

## Introduction

*We interrupt this broadcast* [author's emphasis]—a phrase that has come to command our immediate attention [...] a phrase that evokes a few heart stopping seconds of anxiety between the interruption and the actual announcement of what has happened. It is a phrase that puts us in the moment; we brace ourselves as we wait to hear the news that follows those four chilling words.<sup>1</sup>

I have experienced this anxiety as very real. As a child, I used to have an acute fear when, as I was watching a television programme, the transmission would be interrupted by the announcement: “we are sorry to interrupt this programme but we go over now to the newsroom for a newsflash.” Even now, when I hear those words being spoken, or even reading those words, I become dizzy and start panicking.

Between 2010-2016, I undertook doctoral research that explored aspects of participation in Performance Art.<sup>2</sup> This article, based on that research, contributes to knowledge in participative performance practice and the positive deployment of using interruptive processes; this is to provoke participation within the context of Performance Art. For the purposes of my study, the term “participation” was defined as related to the audience’s active involvement within a live performance. My study defined an audience’s engagement with the work as understood through a form of action as planned/unplanned by the work’s protagonist. For example, planned participation may mean the audience responding to a set of instructions as devised by the protagonist, and the enactment of the instructions by that audience constitutes the work; thereby the work is dependent upon their participation. For the purposes of the study, I extend the term participation as meaning an audience physically taking part by their bodies entering the space and provoking a reaction from the audience. By doing so, definitions of the term participation include the following situation: the audience may sit in a chair and laugh, frown and/or giggle, thus indicating that they are aware of what the protagonist is saying and doing, and have been provoked to make a sound/bodily gesture. These nonverbal and verbal gestural reactions as indications of provocation thus constitute a form of participation within the live performance.

Claire Bishop describes contemporary art practice using aspects of performance with an emphasis on audience participation as a “surge of artistic interest in participation within contemporary art practice that has taken place in the early 1990s [and beyond] and in a multitude of global locations.”<sup>3</sup> The historical pinpointing of the

1990s is of no coincidence; Bishop is specifically referring to a set of practices emerging from a promotion for socially engaged art practice, as defined by Nicolas Bourriaud's curatorial model *Relational Aesthetics*.<sup>4</sup> Bourriaud promotes artists, including Felix Gonzales-Torres, Angela Bulloch and Carsten Holler, who themselves support a theoretical and conceptual curatorial framework that Bourriaud defines as "open relations."<sup>5</sup>

There are many strategies and tactics that practitioners use to engage participation.<sup>6</sup> Aligned with how Bojana Kunst refers to practitioners as establishing artistic tactics,<sup>7</sup> through practice-as-research, I aim to uncover tactics that not only increase the level of participation that I can achieve within my performances, but force audience participation. In other words, I aim uncover and put to work, within my practice, tactics that demand participation from an audience (whether they like it or not). Gregory Sholette and Nato Thompson refer to "tactics" as "manoeuvres"<sup>8</sup> to describe interventionist practice. They propose that "tactics" can be thought of as resembling tools: "like a hammer, a glue gun or a screwdriver, they are means for building and deconstructing a situation."<sup>9</sup> I concur with this definition, as strategies to understand and "deconstruct" Performance Art in terms of participation and, to be discussed in the contents of this paper, the power relations that are involved in participatory processes.

Within the discourse of impoliteness study,<sup>10</sup> there is a term that deserves much greater attention: *interruption*. I define the term "interruption" as characterised by disruption—through stops,<sup>11</sup> pauses, and breaks within the otherwise smooth running operations of an event or action. These stops, pauses, and breaks are surprise moments that derail expectations regarding what is pre-supposed to occur in the logical narrative of the event. Whilst some commentaries relating to the operations of interruption have branded interruption negatively, as a "violation,"<sup>12</sup> my work draws on Juliana Brixey, Kathy Johnson-Throop, Muhammad Walji and Jiajie Zhang's study,<sup>13</sup> which supports my argument that "interruption" can also have a positive dimension. They propose a theoretical framework to help explain the positive aspects of interruptions in which "warnings and alerts, reminders, suggestions and notifications are examples of interruptions that have beneficial outcomes by changing and influencing behavior."<sup>14</sup> They claim that "there is little understanding how interruptions can be exploited for positive outcomes."<sup>15</sup> In a January 2015 episode of the BBC World Service's radio programme *The Forum*, entitled *Interruptions*, the host Bridget Kendall stated:

“interruption can be a cause of disruption, but sometimes [interruption] can strengthen and support us.”<sup>16</sup> In the context of contemporary art practice, Annette Arlander has stated the following:

Work that functions directly as an interruption of the flow of activities in public space, where the interruption consists of breaking down the conventions and norms of how that space is ordinarily used in the expectations of the passerby, is a common strategy for artistic interventions.<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, it can be argued that interruption has historically been used as a tactic by artists and performance-makers in their practices, ranging from Brechtian Epic Theatre, Dadaist performance and the Mummers, to flash mobs and happenings and recent attempts in theatre to structurally engineer interruption into performance to rouse the audience. One example is DV8’s 2013 performance, where hecklers were planted into a performance to provoke audience reaction. *Transmission Interrupted*, a 2009 exhibition at Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, examined how contemporary artists have deployed the term “interruption” as a method for “open[ing] up spaces that disturb the course of everyday life and reframe the way in which we see and understand the world.”<sup>18</sup> In the context of theatre practice, Bertolt Brecht has described Epic Theatre as “not reproduc[ing] conditions but, rather, reveal[ing] them. This uncovering of conditions is brought about through processes being interrupted.”<sup>19</sup> He goes on to state that “the more frequently we interrupt someone engaged in an action, the more gestures we obtain [...] interrupting of action is one of the principle concerns of epic theatre.”<sup>20</sup> Brecht refers to contesting illusion in theatre (akin to naturalistic drama) by means of disrupting the unities of time, space and action through a *Verfremdungseffekt* (alienation effect),<sup>21</sup> a dramaturgical ploy that “constantly goes against the public’s theatrical illusion.”<sup>22</sup> To pull audiences and spectators out of what Brecht believed to be the trappings of illusionist/dramatic theatre (over-sentimentality and lack of criticality in the minds of the spectators), he made visible the means of theatre production—such as captions and projections, half-curtain and visible lighting. Walter Benjamin refers to Brecht’s usage of interruption as having an “organizing function”<sup>23</sup> and a means of uncovering new “situations.”<sup>24</sup>

Interruption has multiple dimensions: physical (bodies being clumsy by falling over etc.); and linguistic (you can interrupt using your body by putting your hand up, standing up, running onto a stage, walking out and so on (bodily interruption) as well as shouting something out to gain a reaction from those you are listening to/watching).

Indeed, during BBC Radio's *The Forum*, speaker Claudia Roda links interruption and interrupting to bodily gesture: "we [Italians] use our bodies a lot when we talk, and that's also a way of interrupting."<sup>25</sup> The context of practice (interventionist art practice) that Sholette and Thompson situate their "tactics" is important to discuss in terms of interruption. I refer to the performance practice of Dani Abulhawa, who in personal communication in March 2015, describes her practice in public spaces as "interruptions rather than as interventions or incursions." I also utilize "interruption" as a term over "intervention," as I do not seek tactics of practice to ameliorate or "improve" aspects of social circumstance; as is the case with much interventionist art practice, and attempts of creating social improvements such as those suggested by Sholette and Thompson e.g. *Homeless Vehicle* (1988-89) by Krzysztof Wodiczko. Although I describe my individual practice as "interruption," the nuances of meaning related to the term are important to highlight. I am much more concerned with interruption as a physical, linguistic, bodily action that has the capacity for aggression, as opposed to interruption as Abulhawa's idea of "interjection," which I argue denotes action that is less aggressive and disruptive.<sup>26</sup>

In 2011, I was invited to generate an audience-participative art performance for *Testing Grounds*. This was a programme by various artists, loosely conceived around the concept of failure, in the art gallery at South Hill Park, Berkshire, U.K. *Lost for Words* was my creative response to that invitation. The key aim of *Lost for Words* was to frame what I was doing as performance, in which a group of audience members, many of whom did not know one another, engaged in embodied participative performance that combined interruptive processes. These processes made use of slapstick to provoke a direct, bodily form of audience participation. In *Lost for Words*, this mismatch relates to contrasting effects on participants in terms of being part of a collective on the one hand, and being inhospitable and enjoying the anti-social nature of slapstick on the other. This latter is termed *Schadenfreude*, meaning the malicious enjoyment of another's misfortunes (German from *Schaden* "harm" and *Freude* "joy"). I anticipated that *Lost for Words* would be a lesson in how to force an audience to do what you want them to do by using a mixture of convivial hospitality, coercive impoliteness and interruption to produce a new, or deepened critical awareness of power uses and abuses in "ordinary" life. Examining interruption and exploiting its virtues through practice (as a tactic) exposes productive insights into exchange of power relations that go beyond abstract theorization. Circumventing commentary of

interruption that often posits the term and its affiliation with impoliteness and capacity to be disruptive as negative,<sup>27</sup> interruption is the key strategy that underpins the performance *Lost for Words*; presented here as a prime example of the operations of interruption in practice. I wished to see what level of disruption I could produce in liminality;<sup>28</sup> defining liminality as “the space between,” referring to interruption’s etymological roots as a derivation from its Latin origin; *interrumpere*: (inter) “between” and (*rumpere*) “break.” I engineered interruptions, actions related to the performative characteristics of slapstick; my role as the protagonist involved injecting interruptions (“breaks”) into performance proceedings (the liminal space “between start and finish”). Interruption can remind us of the implicit power relations at work in social communication processes. The power of interruption can quickly overturn/switch power relations. I drew upon the work of Fred Meller relating to disruptive pedagogy and relationships of power. Her work on the potential of a pedagogy comprised of performative aspects is important here as she suggests that performative technique as played out by the teacher/disruptor/trickster, “conversely maintains and upholds the power relationships and ideologies of the Institution,”<sup>29</sup> going on to argue that “learning about our teaching process and performance making process and how they are inextricably linked could mean that we might also learn how to disrupt this process and in so doing be empowered to challenge the orthodox.”<sup>30</sup>

*Lost for Words* lasted approximately one hour; the audience were instructed by me—as the work’s protagonist—and my sidekick assistant to engage in physical participation relating to bodily slapstick. Despite common perceptions that slapstick originates from North America in the early 1900s, the antics of its most popular protagonists Charlie Chaplin (British-born), Buster Keaton, and Laurel and Hardy owe a great deal to late 1800s British music-hall culture and way further back to sixteenth century Italian *Commedia dell’arte*, “when comedians discovered a way of hitting one another that didn’t cause pain.”<sup>31</sup> Slapstick’s performativity can be characterised by the following: the unruliness of the body;<sup>32</sup> physical comedy and bodily humour; laughter caused by someone falling over, tripping up, being clumsy etc.; and, non-convivial participation in terms of the social implications of *Schadenfreude* and superiority theory;<sup>33</sup> “as long as it is in our nature to laugh at the misfortunes of others, slapstick will survive.”<sup>34</sup> To define the relationship between slapstick and superiority, slapstick can be reduced to the basic joke—*stupid idiot* (he/she fell over, for instance)—*not me!* Slapstick allows the audience to elevate themselves as the “intelligent ones” as opposed

to those they are watching who are essentially “messaging about.” In other words, “we liken ourselves to the clever man, relaxing in the knowledge that we are not so stupid as the poor unfortunate, and we feel secure and can laugh at him.”<sup>35</sup> *Lost for Words* set up a situation that collapsed the binaries between audience and performer; participants not only engaged in slapstick (i.e., “do” slapstick with their bodies), they also watched others and were watched themselves.

Slapstick forces the body’s physicality to be recognised in terms of how we articulate participation. Interruptive processes that underpin the body in slapstick demand the body be recognised as unstable and temperamental. By using slapstick to explore the body’s capacity for incongruity (interruption) uncovers its subversive potential. Linking Brecht’s usage of interruption to concerns relating to the body, comedy, and performance in my own work, slapstick is useful in terms of mismatch and incongruity. It provides a tool (or in Brechtian thought, a “situation”<sup>36</sup>) for thinking about the body in performance as well as supplying a helpful shortcut for (physical) humour. At one moment during *Lost for Words*, the audience undertook a collective slapstick march around the gallery; I wanted to find out how other participants would react when another participant fails to perform an act of deliberate clumsiness correctly. Marching became the strategy within the work for me to engage participants in repetitive bodily actions and verbal gestures whilst at the same time being immersed in interruptive processes (slapstick) that could obstruct their attempts at regimenting their bodies whilst marching. What I discovered (as discussed in the forthcoming contents of this article) related to the body’s capacity for humour and how that humour can enable a discussion relating to participant power relations.

During my doctoral study, I devised a three-stage process as a new methodology for Practice as Research (referred to as PAR hereafter) to encourage, specifically, connecting theory and practice. The process, *Anticipation, Action and Analysis*, extends an existing model of reflective thinking,<sup>37</sup> prioritises the interplay between personal experience and self-reflective writing and rumination, while encouraging experiential learning and critical thinking. This process consists of devising a series of projections, planning a sequence of actions (within a performance artwork, the key form of practice within my study), carrying out those actions; and then writing about those experiences using different strategies. These strategies involved: making notes; annotating diagrams; writing narrative accounts; and listing the different stages that participants (protagonist and audience) underwent. To explain *Anticipation, Action and Analysis*

further: *Anticipation* relates to making a set of predictions informed by theory and argument, as well as using one's intuition. *Action* relates to executing practice based on those predictions, to gain experience of the operations of a theory/concept in practice (in the case of my study, the interplay between audience participation and corresponding levels/types of power exchange) and to lend a different understanding to associated theories. *Analysis* relates to reflecting upon what happened in the last stage, considering how the practice extends the theory through embodied and emotional response.

The chief purpose of this article is to demonstrate how *Anticipation*, *Action* and *Analysis* can be applied in practice: first, to explain how it can be used as new methodology for PAR, and secondly, as a structuring device to document practice in written form. What now follows is not only a write-up of events preceding, during and post *Lost for Words*, but also how the narrative structure of *Lost for Words* replicated my *Anticipation*, *Action* and *Analysis* model. To explain further, each section of this paper is structured to reflect not only the exact process that I underwent in my role as the protagonist—both in terms of setting up, enacting and then analysing *Lost for Words*—but also how the consequent *narrative* of the performance echoes those stages.

The events that took place during this performance can be broken down into three sections, roughly identical to the three sections of the reflective model. *Lost for Words* started with a discussion anticipating events that would take place as part of a forthcoming performance (*Anticipation*). The performance then took place (*Action*). It was then analysed and reflected upon (*Analysis*). By structurally engineering *Lost for Words* so that it replicated elements of *Anticipation*, *Action* and *Analysis*, the audience gained insight into how I devise, execute and reflect upon my performance practice. Practitioners often allow time directly after a performance for discussion of its working processes and rationales and enable the audience to enter discussion with them to gain feedback to *feedforward* (gauge audience reception to make readjustments to future performances). Although I did not allow my audience to share how they felt about their direct participation during the performance, on reflection, this would have been a worthwhile exercise—to gauge mismatch and incongruity, in terms of how I deemed their participation and how they understood their involvement.

An important question that *Lost for Words* raised is: “when did the performance begin?” The “performance” for the audience may have begun after the initial discussion with my sidekick, and finished when my sidekick and I discussed, in retrospect, all the

activities that had just taken place. I suggest that the “performance” began the moment that my sidekick and I walked into the gallery and began our discussion, and ended after I had read out the quote by Lisa Le Feuvre related to the concept of failure: “to talk of failure [is] to embrace possibility in the gap between intention and realization,”<sup>38</sup> and by my saying “thank you” to the audience as a signal that everybody could leave. Opening the performance by making the audience aware of an aspect of theory (Le Feuvre on failure),<sup>39</sup> exploring that theory through practice, and then ending the performance by repeating the aspect of theory in question helped me to reflect upon the relationship between theory and practice. *Lost for Words* was the first time that I had tried out a performance that started with addressing theory, then punctuating that theory with elements of practice, and concluding by re-addressing the theory to reflect.<sup>40</sup>

It is worth mentioning that where I write about—or present on—Practice as Research, I have used this *Anticipation, Action, and Analysis* model to provide the basic structure. In the following sections of this chapter, distinct writing styles with alternative voices are used to give the reader an understanding of my experience of working with slapstick in performance on different levels. These analyses provide the material in which to evaluate the extent to which slapstick can be used within activities framed as performance to increase levels of participation. In this article, I not only provide documentation of practice, but additionally, in my written documentation, I have adopted a style of writing akin to a factual report written in the past tense, to provide narration of a series of events taking place during and post this example of my practice. My strategy of recording the practice using an objective writing style resembles the strategy adopted by artist Chris Burden. Burden, who writes in the style of a police report, gives no personal response to events; no indication nor insight into what he was thinking during his performance—adopting an impersonal, objective and “almost neutral” writing style.<sup>41</sup> The writing style adopted in the section of “Analysis” offers the reader, by way of contrast, a first-person, emotional response to demonstrate what only practice—not theory—could produce. I enjoy both producing and witnessing live performance because I do not know what is going to happen—I cannot anticipate the outcome, either in the running of events or regarding my emotional responses. Dwight Conquergood, who describes performance as “a way of knowing,”<sup>42</sup> suggests that success is dependent upon a “not knowing” at the start and throughout the duration of a performance.

When I designed *Lost for Words*, I sought to exploit the potential of physical



interruptive processes at play, by developing certain focussed aspects within my previous works *Fall and Rise* (2008) and *Yes/No* (2007). Performing *Fall and Rise* and *Yes/No* taught me how I could extend my repertoire of tactics (related to comedy) to provoke audience participation in performance by including physical and bodily interruptive processes. The most significant change that I made to *Lost for Words*, as an updated version of *Yes/No*, related to spatial dynamics. In *Yes/No*, there were clear spatial divisions between the audience and myself. The physical space where *Lost for Words* was performed, however, adhered to conventions most commonly associated with the theatrical tradition of the *fourth-wall*.<sup>43</sup> Whilst I had anticipated that the physical performance space would at times follow a similar spatial dynamic to the fourth-wall space (most noticeably at the start and towards the end), there would be many moments during the performance where the audience would join me as co-performers to engage in bodily mismatch and incongruity. The slapstick in which I hoped to engage my prospective audience had the potential to generate laughter (laughing at getting the slapstick correct and laughing at getting the slapstick wrong). Great! Double possibilities for (anti-social) laughter and *I love Schadenfreude*.

In the following section on “Anticipation” I describe these latter two works as performances that are directly physical and bodily in nature, and make use of various comedy tactics to provoke participation. In the section titled “Action,” I provide a web link to a video recording of *Lost for Words*: a selected clip documenting a crucial moment in the performance’s narrative flow, where the mechanisms of physical and bodily slapstick enacted by participants make visible power relations at play. In the “Analysis” section I refer to key critical incidents taking place during the performance, and describe how these shaped the work’s outcome. In this final section, I deconstruct *Lost for Words* in the form of critical analysis, reflective commentary and personal response. My writing style in this section combines self-reflective, theoretical and contextual analysis. Some aspects of my writing use a colloquial tone, and I use a diaristic style, sometimes having a conversation with myself. I draw comparisons and similarities between *Lost for Words* and the performances of others operating in parallel contextual frames of reference. I also consider how *Lost for Words* advances what other people have said in terms of theory—here, I reconfigured the protagonist/audience relationship in *Lost for Words* as “host/guest.”

Exploring contractual agency through *hostipitality*, wherein a host may be as hostile as she is hospitable, *Lost for Words* reimagines the event of performance as an

event of hospitality. The Derridean concept of *hostipitality* is a portmanteau of “hostile” and “hospitality” that plays upon a language slippage<sup>44</sup> to suggest that hospitality is etymologically rooted in the terms “hospitable” and “hostile.” Derrida refers to “slippage” as a theoretical concept that suggests language does not have a fixed meaning, but rather a multitude of possible meanings dependent on the subjectivity of their user. In terms of slippage in meaning associated with the term “hospitality,” Derrida states:

I quote this title in German to indicate that the word for “hospitality” is a Latin word, *Hospitalität*, a word of Latin origin, of a troubled and troubling origin, a word which carries its own contradiction incorporated into it, a Latin word which allows itself to be parasitized by its opposite, “hostility,” the undesirable guest [hôte] which it harbors as the self-contradiction in its own body.<sup>45</sup>

My performance embodies an ambivalent conviviality and employs hosting to disrupt convivial participation as predicated upon a situation where everyone is happy and respectful of one another. The relationship between performer and audience is redrawn as *host* and *guest*, and the limits of hospitality are rethought by complicating distinctions between the terms hospitality, nurture, protection, generosity and self-preservation.<sup>46</sup> Examination of how the host/guest relation provides a helpful analogy to that of protagonist (me)/audience, as both bearing resemblance to one another. I use a “countdown” method to relate time-chronological events with emotional impact. I refer to how *Lost for Words* embodies tension between collectivity and conviviality on the one hand, and the anti-social nature of slapstick and laughter as a gesture relating to *Schadenfreude* on the other. To help me evaluate *Lost for Words* and assist with my reflections, I held a discussion with participants shortly after the performance, the same night, to gauge immediate response and reception. How participants behaved and what they said in the discussion indicated to me that I had achieved my aims for the performance. Several participants also completed a questionnaire about the performance, which I received via email two weeks later. In the five plus years since *Lost for Words* was performed, I have engaged in conversations with participants to discover how their understanding of the performance, now in retrospect, may have changed or become clearer.

The unfolding discussions contained within this paper theorise, articulate and demonstrate slapstick as an extreme version of interruption that is physical in nature.

My deployment of interruptive processes throughout *Lost for Words* to provoke participation helped me gain a better understanding of the power relations at play.

## Anticipation

The aspect of participation that I am most interested in relates to power relations, and I work in response to Bourriaud's conception of participation and democracy in *Relational Aesthetics* (modelled around social conviviality). As a means of critiquing power relations, I describe my practice as an artist/performance provocateur: not wanting to alleviate social imbalances of power in participative performance, nor to reinstate them, but simply to draw attention to them and use the practice of participative performance as a vehicle in which to initiate discussion of how social power operates in all aspects of our lives.<sup>47</sup> I define power relations in terms of the relationship between protagonist and audience: **I** (protagonist) do this and **you** (audience) do that. Bishop's strategy to address democracy and participant power relations in *Relational Aesthetics* is to use the work of Jean-Luc Nancy and Chantal Mouffe, who address ideas around democracy through a consideration of the term "antagonism" rather than through a consideration of "conviviality," as is the case with Bourriaud.<sup>48</sup> To summarise, Nancy and Mouffe's theories of democracy assert that no democracy exists without antagonism; there are power relations in democracy.<sup>49</sup> In response to the work of Nancy and Mouffe, Bishop suggests the following:

A democratic society is one in which relations of conflict are sustained, not erased. Without antagonism, there is only the imposed consensus of authoritarian order—a total suppression of debate and discussion, which is inimical to democracy.<sup>50</sup>

This is important if we apply a discussion of antagonism to *Relational Aesthetics*, as this acknowledges that there are power relations involved in democratic social relations—but more than that, *Relational Aesthetics* could speak about democracy (and the function of conviviality) whilst accepting the role that antagonism (construed as the opposite of conviviality) plays within it.

Whilst Bishop uses Nancy and Mouffe, I have an alternative strategy to explore power relations in participation: the body. During my performances, power relations are made visible and evident through how participants are instructed to choreograph the actions of their bodies. As the provocateur, I construe participation within my

performances less of a group of “participants” but more of an assembly of “bodies;” one whose exchange—as Michel Foucault asserts—is permeated by an intricate set of power relations, which are intrinsically connected to the body.<sup>51</sup> Referring to audiences as “bodies” rather than participants accentuates the fact that within a collective of people, with varying subjectivities, their body is their commonality; they all have a body, which can be, extending Foucault, controlled and managed. Using practice-as-research to reflect upon the relationship between body and power relations, my practice examines participant power relations through an appraisal of the body; as Foucault writes, “there is nothing more material, physical and corporeal than the exercise of power.”<sup>52</sup> To expand upon my configuration of audiences as *bodies*, I refer more specifically to his suggestion that power is achieved through techniques of bodily control he calls *biopower*;<sup>53</sup> in other words, enacting power through the subjection of the body.

Even though critical interrogation of *Relational Aesthetics* by Bourriaud is not new,<sup>54</sup> how it addresses participation as a set of complex power relations emerging from a consideration of the *body* is not often foregrounded; despite considerations concerning the body within wider discussions relating to contemporary art practice.<sup>55</sup> Cynthia Morrison-Bell’s perspectives on the body emphasise my perspective on the body in relation to Performance Art:

The body was an important departure from much art of the 1960s and 70s. Performance Art uses the body as the tool and medium, as sculpture even, making it endure the limits of the language of art, testing it to its extremes, just as you would any material, to find out how much you could mould it, push it, twist it or break it.<sup>56</sup>

My work demonstrates Morrison-Bell’s ideas above around the body in practice. Deploying slapstick in my performance art as self-inflicting “violence,”<sup>57</sup> or described by Andy Medhurst, slapstick as a form of physical “rudeness,”<sup>58</sup> my work attempts to push my body (and the bodies of others) “to its extremes” by subjecting the body to move in such a way that may cause physical discomfort.

Key practitioners in the field of embodied and physical performance, whose work is predicated upon audience participation relating to the body and its physicality, include Michael Portnoy—whose work contests *Relational Aesthetics* by setting up audience participatory encounters that often involve the audience enacting instructions that produce bodily discomfort.

In *27 Gnosis* (2012-13), for example, the participants are players in a game show where they are constantly instructed by Portnoy to adopt certain (uncomfortable) body gestures (Figure 1). In personal communication with the artist in October 2012, he describes this encounter as “*Relational Aesthetics* with a shifty iron fist [...] anti-feel good [...] *Relational Stalinism* subverts attempts at harmonious community by introducing destabilizing mechanisms to create a kind of voluptuous panic.” Branko Miliskovic’s *Curfew* (2013) performed at *TROUBLE #9*, Les Halles, Brussels is another example of an artist’s practice of producing various forms of crowd control, by ordering his audience to undertake often difficult, pain-enduring exercises that cause physical discomfort.

Whilst Miliskovic and Portnoy set up performative scenarios in which audiences enter into forms of participation which are overtly physical and often generate mental and physical discomfort, my work extends theirs by inserting what Roda suggests as “the body interrupting” into participative performance— *Lost for Words* elicits participation that engages bodies in physical interruptive processes that make explicit usage of slapstick.



Figure 1 Michael Portnoy: *27 Gnosis*, (2012-2013). Photographer: Paula Court. Courtesy of The Kitchen, NY.

The earlier *Yes/No* (2007), which I performed at Battersea Arts Centre, London was my first time working directly with slapstick (and repetition) in performance. Because of the interruptive processes that I deployed, the performance examined the relationship between what the audience hear and what they see.<sup>59</sup> To explain, whilst an audience seated in a *black box*<sup>60</sup> watched me perform in front of them, I would say the word “Yes” (pre-recorded and played through a tape recorder behind me) fifty times repeatedly as I shake my head repeatedly. I would then say the word “No” fifty times (again, pre-recorded and played through a tape recorder behind me) whilst nodding my head fifty times. Further actions consisted of me setting up further “opposites” where what I would say would not correspond with the physical action being enacted through my body. As I attempted to perform these actions, I made every effort to maintain non-emotional facial expressions, which made me appear serious and deadpan (a continual trope in slapstick) and not at all bemused by the slapstick activities that I was engaged in (Figure 2).



Figure 2. A drawing of “deadpan” performer; Lee Campbell, by Bryan Parsons, *Yes/No* (2007).

Extending the early 17<sup>th</sup> century Latin roots of the term “incongruity” from (*in*) “not” and (*congruous*) “agreeing,” these actions set up an uncomfortable discord (incongruity) between bodily gesture and spoken word, disrupting normative expectation of the socially ascribed behavior relating to how body action and verbal language function together, e.g. shaking our heads to express disagreement and nodding our heads to express the opposite. In this performance, *you are doing it right when you are doing it wrong* and vice versa. And it is in this disruption of “the norm” that the slapstick/the interruption lies. Firstly, in terms of what I was doing and what I was saying (retraining my body to perform an action in response to different vocabulary that I had taught it to), and secondly, when the action I was performing in relation to what I was saying at the same time was considered (certainly in British culture) as the “norm.” I understood slapstick in *Yes/No* as related to the disruption of body habits and

body memory, and the usage of repetition to contribute to this disruption. To evaluate how my performance knit theory and practice, I re-examined possible mismatch and incongruity in the relationship between bodily gesture and verbal language by drawing upon the work of Arthur Koestler<sup>61</sup> to explore habits, Edward S. Casey<sup>62</sup> to provide insight into bodily habits and body memory and Jorg Heiser,<sup>63</sup> who was useful in terms of his evaluation of repetition within his analysis of slapstick in contemporary art practice. Koestler suggests that “if often repeated under unchanging conditions, in a monotonous environment they [habits] tend to become rigid and automatized,”<sup>64</sup> and the work of phenomenologist Casey was useful as he suggests that habitual memories help us gain a sense of orientation within our daily lives, and that our bodies are bound in “habits.” *Yes/No* demonstrates the limits of habitual behaviour in terms of bodily gesture and verbal language in practice.

By performing this work, I learnt that one of the potentials of engaging in planned mismatch of the taught actions of the body and spoken language is that one becomes more aware of the felt emotions and bodily responses attached to mismatch and incongruity. I experienced first-hand the emotional and bodily implications of what Casey refers to as *enchevêtrement* a form of complication or entanglement by an overlapping of different elements.<sup>65</sup> What intrigued me most about performing *Yes/No* was the production of laughter by the audience and what could be its possible causes and reasons. Could it be that laughter occurs when an audience encounters the sight of a person purposely performing slapstick upon themselves—as demonstrated when I forced my body to be clumsy; not just once, but many times? Could it be that the audiences enjoyed the fact that I repeatedly failed i.e. shake my head whilst saying yes (the opposite of what I was trying to achieve)—an example of *Schadenfreude* (and how repetition may play its role)? If the production of laughter in *Yes/No* is connected to the interruptive processes in which I engaged, then this performance is a physical demonstration that supports Koestler’s theory of mismatch and incongruity as a form of “collision ending in laughter.”<sup>66</sup> Reece Shearsmith usefully articulates repetition in slapstick concerning its complicated and contradictory nature; Shearsmith suggests that slapstick and repetition provokes laughter, kills it and then by recurrence moments later, has the power to reinstate it (laughter). Slapstick is “funny then not funny and then funny again “cos it is going on.”<sup>67</sup> Heiser emphasises the contradictions in repetition more explicitly when he suggests that it can operate as an adversary to playfulness<sup>68</sup> (implying that repetition does not allow for experimentation or the production of new,

original ideas) whilst legitimising it.<sup>69</sup> Heiser states that “flogging a joke to death is a legitimate slapstick technique, even when pushed to the level of compulsive repetition.”<sup>70</sup> Certainly, the awkwardness I felt when enacting slapstick in *Yes/No* and the fear of getting the action wrong in front of others embodied these ideas. In the first instance, I found performing the slapstick quite enjoyable, but much less so after the twentieth iteration.

Much of my performance work following *Yes/No* took an alternative approach: audiences would join me as co-performers in artworks that provoked exciting dialogue between theories of performativity fore-fronting discussion of identity politics and the body as the core principle for making work. For example, *Fall and Rise* (2008), performed at *Whitstable Biennale* 2008, was entirely dependent upon my ability as its protagonist to engineer a carefully timed moment of physical interruption within performance (Figures 3-4).

Figure 3 Lee Campbell: *Fall and Rise*, Whitstable Biennale, (2008). Courtesy of Simon Steven.



Figure 4. Lee Campbell: *Fall and Rise*, Whitstable Biennale, (2008). Courtesy of Simon Steven.



The performance began with participants (myself included) marching down Whitstable High Street blowing whistles, banging drums and chanting using a megaphone to provoke attention. We then made our way onto Whitstable beach and



undertook a collective act of stripping off our clothes that would re-appropriate the moment where Reggie Perrin strips and runs into the sea in the well-known (in Britain) BBC TV programme *The Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin*. The “interruption” was our collective attempt to disrupt (British) cultural norms pertaining to politeness through an act of collective impoliteness (in Britain, it is widely considered rude/unacceptable to strip off/streak in public).<sup>71</sup>

In *Lost for Words*, I wanted to focus my attention on a specific kind of audience who had agreed to participate in an advertised event of performance within a white-cube art gallery. This location would provide me not only with a site for assembling a group of audience members whom I wanted to engage in a very disciplined form of participatory process (a form of collective participation that would engage their bodies in interruptive processes relating to using slapstick in a directly physical manner), but it would also give me a contextual frame (performative art practice) that would prove useful in terms of analysing the final outcome of the performance in relation to thinking about aspects on contemporary art theory, including Bourriaud’s perspectives on collectivity and conviviality. In planning *Lost for Words*, I sought to exploit and make much more of the interruptive processes in *Yes/No* by encouraging, as in the case of *Fall and Rise*, a group of audience participants to engage their bodies as part of a collective action. This action would again make usage of the process of confusing what is spoken and what is enacted through the body so that participants might gain direct experience of engaging their bodies in an activity that accentuates physicality. Furthermore, such a project would enable me to witness the social implications of performing slapstick as a collective. Collapsing the distinction between audience and performer, in *Lost for Words*, audience members would simulate actions I undertook as a performer in *Yes/No*. Rather than an audience watching me “do slapstick,” on this occasion they would simultaneously witness and produce slapstick. Earlier in this paper, I stated that whilst Bishop uses Nancy and Mouffe’s views on democracy (and the antagonism that is inherent) to critique power relations in participation, my strategy is, more specifically the unruly body;<sup>72</sup> *the slapstick body*.

To ensure that *everybody* in the audience participated in slapstick, I rethought my role in terms of how I direct audience members to enact instructions. This meant employing a “sidekick” to ensure everyone in the audience followed the commands. The nature of the instructions during *Lost for Words* demanded slapstick interruptions be repeatedly enacted to increase the audience’s clumsiness, and cause other

participants to laugh at them (a direct expression of the emotion *Schadenfreude*). To make the clumsiness even more deliberate than in *Yes/No*, as well as speed up the process of the participants getting the action wrong (failing to perform the action in the manner instructed by me), participants would have to contend with not having the sound element of the work pre-recorded; they would have to produce the sound/speech themselves. Participants would be part of a collective action; they would step outside their daily routines; participants would also be given permission to behave in a way that could be subversive, in terms of social norms of behaviour relating to the body and language and context.<sup>73</sup> There was also the “cool”/credibility factor to consider; participation in Performance Art is trendy for some. I anticipated some participants might also experience a form of mental and bodily discomfort because of their participation: what would be their survival tactics? How would they cope with the (potential) chaos of retraining the operations of the body and the mind so that they work incongruently to one another?

Using practice to explore Foucault’s ideas around the body and power, i.e., using various processes to control and manage the body (in much of my practice I use instruction both verbal and non-verbal to attempt to achieve this), I was curious to find out by performing *Lost for Words* if slapstick could offer fresh perspectives through which to think about the relationship between the body, participation, power relations and control in relation to Foucault’s neologism “governmentality”<sup>74</sup> —the enactment of power over people by government, a version of regulation, a conduct of conducts or more succinctly, the means by which political power manages to regulate the population.<sup>75</sup> I refer to governmentality here, as parallels can be drawn between state power and participative performance: *State is the performer/Subject is the audience*. What I wanted to find out was how might slapstick, as a process that is directly physical and explicitly related to the body, somehow disrupt my version of Foucauldian governmentality, or more simply, test David Robbins’ theory that slapstick [somehow] “disrupts society’s attempts to tame, control and regulate the body; walking into a door on purpose throws the socialisation process into question” *in practice*.<sup>76</sup>

Andrew Stott’s appraisal of slapstick positions slapstick as an unrelenting and abrasive force.<sup>77</sup> When I co-chaired a public discussion exploring slapstick with Dr. Giseline Kuipers as part of *Three Artists Walk in a Bar* (2012) an exhibition at De Appel in Amsterdam, Kuipers suggested that “slapstick is democratic [...] anybody is volatile [...] slapstick denigrates rather than levels out.”<sup>78</sup>

The slapstick protagonist is continually prone to attack through either a bodily revolt or loss of self-control, or from an external source that aims to dismantle his dignity [...] the body is utterly malleable and infinitely resourceful. At the heart of slapstick is the conceit that the laws of physics are locally mutable, that the world can rebel against you, or that a person can be suddenly stripped of their ability to control their environment or anticipate how it will behave.<sup>79</sup>

Considering the ideas of Kuipers and those of Andrew Stott in the quote above, as well as those mentioned at the start of this paper surrounding my anxiety around interruption, would I remove myself from the process of performing the slapstick and instead instruct audiences to enact slapstick whilst I occupied another space as to reduce the risk of me being, as Stott suggests, “prone to attack”?<sup>80</sup> No! If I didn’t allow myself to be at the mercy of slapstick, then my knowledge of the practicalities and emotional implications of working with slapstick wouldn’t be so tangible and I would not be able to write about slapstick from a first-hand perspective. I took comfort in Kuipers’ insistence that “[...] there is a moment of liberation for the ‘slapsticker’, glorious in getting up again—personal redemption—there is a vitality in slapstick—he survives!”<sup>81</sup> Yet again, I *quite liked* the discomfort that I was anticipating. My exploration of interruption could be cathartic: me confronting my anxieties and fear of newsflashes as embodying interruption. I surmise that my anxiety of newsflashes was partly because newsflashes are interruptions that I had not planned for, and they took me by complete surprise. However, I am sure that it is far more likely that it was the content (news of death, natural/manmade disaster etc.) of the newsflash that triggered the anxiety.

## Action

Please refer to the following section of the performance *Lost for Words*, South Hill Park, Bracknell (2011) ©Testing Grounds South Hill Park:

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/s4ohem2ql8rdt7i/Lost%20for%20Words%20%282011%29%20.m4v?dl=0>

## Analysis

This section is a discussion of how *Lost for Words* deploys slapstick in audience participation in a manner that sets up a dialogue between the following terms: collectivity, conviviality, the inhospitable, and *Schadenfreude*. To accentuate moments within *Lost for Words* where participants were directly engaged in slapstick, attention

is given to analysis of the first eighteen minutes of the forty-five-minute performance.

Bourriaud claims that “[t]he constitution of convivial relations has been an historical constant since the 1960s”<sup>82</sup> and refers to *Relational Aesthetics* as producing a kind of social conviviality; audience participatory artworks set out to provoke “convivial situations” developed as part of a “friendship culture.”<sup>83</sup> The aspect of Bourriaud’s usage of conviviality in which I am most interested relates to interpersonal power relations implicit within participative performance art. Bourriaud acknowledges conviviality within *Relational Aesthetics* may have its limits, in that “relational artistic practices [have been] reproached for denying social conflict and dispute, differences and divergences.”<sup>84</sup> By setting up a performative situation where visitors to a gallery are encouraged by my sidekick and I to undertake a series of actions, whose nature/limits are unknown to participants upon their consent to take part, *Lost for Words* enables consideration of these limits in terms of power relations at play in “constructed conviviality.”<sup>85</sup> These actions appear playful, fun, and humorous to those undertaking them in the beginning (again, as expressed by participants during my reflective discussion), through their enactment and (extreme) repetition their limits (of generating potential discomfort, pain, humiliation and shame for some) are revealed. What makes *Lost for Words* important in discussions on participation and conviviality is that the performance demonstrates power relations through the observable visible actions of the physical body. *Lost for Words* proposes the activity of hosting less as a convivial gesture, and more as an act of welcoming as a form of governance or *biopower*.<sup>86</sup> In other words, hosting as a control tool; hosting as a method *to control bodies*.

Jacques Derrida’s version of hospitality<sup>87</sup> is useful here because it acknowledges that there are power relations involved in all social exchanges, and enables an examination of conviviality (as a version of hospitality) in terms of interpersonal power relations. Derrida takes a top-down position to power: “I do this and you do the same” and “I instruct and you comply.” I argue that hospitality and the activity of hosting is synonymous with Foucault’s conception of power, insofar that it is “tolerable only on condition that it mask a substantial part of itself. Its success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms.”<sup>88</sup> My performance was a means of planning a situation where the limits of hospitality were explored, in that the situation’s hostility was visible through the physical actions of the bodies of all participants. To explain, despite the enjoyment that the participants felt at the time of performing the slapstick (which they expressed to me during the reflective discussion),

I ultimately used slapstick as the means to control those same participants, to undertake a physical action which, despite its apparent simplicity, was designed to incur laughter as a control mechanism. Through that laughter, I possessed the power to provoke humiliation/shame on the part of the participant (for getting the action wrong in front of others). This situation functions as a performative embodiment of *hostipitality*.

Visual arts exhibition *Feast: Radical Hospitality in Contemporary Art* at the Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago in 2012 explored how artists and performance-makers have interrogated the term “hospitality.” As a support for the exhibition, the museum staged a symposium where one of the panel sessions entitled *Being Bad* asked speakers and audiences to reflect upon artistic situations that deploy being a “bad host” to explore the intersection between art, hospitality and “badness” i.e., the “inhospitable.” Exploring participation modelled as hospitality, Dieter Roelstraete explored the intersection between art and hospitality, announcing “distrust at courtesy,”<sup>89</sup> and that we should remind ourselves of “art’s long interest in the inhospitable,”<sup>90</sup> citing terms such as dissent, disgust, discomfort, dismantle, and dissatisfaction. These ideas are significant to an analysis of *Lost for Words* in terms of my position as the performance protagonist.



Figure 5. Lee Campbell, *Lost for Words*, Testing Grounds, South Hill Park, (2011). Courtesy of Testing Grounds.

Analysing my actions during *Lost for Words* as displaying (bad) hospitality, my behaviour towards the audience fluctuated between displaying visibly outward gestures of being hospitable, and then undermining the goodwill and convivial nature commonly

associated with these actions (actions that could be construed as being a “bad host,” or an inhospitable host). Actions associated with conviviality and welcoming, such as handing out cups (Figure 5), generated conviviality amongst strangers—it was also a way I could secure compliance. Handing out the empty cups (an ambivalently convivial welcome to the performance) set up an immediate uncertainty. Some of the audience members displayed curiosity. Were they expecting me to serve them an aperitif? Did the audience perceive me as being inhospitable in this instance, as the cups were empty? The cups’ function (they were later used as part of a cup-string-telephone activity) eventually became clear; they functioned as extended earpieces. These served to obstruct the ease of audiences enacting the slapstick.<sup>91</sup> In his analysis of humour, Simon Critchley suggests the following:

In being told a joke, we undergo a particular experience of duration through repetition and digression, of time literally being stretched out like an elastic band. We know that the elastic will snap, we just do not know when, and we find that anticipation rather pleasurable.<sup>92</sup>

I connect these ideas with Rudolf Frieling’s theory<sup>93</sup> that consensus in participative art performance is borne out of a curiosity to find out what the nature of the participation itself constitutes. This is important in terms of both duration and participation. Entering into a participative piece of performance art with uncertainty, audience members engaged in the activity that I had set them, but did not know long how it would last. I argue that what they did know was that laughter would occur, because of the repetitive nature of the action, and because they had watched the sidekick and I perform slapstick (not just once but repeatedly over and over again) in front of them, and this provoked many of them to laugh at some point during their participation.

To define and redefine (subvert) how we frame and reframe the possibilities of performance, in *Lost for Words* I generated a space that applied Derridean slippage to performance practice. The outcome was ambivalent participation, as echoed by a response at the time by one participant. In an e-mail conversation on February 21, 2011 with the participant, when I asked her how she construed her role within the performance, she replied “Witnessing? Observing? Participating? Surveying? I was both witness, observer, participant and surveyor of slapstick all at the same time!” The participant was an artist who told me that she participated in the performance because she was exploring possibilities in her practice of working with the medium of performance—of not just making art work in front of a live audience, but by being a

performer *with* an audience. This was something she had not done before, so this situation was a real challenge for her. I was pleased with her response, as I purposely set up an ambiguous state of uncertainty with regards to the terms “performer” and “audience.”

Figure 6 Lee Campbell: *Lost for Words*, Testing Grounds, South Hill Park, (2011). Courtesy of Testing Grounds.



In this moment (Figure 6), all participants present were engaged in the performance, simultaneously as performers and spectators. In other words, they witnessed slapstick (watching others perform slapstick) whilst they also enacted slapstick themselves. By participants engaging their bodies in the interruptive process, different levels of laughter were produced as an outcome of their participation. Analysing what form(s) this laughter may have taken because of participation in physical and bodily interruptive processes is important in developing greater understanding of the social implications of slapstick in practice.

Laughter is of the body, like speech, but interrupting, punctuating and interfering with it. At the same time, laughter is a social act, underpinning social bonds but also capable of undermining them. Its role in the debunking of power is well known to artists but so too is its horrific mocking accompaniment to acts of extreme violence. And when it comes to contemporary art, the urge to provoke laughter, often through absurd or bizarre means, is being felt more and more [...] Provoking laughter through an innate acceptance of certain blunt facts about the body is vital.<sup>94</sup>

The significance of Bob Dickinson's above assertion about the power of laughter relates to how slapstick in *Lost for Words* can be thought of in terms of laughter as participation, provoked by interruption. Laughter can be thought of as having paradoxical functions. Linking Dickinson's insistence that laughter can "underpin" as well as "undermin[e] social bonds"<sup>95</sup> to Don Nilsen's views that humour can be used to "in-bond" and "out-bond,"<sup>96</sup> this paradox can be defined as a three-pronged axis that contains alternative motives and purposes by all parties involved. These three prongs relate to social control, social conviviality and collectivity, and the antisocial nature of slapstick. At the symposium *Dialogues in Performance I: Collaboration* at Central Saint Martins in 2011, Professor Jane Collins suggested that nothing is more controlling than laughter. Collins' perspective relates to my intentions of using laughter as an effective control tool to help maintain participation by those involved in the interruptive process. In terms of social conviviality and collectivity, individuals may want to be part of a collective, whilst at the same time desiring attention to be steered onto them. By performing the slapstick, audience members reaffirmed their presence within the performance and the physical space they were in, by engaging in an action that drew attention to their physical body in a visible manner. This set up a confrontation between me getting my attention (as the chief protagonist/performer) and everybody else (audience members as co-performers) wanting theirs. Alex Clayton describes the slapstick performance of Laurel and Hardy as related to:

[...] the physical dimension of togetherness, stressing the fact that being together is very much an embodied experience. Such an account allows the comedy of Laurel and Hardy to counterpoise the awkwardness, annoyances and complications thrown up by physical proximity against the necessity, value and joy of companionship.<sup>97</sup>

By way of contrast to this statement, and referring to my description of audience members as bodies, *Lost for Words* is a performance that embodies the *anti-social* aspect of slapstick and provides an alternative viewpoint to what Clayton appears to be suggesting above (building positive *convivial* social relations). To explain, participants undergo a version of participation which is directly physical in nature (an "embodied experience").<sup>98</sup> Through the slapstick activity that they enact, such participation has the potential to produce the "awkwardness, annoyances and complications thrown up by physical proximity" that Clayton suggests. And it is precisely in the *awkwardness* (provoked through repetition of the action participants undertake) that those *annoyances and complications* are created, which I argue provides the material for



laughter during that section of the performance. *Lost for Words* extends Clayton's statement in terms of the comedy, laughter and *Schadenfreude* that can be provoked when witnessing bodies being clumsy, and I would argue this need for laughter (laughing at the mistakes of others/ witnessing others' "loss of self-control"<sup>99</sup>) overtakes the desire for the convivial i.e. what Clayton seems to imply when referring to "the joy of companionship."<sup>100</sup>

*Lost for Words* demonstrates that one of the possibilities of using interruption is that it can produce laughter (both social and anti-social). This supports the work of Arthur Koestler in terms of his theory of mismatch and incongruity as a form of "collision ending in laughter"<sup>101</sup> and Michael North's suggestion that interruption, specifically in terms of disruption of expectation (*contra expectatum*), has been identified as "a comic technique since Cicero."<sup>102</sup> The performance supports this claim by: 1) the sidekick and I performing a set of actions directly related to mismatch and incongruity in terms of body language and verbal gesture in front of the audience; 2) inviting the audience to produce the same set of actions; and 3) the (potentially) subsequent realisation by those undertaking the actions of their difficulty for that set of actions to be enacted (and the discomfort this enactment may cause).

It also demonstrates Jeffrey Palmer's notion of *peripetia*,<sup>103</sup> a term used by Palmer to describe, in Nicole Matthews' words "the moment that leads us to laughter."<sup>104</sup> In his appraisal of the functions and mechanisms of humour, Simon Critchley suggests the following:

The succession of tension by relief in humour is an essentially bodily affair. That is the joke invites a corporeal response, from a chuckle, through a giggle into a guffaw. Laughter is a muscular phenomenon.<sup>105</sup>

More forcefully than "leads to laughter," participants within *Lost for Words* had to contend with activity involving interruption that was directly physical, whilst dealing with how their bodies were reacting to that situation by way of an "explosion" of laughter.<sup>106</sup>

John Wright's claim that "comedy can wreck anything"<sup>107</sup> can be drawn upon here. The term "anything" could be replaced with "convivial participation"—anti-social laughter produced by slapstick in my performance could overturn/ "wreck" convivial participation. *Lost for Words* contains two versions of laughter: social and anti-social. As the performance "host," I deploy laughter and humour to generate an atmosphere of conviviality amongst myself and the audience (many of whom do not

know each other). The slapstick activity then produces a laughter which could be argued as being “anti-social”—laughing at another person’s (deliberate) clumsiness. These ideas resonate with Dickinson’s claim—that laughter has two contrasting functions. Firstly, laughter can be used as a means to build social relations (help/enable social conviviality), and secondly, it can produce tension between people.<sup>108</sup> The first version of this laughter in my performance was social; when participants engaged in physical and bodily slapstick, a shared sense of mirth and convivial laughter was produced. There are many reasons that could account for this. For instance, as I had anticipated, participants enjoyed engaging in a process that not only meant they would be part of something collective, it enabled them to subvert habits that occur in their daily lives. They enjoyed the permission to be playful, to have fun “interrupting” how their bodies pertain to social norms, codes of behavior and ideologies that condition bodily gesture, like men shaking hands with men, but not women, for instance. Jorg Heiser, in his appraisal of slapstick, suggests the following:

The tragicomic boom-bash as fates entwine and bodies collide. Why is this funny, even the thousandth time? Schadenfreude. Another is the exact opposite: empathy and a feeling of solidarity in moments of misfortune. Slapstick as a sudden jolt in a smooth sequence, an absurd attack on hiccoughs in everyday life and world events, allowing us to catch glimpses of the truth about ourselves and our relations with others.<sup>109</sup>

On one level, the laughter that was produced by participants when engaged during *Lost for Words* in slapstick can be interpreted as positive, in terms of helping to promote social conviviality amongst a group of people, many of whom were strangers to one another. Links can be drawn between Clayton’s declaration of slapstick and its ability to reproduce social bonds (“necessity, value and joy of companionship”) as quoted above, with Heiser’s echoing of this (“empathy and a feeling of solidarity in moments of misfortune”). By way of contrast, *Lost for Words* also demonstrates that one of the dangers of using interruption is generating anti-social laughter—the key example of this is when the audience find humour in me as the instructor failing to perform the slapstick task I set up correctly. When watching the video documentation of this moment in the performance there are no clear audible/visible signs of laughter—many audience members expressed to me during the reflection discussion that they found this moment in the performance extremely funny; you don’t always need to laugh out loud to find something humorous. The above situation provides extension to Heiser’s useful connection that he makes above in terms of joining together slapstick, repetition and

*Schadenfreude*. *Lost for Words* is an explicit example of how performance may embody what is meant by the emotion *Schadenfreude*<sup>110</sup> and why and when people laugh at the misfortunes of others.

William Ian Miller describes *Schadenfreude* as “the pleasure occasioned by another’s failures”<sup>111</sup> and “mild discomfiture of others.”<sup>112</sup> To examine laughter as a corporeal reaction to slapstick and an audible reaction indicator of *Schadenfreude*, Miller’s ideas can be linked with these of Phillip Glenn:

The phrases laughing at and laughing with suggest a long-recognised distinction between the power of laughter to promote distancing, disparagement, and feelings of superiority; or, conversely, to promote bonding and affiliation.<sup>113</sup>

By referring to the terms *laughing at* and *laughing with*, the above statement is helpful in terms of relating laughter provoked by slapstick to collectivity and conviviality and to the anti-social nature of slapstick. To explain, *laughing at* neatly applies to the anti-social nature of slapstick: exercising one’s position of superiority over another person’s bad fortune (e.g. finding humour in seeing someone fall over a banana skin accidentally), whilst, *laughing with* seems to imply being part of a collective experience where participants find shared humour. I suggest that when participants engaged in slapstick during *Lost for Words*, they complicated this distinction in their dual role of witnesses and performers. They embodied slapstick and *Schadenfreude* in terms of *ha ha, not me!* They did so by “laughing at” another performer (me, and maybe, although it was not expressed to me by audience members directly, at themselves) and also “laughing with” others within the collective of performers. When I, as the instructor, mis-performed the slapstick activity in front of the audience, the shame/embarrassment of getting my own instruction wrong embodied the humiliation attached to *Schadenfreude*: I directly experienced the emotions attached to being confronted with being “laughed at.” In Peter Miller’s exploration of the relation between domination and power, he suggests the following:

By being humiliated we take turns providing a kind of illicit mirth for others [...] For just as our humiliations provide others for their *Schadenfreude*, so do their humiliations provide us ours. Such a nice gift could hardly do without an equally nice return.<sup>114</sup>

Even though I took it on the chin and carried on with the rest of the performance, the humiliation that I felt when I had (genuinely) mis-performed the slapstick was real. The situation where I interrupted the performance because I was confused as to whether I was “left” or “right” was a critical incident in terms of shifting power relations. This

experience can be understood in terms of the levels of power that I had previously embodied and the levels of power that the audience (and my sidekick) now embodied.

To explain, and to unpack power relations taking place from the start of the performance to this moment (my humiliation) further, at the start of the performance, audiences witnessed a conversation between myself and my sidekick. The audience watched attentively and, for the most part, no one in the audience wanted to upset the status quo in terms of the audience who were watching, listening and being respectful of the conversation between me and my sidekick. Even though the *fourth-wall* is a term reserved for describing some forms of theatre behavior, and there exists no corresponding term to describe similar audience behavior within art galleries, it seems to be appropriate to be applied to the audience's response in this situation. My sidekick and I exercised a position of power over the audience through our ability to frame what we were doing as "performance"<sup>15</sup> and how we then used that frame to command their attention (akin to the "fourth-wall" effect). During the conversation with my sidekick, whilst I constantly asserted to him that what we were about to do would be collaborative in nature (a democratic collaboration) and that his status would be equal to mine, I progressively used verbal barbs and put-downs (as discussed later in this article) to assert myself as the lead contributor. It was certainly not a democratic collaboration. When speaking to my sidekick about this part of the performance afterwards, he told me that he wanted me to think that I had "one up on him" by thinking that I was putting him into a vulnerable position where I could publicly humiliate him, when in fact he was preparing to shift power relations and humiliate me—he told me that he was hoping that I would, indeed, mis-perform the slapstick activity. Whilst the audience observed the exchange between myself and the sidekick, the *fourth-wall* was punctured with (possibly) deliberate coughs and huffs—the audience signaling their presence in order to affect the nature/outcome of the exchange. These coughs and huffs (to be discussed in more depth later) could have been tactics to disrupt the power relation I had set up.

In the next part of the performance, I and my sidekick marched around the gallery, performing the slapstick activity as the audience held the plastic cups to their ears. This cup-holding activity was intended to heighten the sense of mismatch between what the audience was hearing and what they were seeing. I then announced that it was the turn of the audience to perform the same set of actions; this was my way of checking that they had paid attention to what they had just witnessed. This aspect of the performance could be seen as asserting my authority—someone who can (successfully)

enact this set of actions. That assertion was then completely undone when, in the subsequent enactment of the actions by the audience as co-performers (and the sidekick too who joined in the collective of “slapstickers”),<sup>116</sup> I failed to perform the instruction correctly. Power relations were then shifted from me onto everyone else in the collective (the audience/co-performers and the sidekick), in that everyone else was able to assert their power over me, in relation to their ability to correctly do something where I had been unable to. Thus, *Lost for Words* embodies the difficulties of engaging in slapstick interruptive processes in terms of their potential for humiliation (by *all* involved).

As previously stated, I anticipated that *Lost for Words* would be a lesson in how to influence others (to force them to do what you want them to do) by using a mixture of convivial hospitality, coercive impoliteness and interruption in order to highlight the presence of power relations in everyday life. I achieved my aim. In addition to the specific moments of the performance discussed above, other moments in the performance can be put forwards as specific examples of where hospitality or hostility was demonstrated; where the participants/bodies showed signs of the social or antisocial nature of slapstick—and I discuss this below. The manner in which I write up these reflections in the following section is in the style of a countdown: the hours, minutes and seconds until the audience were engaged in physical slapstick. Three subsections comprise these reflections: 00:11:45; 00:00:59; and 00:00:00.

### 00:11:45

My sidekick and I engaged in discussion in front of the audience about what was going to happen in the later stages of the performance. The verbal exchange between us embodied many aspects of Leslie M. Beebe’s three considerations of impoliteness: “appear[ing] superior and this includes insults and putdowns;”<sup>117</sup> “get[ting] power over actions (to get someone else to do something or avoid doing something yourself) —this includes sarcasm and “pushy politeness used to get people to do something;”<sup>118</sup> and “get[ting] power in conversation, to get the floor.”<sup>119</sup> In the first stage, our communication was loaded with sarcasm and insults; I used humour to appear superior as I proclaimed authority over my sidekick. By way of contrast, there were also moments during our communication when the power dynamic between us was reversed, for example when my sidekick referred to the chuckle that he had heard

in the audience, which he interpreted as sneer. I understood this response as mockery and a possible attempt by the sidekick to get the audience on his side. During our discussion, my sidekick and I also enacted many “countering strategies.”<sup>120</sup> This moment in the performance can be argued as a demonstration in practice of what happens when one is “faced with impoliteness.”<sup>121</sup> Bousfield includes within his definition of such strategies acts involving “condescend[ing], scorn[ing] or ridicul[ing] [...] emphasis[ing] your relative power.”<sup>122</sup> Whilst not stopping the performance, I interpreted the interruptions from the audience (the cough and the huff) during our discussion as a response of natural bodily operations, or perhaps a deliberate strategy of interruption to affirm their presence and potentially disrupt the performance, affecting its outcome. Maybe these interruptions were a signal that I should stop being such a bastard to my sidekick, or indeed *persist* in my verbal assault.

**00:00:59**

My sidekick and I were still engaged in our slapstick routine with only one minute to go before the planned march. The audience’s attention had started to wane. Their laughter had reduced and one audience member had exited and returned with a glass of red wine. If I were to succeed in getting all the audience members engaged in the following activity, I needed to gain their attention—and fast. In my previous performances where I had attempted to convert audience members into co-performers, I would never say in a convivial manner, “hello, how do you do? Fancy taking part in a performance? Would you like some time while you make up your mind?” You would more likely hear me say, “hello, *now do it!*” Although I accept I do need a certain amount of conviviality to get audience members to do what I want during my performances; this time I needed to be far more assertive in my manner and instructions.

**00:00:00**

I ordered audience members to form a line behind either my sidekick or myself. This was achieved by pointing to them and shouting, “You’re with me, you’re with him.” As we marched around the gallery performing slapstick using our bodies, I thought to myself, “Bloody hell! They are *all* doing it (everybody is doing the slapstick).” Nobody said *no* to my instruction. Maybe nobody wanted to kick up a fuss, appear the odd one out, or maybe they were all curious to find out what was going to happen. I couldn’t believe that I had been so rude and still managed to engage

everybody. If audience members had not have been so obliging, I am sure that I would have been hurled an inflammatory remark when I turned to the audience and said, “Right you lot, your turn!” On reflection, it may be argued that the audience did not interpret my instruction as impolite, and indeed construed what I said as being quite reasonable. There was also the possibility that audience members participated *out of politeness* and pretended to enjoy enacting the slapstick when in reality they had thought “what a load of shit this is, but I will smile and go along with it for the sake of this performance.” Maybe they all stuck two fingers up at me behind my back.

This part of the performance furthered my inquiry by making their relationship visible, through the sight of bodies engaged in physical interruption. I also gained an understanding of the complexities involved with bodily interruption by performing the slapstick myself. The moments when I interrupted the marching were genuine, I didn’t halt the process because I wanted to annoy the participants *on purpose*. Enacting slapstick is not easy. Reflecting upon the moment during the march where I stopped proceedings because I had forgotten to include fifty percent of participants was caused by my anxiety at the time about enacting the slapstick properly. The fact that it was I, the slapstick protagonist, who made the most mistakes, helped contribute (possibly) to the laughter and the *Schadenfreude* of getting the slapstick wrong. Participants probably thought what a stupid idiot I was for getting my own instruction incorrect.

## Conclusion

This paper provides evidence through description and analysis of the performance *Lost for Words*, to support practical application of my PAR model, *Anticipation, Action and Analysis*. By using the model to structure discussion of my performance *Lost for Words*, I demonstrate that one of the tactics for making positive usage of interruption in performance art is slapstick. My exploration of slapstick extends the work of Claire Bishop, Nicolas Bourriaud and others who address participation in performance art by discussing a performance in terms of interruption, the body, and antisocial humour (*Schadenfreude*). Slapstick may have been somewhat forgotten about, in terms of both the history of contemporary art practice claiming authority surrounding the body, and in the discourse of art participation. One of the main possibilities of using slapstick within performance art is that its explicit usage and hyperbolic exaggeration of the physical body provides a practical means of understanding how the body operates in terms of participation, in a direct manner that

is both physical and visible. By including myself in the performance and enacting the slapstick, I did not reduce the risk of being “prone to attack,”<sup>123</sup> but I did gain an embodied understanding of the mechanics of slapstick and how it may relate to a form of *Schadenfreude*, by being engaged in both action and observation—as both performer and witness. In *Lost for Words*, I gained some understanding of the emotional risks involved (e.g. humiliation) when people are collectively engaged in an activity that involves bodily interruptive processes and repetition. *Lost for Words* can be thought of in terms of how, as a performance, it embodies the tension between convivial participation and collectivity on the one hand, and the antisocial (through humour) on the other—and how interruptive processes at work throughout the performance taught me about the social implications of slapstick in practice, as Peter Berger writes:

Man is incongruent with himself. Human existence is an on-going balancing act between being a body and having a body [...] it is also possible that the sense of humor repeatedly perceives the fin-built incongruence of being human.<sup>124</sup>

I claim slapstick as a tactic that makes positive usage of physical and bodily interruptive processes to engage participation; my direct involvement with slapstick as a means of provoking participation within *Lost for Words* taught me to underline the significance of recognizing the individual body of the performer and participant as having an agency within participatory processes. To that effect, for any analytical discussion to reflect upon the actuality of what happens when we engage in participatory processes, importance must be placed upon consideration of participation as an experience that is bodily in nature. Slapstick is directly specific to performance practice; it makes explicit usage of the body and bodily gestures as enacted, performed and witnessed. The “slapstick protagonist”<sup>125</sup> does not need to be sophisticated in using verbal language. *Lost for Words* demonstrates that by making use of the body in practice and forcing it to engage in interruptive processes, combined with repetition to produce mismatch and incongruity, an intuitive undoing of (verbal) language through the body can be achieved. Participants gained a shared collective knowledge of being able to do what language tells us to do the moment when the body takes over. Interruptive processes at work throughout the performance also taught me about the social implications of slapstick, in terms of antisocial humour and non-convivial forms of laughter at seeing somebody (deliberately) being clumsy with their body. In the context of this article, slapstick interruption not only discomforts audiences of live art and performance, it also, at various points throughout *Lost for Words*, undermines and



undoes the position of power of the performance protagonist. To reiterate the point addressed earlier by Andrew Stott: *anyone is prone to attack*.<sup>126</sup>

Encouraging experiential learning, critical thinking and self-reflexivity as a lecturer in Fine Art/Performance, I regularly encourage my students to try *Anticipation, Action and Analysis* out for themselves and/or use it as a basis for developing their own autonomy by generating a similar model that encourages reflection upon action. Students that I have spoken to who have carried out the process have found it beneficial, an effective conceptual tool for anticipating practice, executing practice and then analysing that practice through engagement in self-reflective processes—to look back as the means to look forward. One student told me that using my process and then appropriating it to suit her own practice trajectory has helped her initiate a free flow from theory to practice, an aspect of her learning with which she had previously struggled. Other students have reversed the three stages and found that sequence of actions useful clearer. Reflective practice relates to transformative learning<sup>127</sup> in terms of helping students critically address the implications of their practice, facilitating them to act upon those realisations in the future.

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<sup>1</sup> Joe Garner, *We Interrupt This Broadcast: Relive the Events That Stopped Our Lives - from the Hindenburg to the Death of Princess Diana*, CD resource. (Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, 1998).

<sup>2</sup> Lee Campbell, “Tactics of Interruption: Provoking Participation in Performance Art” (PhD diss., Loughborough University, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (London: Verso, 2012), 1.

<sup>4</sup> Nicolas Bourriaud, *Esthetique Relationelle*. Trans. English by David Macey, 2006 as “Relational Aesthetics” (Dijon: Les presses du reel, 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Bourriaud, 30.

<sup>6</sup> Bojana Kunst, “On Strategies in Contemporary Performing Arts,” *Maska, Magazine for Contemporary Performing Arts*, (January 2003), Gregory Sholette and Nato Thompson, *The Interventionists: Users' Manual for the Creative Disruption of Everyday Life* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT, 2004).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Sholette and Thompson, 13.

<sup>9</sup> Sholette and Thompson, 14.

<sup>10</sup> Derek Bousfield, *Impoliteness in Interaction* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub, 2008).

- <sup>11</sup> This description of interruption as a “stop” picks up on French filmmaker François Truffaut’s fascination within interruptive “stops”: in filmmaking in relation to processes of narrative.
- <sup>12</sup> Jack Bilmes, “Being Interrupted,” *Language in Society* 26 (1997): 507-531.
- <sup>13</sup> Juliana Brixey, Kathy Johnson-Throop, Muhammed Walji and Jiaji Zhang, “A Theoretical Framework to Understand and Engineer Interruptions” (paper presented at the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 2004).
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., 1416.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., 1417.
- <sup>16</sup> Bridget Kendall, Claudia Roda, Gerrard Russell and Deborah Tannen (2015): BBC World Service’s *The Forum: Interruptions*. Broadcast date: January 13, 2015.
- <sup>17</sup> Annette Arlander, “Event Scores for Performing Interruptions,” in *Art and Resistance*, eds. Tiina Mäntymäki, Tiina and Olli Mäkinen (University of Vaasa. Research papers 290 2009), 154-55.
- <sup>18</sup> Suzanne Cotter and Gilane Tawadros, *Transmission Interrupted*, exhibition catalogue (Oxford: Modern Art Oxford, 2009), 1.
- <sup>19</sup> Walter Benjamin “What is Epic Theatre?,” in *Illuminations* (London: Pimlico, 1999), 3.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>21</sup> Bertolt Brecht, *On Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*, ed. John Willett (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 1978), 143.
- <sup>22</sup> Walter Benjamin, “The Author as Producer,” in *New Left Review* vol.1 62 (1970): 94. Available at <http://www.newleftreview.org/?page=article&view=135>.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>24</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>25</sup> Roda.
- <sup>26</sup> Cotter and Tawadros, 1-3.
- <sup>27</sup> Bilmes, 528.
- <sup>28</sup> Susan Broadhurst, *Liminal Acts: A Critical Overview of Contemporary Performance and Theory* (London: Cassell, 1999).
- <sup>29</sup> Fred Meller, “Performing Teaching: Seeing Teaching through a Lens of Performance in Performance Design and Practice” (Unpublished postgraduate thesis, University of the Arts London, 2015): 2.
- <sup>30</sup> Ibid., 1.
- <sup>31</sup> William Hobbs, *Techniques of the Stage Fight: Swords, Firearms, Fisticuffs and Slapstick* (London: Studio Vista, 1967), 90.
- <sup>32</sup> Roger Dugnat, *The Crazy Mirror: Hollywood Comedy and the American Image* (Faber and Faber Ltd, 1969).
- <sup>33</sup> John Morreall, *Taking Laughter Seriously* (Albany: State University of New York Press, Albany, 1983), 4.

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- <sup>34</sup> Miranda Hart, *The Story of Slapstick*. Produced & directed by Breid McLoone. Narrated by Miranda Hart (The Comedy Unit / BBC, 2009).
- <sup>35</sup> Hobbs, 91.
- <sup>36</sup> Benjamin, The Author as Producer, 94.
- <sup>37</sup> Gary Rolfe, *Critical Reflection in Nursing and the Helping Professions: A User's Guide* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001).
- <sup>38</sup> Lisa Le Feuvre, "If at First You Don't Succeed Celebrate," *TATE Etc. Magazine*, Spring 2010. The quote that I read out at the start and end of the performance from this article was as follows: "To talk of failure [is to] to embrace possibility in the gap between intention and realisation."
- <sup>39</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>40</sup> In subsequent practice, I have often adopted a similar strategy of utilizing the format of the performative lecture as exemplified in the lecture component of *Contract with a Heckler* (discussed in my doctoral thesis) and interweaving practical demonstrations into discussions of theory.
- <sup>41</sup> Kathy O'Dell, *Contract with the Skin: Masochism, Performance Art and the 1970's* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 1.
- <sup>42</sup> Dwight Conquergood, "Performance Studies: Interventions and Radical Research," *TDR/The Drama Review* 46 (2), (2002): 152.
- <sup>43</sup> The *fourth wall* is a term derived from theatrical terminology to describe an invisible wall between the auditorium and the stage i.e. the audience and the performers.
- <sup>44</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1979).
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid., 3.
- <sup>46</sup> Paul Domela and Sally Tallant, *The Unexpected Guest: Art, Writing and Thinking on Hospitality* (Art/Books; 01, 2012).
- <sup>47</sup> Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977* (Harvester Press: Brighton, 1980).
- <sup>48</sup> Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October* 110 (2004): 51-79.
- <sup>49</sup> Ibid., 66.
- <sup>50</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>51</sup> Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid., 58-59.
- <sup>53</sup> Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, translated from the French by Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1997).
- <sup>54</sup> Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October*, 110 (2004): 51-79.
- <sup>55</sup> Sally O'Reilly, *The Body in Contemporary Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2009).
- <sup>56</sup> Cynthia Morrison-Bell, *Walk On: From Richard Long to Janet Cardiff - 40 Years of Art Walking* (Sunderland: Art Editions North 2013), 1.

- <sup>57</sup> Sally O'Reilly, "Things Fall Apart", *Frieze*, 110, (October 2007): 256-261.
- <sup>58</sup> Andy Medhurst, *Rude Britannia*. 2010. Produced by Alastair LAURENCE. Narrated by Julian Rind-Tutt. BBC.
- <sup>59</sup> Video Documentation of *Yes/No*, Battersea Arts Centre, London (2007)  
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/wrmvr7hqxhdqb1h/Yes%3ANo%20%282007%29.mov?dl=0>
- <sup>60</sup> A *black box* theatre is a space where the walls are painted black and the floor painted white. *Black box* refers to the traditional bog-standard spatial arrangement for theatre where audiences sit and watch a performance in relative darkness.
- <sup>61</sup> Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation* (London: Pan, 1970).
- <sup>62</sup> Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000).
- <sup>63</sup> Jorg Heiser, *All of a Sudden: Things That Matter in Contemporary Art* (New York, NY: Sternberg Press, 2008).
- <sup>64</sup> Koestler, 44.
- <sup>65</sup> Casey, 168.
- <sup>66</sup> Koestler, 45.
- <sup>67</sup> Reece Shearsmith, *The Story of Slapstick*. Produced & directed by Breid McLoone. Narrated by Miranda Hart (The Comedy Unit / BBC, 2009).
- <sup>68</sup> Heiser, 92.
- <sup>69</sup> Heiser, 62.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>71</sup> Video Documentation of *Fall and Rise*, Whitstable Biennale (2008)  
<https://www.dropbox.com/s/ji7epwsmxuoji9z/Fall%20and%20Rise%20%282008%29.mov?dl=0>
- <sup>72</sup> Dugnat.
- <sup>73</sup> Whilst aspects of my study of interruption acknowledged impoliteness in the context of British culture, my study was neither culture-specific nor class-specific. I acknowledged that if I were to have made *Lost for Words* within a Chinese white cube space, for example, then I would have needed to apply a whole different set of tactics and challenge different norms.
- <sup>74</sup> Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, Peter Miller, *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality: With Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991).
- <sup>75</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>76</sup> David Robbins, *Concrete Comedy: An Alternative History of Twentieth-Century Comedy* (Copenhagen, Denmark: Pork Salad Press, 2011), 119.
- <sup>77</sup> Andrew Stott, *Comedy* (London: Routledge, 2005), 93.
- <sup>78</sup> Giseline Kuipers, "Humor and Social Boundaries", (paper presented at *The Artists Walk into A Bar*, Amsterdam, April 21, 2012).

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- <sup>79</sup> Stott, 93.
- <sup>80</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>81</sup> Kuipers.
- <sup>82</sup> Bourriaud, 30.
- <sup>83</sup> Ibid., 32.
- <sup>84</sup> Ibid., 82.
- <sup>85</sup> Ibid., 44.
- <sup>86</sup> Burchell, Gordon, and Miller.
- <sup>87</sup> Jacques Derrida, "Hostipitality," trans by Barry Stocker with Forbes Morlock, *Angelaki – Journal of the Theoretical Humanities*, 5:3 (2000): 3-18.
- <sup>88</sup> Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 86.
- <sup>89</sup> Dieter Roelstraete, Responses to presentations as part of *On Hospitality*, University of Chicago May 5, 2012).
- <sup>90</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>91</sup> Subsequent audience participative performances have started by me surprising participants and issuing them with consent forms to sign having informed them of the potential risks involved in their participation. This process is method to enliven proceedings and provoke a heightened sense of danger and excitement and add a further degree of uncertainty, fear and participant risk-taking. I want participants to ask themselves the question, 'What the hell am I letting myself in for?' That said, the forms can also be a sign of security for more cautious participants: "**This** (what is written here) is what is going to happen and I've got it in writing. Black and white."
- <sup>92</sup> Simon Critchley *On Humour* (London: Routledge, 2003), 6.
- <sup>93</sup> Rudolph Frieling, *The Art of Participation 1950 to Now* (San Francisco; London: Thames & Hudson, 2008), 4.
- <sup>94</sup> Bob Dickinson, "The Last Laugh," *Art Monthly*, 383 (2015): 3.
- <sup>95</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>96</sup> Don Nilsen. *Humor Scholarship: A Research Bibliography* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1992), 292.
- <sup>97</sup> Alex Clayton, *The Body in Hollywood Slapstick* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2007), 12.
- <sup>98</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>99</sup> Stott, 93.
- <sup>100</sup> Clayton, 12.
- <sup>101</sup> Koestler, 45.
- <sup>102</sup> Michael North, *Machine Age Comedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 201.
- <sup>103</sup> Jeffrey Palmer, *Comedy: Developments in Criticism: A Casebook* (London and Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984), 14.

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- <sup>104</sup> Nicole Matthews, *Comic Politics: Gender in Hollywood Comedy after the New Right* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 27.
- <sup>105</sup> Critchley, 7.
- <sup>106</sup> Koestler, 33.
- <sup>107</sup> John Wright, *Why Is That So Funny? A Practical Exploration of Physical Comedy* (London: Nick Hern Books, 2006), 4.
- <sup>108</sup> Dickinson, 3.
- <sup>109</sup> Heiser, 17.
- <sup>110</sup> William Miller, *Humiliation: And Other Essays on Honor, Social Discomfort, and Violence* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1993) and Lars Svendsen, *A Philosophy of Evil*. Translated by Kerri A. Pierce. Original Norwegian Title: "Ondskapens Filosofi," (Dalkey Archive Press, 2010).
- <sup>111</sup> Miller, 125.
- <sup>112</sup> Ibid., 159.
- <sup>113</sup> Phillip Glenn, *Laughter in Interaction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 13.
- <sup>114</sup> Miller, 10.
- <sup>115</sup> Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002).
- <sup>116</sup> Kuipers.
- <sup>117</sup> Leslie M. Beebe in Jonathan Culpeper, *Impoliteness: Using Language to Cause Offence* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 227.
- <sup>118</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>119</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>120</sup> Derek Bousfield, *Impoliteness in Interaction* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub, 2008), 6.
- <sup>121</sup> Ibid., 99.
- <sup>122</sup> Ibid., 114.
- <sup>123</sup> Stott, 93.
- <sup>124</sup> Peter Berger, *Redeeming Laughter* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter and Co, 1997), 2019.
- <sup>125</sup> Stott, 93.
- <sup>126</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>127</sup> Jack Mezirow, *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1991).