Chapter 3 – I do this every day: pass it on

Chapter Introduction

While Chapter 2 examined the choreography of an art institution in its operational and organisational movements at the 'back of the house', this chapter shifts my attention to the 'front of house' and engages with visitor movement directly on the 'gallery floor'. For this section of my research, I experimented with a practice methodology that investigates a unique intersection between methods currently used in Visitor Research and Evaluation in the museums and galleries' professional sector, and practices of movement observation and scoring used in the dance and performance sector.

In the museums and galleries professional sector, the terms Visitor Research and Evaluation encompass a series of methodologies used to research audiences' attitudes, preferences and responses to exhibitions and displays. These include quantitative and qualitative methods that aim to inform the curatorial and operational choices of museums and galleries, such as face-to-face visitor interviews, closed-ended questionnaires, visitor observations, focus groups, feedback and comments areas in the museum space, to name a few.

As I introduced in Chapter 1, these methods developed gradually since the early 1990s, partly because of an increased urgency to gather data and evidence to justify the societal impact and benefits of museums and galleries, following political shifts that put the culture sector at risk, which required the museum and gallery sector to

increasingly report on visitor attendance and engagement[1]. For this reason, in many art museums in London, for example, evaluation practices are often managed by marketing or fundraising departments, with some dialogue on the aims and objectives of each evaluation with curatorial staff. Increasingly, external agencies are contracted to carry out the work as project work.

Despite the direct connection of these museological practices with political, financial and operational pressures, I want to emphasise that these methods are also strongly conceptually connected to the rise of the 'new museology'. From the late 1980s into the early 2000s, several authors including Peter Virgo, Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, Tony Bennett, George Hein, Stuart Hall, John Falk presented key research and opinions that opened the field of museology to ideas and approaches to culture inspired by decolonial discourse, interrogating the museum in its institutional and representational power. This allowed a shift of museum practices towards a renewed attention to the visitor and the relevance of the museum visiting as a complex socio-cultural experience. As seen in Chapter 1, a fervid interest in Bourdieu's theory, partly connected to the English translation of *Distinction* becoming available in 1984 (Bourdieu, 1984), also led the museological discourse to question the *habitus* of museum visiting, as inherently bound to privilege and social stratus.

My interest in these quantitative and qualitative methods of studying visitor behaviour stems from the conceptual connection to the 1990s' and early 2000s' museological discourse mentioned above, promoting an anti-elitist and decolonial vision of museum practice and a visitor-centered approach. While embracing this theoretical

[1] The UK represents one of the clearest examples, with changes driven by the Department of National Heritage, later DCMS, the Arts Council England (ACE), and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), instituted in 1994.

background in museology, in the PhD practice presented in this chapter, I aim to introduce a new perspective that departs from this approach.

In Chapter 2, I discussed an interdisciplinary practice-research methodology that integrates my practice as an artist and curator, with examples from the history of curating and contemporary art and performance. In this chapter, I aim to further explore the hybridity of my practice, and present my practice-research of live scoring, which builds on my professional experience for the past 15 years both as an artist working in dance and choreography, a Visitor Researcher and Evaluator at the V&A (2013-2017) and Tate (2010) and a Gallery Assistant at the V&A (2007-2013).

While ideas from the museological discourse influence my research at a theoretical level, I emphasise here my day-to-day experience of working in close contact with visitors for a protracted period. In my role of Gallery Assistant at the V&A South Kensington (2007-2013), for example, I spent 7-8 hours a day in the same gallery of the museum, with short breaks, and speaking to visitors on a daily basis, answering questions, listening to their comments and observing their interactions with the displayed objects. As an Evaluator at the V&A (V&A South Kensington, Young V&A) and Tate, I conducted face-to-face visitor interviews and structured, planned visitor 'observations' according to visitor research methodologies.

Through the research explored in this chapter, I aim to explore these experiences of inhabiting the space in a museum at a deeply physical level and the experiential knowledge that comes through the act of standing, sitting, walking –simply 'being' in the space for several hours a day. Every day, in the role of Gallery Assistant, I went

to change into the museum's uniform in the 'back-of-the-house' changing rooms, located on the dark lower ground floor of the building. I was often handed a set of keys, as it was my responsibility to officially 'open' and then 'close' the gallery at the end of the day, perform visual checks of the objects on display, and report any changes in a 'logbook'. I observed visitors interacting with the artwork, their pace, their actions, and listened to their conversations.

While I will give more specific examples the quantitative and qualitative methods of visitor observation later in this chapter, what I want to stress here is that my practice methodology of live scoring, as well as being derived from dance and performance practice, is strongly based on the physical and affective field of experiential knowledge that I gained by being a museum worker for many years. And to acknowledge this field of experiential knowledge is key to inform a curatorial practice that debunks the traditional hierarchies of art museums and galleries.

From the analysis presented in this chapter, I aim to argue the relative objectivity of the quantitative and qualitative methods for observing and recording visitor behaviour in the museum and gallery sector, and at investigating the use of live scoring practices used in dance and performance in visitor observations.

Chapter structure and submitted practice elements – hyperlinks for section

I begin the chapter with a discussion on my experimental 'live' scoring practice developed in collaboration with artist Ivana Sehic for the project *I do this every day: pass it on*. This project was also supported by the ICA, but it was conceived and

delivered separately from both the symposium ‘How Do Institutions Choreograph Us?’. The project built on a 3-month period of research and a previous longstanding collaborative relationship with Ivana. It culminated in a 30-min performance on a street in East London and a 4-hour public workshop held at the ICA in December 2022, and a 30-min podcast as part of the series ‘ICA Infrequencies’, published widely online (Spotify, Acast, and Apple Music). All three elements are linked as part of the practice submission on the website outlined above.

PERFORMANCE VIDEO

https://vimeo.com/1146211180/4df4f7e7f1

PODCAST

https://open.spotify.com/episode/7LzeMyrSiVLa0vRTmCeISr

WORKSHOP DOCUMENTATION

https://www.museumchoreography.com/workshopdocumentation

In the last part of the chapter, I present a series of experiments of live scoring and mapping visitor movement I conducted individually at the V&A South Kensington’s Sculpture Gallery in September 2024, which built on ‘I do this every day: pass it on’. I emphasize the artistic approach I have taken in both projects, and how each informed the other.

V&A BLOG POST

https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/museum-life/travelling-in-time-and-space-staying-still

V&A LIVE SCORING PRACTICE – MUSEUM SCORES

https://www.museumchoreography.com/museumscores

V&A LIVE SCORING PRACTICE – MUSEUM MAPS

https://www.museumchoreography.com/museummaps

Live Scoring Practice

For the project *I do this every day: pass it on*, Ivana and I developed further a practice of live scripting 'instructions' of everyday movement choreography which we had explored in a previous collaborative performance and workshop held as guest lecturer on the Narrative Environments Masters at Central Saint Martins, London in March to May 2014. Based on a remote dialogue – Ivana is based in Porto, Portugal and some face-to-face practice throughout November and December 2022, we discussed through online meetings, email exchanges, video messages to each other, and online practice of live scoring, the concepts of response to instructions in everyday movement. In investigating the idea of response to instructions, we connected to the two ideas of resistance – predominant in the conceptual framework of my research – and deviation – which marked Ivana's research process.

In the performance *I do this every day: pass it on* two performers – Ivana Sehic and I – walk slowly along two streets in East London (Wheler Street and Quaker Street, in the area of Shoreditch). For a set time of 30 minutes, on one weekday evening, we inhabit the space together, both with an invited audience and with anyone passing by

the street in that moment. We observe any verbal and graphic signs or symbols, and other civil infrastructures (street signs, bollards, public notices) that present us with ‘instructions’ on how to move around the space, and we imagine the textual score for the choreographies that these tangible markers imply. We also think about the way people that pass through the space interact with each other and change the space by inhabiting it and imagine what textual scores those movements would have. We live-type each line of this score and, using hand-held projectors, project them on different elements of the space surrounding us. Wearing over-sized vinyl raincoats, partly painted in solid red, allows us to project the texts on to each other, too. The video of the performance is available at https://vimeo.com/1146211180/4df4f7e7f1.

In a 4-hour public workshop at the ICA, we invited participants to explore different movement scoring exercises, including the same live scoring task we carry out during the performance *I do this every day: pass it on* in the public areas inside the ICA, or outside the building, in the neighboring area. Differently from the performance, in the workshop, the task was not carried out using projectors, but through an exchange of instant messages using the participants’ own mobile phones via the WhatsApp mobile application. This meant that the text messages were not visible to anyone else apart from the workshop participants doing the task. Documentation for the workshop can be seen at museumchoreography.com, including transcriptions of their WhatsApp conversations: https://www.museumchoreography.com/workshopdocumentation

To produce my museum scores, I sat down or stood to the side of the Sculpture Gallery at the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington (named ‘Galleries 21-22’ on the current museum map), for a limited time of 10 minutes at different hours of the day, and observed the objects on display, the visitors passing through, the sounds and temperature of the space. I observed and attempted to record the choreographies I experienced through a textual score, of which a few examples can be seen on the PhD website.

Live Scoring as Productive Failure

For both my PhD practice projects *I do this every day: pass it on* and the V&A project, I developed my own unique practice of ‘live scoring’, which draws on current practices in contemporary dance and on contemporary art practice that connects to a wider theoretical framework. The discourse on scores is central to performance studies as it exposes conceptual nodes that key to this field of study: the possibility (or impossibility) of writing movement and dance; the ephemerality of dance and movement versus the score as a tangible or permanent object; the relationship of dance to memory and archiving practices; the traditional hierarchy of dance and music as disciplines.

Rooted in the profound legacy of Jacques Derrida’s *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Derrida, 1995), performance scholars Peggy Phelan and Rebecca Schneider represent two influential positions on the discourse on scores in performance theory. In her seminal book *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (Phelan, 1993), Phelan discusses Derrida’s proposition of the impossibility of

performance to live in the archive because of its very nature of not being evanescent. Performance does not ‘remain’ as it can never be materialized into a tangible object and therefore it is condemned outside of the archive. While drawing on to Derrida’s theory, Phelan departs from it, arguing that the disappearance, or loss, is the intrinsic value of performance, which should be valued.

In her *Archives: Performance Remains* (Schneider, 2001), Schneider responds to this idea of disappearance or loss proposed by Phelan’s reading of Derrida, and contends that, although Phelan attributes a positive value to performance, it still operates within the archival logic. Instead, Schneider maintains, what needs to be valued are the ways of archiving and preserving that are specific and unique to performance. Shneider explains these through the practices of mimetic transmission from body to body: for example, a choreographer demonstrating a sequence of movements, and the dancers copying it; copying a dance teacher during a class; or copying a dance performed on video.

In ‘Rests in Pieces: On Scores, Notations and The Trace in Dance’, artist Myriam Van Imschoot (Van Imschoot, 2014) summarises the different uses and statuses of scores in dance and music, and how the relationship to scores in both disciplines has historically contributed and reinforced a hierarchy between the two. Van Imschoot explains that music has developed, throughout history, systemic ways of notating that allow transmission from one person to another. On the other hand, dance notation systems developed over the centuries, such as Labanotation, have not had as widely recognised an application. Music can therefore live inside the archive, be preserved and transmitted in the dominant logic of the material object,

which allows it to be attributed a higher status as a discipline than dance. Moreover, the music score allows composers to affirm their authorship and greater authorial recognition than the performers or interpreters of the same score, establishing stronger professional hierarchies within the discipline itself.

Rather than analysing the relationship of dance scores with archival practices, this research aims to explore how scores represent an attempt to both capture the impermanent nature of dance, and, equally, attest to the impossibility of reducing the thick complexities of movement practices into something scripted or graphic. Unlike Phelan and Schneider, whose positions focus on the materialisation of the movement into a tangible object, I am curious about the process of scripting movement into words and – as discussed later in this chapter – into a visual-graphic representation. Therefore, my live scoring practice starts from the premise of the inevitable failure of translating or materialising movement into a tangible object, a verbal score or a map, and it investigates, through an experimental practice-led approach, the possibilities produced by this failed attempt.

In this sense, the practice of score-making presented here embraces Jack Halberstam's concept of 'productive failure' (Halberstam, 2011), which puts forward that 'under certain circumstances, failing, losing, forgetting, unmaking, undoing, unbecoming, not knowing may in fact offer more creative, more cooperative, more surprising ways of being in the world' (Halberstam, 2011, p.2). Instead of attempting to formulate an accurate and logical method of transcribing movement into words or graphic representation, my live scoring fully acknowledges the impossibility to do so as its epistemological premise to produce new knowledge that sit outside of the

established methods of knowing that visitor research in museums currently utilise. Furthermore, Jack Halberstam's productive failure concept sits within a framework of 'low theory', which argues against conventional understandings of success in relation to heteronormative standards and institutional life. Although the queer studies lens is not an approach deliberately adopted in this research, the concept of producing alternative knowledge to the museum's epistemological system is highly pertinent in the context of this project.

In contrast with the concept of productive failure as it was first theorised in the context of cognitive psychology and learning theory, where failure is seen as a necessary step towards learning and arriving at the 'correct' answer (Kapur, 2008) , I propose, in line with Halberstam, an idea of productive failure as resistance to a system of knowing movement as quantifiable in numerical units or transcribable in verbal data.

Although I have drawn a contrast between museological evaluation methods and choreographic score-making, I recognise a similar striving towards the impossibility of notating movement in my past work as a museum evaluator at the V&A and Tate. As I will argue later in this chapter, this inconclusiveness is sometimes deliberately acknowledged by visitor researchers themselves. This is because it is very difficult to discern and notate the visitor's physical actions and behaviours, and even more difficult to trace back the visitors' intentions, feelings and thoughts from observational data alone.

While museological practices of notating movement are geared at obtaining statistical results and objective, comparable data, my practice research of live scoring fully embraces its subjectivity and the impossibility to reduce movement to measurable units. Rather than this being a reason for abandoning the practice of recording and producing written and graphic notations of visitor movement, I argue that, by embracing an artistic, openly subjective method of scoring, which fully recognises and takes ownership of the impossibility of this task, it is possible to open a field of knowledge around the initial intent that museological visitor research had set out to achieve: the desire to gain knowledge of the experiential, affective, continually changeable and deeply personal experience of museum visiting.

Choreographer and writer Jonathan Burrows, in *A Choreographer's Handbook* proposes a definition – or, rather, non-definition - of scoring in dance and performance practices, ironically noticing:

'A number of different approaches tend to be grouped under the word 'score'. This can get quite confusing' (Burrows, 2010, p.141)

He then continues to define two main ways in which a score is intended in the context of performance:

'In the first kind, what is written is a representation of the piece itself, a template which holds within it the detail, in linear time, of what you will eventually see or hear. A classical music score works in this way.

In the other kind of score, what is written or thought is a tool for information, image or inspiration, which acts as a source for what you will see, but whose shape may be very different from the final realization.

These two approaches can mix' (Burrows, 2010, p. 141)

My 'live scoring' practice sits in between these two approaches, and deliberately plays with the ambiguity of this definition - or non-definition - of score. This practice is an attempt at capturing in words what I can see, hear, or sense happening, for the fraction of time and in a selected portion of space I exist in in that moment. Equally, each score speaks through what is not saying, and documents my inability, or impossibility to ever complete this task, or to record all the details that are present in that space and in that moment. In other words, I attempt to make a score similar to the first type of score Burrows describes: a record of all that I see or hear in that moment, but one that inevitably and intentionally fails and becomes the second type of score Burrows defines.

Particularly in my museum scoring practice, I identify the tension outlined in Jonathan Burrows' definitions mentioned above between striving for an accurate, detailed representation of the everyday choreographies, and the final product – an incomplete, highly subjective score, only merely evoking the glimpses of my individual experience of those choreographies.

Georges Perec's writings offer a seminal example of on-site writing as a practice for recording any aspect of everyday life. For example, his *Attempt at exhausting a*

place in Paris (Perec, 2010) demonstrates, on the one hand, the infinite possibilities that choosing to paying attention to the everyday in his fleeting details can offer, and, equally, it attests to a certain restlessness or tension on the impossibility of ever completing this task, and this strongly resonates with my thinking around my scoring practice.

The aura of stillness emanating from the sculptures and from the extended time frame of the V&A museum opening hours, presented themselves as an ideal setting for a practice geared at noticing, 'what is happening, when nothing is happening' (De Certeau, 2011, pp.). In his quasi-manifesto to the 'infra-ordinary' (Perec, 2012), Perec incites:

'Describe a street. Describe another street. Compare
Make an inventory of your pockets, of your bag. Ask yourself about the provenance, the use, what will come of each of the objects you take out.
Question your teaspoons.'
(Perec, 2012, p. 210)

In a similar enthusiasm to Perec's teaspoons, during my time practising scoring at the V&A, I find myself mesmerised by the movements, social dynamics, and rhythms of the sculpture gallery – I could be there for hours! While being an observant, I am present in the gallery, too. I am not wearing a staff badge, I sit on a museum bench or stand slightly to the side of the room, I 'live' the space. Other visitors are sat drawing or taking notes – I am sure I could pass for one of them! I am an observant, but also an involved participant – a visitor of the museum. Like the other visitors,

they look at me as I casually look at them, then quickly re-direct my gaze. Like we all do in public spaces, I pretend I am not looking.

While I carry out my scoring task, I pay attention to my posture, head down, the pain in hand when I try and write fast, my breathing. Once again, George Perec posed attention on the physicality of the practices of writing and reading. For example, while attempting to deconstruct the act of reading, he describes it as:
'a precise activity of the body, the bringing into play of certain muscles, different organisations of our posture, sequential decisions, temporal choices' (Perec, 2012, p.175). He then goes on to notice the minimal acts of 'editing' through the eyes moving across the page, which connects to my interest in the choreography of typing mentioned earlier in this chapter in relation to *I do this every day: pass it on*.

While Burrows refers to practices of scoring to record and transmit dance and performance, in the case of my PhD scoring practice, I start from looking at everyday movement, and attempt to score it. I adopted this approach as an experiment in my methodology both in the scoring practice at the V&A and in *I do this every day: pass it on* however, the two experiments started with different premises and conditions. First, the type of public space that I selected for the two practices – a museum space and a street in London – shaped the process differently. Secondly, I developed my V&A scoring practice as a solo observer/scripter, and while the practice carried out for the performance at street level followed an important relational aspect. Ivana Sehic and I also assigned ourselves the task to maintain or create a relationship to each other while producing the score. Third, in the performance on the street with Ivana, the audience – who are also the people we are scoring the movement and

actions for – are able to see the live score, because it is projected on to the walls around it as it is being live-typed. At the V&A, the live-scoring was not typed, but written on a paper pad, without visitors or anyone else being able to see the score I am producing.

Despite the joint conceptual premises and proximity of both practices, for *I do this every day: pass it on,* I was strongly inspired by the choreography of typing and instant messaging, while the V&A project followed a non-digital approach. However, even for *I do this every day: pass it on*, my artistic engagement with a wider discourse digital messaging remained limited, with the inspiration to the instant messaging is at an abstract and conceptual level only. This is to say that instant messaging and the choreography of typing is relevant to my practice only in the way it emphasizes the idea, that scoring produces 'distance', as I will present later in this chapter.

Framing and Drawing Attention

In *Essays on the Blurring on Art and Life* (Kaprow, 2003), Allan Kaprow discusses his practice of scripting everyday actions. For example, Kaprow presents, three scripts describing three different scenarios of three people passing through a doorway, with their negotiation of 'giving way' to each other while passing (Kaprow, 2003, pp.181-194). As well as attempting to script these social and physical interactions, Kaprow refers to them as 'ready-made' performances, 'where the only unusual feature will be the attentiveness brought to bear on them' (Kaprow, 2003, p.188).[2]

[2] Although Kaprow uses the word 'script', I am referring to his reflections here in parallel with my discussion on

In discussing Lucinda Child's piece *Street Dance* (Kolb, 2022, p. 6-13), Alexandra Kolb emphasizes both the effect that scores have in framing otherwise unattended portions of everyday movement, and the imaginative possibilities that scores open to the audience. While the audience is in a loft at the top of a building in New York, a tape-recorded voice gave a minimal score directing the audience's gaze to the street below. The dancers, having the back turned to the audience, performed simple everyday movement and occasionally pointed at different things on the street, in sync with the tape. Kolb reads this work in connection to Lefebvre's concept of rhythmanalysis and Georges Perec's writings, to demonstrate how the piece 'guided audience to 'see' the city, prompting observations of normally overlooked everyday objects and happenings' (Kolb, 2022, p. 7). And, Kolb continues, *Street Dance* seemed designed to disrupt ordinary habits of viewing. The viewing from a bird's eye perspective was channeled towards a restricted portion of the street' (Kolb, 2022, p.8).

Similarly, in *I do this every day: pass it on*, my collaborator and I aim to draw attention to different elements of the urban space we and the audience are present in. While we encourage the audience to follow us while moving through the street, we type a series of words or short sentences referring to what is happening in the space where we are present in that moment. We also draw attention to the different

scores, and using the two terms almost interchangeably. Instead of a lack of clarity and definition, I am fluidly using between these two terms to define practices that intertwine and overlap in the field of performance I contextualise my work in. This is an area where practices from dance, theatre and the visual arts converge and exchange methods and concepts. While 'script' is a term that originates from theatre and playwriting, 'score' traditionally belongs to music and it has by proxy been adopted by contemporary dance. While the former is normally constituted of words, the second may include number, symbols or other graphic representations.

elements of the urban landscape by video-projecting the words and sentences on to a wall, a window, a bollard, the pavement's kerb, and so on. The score was only loosely structured, and it is mostly responding in real time to what is happening around us – we follow a task of 'live-scoring' which the audience can experience first-hand. The movement Ivana and I perform is quotidian – our primary actions are tapping on our mobile phones, and, secondarily, walking at a slow pace along the street, looking down, looking up, looking at each other.

Scores as Distance

> 'A score is a conscious way to *distance* you from the thing you are making or doing. It can mediate between the maker and the work, and also between the maker and the performer' (Burrows, 2010, p. 142).

In the project with Ivana Sehic, we adopted live-typing using mobile phones to emphasize the choreography of typing – the pauses in between message and response, the timing of deleting and re-typing, the moment of lingering and 'thinking' about the next word or sentence, or a sudden acceleration of typing revealing urgency or affect. In my museum scoring practice, these elements are not visible or immediately seen by an audience. However, similarly, my museum scores reveal and almost emphasise a distance between myself, the observer/scorer, and the people, objects and actions in my sight.

In *Street Dance*, Childs intentionally sets up a situation that emphasizes the distance between the audience and the performers. The score recorded on tape allows the

audience to ‘see’, ‘in an imagined sort of way’ (Childs, 1975, quoted in Kolb, 2022 p. 8), what is happening on the street below, but it also restricts to the audience’s vision through the windows. I see in this work the tension between two ideas of scores explained in Burrows’ definition quoted above. One the one hand, the voice recorded on tape attempts to bridge the distance between the audience and the performers and between the audience and the scene they are looking at on the street. At the same time, the score almost becomes the representation or materialisation of the distance itself. I identify this important effect of dissociation in the live scoring of *I do this every day: pass it on*. Here, my collaborator and I wanted to emphasise the idea of distance through time – the pauses between message and response – and, visually, through the physical distance between each of us ‘sending’ the message, and the message projected on the wall.

Allan Kaprow (Kaprow, 2003) also highlights how drawing attention to everyday physical and social scenarios as ‘ready-made’ performances, and attempting to script them, has the effect of creating a distance, and he highlights how these scripts or scores almost have an alienating effect. The very act of framing or placing attention on a portion of life, as Kaprow maintains, produces the effect of turning something usual, quotidian into ‘unnatural’ or ‘strange’. Through his ready-mades, Kaprow explains, ‘you experience directly what you already know in theory: that consciousness alters the world, that natural things seem unnatural once you attend to them and vice versa’ (Kaprow, p.190). In discussing what he describes as a ‘sketch for a possible breathing piece’ which comes in the form of a script, Kaprow notices ‘Consider what this piece proposes to do. It exaggerates the normally unattended aspects of everyday life […] Revealed this way they are *strange*.

Participants could be momentarily separated from themselves' (Kaprow, 2003, p.198).

As I practiced the live scoring exercises at the V&A Sculpture Gallery, I was also often drawn to highlighting absurdity, humour, and word play: https://www.museumchoreography.com/museumscores

I use these devices to emphasise the idea of strangeness and alienation produced by the live scoring practice in the way that Kaprow intends it. In the attempt to script precisely what I can see, I also frame that 'scene' as a ready-made performance. To elaborate this practice, I was particularly drawn to a series of Instagram posts that artist Tim Etchells shared on his own Instagram account (Etchells, 2022, 2023, 2024). With a clear connection to Etchells' main and widely recognised public commissions[3], these Instagram posts show a curiosity for 'found' textual objects, where humour and an unintended philosophical connotation happen to coexist. These are often 'instructions' or textual notices present in daily life – for example, a pop-up message from a computer screen with 'Verifying your identity. This might take a minute'; or a mobile phone screen 'Too many world clocks. Please delete a world clock before adding a new one'; or a sign at a ferry boat pier saying, 'Special fares to all parts of the world'; or a lost-in-translation message on a shop window in Italy 'Please do not stand unnecessary in front of the window/Si prega di non sostare inutilmente davanti alle vetrine' (Etchells, 2024).

[3] See Tim Etchells has produced many neon sign works, for example *Let's Pretend None of This Ever Happened* (2021) All the *Things that could Happen Next* (2021) *Go With the Flow / Swim with the Tide* (2018) *Shifting Ground* (2021)

Using a similar procedure of decontextualized short texts but in a setting even more specific to my area of research – museums – artist Vlatka Horvat's projects *No Contextual Information* (Horvat, 2017) and *Card Index* (Horvat, 2017), also in collaboration with Tim Etchells. In these projects, which emerged from a period of residence at the Museums Sheffield's Millennium Gallery, Sheffield, the artist isolates a couple of words or a sentence written on storage boxes, drawers and filing cabinets as a way to catalogue the objects contained in that portion of the archive. By selecting texts and photographing the archive's cards and labels, Horvat achieves a humorous effect while also inviting philosophical reflection on the passing of time, mysterious histories, and even more mysterious cataloguing processes. What inspired my research from these two works by Horvat is that, despite suggesting a level of abstraction, the cards and labels also underline the materiality of the objects, storage furniture, and the very practical nature of the texts typed on them.

Etchells' and Horvat's examples above relate to my process of live scoring at the V&A in a complex way. First, as described, I share an interest in pursuing linguistic strategies that both produce humour and suggest a philosophical layer. Secondly, I was interested in how the texts presented themselves both as instructions giving an indication or guidance to do something, or to find an object in the drawer. The way both artists frame these texts, however, open up a reality that was not intended when the texts were first produced. In other words, Etchells' and Horvat's framing decontextualises an instruction present in the world, and makes it into a score.

The humour and absurdity in my score-making practice finds its core inspiration in Fluxus' framing of these two aesthetic strategies as an overall attitude towards art

practice and the institutional power in the art world. Rejecting virtuosity, traditional 'high' art, cultural elitism and exclusivity, this historical art movement, first proclaimed by George Maciunas in 1961, often used short verbal statements, in the form of instructions and unusual juxtaposition and decontextualization of words. The apparently effortless simplicity of these statements played with the readers' or viewers' expectation of finding a serious meaning in the artwork, therefore directly challenging the seriousness associated with elitism and the exclusionary culture of 'high art'. Fluxus' texts often appeared typed or written on artworks, were extrapolated texts as ready-mades often in the form of board games or card games[4]. The execution, production and presentation of these works was intentionally simple and inexpensive to contest the system of value of the art market. Although different in form and execution, the scores presented in this PhD project are inspired by Fluxus' attitude and intent, which align with this research's aim to question and investigate the exclusionary and elitist production of space in art museums. In other words, humour and absurdity in the scores are to be read as a form of resistance.

Live Scoring as Resistance

The research connected to *I do this every day: pass it on* explored ways of expressing agency through everyday movement in response to choreographic instructions in the space of the city. As part of this project, my collaborator Ivana Sehic and I were interested in interrogating how scoring everyday movement can itself be a form of resistance to the inherent or explicit instructions of everyday life.

[4] These were often portable collection boxes filled with small objects, games, and performance scores ('Fluxkits') designed for people to experience art at home. For example, Brecht (1963), Maciunas (1964), Ono (1966).

An influential elaboration of the notion of resistance in relation to scores is represented by Peggy Phelan's position earlier in this chapter. In Phelan's view, as performance cannot be materialised into the score-object, it also means that it exceeds the structure of the score. This excess constitutes performance's potential for political resistance in a capitalist system, as performance 'refuses this system of exchange and resists the circulatory economy fundamental to it' (Phelan, 1993, p.149).

As anticipated in this thesis' introduction, another key position in the discourse on scores is one associated with the idea of choreography as a system of command, advanced by performance scholars André Lepecki (Lepecki, 2006, 2010) and Randy Martin (Martin,1998) and Mark Franko (Franko, 1995, 2018). These authors reflect on the proposition first through Jean-Michel Foucault's interpretation of military choreography as a way to control and discipline bodies (Foucault, 1977) and extend it to dance in the modern and contemporary world. In this vision, Lepecki especially further suggests (Lepecki, 2006, 2010) that the ways in which a choreographer imparts their vision onto the dancers and directs the movement may be seen as imperative or prescriptive instructions. These often include vocal instructions, but also written scores. Within this framework, resistance is seen as the possibility of tension or dissent to scores.

In *I do this every day: pass it on*, Ivana Sehic and I interact with the idea of resistance in a complex way. In the performance, we interrogate ways to resist to the visible and invisible scores and instructions present in the public space that

ourselves and the other people in the public space we are in (the audience, the passers-by). An example of a tangible instruction from the *I do this every day: pass it on* performance video is 'Bill posters will be prosecuted'. An example of an imagined score is when we arrive at a scooter parked on the street: 'I turn the key in, I release the break, I switch the engine on'). In the collaborative process, we also worked with the idea of resistance as 'deviation', which was close to Ivana's PhD investigation on the persistence and choreography of mourning rituals.

Most importantly, however, and departing from the idea of resistance as proposed by authors outlined above, *I do this every day: pass it on* proposes live scoring as, in itself, a form of resistance. This is partly achieved through the framing and drawing attention to portions of daily life we would not normally paying attention to, which produces an alienating effect. This is partly achieved through decontextualisation, juxtaposition, and humour, as identified through Horvat's and Etchells' examples. Finally, the performance exposes moments of intimacy between the two performers, between the audience and the performers, and the passers-by – creating a layer of secrecy and affect that disrupts the normative spatial structures of the street.

Live Scoring as Mapping Space and Time

While working as an Evaluator within the Visitor Research team at the V&A throughout a period of six years (2013-2019), I carried out visitor observations in the galleries at the V&A and Young V&A[5]. The term 'evaluation' in museum professional

[5] The name of the museum for the period I am referring to, prior to its re-opening in 2023 after a capital development project, was 'V&A Museum of Childhood'.

practice refers to the process and strategies used to assess visitors' engagement with the museum's exhibitions, permanent displays and public programmes more broadly and, within the V&A, it is led by the Marketing division in close consultation with the curatorial and design teams. The most common evaluation method used at the time was interviewing visitors face-to-face using a set questionnaire with close-ended and open-ended questions, with interviews carried out at random at different times of the day during opening hours of the museums, on different days of the week. This methodology, especially when the questionnaire is mostly based on multiple-choice, rating scales or closed-ended answers, has the advantage of producing comparable data, that can be easily summarised into reports and graphic charts.

The most evident disadvantages of visitor questionnaires are that closed-ended questions are unlikely to capture the nuances of visitors' thinking, and that what people say may not reflect the core of their attitudes and beliefs. For this reason, visitor interviews and questionnaires are sometimes complemented with observations and tracking studies. These are methods where the evaluator places themselves in a position inside the museum, for example, in a gallery or at the entrance, observes visitors' physical behaviour, and records it using various parameters. One of the reasons why this type of methodology is less used in museum practice – which brings me to a crucial point for the present discussion – is that it is very difficult to find parameters to track visitors' physical behaviour that produce comparable data which can be easily summarised or organised into measurable categories.

While working as an Evaluator at the V&A, in 2019 I carried out tracking and observations in the Fashion gallery at the South Kensington site. The evaluation ran on a very limited budget and mainly aimed to inform the gallery's redesign and curatorial rearrangement. In this work, the Visitor Research team discussed with me the possible ways they had considered to categorise visitor physical behaviour, and we agreed and acknowledged the challenges of translating it into quantifiable and comparable data.

The decision was made to consider, in the study, three factors. The first parameter was to examine which of the two gallery entrances was used more often as an entrance and which was used as an exit. This factor was largely influenced by the position of the gallery within the museum, and affected by the proximity of the main museum entrance on Cromwell Road, the museum shop, and staircase, would help to inform the future display of certain objects near the entrance or exit. Secondly, as the gallery had a circular shape, less common for a museum, we tracked which pathways visitors took within the gallery. In this case, the tracking was made by narrowing down the description of the pathways to the four options below, instead of drawing the pathway on a map or diagram of the gallery (See images below).

Route taken	South Asia	Sculpture	Total
Walk straight through	3	3	6
Circled whole gallery, looking at collection	6	10	18
Looking at collection but only one side	8	6	14
Total	17	19	38

Image from V&A (2019) Fashion Gallery Front-end Visitor Survey and Observations Report

Finally, to assess which exhibits sparked more interest, the decision was to look at behaviours that most clearly externalised engagement. Once again, to simplify and make sure the data was quantifiable, the physical behaviours were narrowed down to the descriptive actions in the image below.

	count
Just glancing (less than 5 secs)	294
Looking in detail	405
Talking in a group	206
Taking photographs	32
Sketching	2
Reading labels	230
Reading panels	35

Image from V&A (2019) Fashion Gallery Front-end Visitor Survey and Observations Report

I am referring to this example of an evaluation study from the V&A Visitor Research team, partly because of my longstanding collaborative relationship with them, which enabled close dialogue about the motivations behind these choices. The study was run with limited resources and a tight timeframe, compared with many other major visitor research projects at the V&A. Although tracking and observation studies are common in museum practice internationally, the strategies described above are not drawn from a standard methodology and were devised ad hoc for this study.

This example, however, allowed me to reflect on my live scoring because, again, it points to the tension and productive failure of scripting movement. The discomfort and challenges faced by the V&A Visitor Research team in narrowing down the visitor physical behaviour to measurable data only reinforce the necessity of a practice which is directional and purposefully unquantifiable to complement and inform the current professional practices in museums.

Another tool that was adopted in the mentioned Evaluation study for the V&A's Fashion Gallery redesign is the measuring of time spent by visitors in front of some key exhibits – this is commonly known in Visitor Research as 'dwell time', and often used as an indicator of the level of audience engagement for a particular artwork or section of a gallery. As an Evaluator, I used a chronometer starting in the moment the visitor would stop in front of an artwork, a panel or another element of interest in the gallery display, and stopping when they started moving again. Data from this method looks like the below:

Dwell time	in mins
Average	9.5
Min	1
Max	44

Under 5 mins	27
6-10mins	14
11-15mins	9
16-20mins	6
21-25mins	5
26-30mins	1
30-40mins	0
40mins+	1

Image from V&A (2019) Fashion Gallery Front-end Visitor Survey and Observations Report

Visual-graphic choreographic scores: Blog article, PhD website design and visitor mapping practice at the V&A South Kensington

As part of my PhD practice, I sought to continually integrate my knowledge and experience of this type of methodology from the professional museum sector with my experience of score-making practice as a dance artist. As seen in the previous section of this chapter, although the quantitative and qualitative Visitor Research methods may be problematic and lead to findings that offer only a partial interpretation of visitors' physical behaviour, they attest to a struggle of observing, documenting and recording movement, which strongly connects to dance notating

and score-making practices. During my period of practical research at the V&A Sculpture Gallery, I also experimented with scoring visitor pathways and behaviours through hand-drawn maps. To inform this aspect of my research, I drew on my academic background in the history of art and visual culture to research historical examples of non-scientific mapping.

Rather than adhering to mathematical criteria or striving for accuracy and objectivity, my work on mapping practices seeks an understanding of reality that is subjective and deliberately inaccurate. In the seminal essay 'Deconstructing the Map' (Harley, 1989), J.B. Harley challenges the idea of the objectivity of maps, highlighting, in a Foucauldian framework[6], their connection with systems of political, economic and cultural power, and their role in shaping people's perception of time and space. With reference to Derrida's framing of maps as a cultural text[7], Harley points out how, since the 17th century, 'map makers and map users have increasingly promoted a standard scientific model of knowledge and cognition' where 'the object of mapping is to produce the 'correct' relational model of the terrain' (Harley, 1989, p. 277). In his interpretation, accuracy and austerity of design, too, represent a cultural and philosophical model where 'reality can be expressed in mathematical terms' (*idem*, p.277) and through systematic observation and measurement' *(idem*, p.277) they reflect a truth that can be 'independently verified' (*idem* p.277).

[6] Harley draws on various Foucault's texts
Foucault, M. (1973) *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, Vintage Books, New York.
Foucault, M. (1978) *The History of Sexuality: Volume I An Introduction* (trans. R. Hurley), Random House, New York.
Foucault, M. (1980) *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings*, 1972–1977 (ed. C. Gordon) (trans. C. Gordon, L. Marshall, J. Mepham and K. Sopher), Pantheon Books, New York.
[7] Harley refers to Derrida, J. (1976) *Of Grammatology* (trans. G.C. Spivak), The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD.

As described in the first chapter, this research was partly conducted during the Covid-19 lockdown in the UK, when signs and regulations around quotidian movement in public spaces presented me with new opportunities for reflecting on everyday movement choreography. Concomitantly, I was offered a 2-month period of curatorial work experience at the V&A Museum of Childhood (Feb-Mar 2020), which led to producing a blog post published on the V&A website, which forms part of the PhD practice submission: https://www.vam.ac.uk/blog/museum-life/travelling-in-time-and-space-staying-still. The blog post condensed some of my reflections on the connection between everyday signs and 'instructions' present in the public sphere, systems of choreographic notation in contemporary dance and historical examples of cartography.

This brief online article aims to take the reader through a visual journey that jumps from medieval maps to board games, from Covid-19 street signs to contemporary dance scores, and frames them as examples of drawing, diagramming or mapping a development of events or movement in time through space. Although condensed and summative, the post touched on some key points of this present discussion.

First, through these visual examples in the blog article, I also sought to emphasize the profound connection between movement notating practices in contemporary dance and pre-modern cartography. More specifically, the blog post highlights two examples of Medieval maps that epitomize two ways of representing space characteristic of the cartography of that epoch, and that strongly relate to my PhD scoring practice. The first type of map I refer to is a descriptive 'map' – a map that is not a visual representation of the space but consists in a series of verbal statements

– for example ‘when you arrive at the oak tree, turn right and walk until the stream’. With reference to Austin’s idea of performative as interpreted in performance studies (Austin, J.L., 1976), this strikes me as a type of performative map, as the space is defined through the actions that are performed in it, which change the space through their performance. We may also say that these statements are similar to choreographic ‘instructions’, or verbal scores.

This type of mapping of space has strong connection with choreography and dance notation because it uses the body and an experiential, human perspective on space to measure and record it. Albeit being a representation of space, this type of map also implies a temporal dimension – the verbal or textual statements are in a sequence, and these also occasionally have an indication of how long the action needs to last for, before going to the next action.

The second type of Medieval map I connect to in my PhD practice is one where the space is defined through a graphic representation of space, such as drawing or diagramming (as opposed to a textual or verbal statements) where the graphic representation also contains a temporal dimension. In his lifelong research the Garden of Eden, Alessandro

traces the history and development of the cartographical representations of the Christian earthly heaven (Scafi, 2013). These maps often show, not only a representation of the lands known at the time, but also a vision of what was then believed to be history and, therefore, they represent time. Scafi’s studies show that, in Medieval maps, Eden becomes a crucial point of conjunction of time and space: by depicting Adam and Eve being cast away from the mythical garden ‘at the

beginning of time' these maps represent a moment in time in Christian history. Equally, Eden is always located spatially as a land somewhere broadly in the 'East' in relation to the lands known by European cartographers at the time. Eden also is often located at the top or at the bottom of the map to visually symbolize the beginning of everything. In some examples, Scafi illustrates, the celestial Heaven and Hell are also located in relation to it, symbolizing the end or arrival point of human life and history, once again encapsulating a temporal dimension through their spatial location (Scafi, 2013, p.55).

Through the period of curatorial work experience at the V&A, I had the opportunity to research several visual examples of board games in the Young V&A collection. The design of these games' boards is a graphic representation of different sites and locations (the game 'spaces'), with pathways or ways for the 'pieces' to move through them. Through the rules of the game and different types of performative actions – for example, throwing a dice or choosing a card from the deck – the boards' designs are also maps that represent both a spatial dimension and a temporal progression.

While in the instance of the said Medieval maps, the sequence of events is set and unchangeable (the original sin inevitably marks the beginning of the world in the Christian Medieval vision of history of the time), in the case of board games, the temporal progression has constantly changing outcomes depends on chance and on the players' decision and skill. Though it is produced through a set of rules and it follows the pathways represented through the board's design, these are also always different depending on the game. Similarly, the pathways described by the sequence

of a game's 'spaces' do not always follow a linear progression. A very clear example of this is Snakes and Ladders – a game that is at least 2,000 years old and has been reproduced in many designs and variations from India to the UK and US. In this game, pathways are often intricate and non-linear, as can be seen in the visual examples below.



Game – Gyanbazi, India, late19th-early 20th C (made), Victoria and Albert Museum, CIRC.324-1972.



Board Game – Snakes and Ladders, England, J & L Randall Ltd, 1958-1963 (published), Victoria and Albert Museum, MISC.40-1977

Similarly to the types of Medieval maps described above, I believe that board games – and especially through the artwork of the games 'boards' – share a similar intention or a struggle of representing time in relation to space, and suggesting different possibilities of movement through it, and this has profound links with choreographic notation. For this reason, I chose to present the submission materials through a website design inspired to similar concepts.

The handwritten 'museum scores' which form part of my practice submission, can be viewed at https://www.museumchoreography.com/museummaps. In developing this PhD scoring practice, I was strongly inspired by the conceptual approach to making of artist Himali Singh Soin, especially as conveyed through her limited-edition publication *We are opposite like that* (Singh Soin, 2020), and by my experience as one of the participants in dance artist and choreographer Rosemary Butcher's intensive workshop 'Critical Pathways' (Butcher, 2010). In the discussion that follows, I relate to Singh Soin's use of cartography as an inspiration for her work and Butcher's use of language and text in score-making.

I ground my live scoring practice on to Singh Soin's publication *We are opposite like that,* for the artist's overall artistic approach, including her inspiration into cartography. The publication, co-commissioned by Forma for Frieze London 2019**,** is designed by the artist herself and comprises maps, poems, drawings that derived from the artist's research in the Arctic and Antarctic circles.

Overarching through the book, is the concept that scientific research around the poles has historically been characterized by mistakes in measurement and mirages because of the harsh weather conditions including fog and ice. Singh Soin refers to scientific explorations throughout history, and the ever-changing nature of ‘accurate facts’ about the area known by humans. The story creates fictional mythologies, and it is told from the perspective of a humanized ice, who has seen explorers, animals and landscapes passing and changing over the centuries. Ice is a feminine voice, as clearly revealed by the poem ‘She became ice’ (Singh Soin, 2020, pp.36-37) who seems to distinctively stand among a world of men’s confidently conquered lands and mathematical concepts.

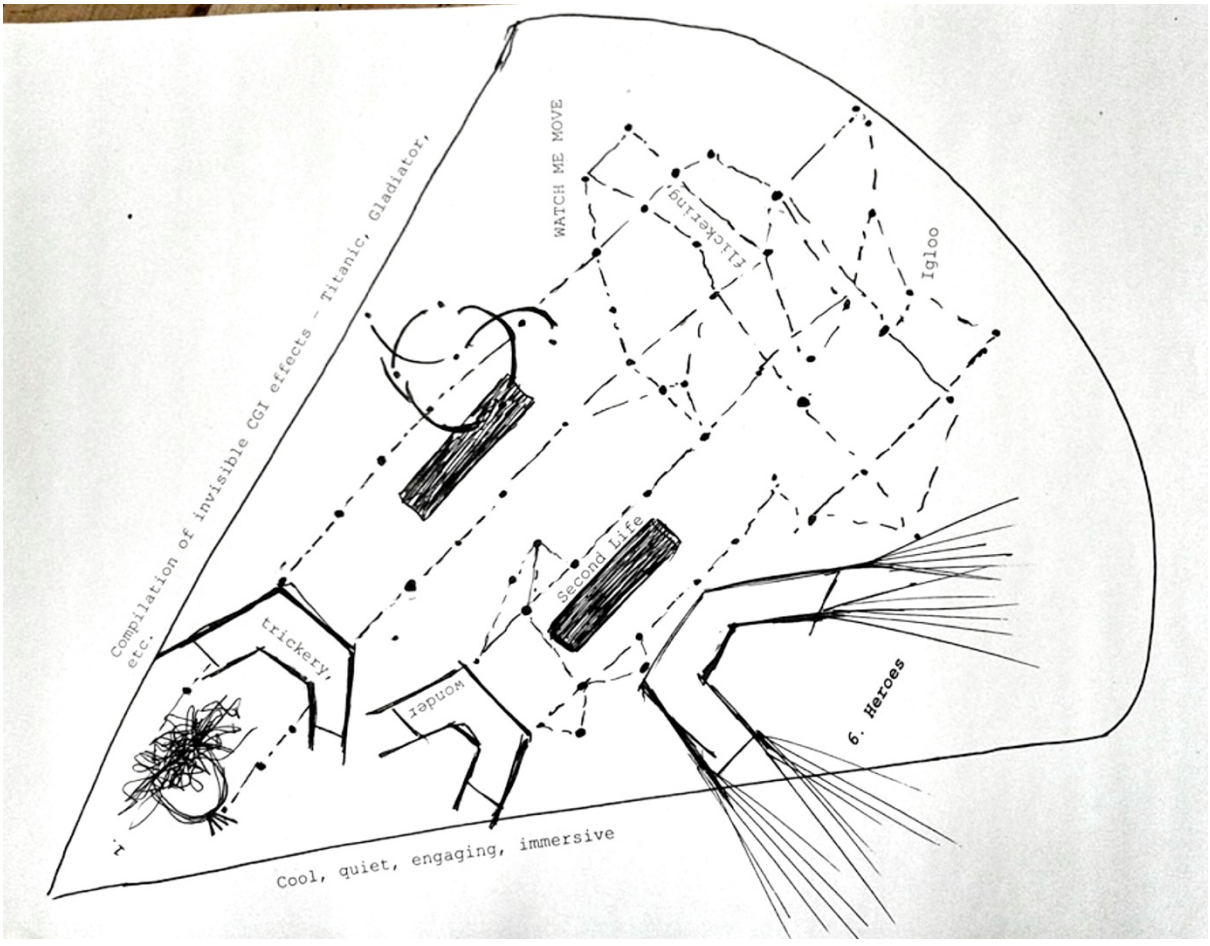
The publication’s overall design and included drawings often echo the principles and aesthetics of cartography and astrology, and the book is framed as an ‘almanac’. The idea of the poles is reflected in its layout, where the left-to-right and top-to-bottom orientation ends halfway through the book, forcing the reader to turn it around. The natural white fabric cover, printed in deep blue ink, and the shiny, crinkly piece of foil gently left behind within the page feel reminiscent of the chromatic and varied textures of ice, sea, and perhaps sails. Three sheets of tracing paper, split halfway through the book and precisely printed with a map, recall the aesthetic of navigation maps.

Critical Pathways was a series of self-curated workshops by Rosemary Butcher as part of the Independent Dance programme at Siobhan Davies Studios in London, UK, open to dance and movement professionals and selected by application. Having taken part in a workshop in 2011, I will draw mostly on my own experience of

working with Butcher to outline how this choreographer's approaches inspired my practice. In doing so, I echo and transform Stefanie Gabriele Sachsenmaier's approach in tracing the history and influence of the Critical Pathways series in her article in the *Theatre, Dance and Performance Training Journal* (Sachsenmaier, 2021). Taking an experimental approach, Sachsenmaier traces Butcher's influential role both as a choreographer and as a mentor and teacher, using anecdotes and accounts from practitioners who participated in the series, as well as several handwritten annotations by Butcher herself and the participants. Through these anecdotal sources and her own experience of working with Butcher, Sachsenmaier emphasises the choreographer's influential role in shaping many of the participants' choreographic practice, which cannot be equally demonstrated through other published sources or the artwork produced by Butcher herself.

The author also highlights Butcher's own use of idiosyncratic language as 'a source for the choreographic' (Sachsenmaier, 2021, p.165). As Sachsenmaier points out, during the workshops Butcher led improvisation sessions in which she gave verbal cues, some of which are documented in handwritten annotations by Butcher herself or her participants. The cues were either improvised or followed an open score, and they were always given in close dialogue with the movement being created in the room, often leaving long pauses between cues in response to the movement. Butcher's verbal cues were often elusive and evocative rather than descriptive of the choreographies being played out, and they offered poetic, imaginary, and philosophical prompts that were at once drawn from and amplified the participants' movement.

Following a similar approach to Sachsenmaier's, I draw on my own experience of participating in Critical Pathways in 2011 and reflect on Butcher's influence on my use of language as a source for the choreographic. The image below is the score I produced during the workshop. The task that led to this score was to watch two other participants' improvised movement and notate it through hand-drawn sketches and text. After the annotation, time was given to rework and develop the score.



My hand-drawn score during Rosemary Butcher's *Critical Pathways* (2010)

The text in this score is a collage of words taken from the gallery brochure for the exhibition 'Watch Me Move', presented at the Barbican the same year, which I happened to have in my bag at the time of the workshop. In this case, the textual score was not created outright but is a 'found' text – a textual ready-made, with

words cut out and re-assembled in relation to the drawing. Decontextualised and reframed in relation to the drawn pathways, the brochure's language, originally intended to guide the reader through an historical overview of animation to video-games, is reimagined as poetic and as describing the qualities of the improvised performance I had witnessed. Words overtly belonging to the semantic area of the digital ('CGI effects') or less univocally relating to it ('Second Life', 'Heroes') find new meaning and allow different associations within the present score. The hand-drawn lines not only represent different qualities of movement and rhythms but also visualise how movement produced different spatial qualities – from a gradual pace at regular intervals (dotted line), to an epic projection around the '6. Heroes' area of the score, and the solemn, tomb-like rectangular shapes filled in black ink.

Chapter Conclusion

In continuing to investigate the first research question around agency and resistance to museum choreographies and its 'scores' (Question 1, p.11), this chapter turns the spotlight on visitor movement. It explores potentialities of overlap between score-making practices in dance and visitor research strategies utilised in museums and galleries, therefore focusing on the second research question, 'How can the choreographic practice of scoring and movement notation be used to investigate visitor agency in moving through an art museum space?' (Question 2, p.11).

I experimented with this practice of live scoring both at street level in *I do this every day: pass it on* – and at the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington, London. This practice demonstrates that deliberately embracing subjectivity, incompleteness and irresolution in notating movement produces possibilities for

resistance through the devices of distance and decontextualisation, framing and drawing attention, humour and absurdity.

In a summative review of the relativity of the act of mapping – framed as a highly subjective, socially conditioned and programmatically failed attempt to trace space in its relation with time – I have suggested new potential avenues of research for the methodology proposed. This is, after review, not positioned in opposition to research methods used in Visitor Research departments in museums, but rather shares a similar tension and strives towards the impossibility of comprehensively recording movement through verbal and graphic representation.