

Extending Collaborative Practice Through Interdisciplinary Experimentation: A Report on the Ayatori Artist Residency at Falmouth University (July 2023)

Abstract

The Ayatori residency explored how a collaboration initiated remotely during the COVID-19 lockdown could be expanded through interdisciplinary practice in a shared physical workspace, and how engagement with AI and audio-visual technologies could shape new and existing bodies of work. Bringing together a composer, visual artist, Interdisciplinary choreographies, AI researcher, and dance and film students, the residency balanced individual autonomy with collaborative experimentation through structured solo, paired, and group sessions.

Artistic aims included opening the collaboration to additional disciplines—particularly dance, with a focus on neurodiversity in educational contexts—integrating AI technologies, capturing the process through documentary filmmaking, creating new work from the local environment, and testing presentation formats across traditional and immersive settings.

The shared physical environment fostered embodied exchanges, such as gestural “visual conducting” between sound and image, and intensified cross-disciplinary dialogue. Fieldwork in Kennall Vale yielded a cohesive body of audio-visual work, though planned extensions to other sites were unrealised. Dance–music–visual interactions produced moments of strong collective authorship, but limited time restricted full exploration of recorded material and neurodiversity links.

AI integration was uneven: an open brief in the first week generated exploratory but disconnected results, while the second week achieved a more tangible aesthetic presence through AI-generated imagery reflecting the project’s sonic and visual identity. Technical limitations, including OSC failures and inadequate institutional support, challenged workflow but also prompted adaptive problem-solving.

Film students documented rehearsals, performances, and interviews, producing two process-focused documentaries that enriched the residency’s legacy. Work-in-progress performances functioned as both testing grounds and audience engagement tools, affirming the project’s process-driven ethos.

Ayatori demonstrates that extending remote collaborations into shared, technology-enabled spaces can foster innovative hybrid practices, while highlighting the importance of flexible structures, effective technical support, and iterative experimentation in sustaining interdisciplinary creativity.

1. Introduction

The Ayatori Artist Residency, held at Falmouth University in July 2023, provided a dynamic environment for interdisciplinary creative collaboration among artists working across sound, visual art, and technology. Originating as a remote partnership developed during the constraints of the COVID-19 lockdown, the residency sought to extend and deepen this collaboration through in-person engagement and experimental methodologies.

The residency brought together a diverse group of practitioners: Ed Jones, composer and improviser working at the intersection of Jazz, Improvised Experimental and Electronic Music's. Yuriko Takagi, a Japanese visual artist, and photographer exploring real-time image manipulation. In lockdown they had developed a collaborative practice supported by En-Rapport curators Keith Michael and Asako Taguchi. Joined in the residency by Research Practitioner Dr Si Waites Falmouth University and Dr Mathew Yee-King Goldsmiths University both working at the intersection of artificial intelligence and audiovisual technologies.

This report critically reflects on the collaborative dynamics, technological challenges, creative outcomes, and pedagogical implications of the residency. It is organized as follows: an exploration of conceptual frameworks and context; discussion of collaborative working methods; analysis of technological mediation and improvisation; review of project ,research aims and questions development and presentation; examination of learning and teaching legacies; and consideration of future directions.

2. Ayatori Background

The Ayatori project began by chance during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown and gradually evolved over the following 18 months through a series of audio-visual exchanges between saxophonist and composer Ed Jones and photographer and visual artist, Yuriko Takagi. These creative dialogues were accompanied by extended Zoom conversations with En Rapport's curators Keith Michael and Asako Taguchi. The project takes its name from *Ayatori*, the Japanese term for the game known in

English as “cat’s cradle” — a collaborative act of weaving ever-changing patterns of material and process from a single thread, involving two or more participants. This became a fitting metaphor for the unfolding creative process through which each piece—and the project as a whole—took shape.

Seven works emerged from this remote collaboration, each shaped by a process that proved just as significant as the outcomes themselves. The importance of process was further underscored by the role of chance operations within both the audio and visual software and the creative apps used. This led to an exploration of AI technology and initiated contact with Dr. Matthew Yee-King of the Computer Research Department at Goldsmiths, University of London (Michael, 2024)

Recognising an opportunity to expand the scope of creative enquiry, four graduating dance students and three students from photography and film were invited to join the residency. This allowed for the parallel investigation of AI’s educational potential alongside its creative applications. The expanded project was supported by four lecturers and course leaders from Falmouth University, each engaged in their own academic research: Dr. Si Waite (AMATA, Creative Music Technology), Tom Ingate and David White (School of Film and Television). A further collaboration was fostered between Falmouth’s Interdisciplinary choreographer Katrina Brown (AMATA Dance) and independent dancer and educator Owen Smith, a specialist in dance and neurodiversity.

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3. Context and Conceptual Foundations

The Ayatori residency is situated within a growing discourse on interdisciplinary and collaborative creative practices that transcend traditional disciplinary boundaries. Contemporary scholarship highlights the importance of collaborative networks in fostering innovation, particularly in art forms that integrate multiple media and technologies (Borgdorff, 2012; Thompson, 2014).

The residency's hybrid framework—combining composition, visual art, and AI technologies—reflects the increasing significance of audiovisual (AV) performance as a site where artistic and technological processes converge (Galloway, 2017; Collins, 2018).

The integration of artificial intelligence into creative workflows foregrounds emergent methodologies that challenge conventional notions of authorship and control (McCormack et al., 2019). AI-driven real-time analysis and generative systems exemplify how technology can act both as collaborator and co-creator, expanding possibilities while introducing elements of unpredictability and contingency. These dynamics align with process-based approaches to art-making that emphasize experimentation and iterative development over fixed outcomes (Ingold, 2013).

Improvisation and experimentation are core to the residency's ethos, echoing broader theoretical frameworks that value the productive role of accidents chance failure in artistic practice. Accident and chance within the Arts and Humanities has an established lineage of theorisation (Bacon & Sylvester, (1987) Eco (1962). Scholars such as Dixon (2012) and Sawyer (2017) argue that creative failure is not merely an obstacle but a catalyst for innovation, fostering adaptive learning and new modes of expression. The residency navigates the tension between structure—through defined briefs and technological constraints—and spontaneity—manifested in live remixing and improvisatory interaction. This dialectic mirrors Deleuzian concepts of becoming, where emergent creative flows arise from the interplay of order and chaos (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987). Overall, the Ayatori project embodies an emergent, iterative methodology that embraces uncertainty and hybridity as fertile ground for collaborative artistic exploration.

4. Research Questions

Central to the residency was the research questions

1 How can a collaboration initiated remotely during lockdown be extended and built upon through interdisciplinary practice and shared physical workspace?

2 What impact did the engagement with AI and audio/visual technologies have on new and existing bodies of work and shared creative practices?

These questions highlight issues of creative process, technological mediation, and the negotiation of authorship in hybrid artistic contexts. The residency structure balanced individual practice with collaborative experimentation, allowing for solo development, paired work, and group sessions aimed at integrating sound, image, and AI-driven elements in both improvised and composed formats.

5. Artistic and Project Aims

- Artistic process To learn and experience new modes of working and to explore and experience new collaborations The aim was to open the collaboration up to others, involving disciplines of
- Dance: Responses to the visual and audio work, enfolding an exploration of how this (could) intersect with current education practices in relation to neurodiversity.
- AI technologies: collaboration with Dr Mathew Yee-King: Open Brief to explore what AI could bring to the project.
- Film Students: Capture of process rehearsal and performance culminating in a documentary format
- To create new work directly from responses to the local environment. Material to be gathered from a series of field trips.
- Experimenting with showing the work in divergent environments: Traditional performance-based/Immersive.

While the scope of these aims was undoubtedly ambitious, they felt achievable at the time. In practice, nearly all of the outlined elements were either undertaken or meaningfully attempted, or engaged with, yielding a range of outcomes.

6 Working Methods and Collaborative Dynamics

The Ayatori residency's collaborative framework was deliberately structured to balance individual creative autonomy with collective experimentation. Participants allocated dedicated solo time to develop personal contributions—such as the composer's sound mixing, the visual artist's manipulation of real-time imagery, and the AI researcher's coding and data analysis—thereby fostering deep engagement with their respective practices. Complementing this were paired work sessions designed to cultivate dialogue between disciplines, for example, the joint exploration of Open Sound Control (OSC) protocols by the AI researcher and visual artist, or the integration of composition and visuals between the composer and photographer. Group sessions further enabled

comprehensive interdisciplinary exchanges, facilitating collective decision-making and shared problem-solving.

To maintain clarity and coherence, scheduled meetings were essential for setting clear briefs, aligning expectations, and negotiating creative priorities. These forums helped delineate areas of overlap and connectivity across sound, image, and technology—such as audiovisual technical coordination, compositional structuring, and visual production—thereby supporting a coherent yet flexible workflow. Core digital tools including Ableton Live, Touch Designer, and OSC were instrumental in enabling both synchronous and asynchronous collaboration, providing platforms for real-time performance integration as well as remote file sharing and editing.

The overall project plan was structured to include performances at the end of each of the two weeks. Each contained a showing of the completed historic remote work as well as highlighting the emerging works in progress generated from the residency. Due to some oversight prior to the residency, it was discovered that some of the audio and visual elements were either missing or not in sync and much of the first few days were dedicated to rectifying these errors.

Despite careful planning, the residency encountered inevitable technical and communicative frictions. OSC failures and incompatible software versions presented significant challenges, while miscommunications—such as confusion over the final length of the piece "Limb"—occasionally disrupted workflow. These difficulties underscored the complexity of interdisciplinary collaboration and the necessity of adaptive problem-solving.

Negotiating artistic authorship emerged as a central thematic concern. Balancing individual contributions with group compromises required ongoing dialogue and flexibility, with participants learning to relinquish certain controls to maintain forward momentum. Ultimately, the residency foregrounded the meta-collaborative question: *how does one work together effectively across disciplines, technologies, and creative sensibilities?* The iterative negotiation of roles, processes, and expectations was as vital to the project's success as the artistic outcomes themselves.

Creation of New Work from Field Work

This was very productive and successful. Several new works resulted from one day's activity in Kennall Vale. Videos and photographic stills, as well as sound field recordings, were all used within a new body of work that had a clear identity formed from our responses to the experience of the environment. It enabled our first full engagement with pure film and video formats.

It would have been beneficial to extend this work further to the planned (but not realised) visits quarry and caves.

Dance: The work that was achieved in the small window of the second week engaging with elements of the older already documented work of the Smoke pieces, enabled new music and dance work based on the improvisation concepts of John Stevens's Search and Reflect writings in the form of exploring the concept of “Peripheral Vision” which really shaped the work. The improvised connections between the dancers, visual images and improvised music had strong moments of communication and connectivity. It felt like there was a common authorship of the pieces and a real sense of collaboration in these pieces.

More time was needed to experiment with the recordings that we made of the dancer's movements and how this could be extended as there was a promising start with creating drum loops from the sound of their feet which was embedded within the Monet pieces. The aim of relating the creation and responses to the work to the enfolding considerations of neurodiversity could have been explored more fully.

AI Technologies The work achieved in the first week was promising but also unshaped and disconnected from the whole. The open-ended nature of the brief did not produce a fully satisfactory outcome. By contrast, the work from the second week demonstrated promise and a real tangible identity in Matthews's work that responded in very much a kind of reflective shadow cast from the insides of the work. He produced a series of images that were generated from the AI responses to the work. All collaborators agreed that this work both embraced and challenged the project aesthetic.

Film

The film students, under the guidance of Tom Ingate and David White, produced a significant amount of footage that has been shaped into two separate documentaries, sharing some of the material. Both documentaries are insightful, communicating historical context and a process-based narrative with the inclusion of interviews and rehearsal, and performance footage. From conversations, it became clear that students were inspired and energised to be within the creative environment. This experience gave them some new reflections and insight into the artistic process.

7 Technological Mediation and Improvisation

A defining feature of the Ayatori residency was the real-time integration of sound and image, facilitated primarily through the use of Touch Designer and Ableton Live. These platforms enabled

the seamless layering and manipulation of audiovisual elements, fostering a fluid interplay between sonic and visual streams. Central to this integration was the Open Sound Control (OSC) protocol, intended to mediate communication between software environments and hardware devices. Despite technical setbacks in fully implementing OSC, Matthew's AI-driven video and audio analysis provided an alternative form of data translation, generating CSV files to trigger image responses in real time and enriching the audiovisual dialogue.

The residency also foregrounded a distinctive form of visual 'conducting' through Ed and Yuriko's respective practices, which drew from his background in jazz and improvised and experimental music's/performance art and her background in visual performance. This embodied approach to entangling sound and visuals introduced a gestural spontaneous, improvisatory foundation reinforcing the residency's emphasis on emergent, process-driven creativity.

Improvisation operated both as a methodological framework and an aesthetic outcome. Live remixing and looping of pre-existing material, such as the sequences titled *light wind shadow* and *White Sage* enabled participants to adapt and recontextualize content dynamically, blurring boundaries between composition and spontaneous creation. This fluid approach underscored the residency's commitment to experimentation and openness to unforeseen artistic directions.

A critical tension emerged between complexity and simplicity in technological application. While AI offered powerful generative capabilities, the group sought 'useful and simple' implementations that contributed meaningfully without overwhelming the collaborative process. Constraints—whether technical limitations, time restrictions, or the need for compromise—functioned as generative conditions, fostering creative problem-solving and shaping the evolving work.

Ultimately, the technological improvisation within Ayatori revealed profound insights into collaborative processes, highlighting media interactivity as a site of negotiation, emergent agency, and co-creation. This interplay affirmed the residency's positioning at the intersection of human creativity and algorithmic intervention.

8.Problems

- **Planning:** Whilst there was an overall plan, deadlines and goals were set for each week, and to a large extent these were all met. To an extent, the duality of the performance deadlines ensured that work was delivered, and conversely, without these, there could have been greater time and space for reflective considerations. There was a lack of microplanning regarding the fluid use of time-space for the various disciplines in the building. This

particularly affected the composer/musicians at times who did not have their own designated space, and as a result, at the time much of the music creation felt last minute and underdeveloped.

- **Technical Issues:** Consistent technical problems during the course of the 2 weeks severely impeded the progress of the project. The support from the Technical staff at Amata was not adequate for the nature of this project. A professional mode of communication with the technical department was unfortunately not fully realised. As the client we were made to feel that they were reluctant to facilitate and support the research work. For example, the lack of technical support impeded much of the day-to-day working of the first week as the set-up in the room was inadequate for our purposes. On the last day of week 2, the lack of support for Si Waite, who was experiencing severe technical difficulties almost resulted in the cancellation of the entire second half of the performance.

9. Project Development and Presentation

The evolution of the Ayatori residency's creative output was characterized by both the refinement of existing work and the generation of new material. A pivotal example was the pieces *light wind shadow and white sage* which, having achieved success in prior iterations, served as a foundation for further exploration with collaboration with AI technologies and dance., Remixing these allowed participants to absorb and reinterpret previous artistic decisions, facilitating the development of a shared creative language that was sensitive to the original collaboration's aesthetic and conceptual intentions. This iterative process bridged past achievements with emergent ideas, fostering continuity amid innovation.

Presentation strategies were integral to the residency's developmental trajectory. Work-in-progress shows provided crucial platforms for testing material in front of an audience, allowing the group to simulate performance conditions while maintaining a degree of experimental openness. These sessions functioned as rehearsal-as-performance, where spontaneity and unpredictability were embraced as productive forces, sharpening the ensemble's focus, and revealing areas requiring further attention.

Spoken introductions and informal communication with audiences played a significant role in contextualizing the work, demystifying experimental processes, and fostering engagement. This dialogic approach enhanced transparency and invited audiences into the evolving narrative of the project, enriching the live experience beyond passive reception.

Performance settings significantly influenced the clarity and creative direction of the work. The act of ‘trying out’ pieces under semi-formal conditions highlighted technical and conceptual challenges, prompting refinements that might not have surfaced in isolated studio contexts. This iterative feedback loop between rehearsal and presentation underscored the residency’s emphasis on process over product, demonstrating how performative environments act as catalysts for artistic development.

10. Learning, Teaching, and Legacy

The Ayatori residency facilitated significant individual learning across diverse technical and creative domains. Si’s engagement with Touch Designer expanded their capacity to create dynamic visual environments, while Ed deepened their proficiency with Ableton Live, enhancing sound design and compositional techniques. Concurrently, Yuriko developed her skills as a VJ within Touch Designer’s environment, integrating her performance practice with new technological tools. Mathew was also able to engage with a

artistic driven brief and whilst conceiving an ingenious outcome that demonstrated great potential. This technical translation fostered rich mutual knowledge exchange, bridging disciplinary and technological divides within the team.

Collectively, the residency cultivated resilience in managing unexpected outcomes and navigating the inherent chaos of interdisciplinary collaboration. Participants developed strategies for structuring teams that balance individual autonomy with shared goals, highlighting the importance of communication, compromise, and flexibility in sustaining creative momentum.

Pedagogically, the project underscores AI’s growing prominence as a critical topic within arts education, necessitating its integration into curricula that emphasize experimentation and iterative practice. The residency’s emphasis on process and ‘work-in-progress’ showings affirms the value of transparency in learning, encouraging students to embrace uncertainty as an essential component of creative development.

Emergent teaching strategies from *Ayatori* include fostering interdisciplinary teamwork, prioritizing iterative experimentation, and situating AI as both a tool and conceptual catalyst. Furthermore, the residency’s legacy extends into subsequent projects such as *Lotus Code*, (also featuring Yuriko in the role of VJ) evidencing its role as an incubator for ongoing inquiry. This trajectory directly connects with Ed’s PhD research, situating *Ayatori* within a broader academic and artistic framework committed to exploring the intersections of Accident Chance technology,

collaboration, and creative practice. Both *Ayatori* and *Lotus Code* have since been the recipients of commissioned work for Southbank London's ESEA Encounters Festival in July 2025.

11. Future Directions and Potentialities

Building upon the foundations established during the *Ayatori* residency, several avenues for continuation and expansion present themselves. Remote performance utilizing OSC protocols remains a promising frontier, offering potential for real-time, geographically distributed collaboration that aligns with the remote origins of the project. Fixed audiovisual works, developed from sequences such as Yuriko's 'galaxy' visuals, present opportunities for gallery or installation contexts, complementing the live, improvisational elements with more curated experiences. Further remixing of existing material will continue to serve as a productive means of re-engaging with prior work, allowing the collective to refine and evolve their shared language.

Technologically, the expanded use of AI and media tools is anticipated to play an increasingly central role. Greater integration of algorithmic processes promises to deepen the interplay between sound, image, and performance, while maintaining a careful balance between complexity and accessibility. Material potential extends beyond audiovisual outputs to include merchandise and ancillary products that may foster broader engagement with the project's aesthetic and conceptual concerns.

Conceptually, future work will seek to deepen interdisciplinary integration, refining methodologies for real-time, remote, and hybrid creative processes. These approaches respond directly to contemporary shifts toward technology-mediated collaboration, particularly in a post-pandemic context where physical proximity is often limited. The residency's experience positions *Ayatori* to contribute meaningfully to evolving discourses around collaborative art, highlighting the transformative potential of flexible, technology-enabled practice in an increasingly interconnected world.

12. Conclusion

The *Ayatori* residency exemplifies the rich potential of interdisciplinary collaboration in contemporary creative practice. Throughout the residency, the project evolved from a remotely initiated partnership into a complex, in-person exploration that integrated diverse artistic disciplines and technological modalities. Key learnings centered on the necessity of embracing failure and adaptation as integral components of the creative process, enabling the group to navigate technical challenges, conflicting schedules, and evolving artistic visions with resilience and openness.

This experience underscored the value of cross-disciplinary fluency, where knowledge exchange between composers, visual artists, technologists, and performers fostered new modes of communication and co-creation. The residency's iterative, process-driven approach highlighted the generative potential of balancing structure with improvisation, and simplicity with technological sophistication.

Ultimately, Ayatori contributes to broader discourses on collaborative creative practice by demonstrating how flexible, technology-mediated workflows can support emergent methodologies that are both experimental and accessible. The residency serves as a model for future projects seeking to expand the boundaries of artistic collaboration, particularly in an increasingly digital and interconnected cultural landscape.

Addressing Research Question 1:

How can a collaboration initiated remotely during lockdown be extended and built upon through interdisciplinary practice and shared physical workspace?

The residency successfully extended the pre-existing remote collaboration by integrating shared physical space, which enabled richer dialogue, spontaneous improvisation, and multi-sensory engagement between sound, image, and movement. The **structured mix** of solo, paired, and group sessions provided a framework for deep individual development while fostering cross-disciplinary interaction. Co-located work accelerated problem-solving, allowed for embodied forms of communication (e.g., visual 'conducting' between music and image), and generated new hybrid works that would have been difficult to realise remotely. However, technical issues and limited microplanning for shared spaces occasionally constrained musical development time, showing that physical proximity alone does not guarantee smooth interdisciplinary integration. Technical issues at the end of week 2 impacted on the delivery of the final performance presentation of work

Addressing Research Question 2:

What impact did the engagement with AI and audio/visual technologies have on new and existing bodies of work and shared creative practices?

AI and audio-visual technologies played a transformative but uneven role. In the first week, the open-ended AI brief produced exploratory but loosely connected results; in the second week, AI became more meaningfully integrated, with Mathew's generative imagery acting as a reflective

“shadow” of the work’s aesthetic. Touch Designer and Ableton Live allowed real-time sound-image interplay, fostering improvisation, remixing, and adaptive performance strategies. Technical constraints (OSC failures, incompatible software versions) slowed full integration but also encouraged creative workarounds, reinforcing the project’s process-driven ethos. Overall, AI and AV tools enriched the project’s shared creative vocabulary and opened new conceptual directions, even if their full potential was only partially realised during the residency. The realisation of the AI components whilst demonstrated promising creative threads did not completely meet expectations regarding a synchronistic aesthetical compatibility .

Meeting the Artistic and Project Aims:

Aim	Achieved	Evidence
Learn and experience new modes of working & collaboration	Met	Interdisciplinary working methods developed; participants expanded technical skills (Ableton Live, Touch Designer, AI visual generation).
Open collaboration to others (dance, neurodiversity link)	Partially met	Strong dancer–musician–visual exchanges occurred; “Peripheral Vision” concept explored; limited time to develop recordings and neurodiversity aspect.
AI technologies (collaboration with Dr. Yee-King)	Partially met	Promising integration in week two; tangible aesthetic outcomes; limited by time and technical setup.
Film students capture process & create documentary	Met	Two documentaries completed, offering process insight and inspiration for student filmmakers.
Create new work from local environment	Met	Kennall Vale field trip yielded cohesive body of work in video, photography, and sound. Planned quarry/cave trips not realised.
Experiment with divergent environments	Partially met	Work-in-progress performances tested in live/immersive formats; further iterations possible in future projects.

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