

**Rupert Loydell & Kingsley Marshall**  
**Thinking Inside the Box: Brian Eno, music, movement and light**

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**Kingsley Marshall & Rupert Loydell**

'In total darkness, or in a very large room, very quietly' (Eno & Schmidt, 1979)

**One**

'Do nothing for as long as possible' (Eno & Schmidt, 1979)

'Brian Eno isn't particularly known for his visual art. He's known for shattering musical conventions' (Dustin Driver, 2007). This state of affairs may be changed by the publication of Christopher Scoates Brian Eno. Visual Music (2013) which 'focus[es] on the ways in which Eno's approach to art making overlaps and flows seamlessly between both his art and music, and approach[es] Eno's work from diverse perspectives that attest to the breadth of his inquiry.' (ibid: pp. 14-15)

This breadth of enquiry, along with his art materials can sometimes put Eno at odds with the art world. 'Brian Eno paints with light. And his paintings, like the medium, shift and dance like free-flowing jazz solos or elaborate ragas.' (Driver, 2007), that is they are hard to pin down, and they are certainly not paintings or sculptures in the traditional sense. Eno challenges this: 'The problem with the whole art object theory, the idea that art somehow resides inside objects because artists have put it there or discovered it, creates a picture of an independent entity, a substance in the world called Art' (In Prendergast, 2008)

Whether making sculptures which fit over light sources, computer programmes which endlessly change and mutate, apps for phones and tablets, or site-specific exhibitions (often in specially constructed sites), Eno has concerned himself with 'compositions which change every time they're played as the systems behind them introduce some kind of randomness.' (Steadman, 2012) and by making 'something so seductive that you couldn't leave' (Eno in Locker, 2013).

'Eno has always been fascinated by the idea of a rootless conceptual music with no aural landmarks, no defined meaning' (Mallett, 2001), but also with 'the idea of music that could make itself' (Eno in Dredge, 2012), saying that 'what was exciting about this was the way he almost "lost control of the music", which became a theme he pursued' (ibid), and it is this generative approach that has underpinned Eno's visual art. Steve Dietz suggests that '[f]rom early on, Eno was interested in rules—not just breaking them' (In Scoates, p. 294) and in 'Learning to Rule Complexity' (ibid: p. 296).

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Eno is also aware that '[c]hildren learn by playing, adults play through art' (ibid, p.388) and that 'we have been looking for art in the wrong places.' (Eno in Kelly, 2005), suggesting that '[a]n artist is now a curator. An artist is now much more seen as a connector of things, a person who scans the enormous field of possible places for artistic attention, and says, What I am going to do is draw your attention to this sequence of things.' (ibid)

## Two

'Destroy – nothing – the most important thing.' (Eno & Schmidt, 1979)

14 Video Paintings, a work originally created in the early 1980s and released as a DVD in 2005 comprises two films, the 1:21:34 Thursday Afternoon and the 47:45 minute Mistaken Memories of Medieval Manhattan, first exhibited at the University Art Museum, Matrix/Berkeley in 1981. Each work extends the notion of ambient music into visual forms, that is video which evolves and shifts to an ambient soundtrack. In the former, the of music was later adapted from the work and released as the album Thursday Afternoon (1985). In the latter, the soundtrack was drawn from the existing Eno recordings Music for Airports (1978) and On Land (1982).

In the accompanying DVD booklet, Eno notes, 'Video for me is a way of configuring light, just as painting is a way of configuring paint' (2005). Later he suggests that the editing and narrative structure of television programming has 'reinforced a rigid relationship between viewer and screen – you sit still and it moves. I am interested in a type of work which does not necessarily suggest this relationship: a more steady-state image-based work which one can look at and walk away from as one would a painting: it sits still and you move' (2005).

In 77 Million Paintings, a DVD released in 2006, Eno's music again accompanies slowly changing images. In a subsequent interview with Louise Gray, Eno described the work as 'a new place between TV, painting, and cinema' (Gray, 2006: 19). The original 296 images which make up the work were produced by Eno, before being photographed and scanned. The software's generative process takes parts of each and layers up to four of these into a new image, each component slowly changing to generate an entirely new image. In an entry dated 31 August in his 1995 diary, later published by Faber & Faber as A Year of Swollen Appendices, Eno observed that many complex systems generators such as John Conway's Game of Life (1970) and Craig Reynolds' Boids (1986) had something in common – 'just three rules for each. And these three rules seem to share a certain similarity of relationship: one rule generates, another reduces, another maintains' (1996a: p. 189).

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As Jim Bizzocchi notes, ambient video 'draws on a range of art forms and practices: a photographer's eye for landscape, detail, composition, and light; a filmmaker's concern about time and interval; and a video artist's ability to combine moving images into a dynamic collage that flows within the frame' (2008).

Eno differentiated the release from his previous media installations in that the DVD allowed the viewer to retain control of the work, whereas his exhibitions served as a place where the viewer surrendered to an environment in Eno's control, one where they had little input and not dissimilar to the traditional cinema space. In the accompanying documentary he observes that the domestic television screens may have increased in size but that they remained dormant for much of the time – 'a big black hole in the wall.' He argues that the *77 Million Paintings* were intended to occupy this space and 'get away from the idea of a picture as a completing unchanging static object, to the idea of a picture as something that slowly morphs' (2006). Eno claimed that if you wanted to see any repetition, you'd have to watch 'for 450 years' (Eno, in Sheppard, 2008: p. 435). The accompanying soundtrack is similarly generated from a selection of existing inputs. Eno directly connects the project to his ambient music, intended to be installed in a house, to create an atmosphere. 'I think of these things,' he told Jessie Ashlock, 'as visual music' (2013).

### **Three**

'Do the words need changing?' (Eno & Schmidt, 1979)

In the *Journal of Visual Culture*, Christoph Cox asks 'Why does sound art remain so profoundly undertheorized, and why has it failed to generate a rich and compelling critical literature?' He suggests that '[i]t is because the prevailing theoretical models are inadequate to it' (2011), but I'd like to suggest that it is more specifically because sound art neither fits into gallery visual arts practice or into the field of music and sound.

Sound art, like video and installation art, has often chosen to colonise visual arts spaces originally designed for paintings and sculpture. Screens, projectors, DVD recorders and amplifiers sometimes sit uneasily within the white box created for earlier versions of fine art. Eno, in *Wired* magazine, argues that 'art has not ceased to affect us; it's just that the process we call art is happening elsewhere, in areas that might be called by other names' (in Kelly, 2005).

Eno's art elsewhere, however, has been criticised by Alfred Soto for 'confusing superficiality with surface' (2005), yet Eno's use of surface is exactly what is interesting about his apps, his visual paintings and his ambient

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music. Matthew Weiner & Todd Burns note that '[i]nstead of “regulating” environments, as Muzak did by conforming them to one particular standard, Ambient music could enhance them, weaving in and out of the listener’s consciousness’ (2004).

They go on to note that:

[b]y weaving dense sonic tapestries that appeared static from afar but upon closer inspection were in a constant state of microscopic transformation, Eno was essentially forcing the audience to examine the broader soundscape – to pay attention not to horizontal development (one moment to the next) but to what writer Eric Tamm would refer to as the ‘vertical colour of sound’ (ibid).

This is a similar kind of vocabulary to that used by Jenn Pelly in a Pitchfork magazine news item to discuss Brian Eno and Peter Chilvers’ Scape app, where it is suggested that ‘users create atmospheric soundscapes using a a pallet of on-screen “building blocks” of various shapes and colours’ (2013).

Interestingly, only a few weeks later, in an interview with David Brancaccio and Ben Johnson for Marketplace, Eno would argue that ‘[i]f you think of what composing used to mean, it *used to* mean something sort of architectural’ (2012; my emphasis), suggesting that generative music is ‘a move from the picture of the composer as a kind of architect, to a picture of the composer as a sort of gardener’ (ibid).

Elsewhere, he states that:

Once music ceases to be ephemeral – always disappearing – and becomes instead material... it leaves the condition of traditional music and enters the condition of painting. It becomes a painting, existing as material in space, not immaterial in time (Eno in Dredge, 2012).

Perhaps looking back to his art student days, in The Believer he stated that he ‘feel[s] a lot more connection with painters than composers’ (in Mitchell, 2011) and, more recently in a New York Times interview with Jesse Ashlock, suggested that ‘[a]rt students by definition are people who are looking at how a medium works, and thinking about what you can do with a medium’ (2013).

How do the words change? From architectural terms to gardening, to what Eno calls ‘a repositioning of ourselves on the control/surrender spectrum’ (2011). According to Eno all his and our artistic endeavours are ‘experiments with ourselves in trying to remind ourselves that the controlling talent that we have must be balanced by the surrendering talent that we also have’ (ibid). His ‘idea about art as gardening is to sort or revivify that discussion and to say let’s accept the role of gardener as being equal in dignity to the role of architect’ (ibid).

Perhaps it is the vocabulary of gardening we should adopt when discussing Eno’s work?

## **Four**

'What to increase? What to reduce? What to maintain?' (Eno & Schmidt, 1979)

Eno described what he coined generative music, as 'ever-different & changing, created by a system' (Generative Music I, 1996b). In a lecture the same year, Eno articulated his belief that generative music was something that could collapse traditional boundaries between the composer and listener through exposing the system within which the music had been, or could be, made, and how it evolved. He added that, 'an object of culture does all of the following, it innovates, it recycles, it clearly and explicitly rejects, and it ignores. Any artist's work that is doing all those four things and is doing all those four things through the metaphors that dominate our thinking' (1996b)

Initially released as a software album in 1996, Eno extended these ideas ten years later to a series of interactive applications, released through his company Opal, which allowed the user of the app to use its generative systems to create their own music and visual accompaniment. Bloom, the first of this series of interactive apps designed by Eno and musician/designer Peter Chilvers for the iPhone, was described by the pair as 'part instrument, part composition and part artwork' (2012). In an email to Norbert F. Herber, Eno articulated his initial concept for Bloom in pictorial terms: 'like a traditional Chinese painting: Sky at the top, then mountains and forests, then people in distant fields working, then some closer details then a stream and earth at the bottom' (2008: p. 31).

The later Trope (2009) and Scape (2012) apps further extended these ideas. Unlike the percussive nature of Bloom where users created music by tapping on a screen, and where the position of the tap corresponded to the pitch of the note and with chords created by tapping in more than one place at once, Scape focused on soundscapes. The app rewards exploration and play. More options become available as the user engages with the backgrounds, persistent musical textures, a palette of abstract elements which introduce notes and moods that varyiate the background textures, and colours which introduce melodic cues to the piece and react to what is happening around them.

In a piece for The Guardian, Chilvers argues that musicians find generative music a challenge, echoing Eno's own comments about the difficulty that musicians had in engaging with the recording studio 30 years earlier. 'Scape is more of an act of curation rather than composition,' he explains. 'It's slightly alien, and there's a certain sense of confusion when people come to a music app like this [...] People have a concept that apps are tools or games, but with music, it's something of a grey area' (in Dredge, 2012).

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As Steve Dietz notes, with each of these applications 'Eno surrendered a significant degree of control over the process, creating Game-of-life like algorithms to grow the final compositions based on its initial conditions – the seed' (2013: p. 303).

**Five**

'Remove specifics and convert to ambiguities' (Eno & Schmidt, 1979).

'The primary function of the garden is to extend the interior space visually into outside, natural space: well then, let it now physically enter into our houses and merge with their interiors, which in turn extend their space into nature outside. Let us integrate our dwellings with flowers, grass, and trees by uniting nature with human-built form' (Teige, 1932: p. 315, quoted in McKay, 2011: p.39).

'Gardens are peculiar, hybrid spaces: part private, part public' (Taylor, 2008, p. 6, quoted in McKay, 2011: p.7).

'Eno uses the garden analogy again to describe the listener's new role in generative music, saying we are almost buying his seeds and growing them on our own patch in our own creative layout. Eno's new app, called Scape and created with the help of composer-inventor Peter Chilvers, plays with a lot of these ideas' (Brancaccio & Johnson, 2012).

Go ahead and say what you are thinking. The garden  
is not the real world. Machines  
are the real world.  
(Louise Glück, 1992: p.39)

'Apps like Trope and Bloom are like doodling with music. It's virtual Zen-gardening with a soundtrack' (Hartsock, 2013).

\*

**bloom**, n. Flower, esp. of plants grown or admired chiefly for the flower, florescence (*in ~*); prime, perfection; flush, glow.  
(The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1964: p.127)

'In Bloom, you create music by tapping a colourful touchscreen, producing a series of tones that sound like plucks on harp strings and repeat at a set interval. All the while a low drone hangs in the background, and everything sounds in-key. The overall effect is that of a xylophone being played in an echo chamber, with added eye-candy – serene, relaxing and oddly fascinating' (Hartsock, 2013).

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'What this means, really, is a rethinking of one's own position as a creator. You stop thinking of yourself as me, the controller, you the audience, and you start thinking of all of us as the audience, all of us enjoying the garden together. Gardener included' (Eno, 2011).

\*

'[F]or Eno there are aesthetic and emotional surprises to be discovered in the static view of landscape. Details such as the play of light on stone or concrete, or the sounds of wind and birdsong, take on an almost visionary strangeness' (Dillon, in Scoates, 2013: p.197).

'I can look at one plant for an hour, this brings me great peace. I stand motionless and stare' (Derek Jarman, in Jarman & Sooly, 1995: p.17).

As for what you're actually  
hearing this morning: think twice  
before you tell anyone what was said in this field  
and by whom.

(Louise Glück, 1992: p.39)

'I suppose my feeling about gardening, and I suppose most people's feeling about gardening now, is that what one is doing is working in collaboration with the complex and unpredictable processes of nature' (Eno, 2011).

'The vegetable and herb garden has thyme and oregano, hyssop, lavender, rue, fennel and rosmary, caraway, artemisia, pinks, a few sweet pears, night-scentd stocks, rows of lamb's tongue, purslane, peas, radish, onion, lettuce, spinach and purple rocket' (Derek Jarman, in Jarman & Sooly, 1995: p. 17).

\*

There was a time  
When we were golden  
Like the Sun  
We were lights in the world  
Then we strayed

Away from the Garden

(Damien Jurado, 2012)

'The properties of a light work do not belong to the work alone; their colour, shape, and surface effects are contingent on the spatial and temporal conditions of observers as they experience the work' (Scoates, 'The Aesthetics of Time' in Scoates, 2013: p. 127).

The light has changed;  
middle C is tuned darker now.

(Louise Glück, 2004: p. 13)

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'The gardener's gesture of free planting has a long history, in which it is often possible to identify a radical critique of private property interwoven with a statement of communal interest, mutual aid and cooperation. This is less to do with a demarcated territory of the (private, domestic) garden than with the social and communal practice of gardening' (McKay, 2011: p. 155).

\*

'The idea of a garden as an integrated part of a free and equal society is utopian: it does not exist' (Hoyles, 2005: p. 37, quoted in McKay, 2011: p. 194).

and he said I beg your pardon  
but we left it oh so long ago, the garden,  
we left it oh  
so long ago the garden  
(Larry Norman, 1973)

Each night the wind pounces, rain carves, the stars enter our  
gardens and the moon searches for where we have put  
the ruined tree.  
(David Grubb, 2012: p. 8)

**scape**, n. & v.t. (arch) Escape  
(The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1964: p. 1123)

**scape**, n. (Bot.) radical stem bearing fructification & no leaves.  
(The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1964: p. 1123)

**scape**. (sounds like scrape, as in close scrape.) Also an abbreviation for landscape. (Not in my dictionary)

'Today, the place of the garden and the activity of gardening consciously enter the dialogic of urban futures; the garden becomes one of the extreme spaces in the contestation of the cityscape' (McKay, 2011: p. 194).

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**blossom**, n. Flower, esp. as promising fruit; mass of flowers on fruit-tree etc. (*in ~*) early stages of growth, promise.  
(The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1964: p. 127)

**blossom**, v. Open into flower  
(The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1964: p. 127)

**bud**, v.i. & t. Put forth buds, spring forth; begin to grow or develop.  
(The Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1964: p. 155)

We are stardust  
We are golden

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And we've got to get ourselves  
Back to the garden  
(Joni Mitchell, 1970)

**Six**

'Make it more sensual' (Eno & Schmidt, 1979)

In 1975, the Tate Gallery in London held an exhibition dedicated to emergent Avant-Garde British Landscape Films. In his introduction to the catalogue, Deke Dusinberre noted that the artists' 'assert the illusionism of cinema through the sensuality of a landscape imagery, and simultaneously assert the material nature of the representational process that sustains that illusionism' (Dusinberre, 1975).

Multimedia artist Chris Welsby links the creation of this work to the notion of 'the interconnectedness of these systems, where landscape was not secondary to filmmaking process or filmmaking process to landscape, but process and structure, as revealed in both, could carry information and communicate ideas' (Welsby in Hatfield, 2006: p.29). Welsby's 2003 installation *At Sea* plays upon this configuring sound and light through the construction of a fictional seascape in the gallery – a looped projection of sea and fog, accompanied by the sound of unseen beacons and passing ships. In the move to the gallery, Welsby acknowledges the 'difficulty of representing the limitless expanse of the landscape in the geometric architectural space of the gallery,' a process he describes as 'conceptually similar to the difficult experience by the cartographer who uses the Mercator projection to translate the curvature of the earth onto the flat surface of a chart' (ibid: pp.31-32).

Eno's sleeve art for the *Ambient* series (1978-1982) made use of such charts though critically, as David Sheppard notes of the Ordnance Survey map that formed the cover of 1978's *Music for Airports*, and common to all four albums, one 'with all the cartographic details removed' (2008: 313). Eno's liner notes to the album defined ambient music as 'an atmosphere, or a surrounding influence: a tint' where the environment in which the music were played would be brightened and enhanced (1978). Natalia Radywyl aligns Eno's definition of ambient music with what she describes as the ambient space of the museum, a place which she argues offers a 'wholly sensory experience,' (2008: p. 18) where 'ambience manifests as an exploration of the intimate relationship between bodily, subjective experience, and the influence of the external environment one occupies' (ibid: p. 100). As with Eno's argument in the *Music for Airports* liner notes that a distinguishing factor between ambient music and muzak was that the former retained the 'doubt and uncertainty' (1978) missing in the latter, Radywyl's thesis argues that the museum and gallery has become a place of interaction between visitor and location, one that encourages an active participant rather than passive receptor of its

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content. She borrows the phrase 'soft design' from Trini Castelli, by which she argues that it is this subjective experience of space that makes the museum inherently sensual (Glibb in Mitchell, 1993: pp.87-88).

**Seven**

'Ghost echoes' (Eno & Schmidt, 1979)

**BELLS & CHIMES**

Listen to how the sound echoes, listen to how the noise we make drifts into the future. Now my hearing has gone I imagine music that is not there: Andrew told me the piece I had written about was completely acoustic, but was kind enough to say he was interested in all responses and ways of hearing.

Eno has made a work that plays from a few years ago until he has been long put in his grave. It is a slow and solemn piece, mainly consisting of sustained tones and drones, sampled from bells and chimes. It drifts along in the background, and will never be a commercial success. He says it is to make us think about how we live, to remind us how time can pass us by.

How do we live? By bells and alarms, self-inflicted clocks and our own invented rituals and daily demarcations. I am out of sorts when I sleep too much or if I lie in in the morning, ditto if I do not get to bed before insomnia or the late film catches up with me at night. I am still not used to being where I am supposed to be, living by someone else's timetable.

The silence of a candle can be blown out. There still seems to me to be an electronic tone behind the soaring strings and lively glockenspiel. I have a 70 minute excerpt of *The Long Now* but there is never time to sit down and listen. The noise we make drifts into the future, bounces back into the past. What does this music have to do with then, with now, with me?

**Eight**

'Gardening, not architecture' (Eno & Schmidt, 1979).

Following the release of *Scape* in 2012 Eno explained to Shane Richmond that, '[c]onventional composing is like architecture, where you're specifying every detail of something, and this is much more like gardening, where you have a number of seeds and you plant them and [...] see what happens'

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(2012).

This theme reoccurs throughout Eno's interviews and lectures from the 1970s as he grew interested in cybernetics, and began to develop his ideas around generative music. In a talk at London's Serpentine Gallery he explained that his first impression of composition was of working out the details and writing it down in order for it to be reproduced – 'In the same way as one imagines an architect working. You know, designing the building, in all its details, and then having that constructed'. With generative music, he argued, the composer had 'a packet of seeds [...] [a]nd those musical seeds, once planted, turned into the piece. And they turned into a different version of that piece every time' (2011).

In his film music, Eno works in much the same way. When composing his BAFTA winning score to the Channel 4 TV series *Top Boy*, Eno explained that he formulated his own 'idea of what the thing is about and then [...] produce a lot of music [...] The film is really about children, actually. Children in a pretty bad situation. And so my choices were always to do with "What's the internal world of the children? Not only what's the external world that they're in?" But "What's the world they are in inside?" as well. And so, I was always choosing things because I thought this has something of the kid's experience in it, rather than our experience watching the kid' (2013).

## **Nine**

'Distorting time' (Eno & Schmidt, 1979)

'Music is made of sound waves that we encounter at specific times and place: they happen, we sense them, and then they're gone. The music *experience* is not just those sound waves but the context in which they occur as well. Many people believe there is some mysterious and inherent quality hidden in great art, and this invisible substance is what cause these works to affect us as deeply as they do' (Byrne, 2013: p. 289).

'Sound is absence, beguiling; out of sight, out of reach. What made the sound? Who is there? Sound is void, fear and wonder. Listening, as if to the dead, like a medium who deals only in history and what is lost, the ear attunes itself to distant signals, eavesdropping on ghosts and their chatter. Unable to write a solid history, the listener accedes to the slippage of time.' (Toop, 2010: p. vii).

## **SUNDAY MORNING**

I own two records which I play at the wrong speed – twelve-inch EPs I prefer to think of as LPs. One features Harold Budd's cautious piano

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alongside a steel guitar, evoking desert landscapes slowly baking in the sun. The other is Bedouin Ascent's *Science, Art & Ritual*, which I prefer to hear as a drip feed of rhythm and metallic droplets distant echoes and half-hearted sounds, rather than techno noise.

It is Sunday morning. The windows are wide, to air the house, and I am nursing a large cup of coffee and enjoying the stillness. One of the cats has chosen to join me. Her purr mingles with the rain and synthesizers, the traffic outside, to conjure up what we call silence, accentuate what we call quiet.

Instead of long walks through the city, the chosen technique the author of the book I am reading uses to map his terrain, I let the city come to me. Sounds and memories from outside catalyse texts assembled from jumble-sale magazines, phrases generating fictional poems which inhabit invented streets and cities.

The world responds sluggishly to my musical spell, slowing itself, making available again the past – smells and sounds of where we used to live, half-caught memories of sitting in other rooms listening to the rain and slow music, with coffee to hand.

(Loydell, in LaBelle & Roden, 1999: pp. 119-120).

'Attention is what creates value. Artworks are made as well by how people interact with them – and therefore by what quality of interaction they can inspire.' (Eno, 1996a: p.98)

'Thoreau, who liked to sit and think, often wrote of silence and music in the same sweep of the pen. "All sound is akin to Silence; it is a bubble on her surface which straightway bursts, an emblem of the strength and prolificness of the undercurrent. It is a faint utterance of Silence, and then only agreeable to our auditory nerves when it contrasts itself with the former"' (Eisenberg, 1988: p.168).

'Suppose some things. Stop thinking about art works as objects, and start thinking about them as triggers for experiences (Roy Ascott's phrase). That solves a lot of problems' (Eno, 1996a: p.368).

'Better we should think of sound as an ear, a mirror, a resonant echo, a carrier, a shell' (Toop, 2010: p. 53).

**Ten: KM**

'Give the game away' (Eno & Schmidt, 1979)

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Speaking of the process of recording the track 'Sense of Doubt', from Bowie's *Low*, Eno revealed that each overdub was predicated on either he or Eno turning an Oblique Strategies card, without revealing the advice to the other. 'It was like a game,' Eno explained, 'We took turns working on it; he'd do one overdub and I'd do the next' (MacDonald, In Sheppard, 2008, p. 254).

The contemporary recording studio is typically driven by the digital audio workstation: Apple's *Logic Pro*, Avid's *Pro Tools*, *Ableton Live*, Propellerhead's *Reason*, Steinberg's *Cubase*, Image-Line's *FL Studio* dominating the market. There is little in *Bloom* that could not be recreated in such an environment, yet *Bloom*, *Scape*, *Air* and other generative systems reduce the knowledge needed to drive such an environments – their seductiveness comes in their initial simplicity but how complexity can be born through repetition and rhythm, in addition to the relinquishing of control from software creator to user. As Eno told Paul Tingen 'it's intuitive to think that anything complex has to be made by something more complex, but evolution theory says that complexity arises out of simplicity [...] you can set in place certain conditions and let them grow' (2005).

The *Scape* (2012) app included both the album of the same name created by Eno and Chilvers together with the tools used to create it. Chilvers explained to Shane Richmond, 'You've not just got every track, you've got every instrument on that track and, really, every musician playing them. Every piece in *Scape* is really like a collection of musicians playing together and they've got their own rules' (2012).

In a lecture at the Red Bull Music Academy in New York, Eno discussed the manner with which he and Chilvers considered the possibilities of digital technology. He explained that technology typically sat in a historical moment – to solve a problem, for instance to do something 'quicker or cheaper' – and would be appropriated by musicians for other purposes later. 'If you think about multi-track recording, [t]hat wasn't recorded so that Phil Spector could create walls of sound. It wasn't invented so that myself and Shuggie Otis and Prince and so on could build up pieces of music over a series of months. [...] It was invented so that recording engineers could balance the voice against the rest of the music' (2013). With *Scape*, he explained 'I was trying to think, is there a way I could automatically generate film soundtracks? [...] So the idea was to make a program that could generate really, really interesting soundscapes' (2013).

In *Scape*, as with *77 Million Paintings*, Eno's intent was to surrender control of his art. He described the latter as a 'surrender space' and made an analogy with surfing. 'When someone surfs...they are using control to get themselves into position and then they're surrendering to be taken by the wave. They take control again, and surrender. This is what I think we do. The only thing is we know a lot more about that [control] end and we respect that end a lot more than we do this [surrender] end. Yet on the other hand, everything we do for fun actually seems to fall into that [surrender] category' (2013).

## **Eleven**

'Work at a different speed' (Eno & Schmidt, 1979)

Sit still. Think like a child. Watch the colours. Listen to the slow drip and fade of sounds combined, of loops rubbing against each other, lights and textures in never-to-be-repeated juxtaposition.

When an ex-neighbour from Devon came to visit us in Cornwall soon after we moved, and took me for a drink, he kept my young daughter occupied in the village pub by handing over his iphone to her with *Bloom* running on it. For a good hour she tapped the screen and colours bounced into each other and faded from view, as sounds did the same, slowly decaying, ebbing away against early evening small talk.

The room is changed by the light inside. The artist wishes to control how we see and hear, wants us to choose to enter this specific space, encourages us to sit and listen. It is one of the ways Eno has answered his own question: 'If you're making a new place of pilgrimage, how do you make it seductive enough for people want to go and spend time there? What do you call upon if you haven't got religion?' (Eno and Perry, 2013) Others have asked themselves similar questions in relation to their own work.

Today in seminar my students and I were discussing the Rothko chapel in Texas, and how a chapel can be secular whilst still referencing, however obliquely, altarpieces and sacred space. Later, we read John Taggart's poem 'Slow Song for Rothko' aloud and discussed how a work that does not directly reference its self-proclaimed subject at all can reproduce the effect Rothko's work has on a viewer so well (Taggart, 2010, pp. 35-43).

It is to do with the repetition and resulting stasis, with the way sentences shift and slide and slowly change, echoing their previous forms, between other lines that work as refrains or choruses, and also to do with the work self-consciously discussing breathing. As the reader proceeds through the work they become more and more conscious of how they are breathing, which results in self-regulation and slowing down.

It is also, as Taggart says elsewhere, to do with Gregorian chant and the language of Meister Eckhart, 'the mystical German theologian', along with 'the example of Steve Reich's music. In this music [...] one hears music as a process. One hears the music compose itself' (Taggart, 1994, pp. 70-75; p. 72).

In Eno's exhibitions and installations, as with *77 Million Paintings*, one watches the art make itself, permutations of source material that will probably never be repeated; in a similar fashion one listens to music constructed from

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different length loops of 'pre-recorded musical elements' (Eno 1996a, p. 330). Multitrack recording, says Eno, 'changed music completely from a medium that is trapped in time, to a medium that is free of time, which exists in space now. It's become what I call a plastic medium.' (Morley & Benson, 2012).

Brian Eno and Grayson Perry not only discuss places of pilgrimage, they also discuss the artist stepping away from their own work:

GP: [C]reativity is mistakes and if you can't accept that, don't get involved.

BE: So that's a way of saying creativity is letting yourself lose control?

GP: Yeah, you've got to do risk.  
(Eno and Perry, 2013)

The room is changed by the light inside. The artist wishes to control how we see and hear, wants us to choose to enter this specific space, encourages us to sit and listen. He would like us to sit still and think like a child. We watch the colours and listen to the slow drip and fade of sounds combined, of melodies rubbing against themselves, enjoy images and textures in never-to-be-repeated juxtapositions.

## **TWELVE**

'Go outside. Shut the door' (Eno & Schmidt, 1979)

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