

Dr Elena Cologni

## RESEARCH AS ART PRACTICE; A PHENOMENOLOGY OF PARTICIPATION BASED ON TRUST

Abstract for forum n 3. 'Re-Framing Interdisciplinary Perspectives', on 9th of October.

My experiences as an Artist, Researcher and Educator overlap and interweave within a process of inquiry. This takes place with an approach which can be traced back to a conceptual art context. Artists like Joseph Kosuth and Dan Graham adopted different media and languages to convey their message, Graham in particular also embedded his awareness of the sociological debate of the time in his work. Within the current information system, a great number of artists opened up their practice to multimedia, inclusive and participatory methods, and this has become a fertile territory for interdisciplinary work and research. My practice belongs in this context. From the art-practice-as-research approach I adopted since my PhD (2003)<sup>1</sup>, I would like to take this opportunity to share my experience of the methodology adopted during a residency at the Faculty of Experimental Psychology, Cambridge University (Arts Council of England, 2011-2013). The main outcome is an umbrella project [ROCKFLUID](#) encompassing site specific urban interventions, academic presentations and workshops. Throughout I understood my methodology as phenomenological, also as a coherent progression from my doctorate thesis and post doctorate project<sup>2</sup>. The project was instrumental for locating the collaborative and participatory nature of most of the activities, including the interdisciplinary research (psychology, philosophy and art), and in order to claim that my creative process/research is manifested or shared at different stages as art with others (collaborators, participants or audiences), as in the process involved in Literal Art (in Grant Kester's terms). In particular by referring specifically to two art pieces I shall illustrate how the recurring format of play in the physical space in relation to its recording/representation through technology<sup>3</sup> is a tool for social

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<sup>1</sup> Cologni, E., 'That spot in the 'moving picture' is you, (perception in time-based art)\*', in *Blood, Sweat & Theory: Research through Practice in Performance* ed. John Freeman, Libri Publishing, London, 2010; Cologni, E., 'FRUITION: perceptual time 'gap' as location for knowledge - Mnemonic Present Un-folding', in Perspective section of Body, Space & Technology, ISSN 1470-9120, School of Arts, Brunel University <http://people.brunel.ac.uk/bst/vol05/index.html>;

Cologni, E, ed, *Mnemonic Present, Shifting Meaning*, Mercurio Edizioni, Vercelli, 2009

Cologni, E., 'Present-Memory: Liveness Versus Documentation And The Audience's Memory Archive in Performance Art', *International Conference Consciousness, Literature and the Arts*, Cambridge Scholars Press, Performance Art', *International Conference Consciousness, Literature and the Arts*, Cambridge Scholars Press, January 2006;

Cologni, E, 'Mnemonic Present, Un-Folding', in Allegue Fuschini, L, Jones, S., Kershaw, B and Piccini, A (eds), *Practice-As-Research In The Performing And Screen Arts*, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008;

<sup>2</sup> 'The Artist Performative Practice Within the Anti-Ocularcentric Discourse', Central Saint Martins College, University of the Arts London, 2004, and post doc AHRC funded *Present Memory And Liveness In Delivery And Reception During Performance Art Events* (Central Saint Martins College, University of the Arts London, 2004/2006)

<sup>3</sup> **Video Live and site specific participatory installations**

SPA(E)CIOUS (series of mediated participatory installations/soft sculptures): Museum of Transitional Arts (MoTA), Ljubjana, Slovenia; Wysing Arts Centre, Cambridge UK; MK Gallery Milton Keynes; Artra Gallery, Milan; PSi #19, Stanford University 2013.

L'ELASTICO (series of site specific participatory installations/soft sculptures): *Games Artists Play* July 2012, Ruskin Gallery Cambridge, curator Bronac Ferran, with artist Liliane Lijn; MK Gallery Milton Keynes.

NAVIGATION DIAGRAMS, 2013 (Public Art, sculpture+film) MK Gallery Milton Keynes.

**Solo Shows:**

SPA(E)ZIOSO, 2013 PiacenzaArte, Gallery, Piacenza, Italy in Collaboration with the faculty of Architecture, L'Osservatorio Public Art del Politecnico di Milano campus Piacenza

**Group exhibitions:**

*Limits of Seeing (II)* June 2012, Institute of Astronomy, University of Cambridge, curators curator Bronac Ferran VISUALISE in collaboration with Anglia Ruskin's Faculty of Science and Technology, Cambridge Film Trust, Cambridge Institute of Astronomy and Ellie Morgan for Wysing Arts Centre.

*Cosmic Things*, October 2012, Artra Gallery Milan

**Conferences:**

SPA(E)CIOUS, *on trust*, Radical Space Conference, UEL, London 2013.

SPA(E)CIOUS, *on trust*, Consciousness Literature and the Arts International Conference, Lincoln University 2013

SPA(E)CIOUS, *Exhibiting Performance*, Westminster University, 01/03 March 2013

SPA(E)CIOUS PRESENT, *Dynamics of collective and individual experiences of space and duration within specious present, adopting technologies for enhancing audience engagement, while producing forms of documentation* at *How Performance Thinks* PSi Performance and Philosophy working group and Kingston University's practice.research.unit (2012)

engagement as well as enabling the construction of meaning within the work and the artist's creative process. Lately within this context the issue of dynamics of trust and power in collaborative and participatory practice widened my work through philosophy in a micro-sociological context.

## Biography

Dr Elena Cologni is an artist who works with site specific installations and performance grounded in conceptual art, and its tangible translations/manifestations. Cologni studied at the Academy of Art Brera in Milan, Università Statale in Milan, Leeds University (Bretton Hall), and has a PhD from the University of the Arts London, Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design, with the thesis: *The Artist's Performative Practice within the Anti-Ocularcentric Discourse*. Her post doc project 'Present Memory and Liveness in delivery and reception of video documentation during performance art events', received an AHRC Grant (2004-2006). In the outcome Mnemonic Present, Un-Folding series of 2005-2006, the use of 'live-recording' and 'prerecording' opened up questions on the involvement of the audience and their perception of what is present and represented, generating a form of 'mnemonic present'. She was Research Fellow at York Saint John University during which time she developed the project 'Experiential' (Creative Lab Residency at CCA in Glasgow 2006, Re-Moved 2008, CCA, Gi08 and Geomemos, Yorkshire Sculpture Park 2009, which received an Arts Council Grant for the Arts). At this point she was engaging with site specificity and notions of memory as archival and removal in trying to enhance the audience's and her own experience of the self in any given moment. She is particularly active in the discussion on Art Research as Practice and Participatory Research methods. She was research artist in residence at the Faculty of Experimental Psychology, and collaborated with a Neuropsychologist on a common interest in the relationship between memory and perception in relation to place. The main outcome is the umbrella project ROCKFLUID, which is characterized by a multidisciplinary approach to investigate the above. Rockfluid's social impact was also through a pilot Cologni was asked to devise for the NHS Foundation Trust in schools in the Cambridge region. Cologni's socially engaged art practice and research has been presented in academic and art contexts internationally, including: Brown University, Stanford University (US); Utrecht University (Netherlands); Venice Biennale, Venice; GAMEC, Bergamo; GAM, Bologna; (Italy), CCA Glasgow, Yorkshire Sculpture Park, MK Gallery, Whitechapel Art Gallery (UK), MK Gallery.

some relevant links

[www.elenacologni.com/memory](http://www.elenacologni.com/memory)

<http://www.elenacologni.com/experiential/removed.html>

<http://www.elenacologni.com/experiential/geomemos/index.html>

(participatory and cultural memory)

[http://www.elenacologni.com/experiential/that\\_spot.html](http://www.elenacologni.com/experiential/that_spot.html) (workshop on movement based art and technology)

- <http://rockfluid.com/category/workshops> in the section there are a number of examples of the interdisciplinary nature of my work including:

<http://rockfluid.com/the-london-studio-centre> (performance and Philosophy)

<http://rockfluid.com/radical-space-london> (performance, philosophy, sociology)

<http://rockfluid.com/cambridge-science-festival-2012> (science, art, cultural history)

<http://rockfluid.com/impact-2> (psychology and art in schools)

- the following are art installations/interventions as a result of all the above

<http://rockfluid.com/navigation-diagrams>

<http://rockfluid.com/cambridge-spacious>

<http://rockfluid.com/institute-of-astronomy-Cambridge>

<http://rockfluid.com/lelastico>

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SPA(E)CIIOUS PRESENT, *Dynamics of collective and individual experiences of space and duration*, Artra Gallery, October 2012.

Rockfluid, *Interfacing With Memory*, Science Festival, Department of Experimental Psychology Cambridge University (2012), E. Cologni and L. Saksida, chaired by Dr Caterina Albano (Artakt, University of the Arts London), Cambridge Science Festival 2012

Rockfluid, *shaping memory in transit*, Performance Studies international #17, Utrecht, The Netherlands, 2011