Methodology

This research adopts an interdisciplinary methodological approach between performance and contemporary dance studies on the one hand, and museological and curatorial studies on the other, informed by professional knowledge in both fields.

I adopt a multi-method practice-research approach and discuss the application and limitations of each method in direct relation to the analysis proposed in each chapter:

Theoretical research and critical writing	Chapter 1 and throughout the thesis
Curatorial practice-research: curation of symposium	Chapter 2
Performance practice-research: live scoring	Chapter 3

Practice Research Approach

This project's methodology builds on the discourse of 'practice research', initially theorised in the mid-2000s by scholars and thinkers Nelson (2006), Haseman (2011) and Borgdorff (2012). These authors first championed a research approach defined

as ‘performative’ (Haseman, 2011, Borgdorff, 2012, p.21), which I acknowledge and develop through this PhD project.

In particular, my research embraces two core ideas of the practice research approach. First, my methodological approach acknowledges that, while the relationship between practice and theory in artistic research is inseparable, neither of the two is a direct translation of the other, nor one precedes the other, or a hierarchical opposition exists between the two (Borgdorff, 2012, p.20). Secondly, this project’s findings are to be identified as the performative knowledge produced in the act of practice research, rather than in verbal or numerical data of quantitative or qualitative research.

In my research, the questions are derived and answered both from the perspective of theory and practice, investigated through both practical methods and critical thinking and writing, to arrive at findings that are both complementary and autonomous. For example, my research questions build on the debate on visitor engagement in relation to a broader concern around social exclusivity of art museums and institutional critique – which I present in Chapter 1 – and, at the same time, on previous professional practice as an Evaluator in the Visitor Research Department at the Victoria and Albert Museum (2013-2021) and Tate Britain (2010). My first research question about agency and resistance is therefore grounded both in the theoretical debate and, equally, it is embedded in a professional experiential knowledge of the quantitative and qualitative visitor research methods widely utilised in museums and galleries in the UK.

Similarly, in Chapter 2 and 3, I describe how problematics derived from practice and informed by theory are investigated and answered both through critical thinking and through a practical methodology, where neither of the two precedes or is to be considered in a hierarchical progression or consequence of the other. In Chapter 2, the question of the body of the museum worker and its agency within the institutional space is investigated through the day-to-day problematics of professional practice of collaborating with various institutional bodies and professional figures in curating and convening a one-day symposium. This practice is informed and is inseparable from critical literature on the figure of artist-as-curator as a fundamental agent in the production of cultural knowledge and value (O'Neill, 2007, p.15). Finally, in Chapter 3, my experimental practice of live scoring is based on my professional knowledge as a dance artist and it closely connects to a theoretical discourse on dance notation and score-making in performance practice on the one hand, and on the discourse on 'institutional critique' in contemporary art and on the museological debate on social inclusivity on the other, without it being a 'representation' or 'translation' of the same theories (Borgdorff, 2012, p.20).

Performative Knowledge

Another core concept of practice research I adopt is the production of performative knowledge. I identify this type of knowledge in the practice elements of the symposium at the Institute of Contemporary Arts discussed in Chapter 2, and the score-making practice in Chapter 3.

As part of the practice presented in Chapter 2, I draw on the curatorial discourse that distinguishes ‘curatorial’ from 'curating' to emphasise a critical approach aimed at deconstructing and questioning the ideas and rationale behind exhibiting practices, and at proposing new models of production of knowledge (Lind, 2012; Von Bismark, 2012; O'Neill, 2007). Within this discourse, various authors have discussed curating as a performative practice (Rogoff, 2006; O’ Neill, 2007; Bishop, 2012; Von Bismark, 2012), and this an approach I embrace in my research.

In the context of practice research, Brad Haseman theorises (Haseman, 2006) that practice produces knowledge that cannot be quantified in numbers or graphs (quantitative data), nor can it be appropriately ‘translated’ or have equivalent value or effect if transferred into the written form (qualitative data). Performative knowledge produces ‘symbolic data’, that is, ‘data that is only intelligible in the material forms of practice’ (Haseman, 2006, p. 102).

The idea of performative knowledge is essential to this project, and it is the connecting principle of all practice research methods I have adopted for this research. For instance, the symposium ‘How Do Institutions Choreograph Us?’ (See Chapter 2) not only explored the themes of social inclusivity of art institutions and visitor movement but it also *enacted* them. The event represented an opportunity to critically address the ideas and problematics of this PhD research in collaboration with other professionals and the audience. However, most importantly, these ideas were also explored through the performative elements of the event: the choreographic games, the performance of the co-conveners and the movement of

attendees, organisers and contributors within the institutional space on the day.

My method of score-making and live-scripting of scores presented in Chapter 3 is also closely connected to the methodological approach of practice research, almost epitomising the distinction between quantitative and qualitative findings and symbolic data Haseman identifies (Haseman, 2006). I must stress that my research did not start from the premise of a binary or opposition between data collection methods of visitor evaluation strategies used in museum practice on the one hand, and score-making and dance notating in dance and performance practice on the other. However, my findings of this portion of the research point to the limits of quantitative and qualitative visitor evaluation strategies in museum practice in appropriately studying visitor movement. This finding sheds light on a key avenue of further investigation on the potentialities of dance and performance research to inform curatorial and museological knowledge.

In line with a practice-research methodological approach, the scores and scripts I produced as part of this practice are not representations or illustrations of the findings but constitute an epistemological act expressed in a performative form. Furthermore, the deliberate subjective and incomplete status of these scores and scripts enacts a refusal of the legibility of everyday movement and of its transcription into numerical or verbal data.

With reference to Halberstam's concept of 'productive failure' (Halberstam, 2011), I position this method as a form of resistance to the choreographies of the museum

and its scores, offering an alternative to the institution's epistemological terms for investigating visitor movement. While quantitative and qualitative visitor research methods used in museum practice confirm what the institution already expects to find, my methodology of score-making and live-scripting of movement refuses those terms.

I must specify that Halberstam's argument is framed in queer theory, highlighting the resistance of bodies that, by failing to move within heteronormative standards of success and productivity, produce new knowledge and new understandings of the world. Although queer theory is not an angle that this research focuses on, the refusal of legibility that Halberstam describes – the refusal for body movement to be fixed and captured – extends meaningfully to my context, even if the political register is different.

Collaborative Practice

My practice research is of highly collaborative nature, and this presents ethical implications regarding ownership and authorship of this PhD project. In Chapter 2 and in the video of the symposium 'How Do Institutions Choreograph Us?', I present the contributions and responses to the symposium brief by artists and speakers on the day. Similarly, I have included as part of this PhD research the work of my collaborator Ivana Sehic for our project *I do this every day: pass it on* (Chapter 3).

For the symposium, my practice as artist-as-curator is not to be identified in the contributions themselves, whose authorship belongs to each artist and speaker, but in the way I moved situationally across those institutional conditions, the dialogues and the relationships I created with the contributors, and the way I explored the research questions in relation to this curatorial practice. As I will explain further in Chapter 2, I define my practice as creating a 'multiple and collective authorship' (p.68) for the event as a whole, to emphasise that my primary role in the event was drawing connections and inviting conversations, while the ownership of each contribution remains with the artist or speaker who produced it.

In terms of my collaboration with Ivana Sehic, each of our contributions to the project was indispensable. We both recognise equal artistic authorship in the artwork and in the public facilitation aspect of the project. The participants in the public workshop held at the ICA in December 2022, were briefed on the PhD aims and broader context of the research, and many of them showed enthusiasm in being part of the research process. All participants were asked for consent to include the materials produced in the workshop in the PhD project documentation and were given the option to opt out of using their first names. For this reason, the transcripts of the WhatsApp conversations that the workshop participants produced as their own 'scores' are included the project documentation on the PhD website. More information about the participant consent process is available at the Workshop Documentation page on the PhD website:
https://www.museumchoreography.com/workshopdocumentation

Throughout the thesis, I often refer to my experience of working within art

institutions. The account presented in this thesis reflects my personal experience and views as a worker and researcher within these institutions, and it should not be read as representing the institutions themselves or the views of my colleagues. Where I refer to information learned in the course of my work, I have taken care to protect the confidentiality of individuals and of internal institutional matters. Where I refer to specific examples of work within an institution (Chapter 2, pp.68-71; Chapter 3, pp. 128-131), the analysis is part of a critical reflection on my own practice and the conditions of art workers in this field, rather than an evaluation of the institutions' practices or an official account of my colleagues' work.