. As she articulates it:

These images of girls and girls and horses cannot have an essence, or fixed reference: set off in tandem with one body, they may or may not meet up and touch off desire in another’s. (ibid., 58)

This suggestion that images lack a fixed essence and may set off desire in one body but not another’s can be seen in a reading of a scene in the film *Marnie* (Hitchcock 1964). In the film, Marnie has a close attachment to her horse Forio. In one scene she is filmed in close-up stroking the horse and saying, “Oh Forio, if you want to bite someone, bite *me*” (ibid.). Raymond Bellour (1977) reads this scene from *Marnie* (1964) through a psychoanalytic framework. Probyn highlights how Bellour attributes Marnie’s pleasure to the “pleasure of the signified [...] the horse, animality, the phallic substitute” (1977: 85-86). Bellour argues that Marnie’s pleasurable attachment to the horse stands in for her desire for a man and for the family (1996: 46). Probyn suggests that Bellour’s interpretation “misses Hitchcock’s incredible mise-en-scène of Marnie’s desire”, and “the wealth of possibilities suggested by the sumptuous shots of Marnie and her horse” (ibid., 45). Her suggestion of a “wealth of possibilities” points to the potential the image has to initiate or trace other more denormalising movements of desire.

Probyn asks what can emerge from focusing on images as surfaces and not as “the expression of a signifier” (Probyn 1996: 32). She argues that it might be productive to explore the surfaces of images and their proximal relations. Probyn suggests that the:

Image, thus freed from its post within a structure of law, lack and signification, can begin to move all over the place. It then causes different ripples and affects, effects of desire and desirous affects. Turning away from the game of matching signifiers to signifieds, we can begin to focus on the movement of images as effecting and affecting movement. (ibid: 59).

Probyn highlights writer Raymond Roussel’s book ([1909] 1992), which she suggests provides an example of a “surface reading” (Probyn 1996: 34). In his book Roussel explains his writing method, “by which a phrase taken by chance, forms and performs a whole story” (Roussel 1963 cited in Probyn 1996: 32). He describes how he takes similar words, for example “billard (billiards) and pillard (a plunderer)” (Roussel 1963: 11, cited in Probyn 1996: 32), and then adds them to “similar words taken in two different senses” (1996: 32). The result is two very similar sentences which then form the story. Probyn suggests that Roussel’s method allows things to “take in their full relations of proximity” (ibid., 33), rather than organise them in relation to a whole or hierarchy. For instance, a reading which isn’t on the surface would be “depth accounts of social life where more fundamental levels of social reality (whether these be conceived of as economic, psychological or whatever) are called upon to explain less fundamental ones” (Philo, 1993: 158; cited in Probyn 1996: 34). Probyn suggests Roussel’s method highlights how the surface can be “another optic, another way of viewing the social”, but it is only of use if it “stretches our analytic reach, if it allows for other ways of seeing and connecting the various examples of our varied lives” (1996: 35).

I suggest that in a similar way to Roussel’s method, looping retranslations of scenes in *The Night is Red* highlight proximal relations and alternative ‘surface’ connections between images. Through looping retranslations of scenes *Marnie* (1964) and *The Red Shoes* (1948) by Paz and Nirenberg,

images and relationships depicted in the script begin to slip away from their place within established narratives. The relationship between Marnie and her mother (*Marnie*, 1964), is juxtaposed with the relationship between Victoria Page and Lermontov (*The Red Shoes*, 1948), and in *The Night is Red* these relations become between two women. There is confusion over the subjectivities of the performers and who they are in relation to one another. They appear to be copies of one another, and there is uncertainty over whether they are conversing with their counterparts on the projected screens or with each-other. I have questions that come and go and remain unresolved. What is the relationship between the women? Who is she really? Is that her real name?

The actors perform their scripts out of sync with one-other and their projected counterparts and the text is retranslated through French and Portuguese, and back into English. As the scene loops again, we learn that it is not an exact repeat. There are jolts of difference; a re-phrasing, an inept re-translation, pronouns change, he not her. Each loop of the text and the scene becomes progressively incongruent. Slippages occur and particular words and phrases from the two scenes repeat or take on slightly different and ambiguous meanings. Through this process there is a reoccurrence of small details which gain resonance – a blonde wig, a ‘Hitchcock Blonde’, women and horses, an ambiguous relationship between women, red flowers, red shoes. I propose that the formal qualities of the performance invite the viewer to reflect on these untethered and juxtaposed details (and others) in relation to each other. I suggest that the images that are explored in ‘retranslations’, become unencumbered from their place “within a structure of law, lack and signification”, and ‘begin to move all over the place’ causing “different ripples and affects, effects of desire and desirous affects” (Probyn 1996: 59). I propose that as retranslations, slippages, juxtapositions and repetitions, highlight the proximal relations of *Marnie*, *The Red Shoes*, *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant*, Maria Callas and Dusty Springfield and free them from their established narratives; I am invited to make alternative connections between them.

I find small, odd connections between these images affective and I feel drawn to consider them in relation to elements from the queer past, as figurings of queer desire, or personal fantasies. Some of these images have been connected to queer performativity despite having largely circulated within more normalising dominant cultural canons. I suggest that ‘retranslations’ offer a way of extending their queer possibilities. Queer theorist Antke Engel’s (2018) use of philosopher Roland Barthes (1981: 25-28) idea of the punctum is useful here. Barthes’ ‘punctum’ is a small detail in an image which provokes the viewer. He suggests that it operates outside of the ‘studium’, which involves interpreting the formal elements of the image in relation to historical, social, and cultural discourses. Engel articulates Barthes’ punctum “as a minor, far-fetched, or odd detail in images, which captures the reader’s attention” (2018: 3). She gives an example of an advertising image for Erste Bank, depicting two women in their 60s (Dopitova 2003). They face towards each-other with their hand on the other’s shoulders as if they are dancing together. Engel questions how one should or could interpret the image:

‘Only the capitalist financial sector can save the old women, respectively, the post-Socialist regime, and organise their development, this ad suggests. Yet, does the free leg raised for a step, the leading hand on the shoulder, and the twist in the women’s bodies unequivocally submit the women to the capitalist order? Or should the reader concentrate instead on the fact that the women’s gazes are not directed far into the future, but rather are turned inward, as if they are contriving something – conspiring in the shared space of their looks?’ (2018: 3)

Engel suggests that reflecting on how an image is presented, its use, and how it is received and reproduced, is just as important as considering its meaning. Engel argues that “the image cannot simply be subsumed to its instrumentalization in advertising, propaganda, or the art market. Instead, the potentials of the image to resist such unambiguity must be tapped methodologically” (ibid. 3). Engel proposes various methods in order to explore what may be generated by the image’s ambiguity. For instance, she adds a headline to the image: “The Demure Dance” (ibid.). She suggests



that by adding this headline, she offers her own “personal, idiosyncratic entry”, and takes “the chance of confusing more habitual or conventional approaches, for example in seeing a lesbian couple and erotic encounter, where others see sisterhood and mirroring” (ibid., 1). By doing so, her aim is to disturb the image’s dominant narrative. She suggests that her headline ‘doubles’ the potential of the punctum which for her is the ‘inward gaze’ of the women and their stance in relation to each-other (ibid., 3, 9). She also sees it as a tool “to provoke dissent- between me and the picture, and me and the reader- and see where we possibly meet or continue to disagree over the cause of an argumentative engagement to come” (ibid., 1).

*A diva is projected on one wall, and what appears to be a copy (mirrored?) appears on the adjacent wall. Live doppelgangers converse with their doubles on screen. The two pairs do not acknowledge one another, they are locked in their own world and their own loop. Their scripts also appear to be a copy, but they perform it out of sync. It overlaps, and they interrupt each other. There are slip-ups in the communication as it is looped and translated, just as there are lapses in my memory.*

Engel’s example is a bit different from the images that I explore, which are not advertising images but are celebrated figures, characters, or other images from the film-arts. I suggest that the images that I work with are steeped in ambiguity and that is what attracted me to them. My attachments to them, and the sense I have of their excessiveness and mysteriousness; can be read productively in relation to Barthes’ punctum. There are details in these images which affect me, and I want to loop over and over. Lermontov’s caress of a ballet shoe figurine. Maria Callas curling her finger, ambiguously calling the audience towards her? A close up of Marnie’s face with her blonde 60s hairdo caressing the edges of the frame before the screen cuts to red. Petra Von Kant’s discarded wigs on a sheep skin carpet. These details in images (and others) affect me in ways that aren’t easily assimilated in relation to the images’ established meanings or dominant contextual discourses.

Perhaps the looping ‘retranslations’ work in a similar way to Engel’s method of adding a headline to ‘double’ the ‘punctum’. Unlike Engel, I do not add a piece of text to an image to call attention to the detail which affects me. Instead, I call attention to particular affective details by looping and retranslating images in relation to one another. So that they reoccur, slip around, and provoke new connections.

*The blonde wigs and reference to blonde hair resonates for me. They connect Marnie and Dusty. Marnie dyes her hair repeatedly to change her identity in order to steal from her employers. She represents the everywoman through her visages (like in Cindy Sherman’s film stills), leaving the male protagonist to wonder who the real Marnie is. Like Marnie’s character, Dusty similarly desires to change identity. Dusty transforms herself from a bespectacled middle-class girl to ‘become’ Dusty (the image of which she in turn takes from the drag queen). Marnie also rejects heteronormativity; she refuses sex and only gets married to avoid jail. The film itself resolves this by finding the real Marnie through a Freudian understanding that there is one original trauma which once put into the right narrative and restoring linearity will stop reappearing in the present. But in *The Night is Red*, there is no linear narrative, only disjointed loopings. In this milieu, the possibilities of Marnie and her desires reach out in other directions.*

In the italicised text above, I trace how the reference to ‘blonde hair’ in the reperformance of the scene from *Marnie* is related to Dusty’s beehive, and to the wigs that reoccur throughout *The Night is Red*. I offer the reader a ‘wormhole’ out of the work and highlight how it might figure queer desire. However, as Probyn underlines, images may touch off desire in one body and not another’s. By offering this reading here, I follow Engel “to provoke dissent – between me and the picture[s], and me and the reader”, or “see where we possibly meet” (ibid., 1).

I propose that the practices of ‘retranslations’ presented in *The Night is Red* offer something other than the ‘wormhole’ text above. The particular effects of the looping in ‘retranslations’, do not posit a clear and particular connection for the viewer to make. Rather, there is a confounding of meaning and confusion of narrative generated by the way the scene loops and becomes more out of sync and disordered. Yet, ‘retranslations’ in *The Night is Red* can be distinguished from the abstraction of meaning I discussed in relation to the section ‘Rock and Roll IS Rock and Roll’ in *The Night is Red*. In ‘Rock and Roll IS Rock and Roll’, the looper’s algorithm abstracted the text spoken aloud by O’Brien to the extent that the viewer’s attention was called towards sound, rhythm, and temporal experience rather than the production of meaning and narrative. In the section ‘retranslations’ the notion of ‘internal content’ is troubled, confounded, and confused; yet the viewer is still invited to make meaning. The viewer is invited to focus on proximal relations between images, make alternative connections, and hook their own personal fantasies and desires to ambiguous images which could figure queer desire or invoke memories of the queer past.

*A camera zooms in on red plastic flowers, a sheepskin rug, a telephone, a pile of different coloured wigs. The frame expands, although it is the same space, the scene is different. We get the sense that this studio holds multiple performances. In a film we see a young woman who adopts the posturing of opera singer Maria Callas. The camera moves past the woman to a film clip playing The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant (1972). Petra Von Kant is wearing a wig, while multiple Marnie’s in blonde wigs are copying gestures from screens. These re-assembled fragments touch one another through a wormhole-like loop.*

## **‘LOOPING-AS-TEMPORAL DRAG’ AND ‘RETRANSLATIONS’ – ALTERNATIVE MODES OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION?**

I propose that the unique specificities of particular practices of looping in *The Night is Red* (2019) afford the potential for offering alternative modes of knowledge production. Lorenz has pointed out that queer feminist chronopolitical arts practices that explore opacity and ‘cloud’ visibility and understanding, can be a mode of resistance against a Western modernist “merciless pursuit of knowledge production” (2014: 17). She suggests that arts practices that obscure clear vision or certainty while engaging with the possibility of alternative ways of knowing are important. Lorenz’s argument is built on critical race theorist Édouard Glissant’s demand for the “right to opacity for everyone” (1997: 194). Glissant argues that “in order to avoid reduction, we have to conceive that the Other is opaque to us and even to accept that we are obscure to ourselves” (Lorenz 2014: 17). Glissant links the Western project of colonialism, slavery and the quest for knowledge of ‘the other’ to ‘transparency’, and ‘reduction’ (Glissant 1997: 189-194). Such forms of visibility enabled a system where colonial subjects could be ‘known’ to be at the lower end of a hierarchy of difference. Glissant argues that “against this reductive transparency, a force of opacity is at work” (ibid., 62). In his book *Poetics of Relation* (1997), he looks at how strategies of opacity emerged in relation to the conditions of the Middle Passage slave ship, the slave plantation, and the development of the Creole language. A strategy of opacity became an “act of survival” (ibid., 68). Glissant gives the example of the oral literature of the plantations, where slaves attempted to communicate things that were forbidden. As Glissant describes it:

Almost never does one find in them any concrete relating of daily facts and deeds, what one does find, on the other hand, is a symbolic evocation of situations as if these texts were striving for disguise beneath the symbol, working to say without saying. (ibid., 69)

Glissant suggests that in order to “to get around the rule of silence” (ibid.) a literature emerged that lacked cohesion, bursting “forth in snatches and fragments” (ibid.). Stories, songs, and other texts from the plantation took a form of detour, alluding to things without *saying* them, and became both obscure and irreducible. Lorenz (2014: 17-18) highlights how Glissant’s theses on opacity as a

strategy of resistance enables the colonised subject to evade the exposure of visibility and allows the production of visible but indecipherable images.

Although Glissant has explored opacity as a strategy of resistance in relation to a particular socio-historical moment and as an anti-colonial strategy, I suggest that its appropriation within queer feminist thought is particularly useful. This is due to the way queer lives throughout history have had to avoid exposure and visibility as an act of survival; and thus queer knowledges are more likely to be found in the ephemeral, opaque, and ambiguous. Hence an exploration of the particular ways that queer knowledges can be transmitted in unreadable but visible images is useful for a queer feminist politics. However, it is important to note that I am not conflating ‘anti-colonial’ and ‘queer’. For instance, the tempos of life and particular strategies of opacity that emerged from within the slave plantation that Glissant describes, differ from other community tempos that have been characterised as queer – such as gay male cruising which evades reproductive time, or queer communities that ‘touch’ across time through pleasurable attachments. Rather than applying Glissant’s anti-colonial opacity to my practice-as-research on the queer effects of looping temporalities, I instead am prompted to explore the tensions and possibilities that can emerge between opacity, semi-visibility, ambiguity and ephemerality. My work in Chapter 3 and in this chapter demonstrate how these experiences of opacity, semi-visibility, ambiguity, and ephemerality produce different relations to time and meaning for the viewer, and thus are not equivalent concepts.

Lorenz highlights the inextricable link between ‘clear vision’ and progressive linear time in the Western project of modernity since the Enlightenment. In order for certain subjects and nations to be categorised as backward and undeveloped in the frame of progress, a ‘transparent’ and ‘reductive’ knowledge of ‘the other’ was needed. Hence a chronopolitical arts practice which interrupts and offers alternatives to a representation of forward moving, linear, and progressive time; may also produce a method of knowledge production which embraces the opaque, the queer, and ephemeral

– knowledges which cannot be categorised and reduced. For Lorenz this can be seen in arts practices which explore the time of “not now! now!” (2014). ‘Not Now! Now!’ is a “time out of joint” a “time which is not fully accessible” (ibid., 20). She describes how this temporality emerges in the film *Puce Moment* (1949), where a figure outside of the frame shakes what could be curtains or dresses, shimmying them towards the camera to then reveal with some suspense another and another and another. Lorenz (2014) poses that these curtain-like reveals employ suspense and ‘the not quite visible’ to produce a sense of a time that is ‘not now! now!’.

Following from Lorenz, I suggest that the strategies of looping that I explore in this chapter, which highlight traces of queer attachments and energies, and invite queer readings while rendering meaning slippery and confusing, may be particularly useful and desirable as a queer method of knowledge production. I propose that the artistic mechanisms of these practices of looping open up the potential for queer readings while also obfuscating meaning. In *The Night is Red* the viewer is invited to focus on proximal relations between images and make alternative connections. I propose that ‘retranslations’ allow small details in the images from *Marnie*, *The Red Shoes*, and of Dusty Springfield, and Maria Callas, to slip away from their place within dominant narratives and invite the viewer to make alternative and denormalising connections between them. Through reiterations and slippages, small resonant details which point to queer cultural imaginaries are highlighted.

I also take my cue from queer theorist Luciano who argues that rather than “making queerness ‘visible’ within the past” (2011: 123) what can be more useful is to understand how historical method and history can be understood differently. She argues that the importance is not in:

Making queerness ‘visible’ within the past but, more provocatively, on queering historical method. Queer historiographers ask what it means to think history as something other than a linear chronology, a public record of steady ‘progress’ enabled

and stabilised by the domestic-familial reproduction of successive generations. (2011: 123).

I propose that this is apparent in Cegielska's looping performance of Dusty. Her performance allowed the viewer to take time with the familiarity, uncanniness, and campiness of Dusty's image and gestures in the present, inviting the viewer to engage with the ephemeral knowledges that are transmitted through queer attachments.

I suggest that 'looping-as-temporal drag' and 'retranslations' are not artistic practices which invite the viewer to read images for deep internal meanings. Rather, the viewer is invited to read the performance 'on the surface', and drawn into a *heightened* sense of the temporary, ambiguous, speculative, and ephemeral potential of performance. I argue that this practice is particularly useful as a queer method of knowledge production as it refuses the transparency, "clear vision" (Lorenz 2014: 17), and reduction that is characteristic of Western modernity's evidence-gathering, and affords the potential for ephemeral queer knowledges to emerge.

*In the film The Red Shoes (1948), the statue of the ballet pointe shoes appears to represent the virtuosity of the prima ballerina. In The Night is Red the loop of Lermontov writs large the character's attachment as he repeatedly and lovingly caresses the statue of the ballet pointe shoe. Perhaps indicating Lermontov's never-to-be-fulfilled longing to possess Victoria Page as an outlet for his creative vision. Or signalling the Hans Anderson story where the red shoes signify promiscuity and an overwhelming attachment to dance that can only end in death and jouissance.*

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

I suggest that the significance of my practice-as-research of loops, through loops and loops, is that it contributes to new ways of thinking about what can emerge from practices of looping in performance, and what it might mean to apply a queer feminist lens to these practices. I propose that the unique insights of this practice-as-research are particularly useful for other choreographers working with feminist and/or queer strategies and non-linear temporalities, and those working with looping and digital performance. These are the research communities that my research sits within. In this final chapter, I summarise the chapters in this thesis and my propositions. I also address the ambivalence I have around suggesting that *The Night is Red* opens up a queer feminist space in performance that is useful for a queer feminist chronopolitics. I also express the hope I have for a dissenting reader of this thesis who takes my propositions as potential 'ways in' to the performance, or as invitations for disagreement, alternative interpretations, and the potential for further discussion to come.

In Chapter 1: Introduction, I set out my topic of research, research questions, and the images I have worked with. I also explained why my research methods; artistic practice-as-research, scholarly writing, performative writing, and mini case studies of other artworks; were appropriate for my research questions. In Chapter 2: Field Review, I introduced the artistic and theoretical contexts of my research. In Chapter 3: Looping-as-stasis and Queer effects, and Chapter 4: Looping and Queer Ephemeral Knowledges, I reflected on my practice-as-research which was presented in *The Night is Red*.

In Chapter 3: Looping-as-stasis and Queer Effects, I proposed that practices of looping in *The Night is Red* presented a metaphor of post-modern time as stasis and perpetual present while also inviting



a corporeal experience of stasis. I explored this sense of stasis as it occurred for me when developing and watching the performance. I proposed that particular kinds of temporal attentiveness were made possible by the performances of looping-as-stasis in *The Night is Red* which I called ‘frisson’ and being ‘drawn into the loop’. I used the work of poet Gertrude Stein (2001) and philosophers Henri Bergson (1910) and Brian Massumi (2002), to help me articulate how particular parts of *The Night is Red* invited the audience to experience a sense of frisson. In the section of the performance that I call ‘Rock and Roll IS Roll and Roll’, the performer O’Brien performs small snippets of a Kathy Acker text, *Blood and Guts in High School* (1984). I noted how the text became more staccato and abstract as her recitation was filtered through a looping software algorithm. I considered this performance in relation to another part of my practice where performers copied movements live from screens. I proposed that these parts of my practice invited the audience to experience a sense of frisson, where the potential of the present can be felt as vitality and intensity, brimming with a multiplicity of past events and the possibility for the present to veer off in any direction.

I also looked at what I called being ‘drawn into the loop’. I considered how loops drew the viewer into spatial-temporal decenterings as they watched them layered through different screens, through simultaneous but de-synchronised performances, and through a shaky, circuitous, live feed which captured the audience. Reading this work in relation to artist Agnes Martin’s paintings, and phenomenologically informed feminist film theorist Jennifer Barker (2009), I proposed that this bodily state of confusion generated the opportunity to experience one’s subjectivity differently. I suggested that watching *The Night is Red* draws the viewer into an awareness of being decentred, uncertain, and non-masterful. Katz (2011), writing on Agnes Martin’s paintings, suggest that the ‘lush seductiveness’ and ‘oscillations’ that are induced by the stasis inherent in her work produce a register of the uncertainty and precarity of being a lesbian in the 1950s. Katz turns to Martin’s biography to make this claim and I critique the way that it points to an essentialist conception of a ‘lesbian experience’. I do not go as far as Katz to suggest that *The Night is Red* affords an essentialist

queer feminist experience. But I do suggest that it engages with a ‘queering’ of the idea of the subject as centred, singular, individual, and instead offers a queer (odd, strange, uncanny) experience of dissonance, interconnectivity, and multiplicity.

I argued that the temporal attention that the audience is invited to experience – the vitality, intensity, and affective potential of the present brimming with multiple pasts, and the destabilising experience of being drawn into the loop – opens up a particular ‘space’ in performance. A space where the audience’s attention is called to an affective sense of manifold pasts available in the present that could be actualised in multiple unexpected ways.

In Chapter 4: Looping and Queer Ephemeral Knowledges, I considered how these effects might be mobilised further and their potential actualised, so that the past might be put in generative relation to the present. I looked at practices of looping, distinct from those discussed in Chapter 3, that I described as ‘temporal drag’ or ‘retranslations’ and reflected on how they highlighted ephemeral knowledges. I proposed that looping-as-temporal-drag invites the viewer to engage with the ephemeral knowledges that are transmitted through queer attachments. This can be seen in *The Night is Red*, when Cegielska ‘atomises’ Dusty’s movements through sequences of gestures, which she performs again and again, inviting the audience to view them anew. The quality of her performance is dramatic and sincere. I propose that in the midst of the confusion and confounding of perception produced in *The Night is Red*, the quality and looping of Cegielska’s performance invites close attention to the specificity of Dusty’s gestures and their re-performance. I proposed that by re-enacting and deconstructing Dusty, an anachronistic lesbian figure from the past, precisely, excessively, and with sincerity, *The Night is Red* foregrounds the campiness of Dusty’s gestures. In doing so, Cegielska’s performance invites the audience to engage with the ephemeral and marginalised histories of queer feminist camp and experience the affective pleasure of this moment from the queer past touching the present.

I also looked at another part of *The Night is Red* which featured snippets of scenes from *The Red Shoes* (1948) and *Marnie* (1964). It was performed as a conversation between two women and their projections, and retranslated, sliced, and looped. I proposed that these ‘retranslations’, highlight potential queer desires that travel through images. Through this practice of looping, images of Marnie, Dusty, *The Red Shoes* (1948), and Callas are reworked, enabling readers and viewers to look askance and anew at familiar dominant cultural texts. Small details slip from their place within dominant narratives and invite the viewer to make alternative and denormalising connections between them. I proposed that ‘retranslations’ in *The Night is Red*, opens up the potential for queer readings – reading queer cultural imaginaries and/or figuring queer desire, while also obfuscating meaning.

I have argued throughout this thesis that although looping reappropriated from digital image-based media in performance can reinforce a dominant post-modern, and arguably limiting, experience of time for the viewer; it also affords the opportunity for alternative, more generative temporal effects. I have proposed that these practices of looping produce temporal experiences which confound and confuse perception, highlight the affective potential of the past in the present, and afford the possibility of transmitting queer ephemeral knowledges. I have described these temporal experiences using the terms; ‘frisson’, ‘drawn into the loop’, ‘temporal drag’, and ‘retranslations’. I propose that these experiences are useful for a queer feminist chronopolitics which values epistemologies that engage with ephemerality and opacity. I offer that a queer feminist space is opened up in *The Night is Red*.

## UNCERTAINTY AND ALTERNATIVE EPISTEMOLOGIES

However, I am ambivalent that my practice may be read solely as queer feminist and I am uncertain about using these terms in relation to my practice. One difficulty I have found is that certain positions I have taken in my practice-as-research can be critiqued for being problematic for a queer feminist politics. I have oscillated in and around the space between a position of overdetermining queer meanings and narratives in images, and a position of engaging with meaninglessness and a-historicity by unhooking images from their original narratives.

At many points in my practice-as-research I found that looping images becomes a nonsensical process. The experience of watching images loop over and over at times became an experience similar to scrolling through multiple media aimlessly. As I worked with and watched multiple images looping quickly in the practice, I found I was called into an unproductive semi-attention. I felt detachment, boredom, and a sense of the images' irrelevance in the performance. The negating and deconstructive effects of looping images can be critiqued for the ways it can produce a lack of attention to the particular affects, histories, and cultural discourses that these images may be an entry point into. Queer theorist Dana Luciano, using philosopher Walter Benjamin's historical materialism, suggests that merely appropriating and collecting cultural texts from the past in ways where one is not attuned to their historicity and contingent effects, risks undermining the possibility for "a larger critique of our historical conditions" (Luciano 2011: 127). Thus, a seemingly endless looping collection of images that is purely deconstructive risks a-historicity in ways that can be unproductive for a queer politics.

On the other hand, overdetermining queer meanings can also be considered problematic. It closes down and essentialises meaning and says 'this is what it is'. In this thesis I have proposed that particular queer narratives and subtexts come to the fore in my practice. And in my studio practice I have attempted to 'attune' for the queer. As I discussed in Chapter 4: Looping and Queer Ephemeral Knowledges, queer scholar Katie Kent suggests "that we read with queerness as an expectation"

(Muñoz 2009: 72). Her suggestion, as interpreted by queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz, offers a way of approaching cultural texts “with a different optic, one that is attuned to the ways in which, through small gestures, particular intonations, and other ephemeral traces, queer energies and lives are laid bare” (Ibid., 72). I have tried to read my practice with “queerness as an expectation” (ibid.) and attune for ephemeral traces and queer subtexts. For example, in Chapter 4: Looping and Queer Ephemeral Knowledges I reflected on the particular queer narratives that I found linked Dusty and Marnie, and I suggested that histories of lesbian camp become highlighted as certain images loop over and over in *The Night is Red*. However, this strategy of “attuning for the queer” can be critiqued for limiting the radical possibilities of ‘queer’ posed by queer theorists. For example, queer feminist art historian Amelie Jones summarises how ‘queer’ underscores the “unknowability”, “undecidability”, and “durationality”, at the core of making meaning (Jones 2012: n.p. ‘Chapter 5: Queer Feminist [...]’). Jones, like many queer scholars is influenced by eminent queer theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who emphasised how queerness exists in the gaps and the excesses of meaning (1994: 3).

The problems I’ve found with attempting to ‘attune’ for the queer, have manifested in the difficulty I’ve had separating theory from practice. The most tricky and difficult times were when I came into the studio with an idea of what I wanted to happen. In doing so, I undermined the potential for the unexpected insights that can emerge through ambiguity, excess, and uncertainty in creative practice. And pinning down meaning and narrative is also precisely what queer theorists have argued that ‘queer’ as a strategy has challenged. My practice-as-research involved preparing footage in advance for performers to work from in the studio. Watching films of Dusty, Marnie, Callas and from *The Red Shoes* (1948), and being aware of the way they have been read as queer became a frame for how I wanted to engage with these images in the practice. Tasks that involved looping particular images in relation to one another sometimes led to literalising connections between them that closed down their potential for ambiguity. I often found myself frustrated when I approached the films as texts to

be read through practice. It has been the moments of joyful surprise and pleasure that emerged through experimentation in the studio that have stuck with me. The enjoyment in watching Cegielska's *Dusty*, the disjunctive experience of the performers talking at cross purposes with each other, the moments of rupture when capturing myself in the frame, the experience of time dipping in and out of endless stasis and semi-attention and affective pleasure.

My position, my own desires, as I 'hope for' and 'attune' for what is queer in and between images have shaped how I have *curated* my creative practice in *The Night is Red*. Yet, in the performance, there isn't a dichotomy between practices of looping which generate denormalising effects and those which produce normalising effects. Alternative temporal experiences that I have explicated using the terms 'frisson' and being 'drawn into the loop', occur alongside a normalising representation of post-modern time which can offer an experience of unproductive stasis, "digital fidgeting" (Wood 2011: n.p.), and passivity. In addition, the practices of looping I look at under the rubrics 'temporal drag' and 'retranslations' cannot be said to be inherently queer feminist.

The messy, non-dichotomous nature of the practice makes it difficult to determine if and when the practices of looping I explore in *The Night is Red* open up a queer feminist space in performance. The methods I use – practice-as-research, personal reflections on my experience of the practice and what I imagine the audience is invited to experience, mini case studies, and scholarly research – have offered some qualitative insight. But creative practice and affective experience can be hard to articulate and qualify. In this writing I cannot account for the multiple other excesses (experiences, events, possible interpretations) that emerge in what appears to me to be many different practices of looping bursting at the seams with possibilities. This uncertainty also aligns with the idea of a queer feminist practice (as I understand it in relation to Halberstam's (2011), Jones's (2012) formulations) which points to messiness, non-fixity, multiplicity and slippery meanings. Perhaps this is a useful place to be as a practitioner?

Yet, *The Night is Red* underlines the potential of artistic research to generate ambiguity in a way that my practice-as-theory (theoretical writing) does not. This complicated approach to theory and practice hasn't been resolved for me. This is reflected to some extent in Chapters 3: Looping-as-stasis and Queer Effects, and Chapter 4: Looping and Queer Ephemeral Knowledges. In these chapters I have discussed my practice in very different ways and written from different positions, as viewer and maker of the work. I have used performative writing, focused on my bodily experience, and framed the images in relation to the way they have been read in other contexts. I propose that these different forms of writing indicate these different perspectives and temporal proximities to the performance. Through these forms of writing, I hoped to reiterate how I understand my position in this research, which is "incomplete, happily inadequate, and intoxicated by others against the idea of the artist as able agent" (Lorenz, cited in Kaila et al, 2017: 31-32). In this exegesis, I have tried to continue the possibilities of the artistic research and underscore how these considerations of my practice are 'unfinished', leaving open the opportunity for further reflections.

But as I acknowledge the ambiguity and uncertainty surrounding my claims and the messiness and multiple possible interpretations that the practice can invite; I ask what does my proposition 'my practice opens up a queer feminist space in performance' *do*? I find philosopher Alfred Whitehead's (1978) ideas on propositions useful when considering what my proposition might do. Whitehead suggests that, "in the real world what is important is that a proposition be interesting than it be true. The importance of truth is that it adds to interest" (1978: 259). For Whitehead the speculative potential of a proposition is of foremost importance (Shannon, 2021, 54). Music composer and scholar David Ben Shannon (2021) usefully links Whitehead's ideas on propositions with the way creative researchers often make propositions about their work. He uses Whitehead to point out how our feelings shape how we interpret a proposition, and the proposition itself 'lures' particular feelings (2021: 56). He gives the example of artist Max Neuhaus who stamped the "imperative

‘LISTEN’, [...] onto participants hands before leading them on listening walks across New York City in the 1960s” (ibid., 56). Shannon suggests that this particular proposition “solicits actions: it lures feeling through asking participants to be open to a different kind of receptivity” (ibid.). Thus a ‘queer feminist space’ can be thought of as a strategy or an approach to experience – to focus attention to experiencing one’s subjectivity queerly, to read images differently, and to engage with queer energies and ephemeral knowledges. To do so, might be particularly important for those of whom alternative ways of knowing and queer ephemera “matters” (Muñoz 2009: 81).

I have proposed particular ways of reading or apprehending *The Night is Red* that I have found to be afforded by the practice. What I have suggested that the practices of looping in *The Night is Red* can do, is interrupt what many queer theorists have called ‘straight time’ – a linear and progressive concept of historical time. In doing so they create the potential for moments where the past generatively touches the present, enabling the viewer to look otherwise at familiar dominant cultural images. I propose that the conditions of *The Night is Red*, the space it creates, highlights the denormalising and dehabitualising possibilities of the practice. I have proposed that these practices are useful for a queer feminist chronopolitics. I argue that they pose an alternative method of knowledge production that is not based on “linear chronology” (Luciano 2011: 123) and produce ephemeral knowledges that provide sustenance and a sense of queer becoming for queer lives. In the context of my PhD, a queer feminist space is a possibility, and a lens through which I understand the potential of performance to engage with a queer feminist chronopolitics. I have illuminated some of my experiences with *The Night is Red*, and have articulated my propositions with the aim that they may open up ‘ways into’ the performance for the viewer, or spark debate, alternative interpretations, and open up into a further ongoing discourse. Rather than considering ‘a queer feminist space’ as a prescriptive model that can be replicated, I think of it as a temporary assemblage between the practice, the text, my position as researcher, and the reader-viewer which has the potential to propel denormalising possibilities. I suggest that proposing that *The Night is Red*



produces 'a queer feminist space in performance' does something. It invites the viewer to experience and understand the work through this particular lens. It acts as an invitation, a proposition for the reader-watcher to be receptive to what the practice can offer, which they may take up (or not).

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# Appendix 1



## Medium to High Risk Research Ethics Approval

Project Title

### **The Loop and The Cut: Chronopolitical Strategies in Practice-Led Research**

### **Record of Approval**

Principal Investigator

I <b>request an ethics peer review</b> and confirm that I have answered all relevant questions in this checklist honestly.	X
I confirm that I will carry out the project in the ways described in this checklist. I will immediately suspend research and request new ethical approval if the project subsequently changes the information I have given in this checklist.	X
I confirm that I, and all members of my research team (if any), have read and agreed to abide by the Code of Research Ethics issued by the relevant national learned society.	X
I confirm that I, and all members of my research team (if any), have read and agreed to abide by the University's Research Ethics, Governance and Integrity Framework.	X

Name: Claire Ridge .....

Date: 24/11/2016 .....

#### **Student's Supervisor (if applicable)**

I have read this checklist and confirm that it covers all the ethical issues raised by this project fully and frankly. I also confirm that these issues have been discussed with the student and will continue to be reviewed in the course of supervision.

Name: Simon Ellis .....

Date: 15/06/2017 .....

#### **Reviewer (if applicable)**

Date of approval by anonymous reviewer: 25/07/2017

## Medium to High Risk Research Ethics Approval Checklist

### Project Information

Project Ref	P48656
Full name	Claire Ridge
Faculty	Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Department	Centre for Dance Research
Supervisor	Simon Ellis
Module Code	N/A
EFAAF Number	
Project title	The Loop and The Cut: Chronopolitical Strategies in Practice-Led Research
Date(s)	19/09/2016 - 19/09/2019
Created	24/11/2016 09:58

### Project Summary

This project intervenes in a wider discourse on practice led research and the politics of time. Practice-led strategies in performance and film, such as dallying, looping, lingering, resist the linear and progressive time frames of academic research. Artistic researchers concerned with the temporalities of research have pointed out that creative practices which disrupt and break rigid linear temporalities, make visible heterogeneous and multiple times in the present. This project contributes to this through investigating how looping, which involves continually returning, re-tracing, re-reading, re-enacting, and repetitional structures, can mine the present for other histories and meanings. Those that have been effaced when dominant and canonistic histories have been written. I will explore the potential of looping as a chronopolitical practice, with the aim of widening and democratizing knowledge to include queer, feminist and 'minor' histories. Ethical approval is being sought for the development and sharing of the performance practice and the sharing of research in the written thesis.

Names of Co-Investigators and their organisational affiliation (place of study/employer)	
Is the project self-funded?	NO
Who is funding the project?	
Has the funding been confirmed?	NO
Are you required to use a Professional Code of Ethical Practice appropriate to your discipline?	NO
Have you read the Code?	NO

## Project Details

<p>What is the purpose of the project?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This project will explore how looping as a method within practice led research can be used to mine for alternate meanings and histories. Particularly when used as a strategy to excavate dominant images for minor narratives, for example through re-reading, re-enacting, re-translating, and making cross temporal loops visible.</li> <li>2. It will provide insight into how narratives emerge through image-based culture, and explore how changes in digital technology have contributed to new ways of producing meaning that are non-sequential. Through looping and cutting in creative practice, I can explore the potential of these new modes of knowledge production, and investigate what they can do in opening up alternative epistemologies in the academy.</li> <li>3. It will investigate how a looping structure in performance can produce a durational mode of spectatorship. Durationality through looping would mean that multiple narratives emerge and meanings which cannot be fixed and made coherent in a single viewing. Thus, this will be an exploration of the potential of a looping structure to produce a generative mode of spectatorship, where viewers are encouraged to form multiple narratives.</li> </ol>
<p>What are the planned or desired outcomes?</p>	<p>The planned outcomes for this practice-led PhD are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Three short performances (each 30 minutes long). Developed in collaboration with dance artists Rebecca O'Brien, Catherine Elsen, and sound designer, Nico Stucklin, in addition to 7 other performers. These will be shown to audiences in different venues, either as separate stand-alone performances, or together during a single evening.</li> </ol>

	<p>2. A written thesis which investigates the critical frameworks and artistic context of this investigation, including case studies of particular artistic works which are relevant to the discourse.</p>
Explain your research design	<p>This research design is practice-led and post positivist. It is an interdisciplinary approach, whereby the contribution to knowledge is built through creative research and theoretical analysis of both the practice and the wider discourse in practice led research and epistemology. The practice will consist of</p> <p>research in the studio using artistic and compositional tools and methods, and reflection and analysis of the work made. This reflection will inform the next steps taken in the development of the research. This will be in conjunction with research into the theory and artistic context of the inquiry. The practical research will be designed as weekly sessions with collaborators in the studio for 10 weeks, leading to a sharing, and then a dedicated month of reflection and analysis following the practice, (although this will also be in motion throughout the weeks in the studio). These 14 week research and development blocs will be repeated twice over each year of the PhD. Films of the three shows and the written thesis will document the research.</p>
Outline the principal methods you will use	<p>This project will be led by practice, leading to research insights and their development shaped by what happens in the performance-based research. However as this is an interdisciplinary project concerned with approaches to disrupting linear time and practices of looping in research, the project will also be informed by research methods in performance and dance, philosophy, and</p>

		<p>queer theory.</p> <p>The research enquiry cycle will be interdisciplinary, borrowing methods of producing temporal dissonance and non-linearity in film and applying that within live work. I will be investigating copying and re-doing, and using multiple frames, parallel performances, screens within screens, and technological loops to produce moments of rupture and cross temporalities – as strategies to re-visit, re-do, and repeat and re-enact and as a way to mine material for alternative meanings.</p> <p>I will produce a series of 3 performance works. Within my practice I will be utilizing a method of reflection of feedback and critique through journaling and video documentation. In addition to case studies which, through writing, will also be a process of investigation.</p>
Are you proposing to use an external research instrument, validated scale or follow a published research method?		NO
If yes, please give details of what you are using		
Will your research involve consulting individuals who support, or literature, websites or similar material which advocates, any of the following: terrorism, armed struggles, or political, religious or other forms of activism considered illegal under UK law?		NO
Are you dealing with Secondary Data? (e.g. sourcing info from websites, historical documents)		YES
Are you dealing with Primary Data involving people? (e.g. interviews, questionnaires, observations)		YES
Are you dealing with personal or sensitive data?		NO
Is the project solely desk based? (e.g. involving no laboratory, workshop or off-campus work or other activities which pose significant risks to researchers or participants)		NO
Are there any other ethical issues or risks of harm raised by the study that have not been covered by previous questions?		NO
If yes, please give further details		

**DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) formerly CRB (Criminal Records Bureau)**

Question		Yes	No
1	Does the study require DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) checks?		X
	If YES, please give details of the serial number, date obtained and expiry date		
2	If NO, does the study involve direct contact by any member of the research team:		
	a) with children or young people under 18 years of age?	X	
	b) with adults who have learning difficulties, brain injury, dementia, degenerative neurological disorders?		X
	c) with adults who are frail or physically disabled?		X
	d) with adults who are living in residential care, social care, nursing homes, re-ablement centres, hospitals or hospices?		X
	e) with adults who are in prison, remanded on bail or in custody?		X
	If you have answered YES to any of the questions above please explain the nature of that contact and what you will be doing	My 9 year old daughter features within a small part of the work as a performer. She is experienced with performance in dance and theatre, and is aware of her contribution and consent and option to withdraw from the project at any time. I have sole parental consent.	

## External Ethical Review

Question		Yes	No
1	Will this study be submitted for ethical review to an external organisation? (e.g. Another University, Social Care, National Health Service, Ministry of Defence, Police Service and Probation Office)		X
	If YES, name of external organisation		
2	Will this study be reviewed using the IRAS system?		X
3	Has this study previously been reviewed by an external organisation?		X



## Confidentiality, security and retention of research data

Question		Yes	No
1	Are there any reasons why you cannot guarantee the full security and confidentiality of any personal or confidential data collected for the study?	X	
	<div>If YES, please give an explanation</div> <div>I will be collaborating with other professional artists, musicians and performers who are informed of their names being listed in marketing material in the event of the performance work being shown, and in the written outputs of this research. I will seek their agreement to the use of their names and their collaboration on artistic work within those two cases. In particular agreeing on how we share the ownership of the work and what roles they take on within it. This will be on the basis of an agreement that the work undertaken within my research design and paradigms will be my PhD research. The work undertaken will include video, photos, live performance, and written outputs, which will feature the collaborators that I work with. Their consent for this will be sought and their contribution will be respected and attributed. In the case that they would like to end their participation they are free to do so, and they have the option to withdraw their personal details.</div>		
2	Is there a significant possibility that any of your participants, and associated persons, could be directly or indirectly identified in the outputs or findings from this study?	X	
	<div>If YES, please explain further why this is the case</div> <div>The performers that I work with will be listed on documentation and marketing material, which will include live performance, video and photography. This is common practice in performance outputs. An agreement will be made for their informed consent, and they have the option to withdraw from the project and have their details withdrawn at any point.</div>		
3	Is there a significant possibility that a specific organisation or agency or participants could have confidential information identified, as a result of the way you write up the results of the study?		X
	<div>If YES, please explain further why this is the case</div> <div></div>		
4	Will any members of the research team retain any personal or confidential data at the end of the project, other than in fully	X	

	anonymised form?		
	If YES, please explain further why this is the case	The performers that I work with will be listed on documentation and marketing material, which will include live performance, video and photography. This is common practice in performance outputs. Thus will be in the public domain. An agreement will be made for the informed consent of this with the collaborators and performers involved in the project. They have the option to withdraw from the project and have their details withdrawn from documentation that I own and have made public.	
<b>5</b>	Will you or any member of the team intend to make use of any confidential information, knowledge, trade secrets obtained for any other purpose than the research project?		X
	If YES, please explain further why this is the case		
<b>6</b>	Will you be responsible for destroying the data after study completion?	X	
	If NO, please explain how data will be destroyed, when it will be destroyed and by whom		

## Participant Information and Informed Consent

Question		Yes	No
1	Will all the participants be fully informed BEFORE the project begins why the study is being conducted and what their participation will involve?	X	
	If NO, please explain why		
2	Will every participant be asked to give written consent to participating in the study, before it begins?	X	
	If NO, please explain how you will get consent from your participants. If not written consent, explain how you will record consent		
3	Will all participants be fully informed about what data will be collected, and what will be done with this data during and after the study?	X	
	If NO, please specify		
4	Will there be audio, video or photographic recording of participants?	X	
	Will explicit consent be sought for recording of participants?	X	
	If NO to explicit consent, please explain how you will gain consent for recording participants		
5	Will every participant understand that they have the right not to take part at any time, and/or withdraw themselves and their data from the study if they wish?	X	
	If NO, please explain why		
6	Will every participant understand that there will be no reasons required or repercussions if they withdraw or remove their data from the study?	X	
	If NO, please explain why		
7	Does the study involve deceiving, or covert observation of, participants?		X
	Will you debrief them at the earliest possible opportunity?		
	If NO to debrief them, please explain why this is necessary		

## Risk of harm, potential harm and disclosure of harm

Question		Yes	No
1	Is there any significant risk that the study may lead to physical harm to participants or researchers?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
2	Is there any significant risk that the study may lead to psychological or emotional distress to participants?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
3	Is there any risk that the study may lead to psychological or emotional distress to researchers?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
4	Is there any risk that your study may lead or result in harm to the reputation of participants, researchers, or their employees, or any associated persons or organisations?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
5	Is there a risk that the study will lead to participants to disclose evidence of previous criminal offences, or their intention to commit criminal offences?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
6	Is there a risk that the study will lead participants to disclose evidence that children or vulnerable adults are being harmed, or at risk or harm?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
7	Is there a risk that the study will lead participants to disclose evidence of serious risk of other types of harm?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will take steps to reduce or address those risks		
8	Are you aware of the CU Disclosure protocol?	X	

## Payments to participants

Question		Yes	No
1	Do you intend to offer participants cash payments or any kind of inducements, or reward for taking part in your study?		X
	If YES, please explain what kind of payment you will be offering (e.g. prize draw or store vouchers)		
2	Is there any possibility that such payments or inducements will cause participants to consent to risks that they might not otherwise find acceptable?		
3	Is there any possibility that the prospect of payment or inducements will influence the data provided by participants in any way?		
4	Will you inform participants that accepting payments or inducements does not affect their right to withdraw from the study at any time?		

## Capacity to give valid consent

Question		Yes	No
1	Do you propose to recruit any participants who are:		
	a) children or young people under 18 years of age?	X	
	b) adults who have learning difficulties, mental health condition, brain injury, advanced dementia, degenerative neurological disorders?		X
	c) adults who are physically disabled?		X
	d) adults who are living in residential care, social care, nursing homes, re-ablement centres, hospitals or hospices?		X
	e) adults who are in prison, remanded on bail or in custody?		X
	<p>If you answer YES to any of the questions please explain how you will overcome any challenges to gaining valid consent</p> <p>I hold sole parental responsibility for my daughter Amelie Clemente-Ridge who will participate as a performer in part of the study. She has expressed interest in performing in my work and has enjoyed participating in a previous project of mine. She has experience in taking part in theatrical and dance productions that involve all ages before, so is aware of what the role would entail. I will seek her consent before her participation in the project. She will be made aware of what the role entails and that she can withdraw her participation and personal details at any point if she so wishes. The role will be minor and as her parent I am aware of her abilities, needs and safety in terms of how I organize her participation in rehearsals and live performance.</p>		
2	Do you propose to recruit any participants with possible communication difficulties, including difficulties arising from limited use of knowledge of the English language?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will overcome any challenges to gaining valid consent		
3	Do you propose to recruit any participants who may not be able to understand fully the nature of the study, research and the implications for them of participating in it or cannot provide consent themselves?		X
	If YES, please explain how you will overcome any challenges to gaining valid consent		

## Recruiting Participants

Question		Yes	No
1	Do you propose to recruit any participants who are:		
	a) students or employees of Coventry University or partnering organisation(s)?		X
	If YES, please explain if there is any conflict of interest and how this will be addressed		
	b) employees/staff recruited through other businesses, voluntary or public sector organisations?		X
	If YES, please explain how permission will be gained		
	c) pupils or students recruited through educational institutions (e.g. primary schools, secondary schools, colleges)?		X
	If YES, please explain how permission will be gained		
	d) clients/volunteers/service users recruited through voluntary public services?		X
	If YES, please explain how permission will be gained		
	e) participants living in residential care, social care, nursing homes, re-ablement centres hospitals or hospices?		X
	If YES, please explain how permission will be gained		
	f) recruited by virtue of their employment in the police or armed forces?		X
	If YES, please explain how permission will be gained		
	g) adults who are in prison, remanded on bail or in custody?		X
	If YES, please explain how permission will be gained		
	h) who may not be able to refuse to participate in the research?		X
	If YES, please explain how permission will be gained		

## Online and Internet Research

Question		Yes	No	
1	Will any part of your study involve collecting data by means of electronic media (e.g. the Internet, e-mail, Facebook, Twitter, online forums, etc)?	X		
	<div>If YES, please explain how you will obtain permission to collect data by this means</div> <div>I will only use data that is already in the public domain. For example I will use films, which may be found on the internet but were published prior to March 1, 1989 and did not comply with one or more of the required formalities for copyright.</div>			
2	Is there a possibility that the study will encourage children under 18 to access inappropriate websites, or correspond with people who pose risk of harm?		X	
	If YES, please explain further			
3	Will the study incur any other risks that arise specifically from the use of electronic media?		X	
	If YES, please explain further			
4	Will you be using survey collection software (e.g. BoS, Filemaker)?		X	
	If YES, please explain which software			
5	Have you taken necessary precautions for secure data management, in accordance with data protection and CU Policy?	X		
	If NO	please explain why not		
	If YES	Specify location where data will be stored	The data will be secured on my hard drive which is protected by password. It will also be secured on the external hard drive available at the Centre for Dance Research, Coventry University, protected by my password and username.	
		Planned disposal date	18/09/2019	
		If the research is funded by an external organisation, are there any requirements for storage and disposal?		X
		If YES, please specify details		



## Languages

Question		Yes	No
1	Are all or some of the consent forms, information leaflets and research instruments associated with this project likely to be used in languages other than English?		X
	If YES, please specify the language[s] to be used		
2	Have some or all of the translations been undertaken by you or a member of the research team?		
	Are these translations in lay language and likely to be clearly understood by the research participants?		
	Please describe the procedures used when undertaking research instrument translation (e.g. forward and back translation), clarifying strategies for ensuring the validity and reliability or trustworthiness of the translation		
3	Have some or all of the translations been undertaken by a third party?		
	If YES, please specify the name[s] of the persons or agencies performing the translations		
	Please describe the procedures used when undertaking research instrument translation (e.g. forward and back translation), clarifying strategies for ensuring the validity and reliability of the translation		

## Laboratory/Workshops

Question		Yes	No
1	Does any part of the project involve work in a laboratory or workshop which could pose risks to you, researchers or others?		X
	<p>If YES:</p> <p>If you have risk assessments for laboratory or workshop activities you can refer to them here &amp; upload them at the end, or explain in the text box how you will manage those risks</p>		

## Research with non-human vertebrates

Question		Yes	No
1	Will any part of the project involve animal habitats or tissues or non-human vertebrates?		X
	If YES, please give details		
2	Does the project involve any procedure to the protected animal whilst it is still alive?		
3	Will any part of your project involve the study of animals in their natural habitat?		
	If YES, please give details		
4	Will the project involve the recording of behaviour of animals in a non-natural setting that is outside the control of the researcher?		
	If YES, please give details		
5	Will your field work involve any direct intervention other than recording the behaviour of the animals available for observation?		
	If YES, please give details		
6	Is the species you plan to research endangered, locally rare or part of a sensitive ecosystem protected by legislation?		
	If YES, please give details		
7	Is there any significant possibility that the welfare of the target species of those sharing the local environment/habitat will be detrimentally affected?		
	If YES, please give details		
8	Is there any significant possibility that the habitat of the animals will be damaged by the project, such that their health and survival will be endangered?		
	If YES, please give details		
9	Will project work involve intervention work in a non-natural setting in relation to invertebrate species other than <i>Octopus vulgaris</i> ?		
	If YES, please give details		

## Blood Sampling / Human Tissue Analysis

Question		Yes	No
1	Does your study involve collecting or use of human tissues or fluids? (e.g. collecting urine, saliva, blood or use of cell lines, 'dead' blood)		X
	If YES, please give details		
2	If your study involves blood samples or body fluids (e.g. urine, saliva) have you clearly stated in your application that appropriate guidelines are to be followed (e.g. The British Association of Sport and Exercise Science Physiological Testing Guidelines (2007) or equivalent) and that they are in line with the level of risk?		
	If NO, please explain why not		
3	If your study involves human tissue other than blood and saliva, have you clearly stated in your application that appropriate guidelines are to be followed (e.g. The Human Tissues Act, or equivalent) and that they are in line with level of risk?		
	If NO, please explain why not		

## Travel

Question		Yes	No
1	Does any part of the project require data collection off campus? (e.g. work in the field or community)	X	
	<p>If YES:</p> <p>You must consider the potential hazards from off campus activities (e.g. working alone, time of data collection, unfamiliar or hazardous locations, using equipment, the terrain, violence or aggression from others). Outline the precautions that will be taken to manage these risks, AS A MINIMUM this must detail how researchers would summon assistance in an emergency when working off campus.</p> <p>For complex or high risk projects you may wish to complete and upload a separate risk assessment</p>	<p>I will be using a studio in London to conduct my practice. It is a dedicated dance studio with appropriate flooring for movement work. I have spoken with the studio owner and we have made a risk assessment which is relevant to my practice. The electrical equipment I use, such as a projector, has been checked for safety measures, such as checking their electrical output and that they have been recently serviced, and are within warranty. The majority of the equipment is booked from Coventry's media lab and therefore has been safety checked. The studio owner and I have confirmed that the electrical output does not go over the voltage available for the studio.</p> <p>The performers including my daughter Amelie will be instructed on the risks that exist within the studio, for example the stairs access to a balcony which overlooks the room.</p> <p>The studio is a place in which the performers and I are familiar working within. We are also familiar with each other having worked together before. Both of which, reduces the risk.</p> <p>In the case of an accident or emergency everyone is made of aware of how to contact the emergency services and how they could leave the building in the case of a fire.</p>	
2	Does any part of the project involve the researcher travelling outside the UK (or to very remote UK locations)?		X
	<p>If YES:</p> <p>Please give details of where, when and how you will be travelling. For travel to high risk places you may wish to complete and upload a separate risk assessment</p>		
3	Are all travellers aware of contact numbers for emergency assistance when away (e.g. local emergency assistance, ambulance/local hospital/police, insurance helpline [+44 (0) 2071 737797] and CU's		

	24/7 emergency line [+44 (0) 2476 888555])?		
<b>4</b>	<p>Are there any travel warnings in place advising against all, or essential only travel to the destination?</p> <p>NOTE: Before travel to countries with 'against all travel', or 'essential only' travel warnings, staff must check with Finance to ensure insurance coverage is not affected. Undergraduate projects in high risk destinations will not be approved</p>		
<b>5</b>	<p>Are there increased risks to health and safety related to the destination? e.g. cultural differences, civil unrest, climate, crime, health outbreaks/concerns, and travel arrangements?</p> <p>If YES, please specify</p>		
<b>6</b>	Do all travelling members of the research team have adequate travel insurance?		
<b>7</b>	Please confirm all travelling researchers have been advised to seek medical advice regarding vaccinations, medical conditions etc, from their GP		