

HÉR!

An Exploration of Artistic Agency

Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir



LUND
UNIVERSITY

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

by due permission of the Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts,
Lund University, Sweden.

To be defended June 19, 10:00 at Inter Arts Center, Malmö.

Faculty opponent
Prof. Jan Schacher

Organization: LUND UNIVERSITY, Faculty of Fine and Performing Arts, Malmö Academy of Music.

Document name: Doctoral dissertation

Date of issue: June 19, 2023

Author(s): Halla Steinunn Stefánsdóttir

Sponsoring organisation:

Title and subtitle: HÉR! An Exploration of Artistic Agency

Abstract:

This doctoral thesis is concerned with agency in the work of a performer, curator, and composer, and how these agencies are socio-culturally constructed. Grounded in creative practice as primary research methodology, the project builds on feedback loops between creation, analysis, and interpretation. The aim is to better understand the conventional norms that define the roles of composer and performer and, further, to explore more dynamic approaches to these agencies through the perspectives of a composer, performer, and curator active in the fields of contemporary music and sound art. The project responds to the following research questions:

- How can ecological-enactive and post-phenomenological perspectives on musical practice within Western classical music challenge current understandings of the roles of performer and composer?
- What artistic methods can be employed to provide a more robust understanding of the fluidity of these roles, to uncover their potential for artistic renewal in the creation and performance of contemporary music?

The research was designed as a series of micro-laboratories to look at agency through artistic collaboration in situations set in the concert hall, the recording studio, the virtual domain, and ecological sound art. This resulted in electroacoustic compositions, multi-channel installations, and site-specific work, including performances within a sonic hologram and with artificial intelligence. The analytical approach was built on autoethnography, and audio and video analysis through stimulated recall.

The findings outline how the technological, non-human, and human agencies of environments affect and shape processual work. The analysis highlights how co-relation between theory and practice may both serve to unpack the pre-conditioning of agency, while the artistic experimentation in the laboratories seeks to explore other agential relations. Here, the intentionality of the technologies used in the lab have unfolded new perspectives on the conventional roles of composer and performer, while enabling the development of more dynamic practices. Through a study of the author's curatorial practice, the role of a curator is understood not as defined by prescribed methods, but rather as dependent on the negotiation of the many agencies at play in artistic practice. The method development of the project has implications for the design of artistic research through the model of the laboratory. Herein, the use of audio and video technologies, particularly their application within stimulated recall methods, are integrated parts of analysis and artistic creation. The artistic research laboratory is proposed as a framework through which the potential of artistic research in music—as a vehicle for the development of new practices in professional contexts and in teaching environments—is substantiated and facilitated.

Key words: music, sound art, agency, situated actions, ecological, enactive, post-phenomenology

Classification system and/or index terms (if any)

Supplementary bibliographical information

Language: Eng

ISSN and key title: 1653-8617: 30

ISBN: 978-91-88409-33-1

Recipient's notes

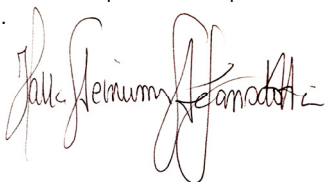
Number of pages: 286

Price

Security classification

I, the undersigned, being the copyright owner of the abstract of the above-mentioned dissertation, hereby grant to all reference sources permission to publish and disseminate the abstract of the above-mentioned dissertation.

Signature



Date 2023-05-15