

Jumping the Limits: the interaction of art forms at Black Mountain & beyond, including UK practice - Gavin Selerie

I

Fielding Dawson says Black Mountain “had no sides (literally). It was wide open in the mountain.”¹ This is a useful reminder that physical space can influence or determine thought. It was significant that the kinds of exploration associated with the college occurred far from recognized centres of learning. You could call it the permission of outlaws, and Ed Dorn, a son of the Prairie, perhaps brings this to fruition with the cinematic-linguistic slides of *Gunslinger*.

On the other hand, no space is definitive, and a key aspect of the Black Mountain community was its willingness to bring people in to work on projects for a limited period. The corollary of this is that skills or modes of inquiry were susceptible of translation to other spheres. Geographically, the dispersal, both before and after the closure of the college, was significant, allowing Bauhaus and related approaches to be taken up in other parts of North America, and finally circulated back to Europe. New York City had a particular cluster of Black Mountain-affiliated artists and San Francisco also, but the small community or individually focused endeavour could happen anywhere. Charles Olson returned to Gloucester but kept ideas afloat through correspondence, appearances in Berkeley, Vancouver and London, and via his two-year teaching stint at Buffalo.

What links figures as disparate as the weaver Anni Albers, the writer Robert Creeley and the designer Buckminster Fuller? Olson, in an unsent letter of 1952, describes Black Mountain as an “assembly point of *acts*”.² The key elements are a possibility for intersection and the physical shaping of ideas. Arthur Penn recalls that he came to Black Mountain not having learnt to read—obviously not in the literal sense. M.C. Richards brought him to this awareness, saying: “Why don’t you start with Dostoyevsky and let’s talk about it.”³ Note here the emphasis on inquiry and discourse. Reading here is active and outward. We know that Richards tried to involve her students in printing “as part of the sensuous experience of writing, the experience of it in its materials”.⁴ Likewise Anni Albers encouraged her students to look around and gather bits of moss and bark which could then be mixed and used for a shared project.⁵

Anthony Mellors, in “Williams Mix: Collage and Synthesis”, has described the August 1952 mixed media event initiated by John Cage. Olson and M.C. Richards read their poetry, Rauschenberg displayed his paintings and played some recordings, David Tudor played piano and Merce Cunningham danced, at one point pursued by a barking dog. In Cage’s words, “[A]ll fused together into the possibility of making a theatrical event in which the things that took place were not related to one another—but in which there is a penetration.” He stresses the involvement of the audience: “anything that happened after that happened in the observer himself”.⁶ Interestingly, memories differ about who did exactly what. Was M.C. Richards up a ladder, riding a horse or in a basket when she was reading poems?⁷ Retrospectively titled *Theatre Piece No 1*, the event had been conceived by Cage earlier that day; there was no rehearsal or script. Each participant did whatever he or she chose. Crucial here is the absence of intention and the role of chance, although there was a degree of control in terms of time slots and location. Cage was a useful activator since, as Karen Karnes has remarked, he was “philosophically connected to everything.”⁸

The cultural climate at Black Mountain had been leading up to this for some time. From his arrival in 1933, Josef Albers had been stressing the value of the unpredictable: “You don’t have to prepare so much as be in a state of awareness.”⁹ There had been a “total theatre” production, *Danse Macabre*, in 1938, which involved movement, words and music, with the audience “wearing identical masks and cloaks forming the outside circles of the spectacle.”¹⁰ This was devised by Alexander Schawinsky, who like Albers, had come via the Bauhaus.

From 1949-1951 M.C. Richards was involved with the Light Sound Movement Workshop, which emerged from Olson’s class on Verse and Theatre. She had got interested in the theories and practice of Artaud, via David Tudor, and ended up producing the first English translation of *The Theatre and its Double*. (The first extract appeared in the magazine *Origin* in 1953.¹¹) These ideas fed into events such as the “black arts ball” held on “the night of the female pope or occult science” (July 1953). This was a lake pageant featuring tableaux of great lovers in history, poled out on a raft beneath the dining hall porch as Richards read her parody of Villon, “Dans l’an moyen de mon Age”. The climax featured a boat emerging from the darkness with potter Karen Karnes at the prow, a nude Ophelia draped with vines and flowers.¹² The various actions were juxtaposed with music played by David Tudor.¹³

Flipping back a little to 1948, Cage asked Richards to provide a translation of Satie’s *Le Piège de Méduse*. This was directed by Arthur Penn, with Buckminster Fuller as Baron Medusa and Elaine de Kooning as his daughter. Merce Cunningham danced the interludes of the mechanical monkey, while Cage played piano.¹⁴ Penn recalls that he had to rewire an old lighting board and coax the shy, withdrawn Fuller into action by rolling on the floor with him.¹⁵ In 1950, Richards staged Yeats’s *The Death of Cuchulain*, with entrances made from the marsh and from stairways of the Studies Building.¹⁶ Again there was original music and lighting provided by kerosene lamps. Later the same year her version of Cocteau’s *Marriage on the Eiffel Tower* was performed, which involved converting the dining hall into a “total environment”, for eating, acting and seeing.

Helen Molesworth has noted the multi-input which shaped such practice, asserting that it was Elizabeth and W. Pete Jennerjahn who invented the Light Sound Movement workshops. They arrived in 1948, she having studied art with Josef Albers and dance with the Martha Graham Company. Molesworth describes one rehearsal with an “overlay of striped costumes and lights—an Albers color study in other media”. In these workshops “projected light and movement were to function as independent elements to reinvigorate one another, a method akin to the disjunctive and immersive practice of *Theatre Piece No 1*.”¹⁷

Clearly then there were antecedents to the famous 1952 happening, and the European influences should be stressed. Olson, whose poetry embraced aspects of music and dance, drew particular inspiration from Tudor’s account of Artaud’s influence on Pierre Boulez—to do with “the wildness of the instant”. This feeds into Olson’s theories about field and kinetics, as does Whitehead’s process philosophy.

I will move on to talk about the diffusion of Black Mountain procedures. Some of these examples are parallels rather than cases of direct transmission.

The Living Theatre had links with several figures who had taught at or emerged from Black Mountain. John Cage's *Music of Changes*, played by David Tudor, was premiered at Cherry Lane Theatre in 1952.¹⁸ Subsequently he encouraged their experiments with a theatre of chance, as in Jackson MacLow's *The Marrying Maiden* and Sophocles' *Women of Trachis*, staged in 1960—both inspired by Cage's theories.¹⁹ Judith Malina created a special part for the former—a dice thrower whose actions determined the sequence in which actors, or Cage's taped music, were to be used. Nick Cernovich, for whom Olson had written the dancer title-part in *Apollonius of Tyana*, became lighting director for the company. Paul Goodman's play *The Young Disciple*, an adaptation of St Mark's Gospel, was presented in 1955, with choreography by Merce Cunningham.²⁰

After she moved to New York in 1962, the artist Carolee Schneemann came into contact with Cage, Cunningham and painter Robert Rauschenberg. She visited Olson in Gloucester and considers his verbal collage technique as an influence on her body performance and artefacts. She was struck by his emphasis on “the phrase as a structure in motion about actual space” and “his notion that an image sustains duration and energy in relation to its factual referents.” When Olson asked about her work she explained that she “wanted to take painting into real time and lived actions, even using fragments of language.”²¹ The construction “Maximus at Gloucester” (1963) combines paint, photos, fabric, lobster trap, nets and glass with a piece of driftwood.²² Most of the material was gathered on the beach while walking with Olson.²³ One critic described this construct as “an epic sea shanty in the form of trash art.”²⁴

In San Francisco Wesley Huss, who had been drama teacher at Black Mountain from 1950-1956, tried to help with a revival of Robert Duncan's *Medea at Kolchis*, which had been staged at the college in its last year.²⁵ This did not materialize but Duncan's ongoing presence in the Bay area ensured a continuation of network contact. His presence on the advisory committee for the Berkeley Poetry Conference 1965 may have contributed to the choice of Olson, Robert Creeley and Edward Dorn as readers and/or lecturers. Stan Brakhage, who lived for a while in the basement of Duncan's house, digested the emphasis on process in Olson's “Projective Verse”, which helped to shape his film aesthetics. Brakhage's work is body-centred, with experience “transformed and reseen in a continual turbulence of movement, of color, of light.”²⁶ Emphasis on the perceptual and rhythmic pulse, with fragmentation and superimposition, echoes much of the varied practice at Black Mountain. (This is not to deny other modernist antecedents.) Duncan and Brakhage had long discussions and remained friends over the years. The film *In Between*, which Brakhage made in 1955, is a portrait of Duncan's partner the painter Jess Collins, edited to music by John Cage. Schneemann, incidentally, features in two early Brakhage films.²⁷

While working at U.C. Berkeley Music Library in 1959, John Whiting was asked to control one of the radios in a broadcast of Cage's *Imaginary Landscape No. 4* (for 12 radios, 24 players and conductor).²⁸ This led to an association over the years that included sound-spread from graphic images (see below, *Cage on Cage*, in a UK context). An index of Cage's international reach is his influence on composer Udo Kasemets, founder-director of the Isaacs Gallery Mixed Media Ensemble in Toronto. He organized a programme that included work by Cage in 1967. His own work involved use of chance operations and audience participation through choice of frequency and other aspects, as in *Tt*, subtitled “Tribute to Buckminster Fuller, Marshall McLuhan, John Cage” (1968). For Kasemets, to compose is a process of “learning to know what life and nature, indeed the whole universe,

are about, and to present a report on these studies by using all means available, including sounds.”²⁹

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II

Passing to developments in the UK, one should note the pre-existence of Dartington Hall, which encouraged craft activity, including cross-generic work, and which had a link to Black Mountain via Bernard Leach’s 1952 visit. This led to a performance by Cunningham’s dance company, with Cage, Tudor and Rauschenberg, during their European tour in 1964.³⁰ When “Rauschenberg couldn’t find any props, he simply stood at the back of the stage during the dance, ironing shirts.”³¹ Subsequently one of the dancers, Steve Paxton, did a lot of work there involving contact improvisation. One could trace this through to performance writing by Cris Cheek and Caroline Bergvall. Cheek was a co-founder of Chisenhale Dance Space, an important venue (from 1981) for music, sound and movement collaboration.

The poetry procedures associated with Black Mountain started to filter through in the 1950s, for instance via Gael Turnbull. However, in terms of mixed media the Edinburgh International Drama conference of 1963, organized by John Calder, probably provided the main spur. A “happening”, partly devised by Charles Marowitz, was held there on the last day. As Marowitz recalls:

Gradually one became aware of the low, throbbing sound of an organ and an electronic tape feeding back carefully edited excerpts from the week’s discussions. Then a nude on a [lighting] trolley was pulled across the balcony above the speaker’s platform. Carroll Baker, who had been seated on the platform, took this as her cue to descend and began clambering over the seats as if hypnotized by Alan Kaprow . . . who, Valentino-like, was spooking her from the front of the hall. By this time a group of strangers had appeared at the windows hollering, “Me, can you see me!” and a mother ushered a baby across the stage pointing out the celebrities in the crowd. The final beat was when the curtains behind the speaker’s platform suddenly tumbled down to reveal rows of shelves containing over a hundred sculpted heads illuminated by footlights. The object of these actions had been to disperse attention and create a number of different areas of interest.³²

Predictably, most accounts of the event have focused exclusively on Anna Kesselaar, the art school model who was wheeled naked across the balcony of the McEwan Hall, to subsequent vociferous disapproval by the authorities. After the performance the prime mover, Ken Dewey, explained to the audience:

This kind of theatre is like jazz, at one level: it is held together not by law, not by control, but by the rapport between collaborators. We are trying to give back to you, the audience, the responsibility of theatre—performing your own thoughts, building your own aesthetics.³³

Mark Boyle, the light artist, adds further detail. On the evening before the event he and other participants climbed a tower by the spiral stair and discovered rooms containing thousands of plaster heads on racks—a phrenology collection. These included “an enormous head about six times life size” with an inscription in lipstick on its forehead, saying “BIG ED”. The latter provided a name for the whole performance. They decided to lower him from the roof during the piece so that he would look in through the window

behind a balcony above the stage. They erected shelves behind the platform curtains and placed a couple of hundred statues there, as “a kind of audience for the audience”. They also explored a cellar, finding skeletons and wax casts of diseased faces and other body parts—a collection from the university dermatology department. It was decided to use them too.³⁴

The event began with Marowitz delivering an “absurd” lecture on the platform, capturing, as Boyle says, “the air of arrogance and conceit that had characterised so many of the contributions” at the conference. Then somebody began to interrupt him: the actor Charles Lewson, “affecting a high, squeaky voice, looking very diminutive in the vast sea of the audience.” He eventually stood on his chair, trying to get heard, then climbed forward “stepping from seat-back to seat-back”, getting closer to the platform. After refusing to let him speak, Marowitz eventually surrendered the microphone—which promptly went dead. This was followed by the “shattering, cacophonous tape collage” of conference speeches, blared out from loudspeakers with the refrain, “I love the theatre! I love the theatre!” Carrol Baker and Kaprow clambered about, doing what looked “like a kind of avant garde ballet on the shoulders of the audience”. This was the signal for the appearance of BIG ED at the window and figures knocking and scratching at the roof-light windows, trying impossibly to be let in. Cue: the nude model on the trolley, followed by Boyle nailing skeletons and body parts to a Cocteau drawing. The rope holding BIG ED broke and he fell, smashing to the ground below.³⁵

If some of these elements were pre-arranged, the performance had the kind of spontaneity and chance associated with Black Mountain. As with *Theatre Piece No 1*, participants differ somewhat in their recall of the proceedings. Interestingly, John Cage distinguishes Alan Kaprow’s “Happening” mode, which “does not depend upon plot convention” for its occurrence, from experimental music composition, which involves “use of chance operations” and indeterminacy.³⁶

Bob Cobbing, a pivotal figure on the UK scene, was already adopting chance procedures in his book and performance work in London. Initially he had no knowledge of Italian and Russian Futurist and Dada sound poets but drew inspiration from Kerouac, Joyce and Gertrude Stein, along with performance by Bernard Heidsieck and Henri Chopin.³⁷ He felt his way via art show, music and writing groups in Hendon, and achieved a central base by becoming manager of Better Books paperback department in 1965. Here in the basement a multi-media environment was constructed. As Steve Willey writes,

Cobbing hosted four performances organized by John Latham. During the last of these performances, ‘Wind, Foam and Dream’ (April 1967), taped audio recordings of Cobbing and [Ernst] Jandl were played into the room as polyurethane foam was pumped from PVC tubes into books. Latham’s ‘bookplumbing’ technique and Cobbing’s tape-based work, used by Latham as an aural frame during ‘Wind Foam Dream’ (1965), indicates how the movement between artistic mediums, and into sound specifically, was by this point a significant aspect of Cobbing and Latham’s event-based practice.³⁸

The People Show, with strong input from Jeff Nuttall, further helped to break down formal categories of art. Starting in the basement of Better Books, this company went on to perform at the Royal Court and La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club in New York City. On another front, as lecturer at Leeds Polytechnic in the 1970s, Nuttall inspired artwork and happenings that “could be confrontational, even extreme, including blood, broken glass and body parts.”³⁹

Cobbing was a founding member of the London Film-makers Co-op, formed in 1966. From 1977 through to the 1990s the London Musicians Collective shared the Co-op premises in Camden Town, and this physical proximity encouraged some crossover of forms.⁴⁰ Over the years Cobbing used Roneo and Gestetner duplicators to produce visual poems. His acquisition of a photocopier (with possibilities for magnification, distortion and overprinting) in 1984 resulted in much significant work relating to performance. For instance, he photocopied and transformed a copy of *Notations*, signed in Cage's customary double form for John Whiting. This was published as *Cage on Cage* in 1985 and performed the following year.⁴¹

Performance artists Bruce Lacey and Jill Bruce intersected with Cobbing and Nuttall at Better Books and went on to appear at many locations including the ICA. As Nuttall records,

Lacey made his magnificent hominoids, sick, urinating, stuttering machines constructed of the debris of the century, always with pointed socialist-pacifist overtones but with a profound sense of anger, disgust and gaiety that goes far beyond any simple political standpoint.⁴²

Jill Bruce remembers a show where she had a bag of offal sellotaped to her abdomen, so that she was “like a pregnant woman that was . . . operated on.”⁴³ Lacey pulled out what looked like entrails—a shock manoeuvre characteristic of such early events. The son of a junk dealer, Lacey built robot-like figures with inbuilt recycling elements; his kinetic sculptures and engagement with cybernetics has some parallel with work by artists and writers associated with Black Mountain. The humour, however, had a distinctly British flavour, absurdist in the music hall tradition. Jeremy Deller and Nick Abrahams said of Lacey's combination of science and art: “It was as if Dr Dee had been reimagined by the Goons.”⁴⁴ Although part of a general trend, Lacey's use of synth and tape delay probably influenced jazz and rock music.⁴⁵

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III

It is perhaps difficult to distinguish the threads contributing to mixed media events in the UK. How does Black Mountain exploration link up with Mark Boyle's liquid light projection, for instance? Adrian Henri, in his study, *Environments and Happenings*, argues that the best work in England showed “an urge to use environmental forms to bi-pass the modern tradition of the isolated artist.”⁴⁶ He doesn't mention it but a good example would be David Toop performing in and out of water-filled fish tanks, accompanied by slides of amphibians and tapes of pre-recorded birds and animals, at London Zoo in 1976.⁴⁷ Jill Bruce observes that she and Bruce Lacey used to go “out into the landscape”, an engagement with sacred sites which fed into their “Elemental Coordinator” (non-electric) performances such as that at Barsham Fayre, Suffolk in 1976:

Bruce had got a big globe and it focused light, and he'd burn the track of the sun through the day. For Barsham we decided to work in a circle, but it was me who worked out the ritual and I started making the costumes. It was a way of expressing my creativity and spirituality, through these elemental costumes. I was working out the rituals initially, and telling him what to do. . . . Bruce had a vast collection of things and . . . we performed with [these objects].⁴⁸

The alternative “fayre” context enabled contact with a community via forms of unusual projection. Earlier, in 1974, Lacey and Bruce developed a show called *Stella Superstar and her Amazing Galactic Adventures*. Lacey remarks:

[T]he audience sat on large . . . beanbag things, and they would have to turn and swivel. Because we’re performing at different places. And we’re running round behind the scenery, changing costumes, and appearing and things like that, and at different times film would come up while we were changing. . . . We were our own technicians . . . Because you see, with technicians, they want cues. When do I come in, what word? [Whereas] we’re improvising.⁴⁹

The reference to film as a further dimension to performance is a reminder that Lacey was a significant filmmaker.⁵⁰

Mark Boyle and Joan Hills had gone from *son et lumière* events at the Jeanetta Cochrane theatre to work with Soft Machine at UFO (1966). Daevid Allen comments:

The light show we used . . . was run by Mark Boyle, a Scottish sculptor turned liquid light show alchemist. The combinations of liquids he sandwiched between the twin glass lenses, that began to alter as they were heated by the projector lamp, were his professional secret. He worked inside a tent so nobody could see what he was doing. Some said he used his own fresh sperm mixed with colours and other liquids and fluids. He felt a particular affinity for our music and although it could not be logically programmed, his lights synchronized with our stops, starts, peaks, and lows, as if it had all been pre-organized by a wizardly Atlantean re-incarnate.⁵¹

Earlier, in May 1965, Boyle and Hills had staged an event at the ICA called *Oh What a Lovely Whore* (the title implicitly critiquing the passive role of the audience and/or the control in terms of expectation by that audience). Boyle recalls:

People got very excited, there was a big crowd and suddenly we put out all the lights and I shouted over the microphone, “We’re not doing any events now, so if you want an event you’re going to have to do it for yourselves!” and then spotlights came up all over the place and there were activities for everyone. . . . We all assumed beforehand that they’d just say, “Oh yeah . . . mmm” and be blasé. . . . They did smash the place to pieces, but they did it in a kind of ritual way that was astonishing.⁵²

Perhaps the Artaud element here reflects Living Theatre practice rather than that at Black Mountain. M.C. Richards insisted that Artaud was “not advocating a theatre of brutality” but “called his theatre The Theatre of Cruelty because it was concerned with the absolute energies of life.”⁵³ On the other hand, Boyle and Hills had not foreseen the audience reaction, which could be called a form of pure energy.

The influence of Black Mountain on the counter-culture in the UK is documented in the *Riverside Interview* volume on Tom McGrath, the Scottish dramatist, poet and editor of *IT [International Times]*.⁵⁴ He speaks at length about the influence of John Cage and Olson, and the way in which they became fused in his own practice with European exponents of avant-garde art. Noting particularly Olson’s presence on the London scene in 1966-67, he describes a dynamic that wasn’t confined to the world of literature, that drew from a range of areas, placing energy at the fore: Olson “showed me how to follow my thought as it actually was, as opposed to how syntax had made me think it was.”⁵⁵ These insights fed into McGrath’s subsequent theatre work, notably in the play *Animal*, which explores ape behaviour.⁵⁶ His plays have a strong sense of geometric space, and an emphasis on placing

language visually. He links this not only with Olson but with jazz musicians such as Charlie Parker. The key thing here may be the simultaneity of diverse actions.

McGrath's account of the conference of "like minds" at Brazier's Park in 1964 is paralleled by Jeff Nuttall's in *Bomb Culture*.⁵⁷ Others present included R.D. Laing, Alexander Trocchi, Bob Cobbing and John Latham. Talk about social and artistic experiment was accompanied by action such as John Latham sticking a copy of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* on the wall with polyfiller and spraying it with black paint.⁵⁸ Although something of a social disaster the event paved the way for attempts to break down the formal categories of art.

One thing that helped the interpenetration of art forms was the relatively open character of institutions, both academic and non-academic. There was a mood in which ideas could be exchanged and an affinity between, say, the ICA, the London Film-makers Co-op, the Roundhouse and the Polytechnic of Central London. Much important activity happened in what might be termed "alternative" venues, but more established spaces also embraced experiment.⁵⁹ I saw a remarkable London Contemporary Dance Theatre Event, *Khamsin*, at Sadler's Wells in 1977. The dancers performed with live accompaniment from the Bob Downes Ensemble, with points of exchange rather than a simple acting out of the score. I should mention that I took part in a series of workshops with the Living Theatre at the Roundhouse in 1979. This, along with exposure to other examples of chance procedure, influenced the performance of my text *Strip Signals*, with multiple voices and instruments, at the London Musicians Collective in 1985 and 1986.⁶⁰ Here, paintings displayed in the background, also contributed to a mobile visual field.

Much more prominent, and a Continental project, was Steve Lacy's collaboration with Robert Creeley, starting in 1982 and performed in 1984-86. This project, *Futurities*, involved the singer Irene Aebi, jazz musicians and dancers, with light effects. Jazz is part of Creeley's verbal fabric, as Tom Clark has noted:

[T]he imagination of a cool, angular, driving jazz, punctuated with anxious, staccato accents and playing at moderated volume somewhere off in the backdrop, is an important element in the existential *ambiance* of much of Creeley's earliest serious writing.⁶¹

There is a danger that bringing in other—even common—forces can spoil the flow of poetry or impose too literal a frame on what is merely implied. However, the procedures adopted here did not interfere but rather opened out the poetry. Lacy chose twenty poems on love and marriage, making a song-cycle. He preserved the prosody of Creeley's poems as a kind of fixed base but allowed improvisation to emerge, reflecting as it were the instrumentation of the texts.⁶² Pianist Jeff Gardner recalls:

[A] 9 foot tall triangular painting by Kenneth Noland . . . was unfurled as a scenario for our live performances The two dancers, from widely different horizons (Elsa [Wolliaston] was Sengalese and Douglas [Dunn] came out of Merce Cunningham's company) had to find a common ground, and the openness led to widely different performances each night.⁶³

The ritual dimension was sharpened by Aebi's vocal timbre, which, atypical of jazz singing, veers towards the operatic (without histrionics). Noland's chevron, painted for the show, shifted colour under different channels of light. In 1986 I attended a performance at the Bloomsbury Theatre which brought out the complexity of the relationships evoked in Creeley's deceptively simple words.⁶⁴ The interplay between forms created a multi-

dimensional scene that yet allowed concentration. The thread woven through Creeley's poems recalled various aspects of Black Mountain practice, perhaps particularly a faith in the grain of material while reworking it.

The dynamic of the 1980s London scene is evoked by Allen Fisher in describing a concert given by The [Giant] Slits at Hammersmith Palais in 1981, involving Steve Beresford (music) and Don Cherry's daughter (dancing):

The ceiling is slatted, a globe suspended from it, has a myriad of small mirrors, a barrage of lights, and a grimy roof. . . . On stage the *Slits* hung a clothes line as part of their set. Some of the music anticipated the *Rip Rig + Panic* to follow with Picasso's drawing on the cover. By that time Don Cherry was playing too, along with his daughter, and then Ari of the *Slits*, now no longer together as a group, got up on the stage and danced. That was all before we saw Brion Gysin performing, with a group that included Terry of the *Slits* . . .⁶⁵

Punk elements were mixed with expertise and inspiration stretching back to a previous era.

Elsewhere Fisher describes the exchange pattern occurring in a performance by Oral Complex at the London Musicians Collective in 1983:

Cobbing and [Clive] Fencott open their mouths, stick out their tongues and vibrate the air. [John] Whiting shines a torch into their throats and records the vibrations, transforms the sounds they make in the process and feeds the new sounds back through their ears. All three complex the oral. Their work, potentially, induces changes in the listeners' receptors and channels . . . the listener is . . . inside the process of composition.⁶⁶

Fisher likens the interplay between Whiting's acts/equipment and the poets' physical/vocal expression to Olson's ideas of process, including perception.⁶⁷

Among the poets using visual and/or musical elements in performance, Geraldine Monk stands out as a creative user of space. In her performances of *Interregnum* at the Greenroom, Manchester and ICA (1993) the poet appeared in a blue macintosh with transparent rain hood, picked out mysteriously through light effects.⁶⁸ She accessed her work in different ways, using flip charts and till rolls; words streamed down as a backdrop from which she read. This provided the physical base or energy spring for a mix of languages charting the Pendle Witches' experience. Earlier, around 1973, Monk featured in an exhibition called *Breeding the Bone Head* at Leeds Polytechnic. Here she "provided the soundtrack, which was retuned violin and voice," set against Robert Clark's organic crayon drawings." The two had "filled the gallery floor shin-deep with autumn leaves and other autumnal debris", along with objects borrowed from the biology department, such as dog embryos and a frog skeleton in bottles of formaldehyde.⁶⁹ The latter element echoes part of the 1963 Edinburgh Happening. Monk worked briefly with Bob Cobbing, Maggie O'Sullivan and Clive Fencott in Rhinestone in the Juju, a multi-vocal ensemble whose first full-scale performance took place at the London Musicians Collective in 1985.⁷⁰ Over the years she has also collaborated with saxophonist Martin Archer. Engaging with the range of projective selves in Monk's work, Chris Goode points to "the movement of voice between the individual and the collective".⁷¹ These layers of being cut through the air as they do on the page, including, as Frances Presley notes, the "subverbal".⁷² It is poetry with the charge of other arts, contained and precise in its very spill.

Other poets involved in cross-media performance include Paula Claire and Hazel Smith. At the 11th International Sound Festival in 1978 Claire presented *Cabbagebrain*, her “gestation of language researches”, slicing open a red cabbage and inviting the audience to sound its patterns.⁷³ This is typical of her use of action and voice to initiate responses. Her description of a *Konkrete Canticle* performance (with Cobbing and Bill Griffiths) at Goldsmiths College in 1978 shows the range of strategies, including percussion and the handing round of birch bark rubbings, that such a group could employ.⁷⁴ Cobbing’s work often involved his partner Jennifer Pike, whose characteristic mode was dancing or moving while wrapped in a sheet. Starting in 1993, Robert Sheppard developed a number of pieces from *Twentieth Century Blues* for performance with dancer Jo Blowers, some involving music.⁷⁵ Prior to this Sheppard had read alongside artwork by Patricia Farrell, as with the text *Looking North* in 1988.⁷⁶

A representative instance of dance/music collaboration in this era is *Bussed Spectacles*, a London Musicians Collective show (1981), where the audience was transported in a bus around a series of events in the street and elsewhere. The group Still Mauve featured Clive Bell, Sylvia Hallett and Richard Coldman alongside dancers from the X6 Dance Collective (later Chisenhale Dance Space). As Clive Bell says, “Still Mauve represented dancers and musicians both trying to push out beyond what they would normally do.”⁷⁷ Sylvia Hallett recalls:

Still Mauve perform[ed] in a disused archaeological dig in Putney. It was a bit like a piece of waste ground with the usual pile of dumped mattress, bits of furniture, bits of metal—oven fronts and other flat metal. I decided to string these pieces of metal together—they were heavy—and wore them as if they were a coat, so that they banged and clashed together. We also set up a little “room” like a domestic situation with all the broken furniture and mattress. A rather sad prophecy of the homelessness that was to come in later decades. The person mainly organising the whole event was Richard Coldman, then a guitarist. Because it was all organised via (I think) walkie talkie radios (before mobile phones!) so the cueing was done like that, we had to wait in the site for a good hour before the bus was expected, and then when given the cue that the bus was about to arrive we started to perform, (maybe we started before that) and the audience got off the bus and watched us for about 15 mins (?) . . . then they got back on the bus. We then made our own way to the next place where we could catch up with the bus, which may have been an event on the river Lea—although my memory may have mixed up two events into the same thing.⁷⁸

The punning title suggests a break from normal modes of perception and a linked, journeying experience, with drama in the ordinary.

In the context discussed above (UK: 1963-1993), several aspects seem to recur: playfulness, a political thrust and chance process. Similarities with Black Mountain work or events may be due to a common heritage of modernist experiment and a natural progression of ideas. Bruce Lacey claimed never to have heard of Dada when he began his work and learned the word “assemblage” from a review of his first exhibition. (He had nevertheless recently seen collage-work by Kurt Schwitters.)⁷⁹ On the other hand, many figures connected with Black Mountain came to have an international reach and, once in the air, notions of practice spread across the Atlantic. There was, of course, two-way traffic, although British radical artistic experiment tended to be less well documented.

* * * * *

IV

We tend to think of the interaction between art forms as a literal display of different forces. In a more subtle sense, however, one can discern that cross-generic practice within a single form. A good example is Cecil Taylor's approach to playing the piano. Acknowledging the influence of Olson, Creeley and Duncan, he has said:

[T]he thing that allows me to enter into what they do is the feeling that I get. It's the way they use words. It's the phraseology that they use, much the way the defining characteristic of men like Charlie Parker or Johnny Hodges is the phraseology. And in the phraseology would be the horizontal as well as the vertical. In other words, the harmony and the melodic. Well, I also see that in word structures . . . [the] syntactical structure.⁸⁰

Taylor collaborated with dancers in the 1970s and this attention to movement and pulse carries over into a purely musical context. He speaks of trying "to imitate on the piano the leaps in space a dancer makes." This is particularly evident in the *Café Montmartres* recordings from Copenhagen in 1962, which have a very physical percussive aspect—for instance the piano solo in the opening number "Trance".

In effect this is parallel to Olson's own incorporation of dance rhythm and perspective in such poems as "Tyrian Businesses" from 1953.⁸¹ As Sherman Paul remarks:

[Olson] invokes the dance not in the service of the transcendent [as Yeats and the Symbolists] but of the immanent, as a practical discipline of body-consciousness—of proprioception, posture, movement. He invokes dance because for the dancer—he speaks always as a participant and not as an observer—it is a projective art, the paradigm of stance and movement-in-space and of the truth . . . that "we use ourselves."⁸²

The last phrase is from Olson's major statement on dance, "A Syllabary for a Dancer," which provides a gloss to the poem mentioned and advocates a way of writing/being.⁸³ He wrote experimental plays that reflected this jointure of sound and gesture, including *The Fiery Hunt*, a choreographic script based on *Moby-Dick*, for the Martha Graham Company (but unproduced).⁸⁴ In its layout as embodiment of thought/voice Olson's poetry reflects the multi-media experience of Black Mountain. He both absorbed and led in working this through.

On the Junction Box site I have an essay dealing with the influence of graphic art on my own poetry, particularly shape poems.⁸⁵ The layout and rhythms of poetry can reflect another art form even within a singleness of form. This is very evident in texts published in the UK in the 1970s/80s involving typewriter and duplicator, reflecting an immediacy of operation. Such presses include Aloes Books, Writers Forum, Pirate Press and Galloping Dog. Bill Griffiths, Geraldine Monk and Allen Fisher are among those who drove and/or benefited from this process. But letterpress publications, sensitively realized, can offer even greater precision in "launch[ing] poems into the air", as Glenn Storhaug argues in his essay "On Printing Poetry Aloud".⁸⁶ Close involvement of the author can be a factor in this process, despite the potential conflict of interest, as Olson's correspondence with typesetter and designer Barry Hall demonstrates.⁸⁷ Storhaug's setting of "Figures of a Goddess *circa* 1920" and "A Ramification of Mallarmé's Theorem" in Alan Halsey's *Auto Dada Café* illustrates such care in placing sound on a visual plane. Halsey's graphic work in, for example, *Five Years Out* (1989) shows how the verbal can gather force in pictorial form, often through collage—drawing together and breaking bits to achieve a provisional close.⁸⁸

This leads into the filmic aspects of Halsey's "Memory Screen" in a later decade.⁸⁹

Film is inherently a collaborative art, and Arthur Penn has acknowledged the influence of the Black Mountain environment and, in particular, the production of *Le Piège de Méduse*, on his working procedures. In an interview with Martin Duberman he explained that the Satie rehearsals encouraged him to test new theatrical possibilities: "the 'opening up of the space,' the disappearance of lines of demarcation, the play flowing into the auditorium, temporarily catching up the audience, then flowing back onto the stage." He said that he did not become conscious of how much he had absorbed from Black Mountain "until perhaps ten years later"—that is, about 1958.⁹⁰ He became a pioneer of live TV drama, moving away from naturalistic forms.⁹¹ In one sequence for instance he "used a midget for somebody who was in a different perspective." Penn recalls:

What we shot went right out on the air. That was television in the early days. I did one every third week for NBC. We'd rehearse them in a hotel ballroom with just the actors, no cameras. We'd plan how we were going to shoot it, and after about seven days of these rehearsals, we'd go into the TV studio. We'd rehearse one day with the cameras, the next day was a final dress rehearsal, and we went on the air that evening. And the pictures that were going out, we cut them ourselves, in the control room. And not only were we choosing the shots, we were choosing how long those shots would last—based on how the actors were performing!⁹²

This echoes the spirit of Black Mountain endeavours, particularly in its sense of seizing the moment and sustaining a relation between different components of an artistic act.

The feature films also reflect a degree of improvisation and structural experiment. The first thing Robin Wood notes in his study of Penn is "an intense awareness of, and emphasis on, physical expression."⁹³ As Adam Bingham says, *The Left-Handed Gun* (1957) reveals "the very close way he would work with [actors] in order to utilise the full body, from small gestures and intonations to grand outbursts, as a means of revealing character."⁹⁴ Penn himself remarks: "There's a sequence in *The Left Handed Gun* where Paul Newman writes on the window what's going to happen and then we go forward to it happening. It's a change in narrative structure that [critic] André Bazin responded to very positively."⁹⁵

Penn remarks of Black Mountain: "You didn't study anything—it was full of inquiry . . . You did what you did because you were curious."⁹⁶ The college gave him "a strong sense of communal engagement" and also, by implication, the determination to draw together ideas in shaping a singular vision. One can see aspects of Olson, Cage, Cunningham, Fuller, M.C. Richards and others in this practice, from *The Chase* through *Bonnie and Clyde* to *Little Big Man*, behind the surface influence of New Wave. It is interesting that work which achieved a mass audience should reflect the activities of a community of 150 or so people. As Edmund de Waal reminds us, the two-week pottery seminar led by Bernard Leach and others in 1952 encouraged "the development of form ideas" to design for mass production and craft in the machine world.⁹⁷

Over the years Mary Caroline Richards has been something of a heroine for me, stirred by my acquisition of her version of *The Theatre and its Double* in 1968. This is one of the

books that made me a writer and it meant a lot that it came via Black Mountain College, which I also discovered, as a phenomenon, that year. I will end with a quotation for her book *Centering*, published in 1964:

[M]y experience builds bridges between disciplines which are often considered separate if not antagonistic. . . . Potters experience the mud, we experience the forces of time and destiny that have transmuted rock into plastic dust. We experience the raw ware, the sudden spell of a mobile act brought into stillness. . . . [T]he fired pot stands in the long narrative of these transformations with only its own authenticity. For it too will disappear; it will be sold or given away. It will almost certainly be broken in time. The shards will then stand with their own special charm . . . They may even be pounded up for grog and thus enter bodily into the process at another beginning point. And though shapes change, though each moment dies into the next, though no thing is being made to last, something is happening. Each moment bears life forward.⁹⁸

She goes on to speak of poetry as an expression of this, living in a world of shape-changers.⁹⁹ You could reverse her emphasis on centering to place the margins at the centre but I think this is what she implies anyway. Every avant-garde is at risk of creating its own orthodoxy but let us take Richards's comments as an inspiration for future experiment.

Notes

¹ Fielding Dawson, *The Black Mountain Book* (Croton Press 1970), 4.

² Charles Olson, "A letter to the Faculty of Black Mountain College" in *Olson: The Journal of the Charles Olson Archives* 8 (Fall 1977), 28.

³ *Arthur Penn on studying at Black Mountain College - TelevisionAcademy.com/Interviews* (available on youtube). See also Nat Segaloff, *Arthur Penn: American Director* (University Press of Kentucky 2011), 25.

⁴ Emma Mary Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College* (MIT Press 1987), 117.

⁵ Anni Albers, *On Weaving* (Wesleyan University Press 1965), 62-64.

⁶ Quoted in Martin Duberman, *Black Mountain: an Exploration in Community* (Wildwood House 1974), 350.

⁷ *Ibid*, 354-57.

⁸ Oral history interview with Karen Karnes, 9-10 August 2005 (Smithsonian Archives of American Art): <https://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/interviews/oral-history-interview-karen-karnes-12096>.

⁹ Martin Duberman, *Black Mountain: an Exploration in Community*, 63.

¹⁰ *ibid*, 98.

¹¹ *Origin* first series, 11 (autumn 1953). Apparently Richards first heard about *The Theatre and its Double* when reading Jean-Louis Barrault's *Reflections on the Theatre* (1951). She mentioned it to David Tudor who, having discovered that Pierre Boulez had used Artaud's text as inspiration, had a typescript of the book. See Mary Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, 228.

¹² This account follows that of Mary Emma Harris in *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, 238.

¹³ See programme for "Night of the female pope, or occult science . . . black arts ball subsequently", North Carolina digital collections at <http://digital.ncdcr.gov/cdm/ref/collection/p249901coll44/id/625>.

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- ¹⁴ M.C. Richards, "Black Mountain College: A Golden Seed" in Mervin Lane ed., *Black Mountain College: Sprouted Seeds: an Anthology of Personal Accounts* (University of Tennessee Press 1990), 173; essay originally published in *American Craft* (June 1977).
- ¹⁵ Martin Duberman, *Black Mountain College: An Exploration in Community*, 290; *Arthur Penn on studying at Black Mountain College - TelevisionAcademy.com/Interviews*.
- ¹⁶ M.C. Richards, "Black Mountain College: A Golden Seed" in *Black Mountain College: Sprouted Seeds: an Anthology of Personal Accounts*, 173.
- ¹⁷ Helen Molesworth with Ruth Erickson, *Leap Before You Look: Black Mountain College 1933-1957* (Institute of Contemporary Art/Boston and Yale University Press 2015), 301.
- ¹⁸ Laura Kuhn ed., *Selected Letters of John Cage* (Wesleyan University Press 2016), 128.
- ¹⁹ Pierre Biner, *The Living Theatre: A History Without Myths* (Avon Books 1972), 53-56. See also John Tytell, *The Living Theatre: Art, Exile and Outrage* (Grove Press 1995), 163-64.
- ²⁰ *ibid.*, 31.
- ²¹ "Maximus at Gloucester: A Visit to Charles Olson" in Carolee Schneemann, *Imaging Her Erotics: Essays, Interviews, Projects* (MIT Press, 2003), 52-53.
- ²² Detail reproduced at <https://mfaboutart.blogspot.com/2017/06/blog-post.html>.
- ²³ <https://bordercrossingsmag.com/article/the-articulate-body>.
- ²⁴ Shawn Hill, "Carolee Schneemann at Pierre Menard Gallery" (2007): http://www.berkshirefinearts.com/11-04-2007_carolee-schneemann-at-pierre-menard-gallery.htm
- ²⁵ Robert Duncan, *The Collected Early Poems and Plays* ed. Peter Quartermain (University of California Press 2012), 803-4. Huss had directed the original production at Black Mountain College. See Duberman, *Black Mountain*, 409-412.
- ²⁶ Sheldon Renan, *The Underground Film: An Introduction to its development in America* (Studio Vista 1968), 118.
- ²⁷ See <https://lux.org.uk/writing/revisiting-brakhage-3-containing-carolee-schneemann>.
- ²⁸ See <http://www.thankyouoneandall.co.uk/letters/cage.htm>.
- ²⁹ "Prologue to an interlogue and an epilogue (introduction to intermedia)" in *Canada Music Book 5 Autumn-Winter 1972*.
- ³⁰ See <https://www.mercecunningham.org/blog/1964-world-tour/>.
- ³¹ <https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/merce-cunningham-common-time-869543>.
- ³² Charles Marowitz, *Burnt Bridges: A Souvenir of the Swinging Sixties and Beyond* (Hodder & Stoughton 1990), 58.
- ³³ *The Scotsman*, 8 September 1963; quoted by Angela Bartie in *The Edinburgh Festivals: Culture and Society in Post-war Britain* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 128.
- ³⁴ <http://www.boylefamily.co.uk/boyle/texts/journey3.html>.
- ³⁵ *ibid.*, Mark Boyle's account again.
- ³⁶ *Selected Letters of John Cage*, 265.
- ³⁷ "The Point About Criticism Is That It Is Frequently Wrong: Bob Cobbing Interviewed By W. Mark Sutherland"; http://www.ubu.com/papers/cobbing_sutherland.html.

³⁸ Steve Willey, “The Event in John Latham and Bob Cobbing”, in *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* 42: 1-2 (2017), 123.

³⁹ Paul Whittle, “Jeff Nuttall in Leeds”; <http://www.bigbookend.co.uk/jeff-nuttall-in-leeds-by-paul-whittle/>.

⁴⁰ Paul Burwell describes an event c. 1982/83 where, after their concert, Musiciens Du Nil changed the Collective into an Eastern Bazaar, attempting to sell the audience their instruments, trinkets, and, I think, items of their clothing . . . Annabel Nicolson [artist and Film Co-op programmer] flooding the place in a representation of the Mississippi river” (*Performance* magazine; quoted in Clive Bell, “History of the LMC”, *Variant* 2: 8 (Summer 1999).

⁴¹ Bob Cobbing, John Cage, *Cage on Cage* (Writers Forum 1985). When Cage signed his copy of *Notations*, Whiting said, “That [signature over another] looks like a musical composition in its own right. May Oral Complex perform it?” Cage said yes and Oral Complex (Cobbing and Clive [P.C.] Fencott, with John Whiting) performed the treated text in Oxford, April 1986. According to Whiting, this was the “first and only performance” (email 14 Oct. 2018).

⁴² Jeff Nuttall, *Bomb Culture* (MacGibbon & Kee 1968), 130-31.

⁴³ “Jill Smith (aka Jill Bruce) on Bruce Lacey, the Albion Fairs and sacred sites”; interview by Rupert White at http://www.artcornwall.org/interviews/Jill_Smith_aka_Jill_Bruce2.htm.

⁴⁴ A statement made in relation to Deller and Abrahams’ film about Lacey; http://www.jeremydeller.org/TheBruceLacey/TheBruceLaceyExperience_Video.php.

⁴⁵ Lacey’s most prominent encounter with popular culture was his appearance in the Lester-directed Beatles film *Help!*, where he mows a lawn with chattering “joke” teeth. He and his robots feature in the Fairport Convention song “Mr Lacey” (*What We Did on Our Holidays* [1969]).

⁴⁶ Adrian Henri, *Environments and Happenings* (Thames and Hudson 1974), 111.

⁴⁷ See David Toop, “Sounding the Object: a Time Base Archive” in *Journal of Conservation and Museum Studies*, 10(1), pp.39–43. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5334/jcms.1011203>; see also Miranda Pope, “But is it Art? Conceptual Art, Corporations and the Artist Placement Group” in *The Weeklings*, 3 Feb 2013: <https://theweeklings.com/mpope/2013/02/03/but-is-it-art-conceptual-art-corporations-and-the-artists-placement-group/>.

⁴⁸ Jill Bruce, interview by Rupert White. See note 43.

⁴⁹ Bruce Lacey interviewed by Gillian Whateley (British Library: Sounds); <https://sounds.bl.uk/related-content/.../021T-C0466X0099XX-ZZZZA0.pdf>. As Lacey says, many elements of *Stella Superstar* anticipated procedures used in Neil Oram’s *The Warp*, directed by Ken Campbell (ICA 1979).

⁵⁰ See *The Lacey Rituals: Films by Bruce Lacey (and Friends)* (DVD, BFI 2012).

⁵¹ Daavid Allen, *Gong Dreaming: Soft Machine 66-69* (n.p. [1994]), 48.

⁵² Jonathan Green ed., *Days in the Life: Voices from the English Underground 1961-1971* (Heinemann 1988), 43-44. See also Hilary Floe’s analysis: <https://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/tate-papers/22/everything-was-getting-smashed-three-case-studies-of-play-and-participation-1965-71>.

⁵³ Interview extract in Mary Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, 228.

⁵⁴ Gavin Selerie ed. with introduction, *The Riverside Interviews 6: Tom McGrath* (Binnacle Press 1983). See index under “Cage” and “Olson”.

⁵⁵ *ibid.*, 84-89, 97, 124.

⁵⁶ *ibid.*, 60-66, 259-71.

⁵⁷ *The Riverside Interviews 6: Tom McGrath*, 160-65; Jeff Nuttall, *Bomb Culture*, 233-40.

⁵⁸ *The Riverside Interviews 6: Tom McGrath*, 165. McGrath says that Latham “had hardly spoken all weekend” and that this “explosion” of paint in the middle of a line of portraits, the regular décor, “expressed the essence of the situation.”

⁵⁹ See further: Gavin Selerie, “A Kaleidoscope of Spirits”, in Robert Hampson & Ken Edwards eds., *Clasp: late modernist poetry in London in the 1970s* (Shearsman Books 2016), 119-30.

⁶⁰ The 1986 performance of *Strip Signals* with Bobbie Louise Hawkins (female voice), Clive Bell and other musicians is available on Gavin Selerie, *Performance-Texts* (2 CD, Binnacle 2011).

⁶¹ Tom Clark, *Robert Creeley and the Genius of the American Common Place: Together With the Poet’s Own Autobiography* (New Directions 1993), 47.

⁶² See Pierre Joris, liner notes to *Futurities*, reprinted at <http://pierrejoris.com/LacyHomage.html> and “Tips: Steve Lacy and Irene Aebi” interviewed by Ed Hazel: <http://www.pointofdeparture.org/archives/PoD-29/PoD29Tips.html>.

⁶³ Jeff Gardner: <http://jeffgardnermusic.blogspot.com/>.

⁶⁴ Steve Lacy, *Futurities*, Bloomsbury Theatre, 4 November 1986.

⁶⁵ Allen Fisher, *Ideas on the Culture Dreamed of: A Book of Relations - An Apparatus or Glossary for the Work Defamiliarising* (Aloes Books 1983), 53.

⁶⁶ Allen Fisher, “Float perception and glue balls: [review of, inter alia] Oral Complex at the L.M.C.”, in *Reality Studios* 6 (1984), 93, 97.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 96. Fisher specifically references Eric Mottram’s essay “‘Grown in America’: *Moby-Dick* and Melville’s Sense of Control” in A. Robert Lee ed., *Herman Melville: Reassessments* (Vision Press 1984); see pp. 93-94 for the discussion of process and perception.

⁶⁸ The ICA event, which I attended, was on 23 October 1993.

⁶⁹ Geraldine Monk, email, 17 October 2018.

⁷⁰ London Musicians Collective, 9 September 1985; the event also featured poetry/music duo Jennifer Pike and Tony Wright. Rhinestone in the Juju was short-lived, with a personnel change for the second gig at Subvoicive and then collapse.

⁷¹ Chris Goode, “Speak and spell: Geraldine Monk’s voiceprint” in Scott Thurston ed., *The Salt Companion to Geraldine Monk* (Salt Publishing 2006), 174.

⁷² Frances Presley, “‘Ring-a-ring-a-rosy: Girls’ Games in the Poetry of Geraldine Monk” in *The Salt Companion to Geraldine Monk*, 117.

⁷³ London Musicians Collective, 13 May 1978.

⁷⁴ Paula Claire, “Bill Griffiths: A Severe Case of Hypergraphia” in Will Rowe ed. *The Salt Companion to Bill Griffiths* (Salt Publishing 2007), 43-44.

⁷⁵ <https://robertsheppard.weebly.com/collaborations.html>.

⁷⁶ Performed at Subvoicive, 16 Feb 1988.

⁷⁷ Clive Bell (email 16 October 2018). He further writes: “Performers were Sylvia, myself, Richard, and dancers Doug Gill, Jessica Loeb and Kit Gerould. Sometimes Mary Prestige? We performed at the Cockpit Theatre, LMC, X6, Dartington College Of Arts, and once in a Sussex wood near Ashdown Forest.” The LMC performance was probably on 12 April 1981.

⁷⁸ Sylvia Hallett, email 19 October 2018. She adds: “Bussed spectacles included, I think, Paul Burwell playing a drum kit on the top of a taxi while driving down the Strand . . . I didn’t see it, but [the show] was full of little surprises along the route, that you had to be looking out of the bus window at the right time” (email 20 October 2018).

⁷⁹ Bruce Lacey interviewed by Gillian Whateley (British Library: Sounds).

⁸⁰ “being the matter ignited: an interview with Cecil Taylor” [conducted by Chris Funkhouser]: <https://writing.upenn.edu/epc/authors/funkhouser/ceciltaylor.html>.

⁸¹ Olson, *The Maximus Poems* ed. George Butterick (University of California Press 1983), 39-42. Olson’s involvement with dance is well documented by Karlien van den Beukel in “Why Olson did ballet: the pedagogical avant-gardism of Massine”, in David Herd ed., *Contemporary Olson* (Manchester University Press 2015), 286-96.

⁸² Sherman Paul, *Olson’s Push: origin, black mountain and recent American poetry* (Louisiana State University Press 1978), 88-89.

⁸³ Charles Olson, ‘A Syllabary for a Dancer’ in *MAPS 4* (1971).

⁸⁴ Charles Olson, *the fiery Hunt and other plays* (Four Seasons Foundation, 1977).

⁸⁵ <https://glasfrynproject.org.uk/w/1362/gavin-selerie-ekphrasis-and-beyond-visual-art-in-poetry/>.

⁸⁶ Glenn Storhaug, “On Printing Poetry Aloud” in *Matrix 2* (1982); republished in *Type & Typography* (Mark Batty 2003).

⁸⁷ Charles Olson, *Selected Letters* ed. Ralph Maud (University of California Press 2000), 404-7. Hall typeset *Maximus IV, V, VI* and other Olson volumes for Cape Goliard Press. Comparison between these and settings of Olson’s work in anthologies or critical books will show how crucial this visual art sensibility is. Whatever Olson’s particular points of inspiration, the Black Mountain experience had a far-reaching effect. Josef Albers “conceived each page as a constructivist field of *tensions*” and his concern with the spacing of type and proportions of the page seems to have carried through to Olson, who encouraged printing activity at the college. See Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, 28, 197.

⁸⁸ Alan Halsey, *Auto Dada Café* (Five Seasons Press 1987) and *Five Years Out* (Gallop Dog Press 1989).

⁸⁹ A CD-Rom of the text-graphic *Memory Screen* is included with *Marginalien* (Five Seasons Press 2005). Laurie Duggan makes interesting remarks about it in “Alan Halsey’s Worldly Signs”; see Nigel Wood ed., *Fugue & Subterfuge: A Festschrift for Alan Halsey* (Goat’s Head Press 2017), 127-28.

⁹⁰ Martin Duberman, *Black Mountain*, 291. This interview took place on 13 July, 1968.

⁹¹ Penn worked on *Playhouse 90* series, 1956-61, and *First Person Singular*. The latter was a half-hour experimental show in which the audience viewed everything through a single camera’s point of view and the actors addressed the camera as a character. Both involved a minimum of rehearsals and cameras that could blow out at any moment.

⁹² <http://thehollywoodinterview.blogspot.com/2009/04/arthur-penn-hollywood-interview.html>.

⁹³ Robin Wood, *Arthur Penn* (Studio Vista 1967), 6.

⁹⁴ <http://sensesofcinema.com/2003/great-directors/penn>.

⁹⁵ Quoted in Peter Biskind, “Arthur Penn: cerebral subversive”:
<https://www.bfi.org.uk/news-opinion/sight-sound-magazine/comment/obituaries/arthur-penn-cerebral-subversive>.

⁹⁶ *Arthur Penn on studying at Black Mountain College* -
TelevisionAcademy.com/Interviews.

⁹⁷ Edmund de Waal, “Black Mountain College and the Crafts”:
<http://www.edmunddewaal.com/general-pages/black-mountain-college-and-the-crafts>.
See also Mary Emma Harris, *The Arts at Black Mountain College*, 230-32, including
a reproduction of the Pottery Seminar announcement, with the quoted phrase, on page
230.

⁹⁸ M.C. Richards, *Centering: in Pottery, Poetry, and the Person* (Wesleyan University
Press [1964], second edition 1989), 3, 33-34.

⁹⁹ *ibid.*, 57.