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***Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag*, an analysis of voice in Sound Art with reference to song.**

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Digital Arts by coursework and research report.

Johannesburg, 2013

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted towards the degree of Master of Arts in Digital Arts by coursework and research report, at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination.

Signed

Pauline Theart _____

_____ day of _____ 2013.

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Chapter 1

Sound Art

1. Introduction

This study aims to contribute to the elaboration of the creative field of Sound Art by exploring the use of voice as a medium in Sound Art, with particular reference to song. The basis for this study is the theoretical understanding of Sound Art as expressed in Brandon LaBelle's *Background noise, perspectives on Sound Art* (2007) and *Acoustic Territories, Sound culture and everyday life* (2010). In both these texts LaBelle substantially investigates Sound Art by giving a clear analysis of artists' exploration of sound in their art practice. LaBelle's text follows chronologically the development of Sound Art as a genre and serves as the most coherent text noting the use of voice and song within Sound Art.

This study consists of two sections: a written report and an original artwork. The primary theoretical intention of the written report is to position the use of voice and song in art within the discourse of Sound Art. This will be done through an historical overview of Sound Art and voice that will discuss, define and contextualize voice and song within Sound Art through an extensive overview of artists who incorporate its use into their art practice. The second chapter of the report will focus on the 2010 Turner Prize winner

Susan Philipsz's use of voice and song within her art, as well as her exploration of site-specificity, architectural acoustics and the disembodied voice.

The second component of the study, an original artwork, will be introduced in Chapter 3, exploring the use of voice and song in relation to site and space, thus contributing to the emerging practice of Sound Art in South Africa. This will be done through the projection of a digital pre-recording of my voice singing *Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag*, an Afrikaans translation of the German lullaby *Opus nr. 49, Wiegenlied* by Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), in the Children's Memorial Institute's Memorial Hall(CMI), in Braamfontein, Johannesburg. This sound installation will function as an investigation into the use of voice and song within architectural space, serving as an artistic response to my Afrikaner identity in the city of Johannesburg. The creative project reflects on both my dissociation from the current Afrikaner culture in Johannesburg, and my personal interaction with my first language, that I often refrain from using when engaging with the city and its people.

The creative project stems from a sojourn in South Korea in 2007. Working as a first language English teacher, I often narrated a sense of home in a foreign context by singing Afrikaans songs. This influenced my interpretation of the cultural and social construction of language and its application in song, enabling me to relate to my immediate environment. The creative project incorporates the use of my voice singing a lullaby in Afrikaans and provides an intimate engagement between sound and site-specificity within the inner city of Johannesburg. I see the vocal interventions in the site

as a form of 'nursing' the 'wounds', nursing another's child, as the city does not belong to me. The use of the lullaby is personal, as it is reminiscent of my first introduction to song in my mother tongue, and reflects on the socially cohesive nature of song within society. *Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag* will serve as an unconventional vehicle, intentionally questioning and exploring ideas valuable to Sound Art, such as site-specificity, architectural acoustics and the disembodied voice. It will also look at femininity and my personal relationship to the site.

2. Methodology

The original artwork will be presented in the CMI, a building that originally had significant value to the Afrikaner culture, but has since been repurposed according to political, functional and social agendas. The CMI has historical, cultural and emotional relevance to the Afrikaner people, and consists of an acoustic space that will allow my voice and the use of song to explore its architectural acoustics. The CMI's Memorial Hall,is a secured space surrounded by offices, which allows for a temporal artistic intervention. For the purposes of the presentation, a limited audience will be invited.

The architecture and historical origin of the CMI address my personal relationship to the notion of gendered sites, whether it is in the design or the use of the site. The intimacy of a feminine voice singing a lullaby in an architectural site will be explored in the light of these observations. The creative process will intentionally establish the autonomy of the original artwork, *Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag*, and will address the

underlying nuances that exist within the use of lullabies as the chosen form of song, as well as the political implications surrounding its use in the current South African context. The lullaby will be recorded in a sound studio and will be played back through speakers at the site. The playback of the recording of my voice will simultaneously address my relationship to the current Afrikaner culture and narrate my engagement with the inner City of Johannesburg.

3. An Historical overview of Sound Art and Voice.

The historical development of Sound Art as a field of practice within Fine Arts, including its overlapping with electronic and experimental sound design, has allowed for the inclusive use of voice and song in art. This was illustrated by the 2010 Turner Prize winner Susan Philipsz's use of her untrained voice in a site-specific sound installation entitled *Lowlands Away* ("BBC News - Turner Prize" n.p).

In order for me to position voice and song in Sound Art, I will discuss their development in Sound Art in line with western art movements in the early 20th century, avoiding unnecessary speculation as to sound's first use in art (Kieffer n.p). Elements of Sound Art were evident in the development of the use of voice and song in Sound Art. These elements were architectural acoustics, site-specificity, the use of playback and recording, the disembodied voice and the removal of language for vocal exploration. It was present throughout experimental music, technological developments in terms of recording equipment, as well as the early Dadaist and futurist art movements. The

development of recording equipment during the technological revolution at the turn of the 19th Century, furthered the use and successful recording of voices with devices such as Thomas Edison's phonograph (1877) (Edison Film and Sound n.p); Emile Berliner's invention of disk recording (1887)(Emile Berliner n.p); and Valdemar Poulsen's first magnetic tape recorder, the 'Telegraphone' (1898)(Allen n.p).

Following the early recordings, the painter Luigi Russolo introduced the first notion of Sound Art in the futurist manifesto *Art of Noises* (1913) (Gibbs 2). The manifesto created an awareness of the introduction of noise following the invention of the machine and was in stark contrast to nature's silence ("Art of Noise" n.p). Russolo and the futurists wanted to select, coordinate and dominate all noises to enrich men with a new and unexpected sensual pleasure through a new musical reality ("Art of Noise" n.p).

Russolo proposed the *Art of Noises* not as a musician but as an artist projecting his determinism to renew everything through the use of art. He suggested an alternative approach to musical noise, through a selective coordination of sounds after the emergence of 'noise sound' that emerged from the multiplication of numerous machine noises ("Art of Noise" n.p). The manifesto stated that all musicians had to continually develop the field of sounds available to them, including the use of complex dissonances. Rusollo believed that this could only be achieved through noises being replaced by sounds ("Art of Noise" n.p). Musicians had to include noise and its diverse rhythms in an orchestra consisting of instruments with varied tonal qualities and levels of amplification

and organize the ever-evolving machine sounds into an imaginative arrangement ("Art of Noise" n.p).

Following the publication of the manifesto, voice and song were introduced into works of numerous Dadaist and futurist artists. Hugo Ball and his wife Emmy Hennings, along with Hans Arp, Marcel Janco and Tristan Tzara opened a cabaret entitled Caberet Voltaire in Zurich. The cabaret incorporated artists' clubs, exhibition rooms, pubs and theatres. Radical performances consisted of noise music, poems recited by multiple voices simultaneously and masked dances that were interrupted by German and French sound verses ("Cabaret Voltaire" n.p). It also included solemn incantations by Jacob Bohme and Lao Tse. Kurt Schwitters's *Ursonate* in 1922 was significantly relevant to the introduction of voice within Sound Art and consisted of two endlessly repeated *Plakatgedichte* performed by different voices, provoking audiences at the literary salons, who expected traditional romantic poetry (Blonk n.p).[1]

The use of voice in the significant development of electronic sound and the recorded voice occurred in music, not in art (Dunn n.p). The following period consisted of the development of a large number of electronic instruments, including Russolo's electro-mechanical-noise instruments, which were abandoned and only used for commercial sound effects (Dunn n.p). One of the more significant instruments of the time was Dr. Friedrich Trautwein's *Trautonium*, a keyboard instrument that was one of the first to use a neon-tube oscillator. The sound of the *Trautonium*, which could be

[1]Also known as Sonate in Urlauten, primordial sonata or sonata in primordial sounds("About Kurt Schwitters' Ursonate, by Jaap Blonk").

selectively filtered during a performance, was developed in unison with a research project on the compositional manipulation of phonograph recordings at the Hochschule fur Musik in Berlin in 1928 (Dunn n.p).

These experimentations were significant in the development of the use of voice within experimental recording. The composer Paul Hindemith simultaneously developed compositions for the phonographic manipulation of voice and the *Trautonium* (Dunn n.p). The compositions included *Concertino for Trautonium and string orchestra* and a sound montage based on a phonograph recording of manipulated voice and instruments. The German phonographic manipulations were the first experiments that organized sound electronically, without using an instrumental model (Dunn n.p).

The period following these experiments was filled with further development of electronic instrumentation, and it was only in 1939 that Homer Dudley created a non-musical application associated with speech analysis called the Voder and the Vocoder (Dunn n.p). The keyboard-operated encoding instrument, *the Voder*, used bandpass channels that simulated the human voice and imitated vowels and consonants using its tone and noise sources. The decoder, the Vocoder, could analyze and reconstruct the speech through its use of an analyzer and synthesizer (Dunn n.p). As the first sound modifier, the Vocoder was widely used in electronic music as a voice-processing device (Dunn n.p).

Experimental developments in electronic music in the 1940's and 1950's contributed to the use of voice and song in early explorations of recording technology and these subsequently influenced the use voice in Sound Art. The composer Karl Stockhausen produced [2]*Gesang der Jungelinge* in 1956, in which he combined German Electronische Musik with French Musique Concrete. Stockhausen introduced the human voice in combination with electronic music through the matching of pitch resonances, creating the sound of 'phonemes' (Decroupet n.p; Ungeheuer n.p).[34]

The development of the recorded voice continued in musical compositions. The Belgian composer, Henry Pousseur used voice in electronic music, such as the work *Scambi* (1957) and the experimental opera *Electre* in 1961. During this time Luciano Berio explored the use of voice in recording technology in the work *Thema (Omaggio a Joyce)* in 1958, recording his wife reading a chapter of Ulysses (Joyce n.p). Henry Pousseur included voice in *Liege à Paris: the sound work principle*, a work composed for the Centre Pompidou Foundation in 1977.The work was a fifteen-part composition in which Pousseur mixed the voices of travelers with diverse accents and dialects, with sounds found in the everyday environment (Layne n.p). [5]

The manipulation of the human voice in music (which led to the inclusion of voice and song in Sound Art) was further explored in 1958 when John Cage included

[2] Translated as 'Song of Youths' ("Masterpiece's of 20th-Century Multi-channel Tape Music: Stockhausen").
[3] The vocal parts where sung by the 12 year old Josef Protschka (Lewis n.p).
[4] The basic units of sounds that represents morphemes, words and sentences are represented ("Phoneme | Define Phoneme at Dictionary.com").
[5]Pousseur's work is reminiscent of Susan Philipsz's vocal harmonization in *Surround Me* (Green n.p).

voice in *Fontana mix*, which consisted of a score and four multi-channel tapes.[6] Cage divided the sound sources used in the multi-channel recordings into six classes, namely city, country, electronic, manually produced, small sounds which needed amplification, and wind-produced sounds, which included singing voices (Lewis n.p).[78]

Brandon LaBelle stated that the move in everyday life and the quotidian experience of Cage's musical output echoed in "the tumultuous euphoria of Happenings" in art, and was reiterated in Fluxus ("Background Noise" 68). This was observed in the interdisciplinary work in New York in the late 1950's and early1960's ("Background Noise" 68). This included the Fluxus artist Yoko Ono's exploration of the modalities of voice as she screamed John Lennon's songs. She also produced vocal work, such as a 31 minute performance entitled *Cough Piece* (Neumark xxviii) and an interactive work called *Voice piece for Soprano* in 1961("Yoko Ono" n.p). Museum visitors were invited to follow Ono's instructions, using a microphone in the museum's atrium to project their screams in the gallery space (Persse n.p). Ono's lack of control in her vocal work reflected Fluxus's focus on the immediacy of sound that could intrude on the listener's perceptual field ("Background Noise" 63).

3.1. Voice, Song and Performance

The interdisciplinary nature of the use of voice in art was observed in Sound Art when it took shape as a distinct art form against the backdrop of artistic developments in

[6] Published by *C.F. Peters* in 1960
[7] Instrumental sounds.
[8] Insect sounds.

the 1960's. The emergence of conceptual art placed more emphasis on the idea than the physical art object and relationally incorporated art into everyday life ("Background Noise"101).Many performance artists chose the immediacy of the auditory experience as a medium in their work and included the use of voice. Bruce Nauman, Richard Serra, Henri Chopin and Marina Abromovic were artists renowned for their use of voice during the 1960's and 1970's. Bruce Nauman's video *Lipsync* in 1969 illustrated the loss of meaning through repetitive speech ("Background Noise" 102). Nauman demonstrated his own fallibility, addressing his body as an upside down sculpture focused on the movement of his mouth and the sound that it created, as he tried to sync his own words while listening to them(Bruce Nauman n.p).

In the video *Boomerang* (1975), Richard Serra filmed Nancy Holt as she was trying to repeat her own delayed words through headphones. During Holt's performance a form of disembodiment occurred with the removal of the echo of her voice from its original source. This interaction led to an alienated technological closeness that happened as she was mesmerized by her own voice (Gee 5). In *Freeing the voice* (1975), Marina Abromovic depicted the removal and separation of her voice from her body in a three-hour cathartic performance. Abromovic placed her voice outside the confines of language through screaming, moaning and sighing, playing on the existing duality in Julia Kristeva's 'speaking subject'[9]. Abromovic therefore purposefully separated herself from language's function as both an institutional force and a private communicator. These

[9] The speaking subject is that transcendental ego which underlies any and every predicative synthesis (Toril Moi n.p).

expressions of voice reflected the importance of the voice leaving the artists' bodies to show that they were alive ("Background Noise" 103).

Linguistics and poetic expression were observed in the works of Henri Chopin and Vito Acconci, as they were directly tied to artistic explorations of voice. Chopin used 'aphonic' sound poetry in which he transcended the limitations of phonemes, consonants, and textual scripts, producing electromagnetic speech, while Acconci probed the differences that exist between writing and aurality ("Background Noise" 103). [10]The self-expression of voice through performance explored the space between the performer and the audience, and produced meaning with the fusion of art and life ("Background Noise" 103).

3.2 Voice, song and site-specificity

Site-specificity was introduced in the 1960's and 1970's as a contextual practice with artwork incorporated into its presentation space. These works considered the location's architectural features, its curatorial implications, as well as its larger social and cultural conventions ("Background Noise" xi). The use of sound in site-specific installations activated the perception of the space and articulated its spatial boundaries ("Background Noise" xii).

Two of the first artists to include the use of voice in their art practice through site-specificity were Vito Acconci and Alvin Lucier. Lucier instigated an exploration of the

[10] See Stockhausen

use of voice and site in *I am sitting in a room,* using the re-recording and playback of his stuttering voice in an acoustic space and transforming its original structure through the resonance found within the site ("Background Noise"126). Acconci's personal association with speech and site was illustrated best in *Seedbed* (1971) and *Claim* in 1972. LaBelle noted that these works were created as an alternative view of presence, as they staged the self as volatile ("Background Noise" 108), and that Acconci used social confrontation to intersect the use of voice and architecture (124).

Seedbed was presented at the Sonnabend Gallery in New York. It consisted of a wooden ramp under which Acconci would hide and masturbate, while speaking through a microphone and amplifier to visitors in the gallery ("Background Noise" 109). LaBelle noted that the wooden ramp created a separation between Acconci and the listener, and enacted his desire through his absence in the room. Acconci's voice illustrated the acoustic act of the performance and introduced a depleted form of sympathy ("Background Noise" 110).

In *Claim* (1972), Acconci reflected on the construction of fear. He sat blindfolded, armed with a crowbar and two lead pipes, at the bottom of the staircase to *Avalanch* magazine's offices in Grand Street, New York City. Visitors observed him on a video monitor as he chanted to himself, while occasionally bashing the staircase ("Background Noise" 108). In both works Acconci explored, challenged, trespassed and violated the relationship between his own artistic body, the audience and the performance space ("Background Noise"108). His disembodied voice engaged forcefully with the audience,

while it remained attached to his own externalized interior through which he imposed an unwanted intimacy (“Background Noise”105). Coinciding with Acconci and Luciers art practice, parallel developments could be observed in experimental music, with groups such as MEV; Scratch orchestra; AMM and The Sonic Arts Union, following Cage and the Fluxus’s movement through explorative performances (“Background Noise”124). It was also during this time that Hildegard Westerkamp and Janet Cardiff explored soundscapes and sound walks.

Architectural form, spatial music and site-based sound, created immersive listening experiences that expanded a broader environmental understanding of sound (“Background Noise”197). These concerns were central to the development of acoustic ecology, also known as ‘soundscapes’, which developed simultaneously with the Land Art movement in the early 1970’s. Where Land Art extended the art object into a broader environmental context, acoustic ecology used music and Sound Art’s aesthetic realm to extend sound into a space in which listening and environmental awareness took effect (“Background Noise”197). Westerkamp created a soundscape noted for its specific use of voice entitled *From the India Sound Journal (1993/99). For spoken voice and twochannel tape.* She captured sounds such as: *Dhvani-Sound, Camel Voice, Undercurrents ,Rivetted, Temple Bells, Silent Night, The Village, Goa Trance,“Hello! Where From?”*,as snapshots of places and situations during her travels in India(“Hildegard Westerkamp” n.p).

Westerkamp formed part of the original team that established acoustic ecology and was known for her work in field recording and 'sound walking'("Background Noise"197). She explored this in a form of composition based on a specific narrative, in which she included poetry, found sounds and an electronic treatment that harnessed and abstracted environmental sounds ("Background Noise" 206). An additional work that included voice was *A Walk Through The City (1981) for solo tape with poetry and reading by Norbert Ruebsaat*, in which Westerkamp symbolized human presence in an urban landscape using the author Norbert Ruebsaat's reading as an interactive commentary, while he struggled to make himself heard against the background noise of other sounds ("Hildegard Westerkamp" n.p).

Janet Cardiff's sound walks included the use of headphones, which created what LaBelle calls "soundscapes of the mind"("Background Noise" 225). *The missing voice (Case Study B)* is a sound walk that includes the use of voice and forms part of an audio recording, in which participants intimately listen to Cardiff's narration of a detective type commentary on the city, while walking through London's East End (LaBelle"Sonic Arts" n.p). Cardiff's voice is related through its metaphorical interaction with multiple personalities and voices, becoming alienated in a third person narration that distances her from the work (Lingwood n.p).

3.3. Current developments in Sound Art

Recently Sound Art (as a genre within art) has been a topic of discussion at numerous theoretical symposiums and retrospective exhibitions, which aim to redefine the genre through academic discourse and dialogue (Magasak n.p). These symposiums and exhibitions (mentioned below) serve as evidence that voice and song are used within the context of Sound Art, and also illustrate the diversity of their use within Sound Art. The first milestone for Sound Art was the retrospective exhibition Sonic Boom, held at the Hayward Gallery in London (2000) and curated by David Toop.Sonic Boom exhibited the work of 23 artists working with sound, with the emphasis on sound producing sculptures (Martin n.p).

The period following Sonic Boom was characterised by scattered sound exhibitions and symposiums, such as Bitstreamsat the Whitney Museum in 2001(Scott n.p) andThe Sound: Space Sound Art Symposium in 2008 in Bracknell ("Sound Art Symposium" n.d).It was only after Susan Philipsz won the Turner Prize in 2010 for her sound installation in which she used her untrained voice to sing the Scottish lament *Lowlands Away* over the river Clyde that renewed interest concerning Sound Art flared up. The most significant academic symposium was held the following year, entitled the SAIC Sound Art Theories Symposium at the School of Art Institute of Chicago. The symposium discussed academic papers which focused on the numerous critical approaches that existed within Sound Art and that were unrelated to music ("SAIC Blogs" n.p).

In the same year another symposium entitled Sound Thinking 2011SymposiumActive Voice: Vocality as medium, object and material', focusing on the human voice, was held at the Surrey Art Gallery in Canada. The symposium explored the role of the human voice in spoken dialogue, song and other non-verbal sounds formed by the human mouth, as it addressed the appearance of voice as an art form in contemporary art and society. Its aim was to examine the voice as an object, "an object of excess and resonance with material and philosophical weight both with and beyond linguistic sense or the structures of meaningful speech" ("Active Voice" n.p).

In 2012 the ZKM Museum in Karlsruhe presented an exhibition entitled Sound Art, curated by Peter Weibel, which gave an overview of the development of Sound Art in the 21st century within museum and public spaces. Sound Art comprised of the work of 90 artists, with the emphasis on contemporary art practice. The sound work created and visualized its own exhibition architecture and the exhibition visitors became the sound generators ("ZKM Exhibitions 2012" n.p).

The use of voice and song (as sound recordings and video installations) gained local exposure through the explorative work of Candice Breitz, James Webb and Francis Goodman. Candice Breitz works mostly with film and music videos and includes voice in manipulated video installations. In *Four Duets* (2000), Breitz manipulated recordings of four different female pop stars singing love songs, looping the self-referring words 'I/Me/My' sung on one monitor and 'You' on another (Schillinger n.p). In the work *Alien*

(Ten Songs from Beyond)', Breitz comments on the cultural integration of immigrants in ten looping video screens that show ten immigrants re-performing (lip-syncing) German songs in various settings in Berlin("Candice Breitz" n.p). *Alien* attests to Breitz's interest in language that does not originate from within, but occupies an individual from beyond, addressing notions of belonging that are absent in a foreign language("Candice Breitz" n.p).

James Webb alternates the use of his own voice and those of others as part of his conceptual work dealing with sound in art. The multi-channel sound installation *Prayer*(2002-2012), includes voices from the various religious groups in the various cities it is hosted in("Webb"n.p).In *'Like it, but can't afford it* (2007), his own voice is projected from speakers sewn into a black leather chaise longue and in *Scream,*(2008) heinvites visitors to physically scream at Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*("Webb"n.p). In *Ost'* (2009), Webb records the voice of a lifelong female resident of East Germany, enhancing the audible demise of the Deutsche Demokratisce Republik and its anthem, *Auferstanden aus Ruinen* ("Webb"n.p).He reads the autopsy report of David Koresh in *Untitled* (17th April 2010) and in the same year created *Aleph* in which he broadcasts private recordings of glossolalia("Webb"n.p).

The artist Francis Goodman situates the use of voice within the social commentary that is generated around her work. Goodman's voice and those of others are used as either narrators or commentators in sound installation pieces that speak to social obsessions and identity. In *David (2003-2004)* ("francisgoodman" n.p), a woman's voice

narrates her visit to David, her unattainable Adonis, and in *The Dream*(2010), the use of voice is seen in the responses gathered after interviews surrounding the social construction and stigma pertaining to marriage (“francisgoodman” n.p).

Earlier this year, Sound Art gained local attention at the Bag Factory Artists’ Studios exhibition Sounding Out *(2012),* curated by Kim Gurney. The exhibition stemmed from the increased incorporation of sound into the work of local contemporary visual artists ("Bag Factory Artists"n.p). The exhibition contributed to the emergence and establishment of Sound Art as a medium within art in South Africa, with glimpses of voice through radio inserts that were broadcast from the exhibition space.

Notwithstanding the importance of the aforementioned artists, symposiums and exhibitions, the most significant milestone concerning the use of voice and song within Sound Artremains that of Susan Philipsz’s winning of the Turner Prize in 2010. Her sound installation, *Lowlands Away*, served as a benchmark for any further exploration into the use of voice and song, situating it within the realm of Sound Art(Higgins "Turner Prize Won by Susan Philipsz" n.p).

4. Defining and contextualizing voice and song within Sound Art through site-specificity and the echo

Brandon LaBelle’s discussion of voice and song in both *Background noise, perspectives on Sound Art* (2007) and *Acoustic Territories, Sound culture and everyday*

life (2010), is essential to *Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag*, as LaBelle addresses the use of the human voice and its echo within Sound Art. In *Background noise, perspectives on Sound Art* (2007), LaBelle addresses, discusses, situates and interprets the voice as a site-specific sonic body.

He approaches the use of voice in the light of Robin Maconi's referral to the self wrapped up in sound, resulting in a form of acoustic mirroring. The voice is seen as a sonorous event that leaves and returns to the body, reflecting on the notion that listening and speaking occur simultaneously. This voice is extended through sound events created by the individual, acting through a performing body, which is situated in society and culture, and is reliant on language(62).

LaBelle addresses the voice in the light of developments in performance art, which created the possibility of sound being used as a medium in art. He reflects on Julia Kristeva's term 'the speaking subject', as she sees the voice as a production of the body and 'a trace of the subject's processional construction'. This construction allows the subject to speak through the structures of language that provide its embodiment as well as its disembodiment (104). Speech, the ultimate presentation of voice, constructs the subject as an ongoing negotiation between definitive cultural symbolism and its use as a heterogeneous force (104).

LaBelle interprets Kristeva's construction of the speaking voice as a continual fluctuation between symbolism and usage (105). He follows the use of voice within

gallery installations, musical compositions and audio-poetic performance in terms of the engagement between sound and language, which undo each other when the linguistic and sonic meet (105). The voice, as a combination of sound and language, is presented as speech. LaBelle argues that the voice functions through the structures of language (which include codified markings of symbolism), relying on the acoustic and physical dynamics of sound, as a force of breath, vibration and with a sense of immediacy (105). Speaking and the use of voice complicate the meaning of sound, by overriding the symbolic domain of language, adding and subtracting presence (106).LaBelle states that language is used to communicate and engage with reality in a way that establishes it both as practice and institution as well as a personal tool of communication (106). He sees the voice as being too dependent on its own linguistic signification in media art and therefore approaches it with hesitation in the aesthetic arena (106).

LaBelle emphasizes sound in everyday life, in the same way as the theorist Caleb Kelly, who emphasizes the awareness, retuning and refocusing on the close listening to sound within the gallery space (Hoyle “SOUND by Caleb Kelly"). He continues his discussion on the site-specificity of voice in *Acoustic Territories, Sound culture and everyday life* (2010). He follows the construction of the sonic self as a figure embodied within a sphere of culture and as social habits or ‘soundways’(“Acoustic Territories” xx).[11]LaBelle looks at the contemporary metropolis’s acoustic landscape, exploring its underground territories (the home and site), streets, neighbourhoods, the movement of cars and the infrastructure of transmission towers. He follows the appearance of sound in

[11] This is a term defined by Richard Cullen Rath in Acoustic Territories(Labelle “Acoustic Territories”xx).

specific auditory systems and locations when it is expressed in different cultural projects and establishes sound's relationship to site-specificity("Acoustic Territories" xxi).

The echo serves as a recurring theme in *Acoustic Territories, Sound culture and everyday life* (2010), and originates in LaBelle's discussion of the underground. He explores subterranean space's use of the echoic (xxv) and explores it as part of the underground's acousmatic experience (6). He interprets sound as a series of material frictions/vibrations that arise from a given object or body that spreads and leaves behind its original source ("Acoustic Territories" xvi). The echo's movement solidifies the temporality of sound (6) as it 'exaggerates the passing of sound, staging it as a performance' (7).

LaBelle states that the echo returns to the original sound event, reshaped and refigured as a spatial object, turning it into a sound sculpture. The echo alters the time in which sound produces spatial dimensions, and displaces and confuses our relationship and placement within a site (7). The most significant function identified in LaBelle's understanding of the echo, is that it becomes a voice, a voice in the sense that when it returns to its source, it seems to be speaking back (14). LaBelle's description of the echo relates to his previous interpretation of the voice as an 'acoustical mirror' in *Background noise, perspectives on Sound Art* (62). The echo comes alive as it replaces the source with a fragmented interpretation of itself, expressing itself as our own doppelgänger (15).LaBelle states that the voice removed from its source evokes the voice of the dead and infuses listening with a haunting uncertainty, an echoic listening within a space

without perspective (24). LaBelle's interpretation of the echo is one of a personified underground figure that splinters meaning, rendering the original sound unintelligible.

Erin Gee discusses the function of the echo in *Repetition as Radical Referral: Echo and Narcissus in the Digital Index* at the SAIC Sound Art Theories Symposium in 2011 (Magasak n.p). Gee's paper expands visual reflection and narcissism as a methodology for critically analyzing media arts through reflexive modes inspired by aural reflection.[12] Gee highlights the absence of echo in discussions on media art by Lev Manovich and Rosalind Krauss, in which they define media arts as a psychological condition of narcissism and narcissism as a state of self-reflexivity, arising from specific spatial relations that characterize a mirror reflection. Gee refers to this self-reflexivity that aligns itself with the aural reflection as 'echoist' (Gee 3), perceiving the echo as a "discrete sonic event" that interrupts the currently audible and suggests time doubling back upon itself, as seen in LaBelle's formulation of the echo (Gee 4).

The moment at which the echo is perceived as reverberation, the boundaries between the physical and temporal realms collapse. Gee sees this reverberation as an enlargement of the self's voice that results in an impossible narcissistic relationship. He continues to say that the echo's chief difference from a visual reflection is its articulation of the temporal spatial distance, resulting in an alienating reflection that disturbs the self into critical awareness (Gee 4). Gee's representation of the echo resonates with LaBelle's

[12] Rosalind Krauss and Lev Manovich define media arts as the psychological condition of narcissism (Gee 1).

personification of voice that enters into dialogue with its source, a figure with an unsteady shape and dimension, filled with ambiguous signification ("Acoustic Territories"14).

Gee uses Rosalind Krauss's essay *Video: The Aesthetics of Narcissism*, in which she analyzes Richard Serra's video, *Boomerang* (1974), illustrating the echo's technological transformation into an assertive vocal force that challenges narcissistic reflexivity (Gee 5). Krauss relates Nancy Holtz's fascination with her doubled aural self as similar to that of Narcissus being transfixed by his image reflected in the pond (Gee 6).[13] Holtz's auditory reflection severs her from text and language in *Boomerang*, surrounding herself with herself (Krauss 53). For Krauss this separation is enhanced owing to the fact that Serra employs audio feedback instead of visual feedback (Krauss 59). The disembodiment that occurs as Holtz is detached from her voice (the echo removed from its source) enforces a technologically enabled proximity that is also alienating in its closeness. It is through Gee's echoic that one situates and locates oneself in the returning reflection that is directly tied to psychological and physical space (Gee 6).

The echo decentralizes and distorts the sound of its original source, expanding the sound uniquely according to the acoustic dynamics of a given space. As an 'underground sonic figure', the echo allows for creative exploration through the imaginative

[13] Rosalind Krauss relates Holtz's transfixion with her doubled aural self, to that of Narcissus's fascination with his reflection in the pond. Holtz's relationship with her voice is that of confusion and disorientation that engages with the listener's ears("SAIC Blogs » Sound Art Theories Symposium 2011 « Inside Sound" n.p).

transformation of voice, in shifting and altering meaning through fragmentation ("Acoustic Territories" 40). The disorientation created by the echo diminishes our sense of orientation in LaBelle's underground, transforming every sound into a voice that is disconnected from its source ("Acoustic Territories" 24).

4.1 Voice, song and the feminine

The role of the feminine is emphasized through the presence of the echo's relationship to sound. In *Reflections On Echo—Sound By Women Artists In Britain*1993, Jean Fisher compares the echo's disembodiment and the loss of vocal significance within the patriarchal myth, with that of the marginalized positioning of the feminine voice in terms of its creativity and production (6).[14]In light of Helen Cixous' reading of the female body, she states that this body should not be censored, for in doing so you censor breath and speech (6).Cixous interprets the feminine voice, both spoken and written, as a privileged voice. The written and spoken voices are interwoven as they fluctuate between the loss of voice and its cries, in text that is filled with suspense and silence (Cixous, Clement 92).

A woman's public voice is not spoken but thrown from her trembling body and as she speaks she loses all inhibition, exposing herself while conveying meaning through her body (Cixous, Clement 92). Her voice situates itself in history through narrative and its discourse is never simple, linear, objectivized or universalized (Cixous, Clement

[14] This is established through detachment from her fading body.

92).Cixous argues that woman experiences torture everytime she speaks in public, as her unheard voice transgresses and falls on masculine ears(Cixous, Clement 92).She states that feminine speech reverberates through song, that it is the first music of the voice of love that every woman keeps alive (Cixous, Clement 92). Cixous relates the feminine voice to that of the healing mother, who merges text with her affectionate body and voice as its nurturing milk (Cixous, Clement 92).

It is a voice of a voiceless woman, Cixous' understanding of the female voice, stripped of symbolism, law and separation, stems from a place of innocence, which enables it to be established and explored through song. This creates a space for a lullaby to relate to the echoic disembodied feminine voice within *Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag*, as it echoes and resonates within the pre-existing architectural acoustics of the Children's Memorial Institute's Memorial Hall.

5. Voice and song.

5.1 Song

The construction of the feminine voice and song and its use within Sound Art has been limited in terms of its positioning within media, performing, and digital artsin this discussion. The specific use of song in art has only recently been used as art practice, making way for further exploration. The Webster's Dictionary (1913) defines song as 'that which is sung or uttered with musical modulations of the voice, whether of a human

being or of a bird, insect, a lyrical poem adapted for vocal music, a ballad, any poetical strain, or as a poem defined by the English dramatist John Dryden' ("Song" n.p). Situating song within Sound Art relies on the site-specificity in which it is presented, the voice it is sung by, as well as its textual narrative that serves as an audible signifier in the listener's mind. A song is embedded in social, political, religious and cultural context, and cannot be stripped of these associations. It must therefore be noted that the inherent interpretation of *Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag*, always refers to its German roots.

This study focuses specifically on the use of the song in the form of a lullaby, referring to its placement within the South African context. In *Suid-Afrikaanse volkspoësie, Bijdrae tot die Suid-Afrikaanse volkskunde,* S.J du Toit describes the rhythmic development of song as originating from the rhythmic nature of physical labour (Du Toit 1). Du Toit relates this understanding of rhythm to the development of lullabies, as the motion of a mother nursing her infant, which leads to the development of elementary sounds incorporated into the melodic structure of the type of song (Du Toit 1). The use of the pure rhythmic sounds addressed within Sound Art, begs the listener to separate the disembodied feminine voice from its intimate association with the infant and instead approach it in terms of its use within the architectural acoustics in which it is presented.

5.2 Voice

In *Voice, Vocal Aesthetics in Digital Arts and Media* (2010), Norie Neumark situates the voice within digital arts and media, addressing issues concerning its embodiment, otherness and signification. These issues support techniques that shape the voice, as well as vocal modalities that disturb and distort operations of the voice (Neumark xvi). Neumark's digitized voice is characterized by an intensity and intimacy that occurs while we are listening, and brings about a performative embodiment (Neumark 114). Jacob Smith addresses a similar notion of the performative, defining the voice as an 'index of the body, a conveyor of language, a social bond, a musical instrument of sublime flexibility, a gauge of emotion, a central component of the art of acting, and a register of everyday identity' (Smith 3). In *Vocal Tracks, Performance and Sound Media* (2008), Smith emphasizes the physicality of the voice by referring to its placement within the human body, as well as its slippery nature, moving from being a conscious expression to being an unintended reflection of the self (Smith 3). Neumark and Smith's investigation into the performative nature of voice, introduces the voice as a sound object within Sound Art, opening up the possibility for the voice to be used in the performance of song within art.

The voice as a digitized sound object, projected outward through performance, does not only allow for a passive engagement, but also for an interactive vehicle of self-expression. The artists Golan Levin and Zach Lieberman illustrate this in the work *Messa di Voce*, which presents the interactions of two experimental vocalists, Joan La Barbara

and Jaap Blonk, performing speech, shouts, and songs in real-time with interactive visualization software. The voice-generated graphics serve as a control for their acoustic playback and become an instrument that the singers perform, while their bodies manipulate the graphics and replay the sounds of their voices, creating an interactive cycle within which the singers are fully integrated with sound, virtual object and real time processing("Messa Di Voce" n.p).[15]

Given the above it is evident that the relationship between the use of voice and song in Sound Art relies on its broader interpretation within art and that its boundaries are still unexplored. For the purpose of this study, the creative explorations of artists using their own voices and song will be reflected on in terms of performance, site-specificity, as well as the use of recording and playback in the exploration of architectural acoustics.

5.1 Voice and song use in contemporary art practice

The use of voice and song expressed in the form of an anthem reflects on music's ability to address cultural, political, historical and social realities within art, through videos, sound installations and silent works (Khazam 76). The artist Susan Philipsz's interest in the displacement and mutation of song and its projection (using her own voice) in different locales was evident as she sang a revolutionary workers' anthem in *The*

[15] The interactive cycle is similar to Nancy Holtz's immersion within the feedback loop of her voice in *Boomerang* (Gee 5).

Internationale in 1999.[16] Two versions of *The Internationale* were presented in the former Eastern Block, and one in London. The first presentation was in a pedestrian underpass near the main gallery of Manifesta 3 in Ljubljana, Slovenia (1999), and the second at Berlin's Friedrichstraße Station.[17] In 2008 Philipsz' wavering voice presented *The Internationale*, played through a single loudspeaker (blending her voice with city traffic), in a two day presentation at the Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) in the centre of the boulevard 'London of The Mall' (Budzinski n.p).

Philipsz's use of an anthem to elicit social response through the use of her disembodied voice recalls images of Marina Abromovic's vocal performance in *The Hero* (2001). In a static black and white film entitled *The Hero* (2001), Abromovic is depicted sitting astride a horse holding a white flag, while a rendition of the Yugoslavian pan-Slavic anthem is sung by a single female voice (Khazam 76).[18] The scene presented is superimposed with uncertainty as she juxtaposes notions of bravery and surrender, through the use of song in the form of a stately anthem to commemorate her father (Khazam 76).[19]In contrast to Abromovic's combination of voice and song in film, Philipsz's disembodiment is not illustrated through aesthetic imagery but relies on the site-specificity of the audience's cultural memory.

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[16]*The Internationale* formed part of a short series of artists intervening in the private spaces of art institutions around central London entitled Out of Bounds.

[17] This station was an historical Cold War border crossing between East and West Germany(Budzinski n.p).

[18] This is an anthem from the Tito period(Khazam 76).

[19] Abromovic's father was a Yuguslavian national hero(Khazam 76).

The relationship between Sound Art and experimental developments in music have an indirect effect on each other, as can be seen in the inter-disciplinary work of artists and musicians exploring sound as a central or additional motif in their art making. Musicians whose interdisciplinary engagement with music and art incorporates the use of voice and song are Charlotte Hug, Franziska Baumann and Anna Holmer. They explore voice and song through site-specificity, inter-media performances,("Rova:arts"n.p),[20]the exploration of alternative languages, synthesized music, the spoken word("Anna Holmer Discography at Discogs" n.p),and a vocabulary of experimental and extended vocal techniques, that includes multi-phonics and glottal clicks ("Biography Franziska Baumann").

Voice and song are used mostly to aid and enhance the multiplicity of meanings found when they are introduced into art. The artists discussed here explore this through the incorporation of popular song and voice in video installations. Nevin Aldag, Breda Beban and Joachim Koester, use voice and song in video installations, often only by referring to song as seen in Koester's video *Sympathy for the Devil,* which refers to the song by the Rolling Stones ("Joachim Koester" n.p).

Nevin Aldag and Breda Beban use voice and song in video installations such as Aldag's[21]"*Significant Other", Performance, A window to Performa New York, HAU,*

[20][20]These sites include the Rhône glacier in Switzerland's ice tunnels, a torture chamber in Zurich's red light district, a half demolished bunker in Berlin's Humboldthain, a 250 year old prison (the House of Detention) in Farringdon, London, a sulphurous healing spring beneath a former luxury hotel in Verenahof in Baden, Switzerland and a dockyard in Coph, on the Irish Atlantic coast("SAIC Blogs » May « 2011 « Inside Sound")

Hebbel am Ufer in September 2011, in which Aldag shows interviews revealing people's attitudes towards relationships and friendships, with Milli Vanilli's song *Girl you know it's true* shown in playback as part of the introduction("Significant Other" n.p). Breda Beban's five-screen video installation *My funeral Song,* shows five of her friends listening to their own chosen funeral songs, enhancing the narrative that Beban aimed at creating through the use of sound in her work("Breda Beban: My Funeral Song"n.p). The songs (all but one are vocal pop songs) are listened to by friends of a similar age group, and the video's are looped on five separate screens showing each individual's engagement with their chosen song (Revel 84).

Given the above-mentioned exploration and application of voice and song, it remains evident that its specific placement within Sound Art serves as the platform on which Susan Philipsz creates sound installations portraying her untrained voice as a signifier of disembodiment, site-specificity and the effective use of architectural acoustics. It is therefore quintessential that her art practice is discussed as the most prolific exploration of voice and song within Sound Art, as it successfully relates its ability to challenge humanity's interaction with the emotional and socio-political narratives found within site.

Chapter 2

Case Study: Susan Philipsz

1. Introduction

A milestone was reached in the realm of Sound Art the moment the Glasgow born artist Susan Phillipsz won the esteemed Turner Prize in 2010 for her work *Lowlands Away.* It was the first time that the Turner Prize, an annual award presented to the best contemporary British artist under the age of 50, was awarded to a Sound Artist with a work that could neither be seen nor touched (Weidenbaum n.p). Fisun Güner observed that her winning the Turner Prize introduced the use of voice and song as an acceptable medium in contemporary art, overcoming Sound Art's intangibility and inability to create a visual identity (Güner n.p).This chapter will discuss Philipsz's handling of voice and song within her art practice, considering relevant examples and analyzing the underlying thematic development evident in her art practice.

2. Background

Early on it was clear that Philipsz's love of singing would eventually spread to her art practice. Although this love did not lead to a formal study of music, it did influence her art practice, creating an awareness of the acoustic qualities of sound when it is interpreted as a sculptural experience. The only form of vocal training she received was when she sang in her family's parish choir as a schoolgirl and in a militant-socialist African choir when she was a student (Wright n. p). Philipsz studied sculpture at the Duncan Jordanstone College of Art in Dundee in 1993, and received a Masters in Fine Arts at the University of Ulster in Belfast in 1994("Introduction to Susan Philipsz"n.p). It was only during her studies in Belfast that she started considering the sculptural qualities of sound and that she started creating sound installations using her voice (Cantopher n.p).

Philipsz never practiced sculpture but her interest in singing never wavered, and she started drawing connections to her singing as a sculptural experience, in the way that sound structures the inner body space (Philipsz, "Susan Philipsz, C108LifeOnMars" n.p). Philipsz's perception of the use of song is that it emphasizes the physicality of the voice and heightens the individual's awareness of the space in which he or she is. She therefore saw a move from sculpture to sound as a natural progression in her art making and became aware of the emotive and psychological properties of song. She started considering the physicality of the voice, the corporeal activities that occur when the diaphragm contracts to draw air into the lungs, the shape that the throat and larynx take

on to form sounds(Philipsz, "Re: Confirmation of Case Study" n.p), and the ability of her projected voice to redefine architectural space(Corner, "Susan Philipsz" n.p).

Philipsz's art practice stems from her exposure to working in public spaces that she gained while participating in artist led organizations, such as Catalyst Arts, where she was a director for a few years, and her own Grassy Knoll productions in (a politically unstable) Belfast (Philipsz, "Re: Confirmation of Case Study" n.p). [22]Her first sound piece, *Safe* (1994), formed part of a group exhibition entitled Hit and Run. This exhibition was staged by Catalyst Arts and was held at Wilmont House, a former nursing home in Lady Dixon Park in Belfast, (Kennedy n.p). *Safe* consisted of her recorded voice singing a lullaby from Engelbert Humperdinck's opera *Hansel and Gretel*, down a chimney, with plaster cherubs placed in the hearth below (Asiado n.p). Brian Kennedy observed that the cherubs appeared to have fallen from one of the plaster friezes, combining "the physicality of the house with an ethereal existence" (Kennedy n.p). The absence of her physical body created a haunting echo of the physicality of voice that she had previously explored, as it was projected down the chimney. This seminal work introduced her first thematic exploration of ideas concerning the spectral and the disembodied voice(Kennedy n.p).

Philipsz continued explorations of embodiment and disembodiment in two pieces entitled *Metropola* (1997), and *Strip Tease* in 1999. In *Metropola* (1997) she physically sang *a capella* versions of pop songs, over the tannoy of a Tesco metro supermarket in

[22]Catalyst Artsis seen as Belfast's primary artist-led organization, formed in 1993 (during the politically unstable period in Belfast), in response to "what was seen as a cultural vacuum"("Catalyst art" n.p).

Manchester(Corner, “Susan Philipsz” n,p). Her untrained voice interrupted the store’s music, startling the confused shoppers into an awareness of their surroundings. The work *Strip Tease* (1999) displayed a stage set up for a strip show, and played on the delay of male expectations, as the audience aimlessly waits for the stripper that never appears. Peio Aguiro states that the absence of the stripper’s body reflected on gender representation, allowing viewers to interpret the void left by the absent stripper according to their own subjectivity (McTigue 8) The artist’s early exploration of the presence and absence of her physical body, established a thematic development of the disembodied voice in her art practice, and created a space in which she appeared to be singing to herself. The intimacy and doubling of the self as she sings to herself, enhances a sense of trespassing that listeners unexpectedly experience when they encounter her public sound installations (Kosan n.p).

These developments in Philipsz’s art practice led to the Isabella Bortolozzi Gallery in Berlin, that primarily represents emerging and young international artists, signing her in 2005(“Isabella Bortolozzi” n.p). This was followed by an invitation to exhibit at the Münster Sculpture Project in Germany and subsequently to her being signed by the Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in New York. In an interview with *The Observer* in 2010, Philipsz stated that after she came to be represented by these galleries, her financial position changed and she realized that winning the Turner Prize was not out of her reach (Corner, “Susan Philipsz” n,p).

Philipsz's interest lies predominantly in the psychological and sculptural potential of sound, creating immersive sound environments that enable visitors to have intensified, thought-provoking engagements with their surroundings. She considers herself to be an artist first and foremost, and is of the opinion that the term 'Sound Artist' will dissipate, as the use of sound in art becomes more mainstream. Although she enjoys working with sound, she remains adamant that she does not want to be categorized as a Sound Artist (Philipsz, "Re: Confirmation of Case Study." n.p). The Tanya Bonakdar Gallery presents the thematic content of Philipsz's art practice as mostly addressing the universal themes of presence and absence, nostalgia and hope, love, longing and the cyclical nature of time as explored in her most successful work, *Lowlands Away* ("Susan Philipsz: Here Comes Everybody"n.p). These thematic concerns will be reflected on in the analysis of her key artworks and exhibitions in the following discussion.

3 Art Practice: Voice and disembodiment.

After watching a *Youtube* documentation of Philipsz's art practice, presented by the artist at the Sculpture Networks Tenth International Forum in Spain (2011), one is left with an imprint of the artist's singing voice lingering in one's memory (Philipsz,"Lecture Susan Philipsz" n.p). Philipsz explores the effect of repetition and the impact of her untrained voice within her art practice. The use of her voice in repetition can be observed when it repeats in harmonic interaction with itself, especially when in correlation to site, song and the occasional use of solo instrumentation. One identifies with the repetitive voice and its imaginary body through what Peio Aguirro calls repetition's 'acquisition of

subjectivity'. The voice repeated in a continual loop presents itself in both its original and in its changed state (McTigue 4). The second notion, that of the effect or impact of her untrained voice, is illustrated when the artist's voice activates the psychological connection and association embedded in song, luring the audience into a state of spatial awareness. Her voice, without its body, is a voice on the periphery of the visual and audible, with its fleeting nature relying for belonging on site-specificity (Philipsz,"Lecture Susan Philipsz" n.p).

In her works, Philipsz's voice is often projected over city noise and activates desolate spaces, as seen in the multiple sound installations of *Surround Me*placed within a square mile in the City of London (Green n.p).[23] In the previously mentioned lecture given at the Sculpture Network Tenth International Forum, it is clear that the melancholia present in her choice of song often derives from the historical period in which the texts, songs and madrigals were written (Philipsz,"Lecture Susan Philipsz" n.p). I am of the opinion, after considering Philipsz's discussion of her work, that the effectiveness of her art practice in Great Britain is enhanced by her Scottish accent clearly relating to her immediate audience, making the association with her voice more direct. It recalls images of a church choir singing choral works and becomes a sound that varies from angelic to average in a matter of seconds (Philipsz,"Lecture Susan Philipsz"n.p).

Philipsz does not think much of her voice, stating that it is distinctly average and going so far as to say, "I hate my voice" in an interview with *The Observer* (Corner, "Susan Philipsz" n,p). She continues to express her disapproval with her soft, mumbling

[23]This work forms part of a collaboration between Philipsz and the art organisation Artangel.

speaking voice, but uses its insignificance when she sings to produce a sense of familiarity within her work. Philipsz notes that most people are able to identify with the human voice and its ability to trigger poignant memories and associations (Corner, "Susan Philipsz" n,p). The intimacy of her voice is presented in public spaces and creates a tension between the personal and communal associations that exists between the listener and the song ("FreePort [No. 003]: Susan Philipsz" n.p).

In response to a question about her use of voice as a medium in Sound Art, she stated that she considers all the 'physical and corporeal activities' that go into singing when a sound is formed and projected into space. This is translated into an understanding of volume and space and these elements are seen as materials in her art making (Philipsz, Re: Confirmation of Case Study. n.p). Philipsz is drawn to a 'certain physicality of producing sound'. This does not necessarily include her own voice and possibly explains her venturing into the use of instrumentation without voice in *Study for strings* created for the exhibition Documenta 13 in Kassel, Germany (Philipsz, "Re: Confirmation of Case Study" n.p).[24]

Disembodiment and the notion of the spectral are recurring themes in Philipsz's use of voice. In *The Voice of the Spectre in Contemporary Art Practice: Susan Hiller, Janet Cardiff, George Bures Miller and Susan Philipsz'*, Jackqualyn Gray notes that the voice without a source, lends itself to the corporeal body's ambiguity, indeterminacy and multiplicity, traits that are typically attributed to the spectral (47). Philipsz's interest in

[24] ("documenta 13: Susan Philipsz". n.d)

the dynamics that exist between disembodiment and absence is further evidenced byher interest in haunting.

This theme is explored in a group show held in 2010 at the New York Guggenheim, entitled Haunted Contemporary Photography/ Video/ Performance("Haunted: Contemporary" n.p). The exhibition focused on how often contemporary art is haunted by the past, and how these images are reanimated in media as well as in live performance and the virtual world ("Haunted: Contemporary" n.p).Philipsz's contribution to the Haunted exhibition was a short one minute and fifteen seconds sound piece entitled *Shallow Sea* that conjured up images of the spectral and the disembodied voice as it spiraled and reflected throughout the Museum's rotunda (Barliant n.p). Philipsz responded to both the exhibition theme as well as the architectural acoustics of the museum with her choice of the song *Willow Waly* (Barliant n.p).The song was based on the film *The Innocents* which was based on Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw*, and was repeated every 10 minutes (Barliant n.p).

Jackqualyn Gray argues that Philipsz's disembodied voice and her relationship to the spectral, is not only confined to her decision to remain unseen, but speaks of her absence in terms of her subjective political views and personal ideas. Philipsz's broader concern in her use of voice remains, regarding its ability to evoke an emotional response in the viewer, which results in an enhanced awareness of the viewer's presence in a particular place and time (34).

4 Art Practice: Song and Site

An important aspect of Philipsz's art making is her use of site-specificity and song. Site-specificity is the foundation of her art practice, and she interprets every interaction with site in a different way. In response to the question whether or not she selects sites specifically for their acoustic resonance, she stated that she allows the site to dictate the resonance, without adding additional reverb to the recording (Philipsz, "Re: Confirmation of Case Study" n.p). The site does not only dictate the resonance of her voice, but also informs her choice of song. She draws from the historical and contemporary narratives associated with the location and uses song as a focal point in the work, as a reflection on the emotive and psychological aspects of sound. She separates the songs into different audio tracks and creates an environment in which the visitor can perceive distinct voices while moving around the exhibition space ("Archive for Susan Philipsz"n.p).

She believes that everyone carries a set of songs with them through life and that these songs are both private and communicative, with their own history and narrative that situates them culturally. Philipsz chooses to work with variations of these songs that are often passed from place to place over time (Philipsz, "Re: Confirmation of Case Study" n.p).Her interest in humanity's fascination with morality, often leads her to consider dark emotive songs ("Archive for Susan Philipsz"n.p), although she chooses popular songs such as *Pathetic Fallacy*, in which she sings *Dolphins*, made popular by Tim Buckley in the mid 1970's ("Susan Philipsz -Folkstone Triennail" n.p), *Sunset Song* in which she

covers two versions of the American murder ballad *The Banks of the Ohio* ("Exhibitions - Susan Philipsz" n.p), or *If I with you would go* inspired by the ballad *The House Carpenter's Wife (The Daemon Lover),* from a collection of English and Scottish folk songs entitled *The Child Ballads*(PEM n.p.).

5. Awards and key sound installations

Philipsz has been widely exhibited in galleries and public sites in Europe as well as in South and North America. The following section will focus specifically on key career changing awards and exhibitions indicative of her development as an artist. This section will also focus on sound pieces that provide a clear presentation of the interaction between voice, song and site in her art practice. These works are *The Internationale* produced for Manifesta 3 (2000); *The Lost Reflection,* a Munster Sculpture Project in 2007; the Turner Prize winning work *Lowlands Away* (2010); *Surround Me* created for the City of London (2010-2011); and *If I with you would go* commissioned by the Peabody Essex Museum in Massachusetts in 2011.

5.1. The Internationale/ Manifesta 3

The artist's breakthrough to international recognition happened six years after she completed her Masters degree in Fine Arts, when she was invited to participate in the international exhibition Manifesta 3 in Ljubjana, Slovenia ("Collection Online-Susan Philipsz" n.p). The exhibition took place shortly after Slovenia attained independence

from the Soviet Union. The curators of Manifesta 3,which was entitled*:* "Borderline Syndrome: Energies of Defence", focused on the transformation of the geopolitical and psychological borders between the Balkan and former Eastern block countries (Gray 35).Otto Kernber's theories of borderline personality disorder were used to metaphorically suggest the transformative process (Gray 35). Philipsz played a recording of herself singing the old socialist anthem *The Internationale* through speakers under a busy walkway, close to the main gallery of Manifesta 3 in the city center, drawing on the political history of Slovenia (Gray 35). The sound installation, which consisted of a single loudspeaker broadcasting an audio recording at ten-minute intervals, activated a sense of self-awareness within the listener and created a need to identify with the disembodied voice(Gray 35).

According to Philipz, this self-awareness led the audience to shift their focus outward and made them aware of their surroundings("Manifesta 3." n.p). It remained unclear whether the anthem, sung by her ambiguous voice, called people to political action or created a space in which people could reflect mournfully on the socialist past (Corner, "The art of noise" n.p). *The Internationale* was successful in its engagement with the emotional, psychological and political implications of song. In an interview with Charlotte Higgins in 2010 she admitted that eventhough her works were not 'overtly political'*The Internationale* was one of the few works that did reflect on politics(Higgins "Susan Philipsz: Sonic boom" n.p).Philipsz recollected one of the most remarkable moments of the installation, when a group of elderly women stood in the walkway humming and crying while listening to the anthem (Corner, "The art of noise" n.p).

The Internationale reflects on the loss of power and the aggression that was asserted by rebellious masses worldwide. It has been exhibited in numerous other sites including Berlin's Friedrichstraße Station (2000), as a two day exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, and as part of a short series of artistic interventions around central London entitled Out of Bounds (Budzinski n.p).[25]*The Internationale* (2000) and another work, entitled *We shall be all*, were reproduced at the Museum of Contemporary Art (MCA) in Chicago in 2011 ("Archive for Susan Philipsz"n.p). The melancholic displacement of the anthem projected in different locales suggests a fragility that is created through the lack of the artist's use of site-specificity, and illustrates the evolution of her use of song, as its meaning becomes altered with every recreation (Grey 37).

5.2 Munster Sculpture Project: The Lost Reflection

Philipsz took part in the Münster Sculpture Project in Germany in 2007 (an event hosted once every decade), with a sound installation entitled *The Lost Reflection* ("Introduction to Susan Philipsz"n.p). This sound piece is based on Jacques Offenbach's composition *The Tales of Hoffmann*, the score of which derives from*The Story of the Lost Reflection* by E.T.A. Hoffmann("Skulptur Projekte Münster" n.p).Hoffman's text narrates the tale of the courtesan Guilietta, whose charms bewitched men while stripping them of their own reflection, making them unrecognizable to their wives and children.

[25] This was a border crossing between East and West Germany during the Cold War.

The barcarole *Lovely night, oh night of love, smile upon our joys!* is divided into soprano and mezzo soprano parts and is projected from opposite ends of Lake Aasee under the Torminbrückebridge (“Skulptur Projekte Münster” n.p).

Philipsz’s melancholic voice merged with itself, creating a call and response cycle that echoed over the sound of rushing water and overhead traffic, altering the audience’s experience and perception of the space they were in (“Skulptur Projekte Münster” n.p). In a discussion with Philipsz, Carole Christov-Bakargiev observed that the use of the call and response motif in the form of a duet is a common characteristic of her art making(“Susan Philipsz and Carolyn Christov Bakargiev ” n.p). Christov-Bakargiev interprets Philipsz’s use of voice as an act of singing to herself and to another self. She suggests that Philipsz’s voice duplicates itself and that *The Lost Reflection* thematically illustrates her use of repetition and the echo to depict the relationship between her own voice and that of someone who sang the song before (“Susan Philipsz and Carolyn Christov Bakargiev ”n.p). The duality of Philipsz’s voice singing to itself relates to her interaction with embodiment and disembodiment, creating a passage between sculpture and voice. This resonates with the removal of a physical body, as illustrated in *Strip Tease* (1999) (“Susan Philipsz and Carolyn Christov Bakargiev” n.p).

In 2007 the city of Munster bought *The Lost Reflection* for their permanent art collection due to its popularity (‘Sculptures in Münster”n.p). An edition of the work was also bought by the art collector Paul Palmieri and is on display at the forest of Bontempo in Artesina, Italy. The sound piece was presented amidst trees, duplicating a similar call

and response motif to that of its original setting, but it took on a different character in the woods and reflected the alteration of meaning through site-specificity that exists when the song is moved into a different space (Coulter-Smith n.p).The work was looped from morning till noon with two minute interludes of silence between the tracks (Coulter-Smith n.p).

5.3 The Turner Prize and *Lowlands Away*

5.3.1 The Turner Prize

After a decade of working with sound, Philipsz created a work that challenged the definition of art and she became known as the most controversial nominee for the Turner Prize and first ever Sound Artist to win the prize (Corner, "The art of noise" n.p). The award is usually awarded to an artist that challenges the definition of art in a provocative and novel way, such as Damien Hirst with *The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living*, a controversial sculpture of a fourteen foot tiger shark suspended in a tank of formaldehyde ("Damien Hirst". n.p).Kirsten Innes noted that Philipsz's work was not 'archly conceptual', something she states the Turner Prize is often criticized for, as it interacted with both the audience's emotions and intellect (Innes n.p).

Notwithstanding the critical response it attracts, the award (worth £25,000) promotes art practice in general and aids artists such as Philipsz who, prior to the award,

had to overcome many restraints and difficulties due to a lack of finances (Innes n.p). Philipsz remained confident that the prize came at the right time, while she was creating her most interesting work (Corner, “The art of noise” n.p).

5.3.2 *Lowlands Away*

The Turner Prizejudges considered two of Philipsz’s sound pieces, *Long Gone,* a recording of the artist’s rendition of a Syd Barret song installed at the entrance of the Museo de Arte Contemporánea de Vigo in Vigo, Spain and *Lowlands Away* (Lyall n.p). *Lowlands Away,* in which she sang three different renditions of the traditional Scottish lament, played in the underbelly of the three bridges that stretch over the River Clyde in Glasgow, won the award (“Susan Philipsz: [40] Notes”). The folk ballad narrates the story of a drowned man who returns to haunt his lover:

> I dreamed a dream the other night, Lowlands, lowlands away my John,
> I dreamed a dream the other night, Lowlands, my lowlands away,
> I dreamed I saw my own true love. He stood so still, he did not move
> So dank his hair, so dim his eye I knew he'd come to say goodbye
> "I'm drowned in the lowland sea," he said. "Oh you and I will ne'er be wed."
> "I'll never kiss you more," he said "Ne'er kiss you more, for I am dead."
> I will cut off my bonny hair No other man will find me fair I dreamed a dream the other night I dreamed a dream the other night ("Shanties and Sea Songs"n.p).

Philipsz used her voice as the aural focus in the sound installation, providing a space in which her untrained and unaccompanied voice simultaneously addressed and accessed an emotional response from the audience (Shearer 23).*Lowlands Away* starts with the words of the song played in unison, and as the verses continue, the voices veer off on their own. It concludes with the lyrics in the refrain sung in unison, establishing a sense of continuity(Higgins "Turner Prize" n.p). In documentation of *Lowlands Away* Philipsz's unadorned voice reflected off the water and echoed to itself as listeners hovered under the bridges. She placed speakers on the outside pillars of the bridges, projecting her voice inwards, activating the architectural underbelly with her lone voice that was at times off pitch("Susan Philipsz-Lowlands-Short Excerpt"n.p). The work recalls her previous use of the architectural acoustics under a bridge in *The Lost Reflection*(2007), but in *Lowlands Away* her lone voice does not call out to itself delivering an *a capella* rendition of the song, but creates a unified vocal interaction with the architectural acoustics of the bridge("Susan Philipsz-Lowlands-Short Excerpt" n.p).

The work originated as a smaller piece made for a gallery in Berlin(n.d), overlooking the canal into which the German communist revolutionary, Rosa Luxemburg, was thrown after being shot in the head in 1919. The photographic portrayal of Luxemburg's body, found months later covered with silt and weed, initiated a creative response from Philipsz, who saw the body reclaimed by water as a rebirth, reminiscent of the heroine and river-spirit, Anna Livia Plurabelle, in James Joyce's *Finnegan's Wake*. Joyce's interwoven use of text with the names of rivers merged the bodies of Luxemburg and Anna Livia Plurabelle in her mind and became *Lowlands Away*, which she then

played through the speakers in a gallery (Higgins“Susan Philipsz: Lament for a Drowned Love”).

Later when *Lowlands Away* was commissioned for the Glasgow International Festival of Visual Art, it became clear that the location for a larger version of the work would be in the lowlands of Scotland. The work was installed under three bridges -the George V Bridge, the Caledonian Railway Bridge and the Glasgow Bridge- stretching over the waters of the River Clyde. Although Philipsz (originally from Glasgow) was familiar with the River Clyde, she aims to approach each site with fresh eyes, as she does with every site that she uses for an artwork(Philipsz,“Lecture Susan Philipsz” n.p). It was thus that her ‘first encounter’ with the Clyde and its bridges was marked with the realization that they were suicide hot spots, decorated with memorial flowers taped to their railings (Higgins “Susan Philipsz: Lament for a Drowned Love” n.p).

The success achieved by *Lowlands Away* was due to the fact that it was created for the public and engaged with the audience’s emotive interaction with the locale, as Philipsz’s voice echoed for two weeks over the River Clyde (Innes n.p). Philipsz’s familiarity with her hometown of Glasgow, took on a new dynamic as she explored the city as an artist, drawn to the iconic bridges filled with historical significance. She metaphorically described the sites under the bridges as ‘the dark underbelly of Glasgow’, as it related to the physical loss experienced by those mourning their loved ones who had committed suicide (Innes n.p).

The combination of location, Philipsz's unaccompanied and untrained voice, and the sad lyrics caused *Lowlands Away* to have a profound effect on its audience ("Susan Philipsz-[40] Notes"n.p). Surprisingly, the work took on a second life when it was reproduced for the Turner Exhibition and intimately positioned in the "white cube" of the Tate Gallery with just three single black speakers (Innes n.p). This intimacy altered the audience's interaction with the piece, and provided a space in which they could spend sufficient time engaging with the work, either lying down or observing it with closed eyes, something that they could not do at the River Clyde(Innes n.p). *Lowlands Away* echoes her previous sound works' use of the emotive qualities of song, disembodiment, history and the exploration of architectural acoustics, to show how each sound piece uniquely transforms the space it is in.

5.4 Surround me

The song cycle *Surround Me* (2011) is a sound installation created for the city of London and was exhibited in six different locations. For each of these sites Philipsz recorded herself singing an English madrigal from the late 16thto early 17thcenturies (Mctigue n.p). These works are: *New oysters* (Change Alley), *Lachrimae* (Milk street/ Russia Row),*Weep, O mine eyes* (Moorfields Highwalk), *The silver swan* (Tokenhouse Yard), *Oh my love* (All Hallows church tower/Marklane) and *Flow my tears* (London Bridge). The installations could be visited in any specific order (Mctigue n.p).

An essential aspect of *Surround Me*, apart from Philipsz's unadorned voice, is the interactivity of the work that allows visitors to engage with and enter the scattered circle of songs from any point in the city. The artist mapped the location for each of the madrigals, purposefully recreating an ancient practice called 'beating the bounds'. This practice happened at Rogationtide, where members of the parish would move around the outskirts of the city singing and dancing.[26] It activated the continuity between the different locales, displaying the relationship formed between site, song and sound (McTigue n.p). The interplay of the memory of one song with that of another, merged with the movement of the visitors as they engaged with the different works. Philipsz's voice amplified the fluidity of the visitors' movements, echoing and disappearing in the wind and in the pauses between the different tracks (McTigue n.p).

The choice of song in *Surround Me* was drawn from the historical narrative of the city, and was written to imitate angelic voices. The madrigal created a continual choral sound, using different voices to replace each other as a breath was drawn. Similar to the practice of beating of the bounds, the madrigal suggested the rise and fall of voices, metaphorically depicting the ebb and flow of a tide of tears that crashed on a concrete shore, drawing on the melancholia related to death and disease during the 16th and 17th centuries ("Tateshots" n.p). Philipsz used her voice to harmonize with itself, transforming the city into what Ian Sinclair calls 'unexpected amphitheaters' that emerge amidst the brutalist architecture of the city ("Tateshots" n.p). Sinclair described time in the City of London as plural, and it is this plurality that allowed the

[26] The traditional day for beating the bounds of the parish was Holy Thursday (Ascension Day) 40 days after Easter (*'Calendar Customs-Rogationtide'.*)

Elizabethan voice to interact with the contemporary, and in this case with the voice of Susan Philipsz (“Tateshots” n.p).

5.5 If I with you would go

If I with you would go (2011)is a sound installation inspired by the Peabody Essex Museum’s maritime history, with a series of projects entitled Freeport(“PEM Turner” n.p). The series invited artists to establish a unique dialogue between the museum and its visitors. Charles Sandison’s exhibition *Freeport 001-Figurehead*,displayed an immersive activation of text from ships’ logs and journals from the 18th century, followed by Marianne Mueller’s photographic exhibition entitled *Freeport 002-Any House Is a Home*. The museum traces the way in which cultural change is driven by trade, exchange and translation, resonating as questions that often arise within contemporary art (Sandisonn.p).

If I with you would go (2011)formed part of the third project in the series and was located in the museum’s neoclassical East India Marine Hall. The hall is filled with immense figureheads and 18th century portraits of New England ships’ captains. Philipsz engaged with the maritime history narrating stories of longing and loss and the role of the sea as provider and taker of life (“PEM Turner” n.p). Originally her focus was on Salem’s history as a seaport and because of its witch-hunt, but she soon became drawn to the architecture and portraits found in the East India Marine Hall (Kosan n.p).

Philipsz activated the objects in the Marine Hall with voice and song, making the audience aware of their environment while simultaneously engaging with the tangibility and intangibility of its history (Kosan n.p). For the PEM series, Philipsz investigated the work of the folklorist Frances Child, and found *If I with you would go* (2011), a ballad from *The House Carpenter's Wife (The Daemon Lover).* This ballad formed part of a collection of over 300 English and Scottish folk ballads compiled in the late 19th century named *The Child Ballads*(“PEM Turner” n.p). *If I with you would go* had a special resonance with the Marine Hall, as one of the founders of the museum, Nathaniel Bowditch’s son Jonathan, funded the author Francis Child’s travel to Europe, where he met the Grimm brothers who inspired him to write the ballad (“Freeport No 003”n.p). The ballad tells the story of a man who returns after a long absence at sea to find his former lover with a husband and child (“Freeport series”. n.d).

Philipsz recorded eight different versions of this ballad, playing them simultaneously in the Marine Hall, interrupted only by interludes of glass and rudimentary violin sounds. Cate McQuiad described the instrumental sounds as “forlorn and dolorous”(McQuiad n.p). She notes that the sounds are more about harmony than melody, due to the way in which certain combinations of notes trigger emotion. The inclusion of the instrumental sounds created a space in which the viewer could engage with the entire work: “the song, the story, the portraits and ship models, the sun filtering through the windows”(McQuiad n.p).

McQuiad stated that where the layered lyrics helped the story to reside in the gallery, the instrumental sounds cleared the story out, leaving the audience "with the feeling of what has just occurred still humming through our bones"(McQuiad n.p). The sounds and her voice created a tension within the hall, giving voice to the objects, and created an atmosphere that Philipsz described as the sounds in an empty ship ("Freeport No 003"n.p).In this way, public sites are often transformed into intimate spaces, making the observer aware of his environment. *If I with you would go* is one of the site-specific works directly tied to its location. The work illustrates Philipsz's use of gallery space and presents the sound piece in its purest form, unaffected by the architectural acoustic usually found within the locale she creates it for (Kosan n.p).

6. Additional work

The following exhibitions and sound installations were selected to reflect Philipsz's use of gallery and public space, it also reflects on the current tendencies within her creative process. The works selected to reflect her use of gallery space, are two older, solo exhibitions entitled *Here comes everybody* and *I see a Darkness,* which were mounted at the Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in New York in 2008. Works relating to her use of public space and the current development in her art making, are the sound installation *Timeline,* produced for the Edinburgh Art Festival (2012), and *Study for strings* at Documenta 13 (2012). The analysis of these earlier works as well as the more recent works, aims to assess the longevity and effectiveness of her creative process, as they

either draw on the historical narrative of a given site or a rendition of a song that the artist finds meaningful.

6.1 Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York

Philipsz produced two sound installations at the Tanya Bonakdar Gallery in New York in 2008. The installations were entitled *Here comes everybody* and *I see a Darkness*. Her first solo exhibition in both the gallery and in New York was with *Here comes everybody* (2008). The work originated from a line in James Joyce's novel 'Finnegan's Wake',which Philipsz interpreted as humankind's nature to participate and retreat in society. To establish this concept, she used the song *Trees and Flowers* by a Glasgow punk duo Strawberry Switchblade, to enhance the movement of her voice. The work was exhibited in two spaces in the gallery, one light and one dark. In the darkened room the song was sung by Philipsz's solitary voice, suggesting fear of the outdoors and the need for solitude. In the lighter room it was used to reflect on humanity's need for participation and *Trees and Flowers* is transcribed into a method of singing called '*fasola*'or 'shape note singing' ("Susan Philipsz: Here Comes Everybody"n.p).

American choral directors developed this style of singing in the 1800's, making the reading of music more accessible to public congregations("Susan Philipsz: Here Comes Everybody"n.p). *Fasola* singing grew more popular during the early 19th century

and continued to be sung at gatherings referred to as “The Big Singing”. The style of singing is mostly tonal and does not elevate any specific voice above the rest. It creates a discordant sound, filled with unusual harmonization and syllables merging with the impact of participatory voices that sing with force("Susan Philipsz: Here Comes Everybody"n.p).

Philipsz projected *Trees and Flowers* through three strategically placed speakers in the gallery. Her voice mimicked the movements of the *fasola* singers, separating the three parts, melodies and harmonies and projecting different parts of the song in a circular pattern around the room. This allowed her disembodied voice to surround and encircle the listener("Susan Philipsz: Here Comes Everybody"n.p). She used her voice to effectively recreate a common practice of the *fasola* singers’ movement between different groups, giving voice to a sculptural use of sound in the room as her voice reflected from one speaker to the next. In similar fashion to the *fasola* singers’ dedications at the start of their singing, she dedicated *Here comes everybody* to her sister Sarah ("Susan Philipsz: Here Comes Everybody"n.p). The duality found within the work reminds one of her later work *Surround me*, and its emphasis on the inward and outward motion between different voices, tentatively becoming an underlying leitmotiv in her art making (Mctigue n.p).

A similar theme was evident in Philipsz’s second solo exhibition at the gallery entitled *I See a Darkness* (2008). This work continued her investigation into the psychological and sculptural potential of voice, site and sound, and was placed in two darkened rooms, in which three vocal and instrumental tracks resonated. Each of the

songs played reflected a literal and metaphorical interpretation of light and darkness, thematically linking the songs with the darkened exhibition space ("Susan Philipsz: I See a Darkness"n.p).

6.2 Edinburgh Arts Festival: Timeline

The multi-sound installation *Timeline,* formed part of the Edinburgh Arts Festival's program Festival Promenade in 2012("First Sounding of Timeline"n.p). This program aimed to bring new artworks by leading and early-career Scottish artists into the public space, giving visitors a fresh look at the city ("First Sounding of Timeline" n.p). Philipsz's work *TimeLine* was inspired by the sound of the One O'Clock Gun fired from the battlements of Edinburgh Castle during lunchtime. The gun served as a time signal and audio backup for the Nelson's Monument and time ball that was created in 1861(Palomar n. p). Philipsz gained access to the Time Gun's map that showed how long it took the sound of the gun to travel throughout the city, and combined this sound with the three tone sounds of a British ship's horn (Palomar n.p). John Robinson designed the ship's horn (siren) as a musical instrument, simulating the female voice ("History of the Siren" n.p).

Philipsz was specifically drawn to the three-part harmony of the British ship's horns and used three harmonized notes in G major (G, A and D) to mimic the sound of

the siren and played it as short bursts of voice throughout the city (Palomar n.p). The first recording was played at Nelson's Monument at one o'clock, followed by presentations at the Old Calton Cemetery, the North Bridge, Waverley Bridge, The Mound and Princes Street Gardens and the Scottish National Gallery ("Susan Philipsz: Timeline"n.p).*Timeline* illustrated the incorporation of voice and site-specificity, merged with the city's historical background.

6.3 Documenta 13

Philipsz does not present her own voice as the medium in her sound installation for Documenta13 in Kassel (2012), but delivers a fragmented instrumental expression of song entitled *Study for strings*. The work is characteristic of the call and response motif mentioned earlier and is presented at Kassel's intercity railroad station, the Hauptbahnhof (Philipsz, "Documenta 13"n.p).*Study for strings* encompassed site and song, drawing on the historical subtext found within the Hauptbahnhof. The twenty-four channel sound installation played for thirteen minutes across the weathered railway tracks, evoking memories associated with stations, traveling and sightseeing, while simultaneously referring to the doomy route to Auschwitz(Philipsz. "Study for Strings"n.p).

Pavel Haas, the composer of *Study for Strings*, and fellow residents of Kassel were taken from the Hauptbahnhof to concentration camps during World War Two. It was at the Terezin camp in 1943, that Haas composed *Study for strings*, which was later reconstructed by Philipsz at Platform 13 (McDonald n.p). Philipsz separated the cello and

violin tracks and played each individual note through scattered speakers across the tracks. This created what Philipsz referred to as an abstraction of the individual notes of the composition (“Documenta 13”n.p). The fragmented instrumental sounds hovered hauntingly over the railway tracks, with the audience gathering at the end of the weather-beaten platform, as if to board a train themselves (“Dora Garcia”n.p). The composition was broken into three sections: the introduction, reminiscent of industrial tones (trains moving on the tracks); a call and response motif in the middle section; and pizzicato notes, mimicking the sounds of overhead cables, at the end (Philipsz,“Study for strings” n.p).

The weathered Hauptbahnhoff remains visually connected to Kassel’s historical past as it has been aesthetically unchanged for decades, and is reminiscent of Philispz’s description of the River Thames in *Surround me* (Peetz n.p).Philipsz’s creative style suggests existing parallels between the site-specific motifs underlying the Hauptbahnhoff and the Thames. In both *Surround me* and *Study for strings*, permanence and decay become repetitive, cyclical motifs. The station and the river translate into backdrops against which Philipsz’s voice is projected. The absence of her physical voice and the penetrating sound of solo instrumentation echoes and repeats the motion of trains, resounding with the pre-existing soundtrack of the Hauptbahnhoff(“Dora Garcia”n.p).

7. A Critical Response

Philipsz creative practice and art did not draw a lot of attention prior to her nomination for the Turner Prize and this led to a mixed response from numerous critics and journalists. The newspaper *The Independent*, did not approve of her, labeling her win as a 'dismal decision', describing her voice as 'drearily pokerfaced' as if she is trying to haunt us with her voice. She does not succeed' (BBC n.p). The culture editor from Channel 4 News, Matthew Cain, said that her win was a 'shot in the arm for Sound Art', and that (ignoring her dismissal of the term 'Sound Artist'),'the high profile win for Susan Philipsz might just build this up to the tipping point needed for Sound Art to really take off'(Cain n.p).

The audience response received at different intervals of her art practice, was best described by observations made at the Tate Britain's installation of *Lowlands Away.* Some listeners understood her work as a set of vocal exercises in harmonization, while others sat around listening in anticipation, reminiscent of paralyzed sailors following a siren's call (Corner, "The art of noise").

Owing to the emotional nature of Philipsz's rendition of *Lowlands Away* and the general consensus that audiences effectively engaged with her untrained voice, it was difficult to find critical responses in the media pertaining to her work as a Sound Artist. Michael Glover called *Lowlands Away*' hype-cum-hogwash', Richard Dorment condemned anyone who appreciated it to the 'the ninth circle of art hell'(Morris n.p) and

some went so far as to dismiss her art practice as something that would be more fitting at folk dancing societies (Dorment n.p).

In an article following the award in 2010, the columnist Jonathan Jones echoed Philipsz's personal dislike of the term 'Sound Artist' (Philipsz, "Re: Confirmation of Case Study". n.p).Jones deflated the Turner's prestige to a headline-oriented prize and his disdain towards the term 'Sound Art' included a dismissal of artists' labeling sound as a genre instead of a medium (Jones n.p). Jones argued that even though Marcel Duchamp was one of the first conceptual artist to incorporate sound in his 1916 readymade work *With Hidden Noise,* he never called himself a 'Sound Artist' and never claimed to have invented Sound Art (Jones n.p).[27] Jones saw both Philipsz's and Duchamp's work sharing the same conceptual insight that 'art begins with the idea of art'. Jones is of the opinion that Sound Art does not really exist. He stated that 'Serious modern art moves freely between different strategies and media'. Notwithstanding these sentiments, he still viewed Philipsz as a specialist in her field. He stated that 'a worthy Turner winner' did not need to be labeled anything else but an artist and that it was the simplicity of Philipsz's rendition of familiar tunes that translated the seductive history of the avant garde through the poetry of tabloid media(Jones n.p).

Philipsz's response to one of the only recorded criticisms of her work was in an interview with Lena Corner in 2010. Corner suggested that the lack of diversity in both her medium and art practice resulted in her being a one trick pony. Philipsz responded with shock and stated that the intentionality behind her sound installations always

[27] A ball of twine between two brass plates, that rattles when it is shaken.

differed, although she used her voice as a repetitive medium, and that to criticize that would be similar to criticizing a painter for using paint (Corner, “Susan Philipsz”n.p).

It is unmistakable that the success of Philipsz’s sound pieces reflects on her effective understanding of public art. Her work thematically explores notions of architectural acoustics, site-specificity and the disembodied, spectral voice. Her interaction with disembodiment and embodiment thematically explores haunting and the absence of presence and performance. She explores different facets of her own voice pertaining to the effect it has on the listeners. This includes the associative nature of her amateurish singing voice, which makes the listener aware of his immediate location (Philipsz, “Re: Confirmation of Case Study”n.p).She uses voice, song and site as the continual leitmotif and transporter of meaning, albeit her physical voice or a metaphorical simulation of it, through instrumentation.

A theme that often recurs within her art making is her voice’s repetitive interaction with itself, resulting in its entering into a dialogue with itself through what can be described as ‘a call and response’ motif. Her voice doubles up in harmony with itself, while it transforms the architectural dynamics of the location in which it is projected (“Susan Philipsz and Carolyn Christov Bakargiev ”).Philipsz’s signature creative style, the use of voice, song and site, addressing the historical narrative found within both the song and the location in which it is projected, is evident in all her work.

Her simplistic, yet complicated fragmentation of song indicates motion and interaction, and invites the listener to engage with and consider what Adrian Searle calls 'one's place in this world' (Searle n.p). Broken down to its basic structure, Philipsz's art making hinges on the intangible with the use of a fragile disembodied voice in different locales. It is the seemingly uncomplicated sound work that leads the unsuspecting audience to engage with and relate to a voice that is not so different from their own.

Chapter 3

The creative sound installation *Slaap my kindjie slaap sag.*

1. Introduction

The sound installation *Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag* originated from an exploration into the use of voice, song and site-specificity within Sound Art. It followed an in-depth study of Susan Philipsz's art practice and aimed to use voice, song and site-specificity within the context of my personal engagement with the City of Johannesburg. The site selected was the Children's Memorial Institute's Memorial Hall(CMI) in Braamfontein, and was chosen because of its historical, political and social relevance to my Afrikaans

culture. The Afrikaans lullaby *Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag* was used as an expression of my cultural association with song and was projected in the CMI's Memorial Hall.

2. The Children's Memorial Institute

The Children's Memorial Institute (CMI) commemorates the men and women of the Transvaal who lost their lives during World War 1 (1914-1918).The red face-brick building is situated in Braamfontein on the corner of Joubert Extension and Empire Road, leading up to Constitution Hill to the east and to the City of Johannesburg's metro centre to the west (Bird n.p). It faces the oncoming traffic to Hospital Hill Ridge and is situated directly east of the old Queen Victoria Hospital, with the Fever Hospital above it, historically reflecting the state's provision for health care (Bird n.p).The CMI's original terraced garden was replaced with a concrete guardhouse which currently serves as an unofficial entrance to the CMI's Memorial Hall(Bird n.p).

The Johannesburg branch of the National Council of Women of South Africa, a group affiliated to the International Council of Women, was inaugurated in 1912, and aimed to address society's basic needs. They soon became aware of the difficulties of hospitalisation for children in the city, and a memorial hospital was proposed at a council meeting on 8 December 1919 (Beaconsfield 6). The CMI was erected as a 'thank-offering for the successful termination of the War', and was funded by donations collected by the National Council of Women of South Africa, and from private donors and the City of Johannesburg (Bird n. p).

The architects Cowin, Powers and Ellis won the open competition that was held for its design and Major General His Royal Highness Prince Arthur of Connaught, Governor General of the Union of South Africa, laid the foundation stone on 10 December 1921(Bird n.p). The memorial hospital was officially opened and handed over to the provincial administration on 29 October 1923 (Beaconsfield 8). The CMI consisted of a memorial hall on the ground floor, six wards with 112 beds and two operating theatres. It also had a radiology and physiotherapy department and a nurses' home (Beaconsfield 8).

The hospital expanded thanks to the continued support of the community and served as a teaching institute from 1924 onward. In 1926 Dr. R.A Ross and the Rotary Club funded a 12-bed Ross-Rotary Ward (Ward 6). In 1938 the E.P Baumann Convalescent Home was completed and the new Theatre Block was opened. The Theatre Block comprised of two operating theatres, a plaster room, and a lecture theatre for medical students (Beaconsfield 9). Wards 7, 8, 9 and 10 were completed as part of a 90-bed Ward Block in 1941. Twenty years after these expansions the 'New Building' was erected in May 1965, as an addition to Ward 10 and in the following year another 20-bed ward, Ward 11, was completed. In 1968 a Dental Unit was created in the hospital, and in 1970 an extension of 4 beds was added to Ward 2 (Beaconsfield 10). [28]

The CMI was later opened for outpatients, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, a central sterilizing department, a South African Institute of Medical Research

[28] The Dental Unit was a branch of the Johannesburg Coronation Dental Infirmary (Beaconsfield 10).

(SAIMR) laboratory and a Child and Family Unit (Bird, n.p).[29]It functioned as a Children's Hospital from1923 and was later integrated into the new Johannesburg General Hospital (The Charlotte Maxeke Johannesburg Academic Hospital). It was left vacant during 1978-1979, until it was decided that it would accommodate special needs clinics and non-govermental organisations (NGO's).All of the NGOs focused on the social and financial needs of children albeit through fundraising and special support services (Bird, n.p). The CMI worked with the state until 2006 when the specialized clinics were transferred to the Johannesburg General Hospital, leaving the NGOs to uphold and maintain the building, which the current Gauteng Provincial Administration had failed to do(Bird n.p).

The CMI's Memorial Hall embodies the hospital's initial commemorative intent, the bettering of the social needs of the City of Johannesburg, through the remembrance of those who fell in the War. The Memorial Hall is well maintained and has remained visually undisturbed throughout the existence of the CMI. It is lined with bronze memorial tablets and there are two altars in the center of the room (Bird n.p). Six of the memorial tablets, in English and in Dutch, commemorate those who sacrificed their lives in battle. Five smaller bronze plaques commemorate individuals who donated cots, or those in whose memory cots were donated. They also include inscriptions of individual gratitude to the City of Johannesburg and Louisa Beck for their financial donations (Bird n.p).

The names of the honoured dead are written on scrolls placed on the two altars in the centre of the room (Bird n.p). Flo Bird argues that the names do not fully reflect the men and women of the Transvaal who volunteered to serve and died in the War, as only two recognizably African names appear on the roll. In Bird's opinion this 'shortcoming' should not override the cultural value of the memorial and that ideally, the missing names of black soldiers should be added to make the Memorial Hall all inclusive (Bird n.p).

3. Relationship between song and site

3.1 *Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag* and the Children's Memorial Institutes's Memorial Hall

In many cultures lullabies are often sung in high pitch and filled with emotion (Trehub n.p). A child looses his/her fear of the outside world through the repetition often found in lullabies and fairytales, allowing the child to become an autonomous subject (Mctique n.p). In this rendition of *Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag*, the digital recording repeated a similar notion throughout the dedicated hour of remembrance, metaphorically addressing and reflecting the current state of the Afrikaner. The NGOs that currently occupy the CMI, work with the understanding that their overarching vision is the nurturing and protection of children, reflecting the initial response to the need for child care by the National Council of Women of South Africa, in the early days of the City of

Johannesburg (Beaconsfield 6). The sound of my voice singing the lullaby is thus not detrimental to the site's aural history, but rather reflective of the dynamics between its past and present.

The lullaby*Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag* was originally composed in German as *Opus nr. 49, Wiegenlied* by Johannes Brahms (1833-1897), and was later included in the German Volksbucher by Karl Joseph Simrock (1802-1876). It was translated into Afrikaans and included in the *FAK Afrikaanse Sangbundel*, a collection of traditional Afrikaans songs ("5 Lieder, Op.49"n.p).The song was played through speakers in the room, introducing the notion of the disembodied voice. *Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag* was pre-recorded in a sound studio and the recording was not altered by any additional effects, leaving the recording of a lone female voice to resonate within the architectural acoustics of the Memorial Hall.

The lullaby was sung in a translated text that narrated both the historical European and Afrikaans cultures in the Memorial Hall, opening up the work to an international audience and simultaneously restricting it to a cultural interpretation found only in South Africa.[30] This was apparent from the comments of a foreign member of the audience, who could not understand the words of the song and understood the work mostly for its ethereal quality. *Slaap my kindjie, slaap sag* responded to the aural and historical dynamics of the Memorial Hall through the use of voice and song, purposefully exploring ideas valuable to Sound Art, such as site-specificity, architectural acoustics and the disembodied voice. The Sound Art piece was created as an audible contribution,

[30]Children's Memorial Institute

reflecting and enhancing the site's cultural significance and instilling a desire to value, love and protect children in South Africa.

4. A personal engagement with the Afrikaner language and culture

For this creative project I investigated the historical relationship between the Afrikaner and the CMI after World War 1, with specific reference to the languages used in the bronze memorial tablets in the Memorial Hall. This includes an overview of the Afrikaner sentiments leading up to the War, their relationship to the English and the establishment of Afrikaans as an acknowledged national language. The term Afrikaner is used to refer to white burghers or colonists of Dutch, German and French origin residing in South Africa at the turn of the century, of which I am a descendant(Giliomee 217).[31]

4.1 *'Afrikaner'*

Hermann Giliomee's discussion surrounding the relationship between Afrikaners and the British in *The Afrikaners, a biography of a people* is essential to the purpose of this study as it explains the linguistic sentiments leading up to, and in the aftermath of, the Anglo Boer War of 1899 – 1902.Giliomee is of the opinion that the general absence of Afrikaner colonists in the trade industry in South Africa, throughout most of the 18th century, came about because the British settlers seized most of the job opportunities for tradesmen and artisans during the 1830's(194).

[31] I am a white Afrikaans-speaking Afrikaner.

Britain's advantage as a world power bred an elevated sense of superiority amongst the British colonists in South Africa, which led to the existence of the dominant English nationalism present in the urban life of the time (195). This annoyed the Afrikaner, who disapproved of the idea of English cultural supremacy and their feelings of inferiority were mixed with what Barrow called 'the reluctance that a vanquished people must feel in mixing with their conquerors'. These sentiments resulted in the Afrikaners' intensified need to redefine themselves as a community (195).

The first Dutch newspaper *De Zuid Afrikaan,* played an essential role in the development of Afrikaans and the Afrikaners' sense of nationalism when it declared that it' wanted to hoist a banner which would serve as a rallying point for all colonists, old and new'(196). The newspaper labeled these colonists 'Afrikaners' and assigned the term only to those (both colonists and settlers) who were loyal to South Africa (196). Giliomee notes that the newspaper's use of the term 'Afrikaner' referred only to white colonists, therefore excluding any coloured or black people(196).He states that *De Zuid Afrikaan* also urged colonists of Dutch decent to assert their own nationality, and not to become 'Englishmen'or 'Hollanders' (Dutchmen)(196).

Britain's attempts to Anglicize the colony from the 1820's onward, created further hostility amongst the Afrikaner colonists. This was reflected in their identity crises during this period, as some chose to become 'Anglomen'(Englishmen), and others (unsuccessfully) promoted a Cape Afrikaner identity (198). The Afrikaners, under extreme pressure from the British, did everything they could to become 'English', even

though their conquerors continually emphasized the fact that they remained ‘Hollanders’ (199).

Britain’s attempts to Anglisize the church and school systems resulted in significant political awakening amongst the Afrikaner farmers (boers), which led to the editor of *De Zuid Afirkaan*, Jan Hofmeyer, forming the short-lived political party, the Zuid Afrikaansche Boeren Beschermings Vereeniging (212).It was only in its aftermath that the promotion of the Afrikaans language as a vehicle representing their new sense of political awareness was established by the Reverend S.J du Toit(214).

4.2 *‘Afrikaans’* and its First and Second Language Movements

The Zuid Afrikaanschen taal(Afrikaans), a form of simplified Dutch, was used as an unofficial language spoken (but not written) throughout South Africa, from Cape Town to deep into the interior (Giliomee 215). Giliomee notes that mostly uneducated Afrikaner colonists, ex-slaves and servants used the language. He refers to the Dutch educationists Johannes Brill’s description of the language as ‘ the unofficial language that was not written but spoken from Cape Town to deep in the interior of South Africa’(212).

The language emerged under great criticism, it was seen by some as ‘an impoverished dialect’, degenerate Dutch, an incomprehensible Creole tongue, a ‘Hotnotstaal’, without any future (216). The Chief Justice, Lord John Henry de Villiers described it in 1876 as ‘Poor in the number of its words, weak in its affliction, wanting in

accuracy of meaning and incapable of expressing ideas connected with higher spheres of thought'(216).

It was during this time (prior to the war), from 1875 to 1900, that the first Afrikaans language movement (Eerste Afrikaanse Taalbeweging) evolved. This movement, with the previously mentioned Reverend S.J du Toit as its most prominent member,was mostly centered on the initial desire to publish an Afrikaans translation of the Bible.The first book purposefully written in Afrikaans was published in 1873 by 'Hoogenhout' entitled *Die Geskiedenis van Josef voor Afrikaanse Kinders en Huissouwens, in hulle eige taal geskrijwe deur een vrind* (The history of Joseph for Afrikaans children and housewives in their own language, written by a friend') ("Afrikaanse taalbeweging III" n.p).

Letters written in Dutch by reverend S.J du Toit, followed the book's publication and were published in the Dutch newspaper *De Zuid-Afrikaan.* Du Toit defended the Afrikaans language in terms of its linguistic and religious function in Dutch, and used the pseudonym the 'Ware Afrikaander'("Afrikaanse taalbeweging III" n.p). Following numerousdebates and articles in *De Zuid-Afrikaan* (1872-1874), it was concluded that the Afrikaner nation was still unaware of its own identity and the existence and feasibility of its own language. The Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners (GRA), was established to promote the Afrikaner identity, language and nationhood ("Afrikaanse taalbeweging III" n.p). The first language movement and the GRA were situated in Paarl and produced one publication: *Die (Afrikaans) Patriot* ("Afrikaanse taalbeweging III" n.p).

The second Afrikaans language movement followed the War, and was characterized by an increased desire for national identity (*Die Tweede Taalbeweging*)("Afrikaanse taalbeweging III" n.p). [32]Authors flourished under a newfound inspiration to cultivate their culture against the backdrop of the Anglicization that was promoted by the British Governor, Lord Milner(Lauder, n.p). Milner left South Africa in 1905, followed by a large exodus of British immigrants, leaving the Liberal Government to fend for itself (Giliomee 277).

General J.B.M. Hertzog addressed the language issue and proposed 'equal freedom, rights and privileges' for English and Dutch. Giliomee states that the equality of the two languages was essential to ensure Afrikaner support for the Union. After a draft constitution was approved by the four colonies, they became the four provinces of the Union of South Africa on 31 May 1910 (277).Giliomee notes that these developments subsequently led to the Minister of the Interior, dr. D.F. Malan introducing a bill that added Afrikaans to Dutch and English as the official languages (376).

4.3 The Anglo-Boer War

A significant period in the development of the language occurred prior to and during the second Anglo-Boer War (9 October 1899 -31 May 1902). The War was fought between the British Empire and the Afrikaans settlers (the Boere) of the Transvaal

[32] The second Afrikaans language movement occurred after the Treaty of Vereeniging in 1902, in which the Boere where reassured that Dutch would be maintained as a language.

Republic and the Orange Free State. [33] The War ended victoriously for the British Empire, who declared sovereign rule over the Orange River Colony and the Transvaal (Giliomee 250). The Boers (also referred to as the Bittereinders) did not completely surrender as the British had hoped they would, they divided their commandos into smaller groups and attacked the English in what was known as a guerilla war(Van Jaarsveld 208).

The British, under Lord Kitchener, retaliated with their 'scorched earth policy', the ultimate aim of which was to deprive the Boers of any shelter and supplies (Giliomee 255). Farmhouses were burned down and all food supplies were destroyed (Van Jaarsveld 208). Most Boer men were captured and their wives and children sent to concentration camps, where inadequate food rations and sanitary conditions resulted in a high death toll. Giliomee states that it was a rarity for any child under the age of five to survive the horrific living conditions in the camps (Giliomee 255).

He is of the opinion that many died 'mainly of typhoid and measles, partly because the Boers as a rural people had not built up any immunity to diseases and partly because of their weakened condition' (255).Britain controlled the entire railway network of southern Africa and severed all Boer links with the outside world, isolating them from the rest of the world (Giliomee 252). The overwhelming destruction experienced by the Boers finally led to their surrender and the signing of the Vrede van Vereeniging(The Treaty of Vereeniging) on 31 May 1902(Van Jaarsveld 208).

[33] Afrikaans speaking settlers in South Africa.

Giliomee notes that it was the Boer *vrouens'* (woman's) resolute resistance that was the decisive factor in the War. The trauma, suffering and defeat experienced by the Afrikaner women, strengthened their patriotism and made them cling to their culture (256). Giliomee notes that reports from some of these women expressed their hesitancy to allow their children to speak English. These women differentiated themselves from the English through their 'republicanism, history, the *taal* (language) and hatred of the (British) race' (256). The period leading up to, and following the Anglo-Boer War was 'quintessential to the development of Afrikaans, as it left the Afrikaner *volk* in an impoverished and depleted state'.[34]

4.4The City of Johannesburg

In *Van van Riebeeck tot Verwoerd 1952-1966,* F.A van Jaarsveld describes the situation surrounding Johannesburg as one of the factors that led to an intensified struggle between British imperialism and Afrikaner nationalism. With the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand (1886)thousands of British immigrants settled in what was soon to be called Johannesburg (197). The Boers could not stomach the presence of these *Uitlanders* (foreigners) and even less the establishment of their 'British City' (197).

The Boers saw the presence of the British as an infringement of their independence and could not identify with their hedonistic lifestyle and their love of money that they referred to as 'Mammon worship', and went so far as to label the city

[34] Nation.

'Judas stad'.[35] The *Uitlanders* on the other hand viewed the Boers as culturally backward, with no understanding of their language or history (197). The hostility led to an even bigger conflict between the two parties, resulting in the Afrikaners' refusal to grant the *Uitlanders* voting privileges, as they anticipated the loss of their independence with the increased growth of the *Uitlander* community (197).Without going into a broader discussion of the *Uitlanders*' infringement of Boer independence, it must be noted that these sentiments resulted in even greater hostility between the British and Afrikaner *volk* (nation) (197).

In light of the historical overview of the City of Johannesburg and the preceding discussion of my cultural origins, I now reflect on the city's influence on the conceptual development of *Slaap my kindjie slaap sag.* The creative artwork reflects my inability to identify with the current Afrikaner culture in Johannesburg and my shying away from using Afrikaans when engaging with the people of the city. I find very little room for my Afrikaner identity to be explored within the city, as any notion of my origin casts me in a mold of past political shame. This influences my dissociation with the city's current social and political state, as well as its infrastructure.

This dissociation leads me to explore the architectural residue of the past that visibly haunts and defines the city. In *The singing building* it is observed that a sound continues to reverberate in the space in which it is made. This reverberation never disappears and becomes part of a room's natural tone ("The singing building".n.p). Projecting my voice into the CMI's Memorial Hall, is a way in which my voice becomes

[35]Jewish City.

part of the room's aural history and natural tones, remaining in the building long after I have left. This also reflects on the way in which I initially saw buildings in Johannesburg that have been repurposed and rebranded by the current political regime. Buildings that once played an essential part in the creation of 'nation building' have now been left either to completely deteriorate or to take on a different function within the city's landscape. These buildings represent gaping wounds from the past, and I used this metaphorical interpretation to direct my choice of song. I therefore use my voice, through song, to establish a direct link to my Afrikaner culture, and in so doing interpret the use of a lullaby as a way in which I nurse another's child.

5.The Technical installation of *Slaap my kindjie slaap sag*

The four-channel sound installation of *Slaap my kindjie slaap sag*, consisted of a pre-recorded rendition of the lullaby, presented in the CMI's Memorial Hallon 20 November, 2012. The recorded rendition of my voice singing the lullaby, repeated its two verses for precisely one hour, two minutes and sixteen seconds, translating it into an emotive activation of the site-specificity of the song in relation to the CMI. It commenced at 18:00 and played throughout the twilight hour, resonating throughout the building, stretching into the hallways and surrounding passages that lead into the main building of the CMI.

The technical support for *Slaap my kindjie slaap sag* was provided by Jan van Zyl and Andrew Smith from the Academy of Sound Engineering("Enter our world" n.p).Jan

van Zyl provided guidance in terms of the sound design needed for the installation and provided all the technical equipment for the sound trial prior to the presentation as well as on the day of the installation.

During the sound test it was decided not to elevate the speakers on skeleton stands, but instead to place them on the ground facing upwards, allowing the sound of my recorded voice to reflect the architectural acoustics found within the Memorial Hall. Four black JBL SRX712Mspeakers were used, facing the four corners of the room. They stood in full view of the audience and were connected to each other by four ten meter, and two twenty meter speaker cables. These cables connected to a Soundcraft Spirit SX mixer through one mini-stereo jack and two quarter-inch mono-jack cables.

Andrew Smith assisted with the vocal recordings of the lullaby at his private sound studio prior to the installation. This pre-recorded soundtrack was not enhanced by any digital/artificial sound modifiers, and it created an unexpected reflection of the voice in the architectural space, simulating a similar resonance of my voice when physically singing in the room. I used the lullaby to explore central ideas surrounding Sound Art, in terms of its relationship to site, architectural acoustics and the disembodiment present in an unaccompanied voice.

Two central aspects of the installation were its use of repetition, and the approach used in the vocalization of the lullaby's verses. The voice in repetition produced a subtle sense of urgency within the song's narrative, as it continually repeated the verses,

entering into a dialogue between the superimposed reproduction of my voice and the architectural resonance of the CMI. The lullaby was not sung intimately and I specifically emphasised the higher tones of song to emphasise the resonance of the Memorial Hall.

This produced a sense of disembodiment, refracting the voice even deeper into the building.

The installation relied on the accommodation of both the acoustic and aesthetic variables within the room, as well as unsuspected interruptions from staff members working at the CMI. The room's skylight gave sufficient natural light to the Memorial Hall, and during the twilight hour the natural tone of the room turned from a yellowish white to blue. This enhanced the ethereal quality of my feminine voice in the space and allowed the listeners to reflect on the installation's temporal qualities, as my voice purposefully recreated itself in the site.

The sound installation reflects and addresses my personal relationship towards the stereotypical association with the female Afrikaner *Boervrou* within Johannesburg.The production of the lullaby in the Memorial Hall enables me to use my mother tongue in a way that re-establishes my existence within the city. *Slaap my kindjie slaap sag* explores the voice and the use of song within my personal context and has a significant impact on the re-evaluation of my past and current Afrikaner identity.

Laurence Binyon's poem *For the Fallen* is used as a title underneath a photograph of the Memorial Hall. It reads, 'At the going down of the sun and in the morning we will remember them', and even though the phrase was originally used to commemorate the British war dead, it is claimed as a tribute to all casualties of war ("Ode of Remembrance"n.p). The phrase informed the time chosen for the final four-channel sound presentation, and established a reference within the Memorial Hall (Beaconsfieldn.p).

The images below present the current state of the Memorial Hall and were taken on the day of the presentation. They depict the Memorial Hall facing towards the outside veranda. *Children's Memorial Hall 1* shows the two altars and the bronze memorial plaques on the walls (Barbour n.p). *Children's Memorial Hall 2* presents a view of the Memorial Hall facing towards the main building, also showing the overhead skylight that had a significant atmospheric effect during the presentation of *Slaap my kindjie slaap sag.*

Barbour, Dean. *Children's Memorial Hall 1*. 20 November 2012.

Barbour, Dean. *Children's Memorial Hall 2*. 20 November 2012.

5.1 Audience Response

The audience were instructed to remain silent for the duration of the sound installation. Their silence, the change of light and the repetitive sound of my recorded voice enhanced the tragedy of war and the fragility of youth within the CMI's often forgotten Memorial Hall. At the end of the presentation the audience remained seated in

the room, silent and deeply reverent of what had occurred during the hour. Suzanne Barret, a representative of the NGO Bigshoes Foundation, with offices next to the Memorial Hall, commented that she experienced the work as deeply moving and relevant to the day-to-day engagement of the children in the building ("The Bigshoes" n.p).

Others noted the resonance of the lullaby that stretched deep into the heart of the CMI, and described how the unplanned sounds of children playing collated with my voice's repetition in the passageway. Another audience member, Johannes Myburgh, reflected on the work in a personal email, stating that the lullaby in the CMI recalled images of sick children and soldiers' broken bodies merged into an image of European children mutilated by war (Myburgh n.p). The sound installation also made him reflect on the racial discrimination towards black children during and prior to the Apartheid era (Myburgh n.p). Myburgh related the governmental dismissal of the building to the often-existing dismissive sentiments surrounding the Afrikaner culture, questioning his own interpretation thereof, as well as his response to his own Afrikaner culture (Myburgh n.p).

6. Conclusion

The creative project drew on observations made during an analysis of the Turner Prize winner Susan Philipsz's art practice[36], but mostly from experience and guidance gained while assisting the South African artist James Webb in a project entitled *Prayer*, that formed part of his retrospective exhibition 'MMXII' at the Johannesburg Art Gallery

[36]See Chapter 2, Case Study: Susan Philipsz.

in 2012. My role was to contact all the religious groups within the City of Johannesburg and schedule ten minutes of recorded prayer with a representative of each of these groups. Webb's meticulous eye for detail and thorough planning enabled me to engage with the city's people in a very unique and unbiased way. This taught me how to plan and strategize public art interventions and gave me an in-depth insight into the effective use of sound within a gallery space.

I built up an extensive database of different religious sites, and this aided me in placing myself within the geographical layout of the city. This subsequently led to my choice of the CMI's Memorial Hall for the final sound installation. Webb encouraged my personal exploration of site recordings and I went on numerous excursions, exploring different acoustic spaces in my immediate environment. The initial vocal recordings drew my attention to the architectural acoustics within each of these sites, and finally led me to record the lullaby without any artificial adjustments.

Slaap my kindjie slaap sag achieved its overall success as a contemplative site-specific sound installation, through exploring notions of disembodiment and the use of voice and song within the pre-existing architectural acoustics of the site. It served as an investigation of my personal association and identification with my Afrikaner culture. The use of voice and song within Sound Art allowed me to address the social and historical underpinnings present in language and specific spaces, often inaccessible to artistic exploration. *Slaap my kindjie slaap sag* addressed my personal dissociation with my culture and the use of my *'huistaal'* (the language I speak at home) in Johannesburg.

The installation established a link between the historical and current interpretation of the Afrikaner in the CMI and testifies to the relevance of the human voice in producing meaning within art through song.

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