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MÖBIUS SCROLLS: DRAWING THROUGH EMBODIED LISTENING

Cindy Yuen-Zhe Chen

cyzchen.com

Möbius Scrolls are structures for drawing that were created to facilitate distinct perceptual experiences of Langshi Village in Guilin, Southern China. They articulate an expanded approach to drawing that is developed through interconnected listening and sounding practices. The Möbius Scroll reconfigures the notions of surface, line, gesture and mark-making that are found in Western drawing practices, by reimagining the function of the traditional Chinese scrolls used in shanshui (mountain/water - landscape) painting. In using the Möbius Scroll to interact with the shanshui visual conventions of stone, water and bamboo of Langshi in their materiality, I extended drawing as a multi-sensory process through the practice of embodied listening and sounding. Some of these interactions incorporated Sound Feedback Drawing processes which enabled me to transfigure my experiences of listening and develop new possibilities for the practice of gesture, line and surface in drawing.

Möbius Scrolls: Drawing through Embodied Listening

Möbius Scrolls are paper structures that were developed to enable drawing while listening, walking and interacting with the surfaces, sounds and atmospheric contingencies of places. The structure of the Möbius Scroll emerged from a key enquiry of my practice-based doctoral research project, which centred upon the ways that embodied listening and sounding could extend experimental drawing as a multi-sensory, emplaced and enactive practice. By developing drawing, listening and sounding as multi-sensory relations with places, I investigated ways of practising the drawing properties of surface, gesture, line and mark-making that foregrounded the experiences of embodied listening. Processes that used the Möbius Scroll enabled me to enact distinct perceptual experiences of places that were specific to its malleable structure, the contingent atmospheric and material qualities of places and the characteristics of my body.

This paper focusses upon the ways I used Möbius Scrolls to interact with the mountains, river, bamboo, sounds and people of 浪石村 Langshi Village in Guilin, Southern China in 2018. I trace how developing an embodied listening practice led me to question and rework the drawing surface in order to develop a structure for drawing that responded to the spatial and perceptual conditions of listening. I examine two key attributes of the Möbius Scroll: how the looped structure of the scroll articulates a specific conception of the drawing surface and support, and the ways that it facilitated my perceptual experiences by acting as a mediator between my body and the materials and surfaces present within Langshi Village.

I explore how the singular surface and looped structure of the work '走, 聽, 畫 - Walk, Listen, Draw' enabled me to draw while walking along the Li river and climbing mountains, so that the marks embodied the rhythm of my movements. I also examine the process of making '浪石響: 山, 江, 竹子 - Sounding Langshi: Mountain, River and Bamboo,' an installation of paper pieces and sound, where I employed the Möbius Scroll and Sound Feedback Drawing processes to interact with rocks, water and bamboo. Using Möbius Scrolls, microphones and speakers to generate sound feedback allowed me to extend upon the notions of line and gesture in an expanded approach to drawing. By developing interconnected processes of listening, sounding and drawing, I enacted distinct perceptual experiences of Langshi that involved the local people of the village on some occasions. I discuss these intersubjective experiences of listening within the context of my role as an artist-researcher, where I had brought distinct perspectives to this place that had been shaped by my understanding of the Chinese 山水 shanshui (mountain water) painting tradition and my Western-centric education as an Australian artist of Chinese descent.

Nestled in between the Li River and the karst mountains of Guilin, Langshi Village was ideally situated as a base from which I could access rocks, water and bamboo, which are elements that are often featured in shanshui paintings. I chose Guilin as a place that had become visually iconic through the historical painterly and poetic practices of the Chinese Song Dynasty (960-1279) literati gentlemen scholars.¹ By interacting with the materiality of rocks, water and bamboo through interconnected processes of

¹ The 'literati' were an elite group of educated gentlemen scholars who emerged in the Chinese Northern Song Dynasty (960 -112). They differentiated themselves from commissioned artisans through their emphasis on painting as a intellectual pursuit. (Bush 2012, pp.1-4).

drawing, listening and sounding, I developed a dialogue with specific Song Dynasty philosophical ideas that are expressed through these visual conventions. The structure of the Möbius Scroll integrates my knowledge of traditional Chinese materials and practices with Western drawing theory to reimagine the drawing surface as malleable and responsive to my body's movements. I examine how these drawing, listening and sounding processes bring traditional Chinese practices into a dialogue with contemporary ideas in art theory and philosophy that have their origins in Europe and North America.

Curator and art historian Catherine de Zegher describes drawing as “born from an outward gesture linking inner impulses and thoughts to the other through the touching of a surface with repeated graphic marks and lines” (de Zegher 2010, pp.23-24). De Zegher's notion of drawing as a relational act that connects dimensions of experience through lines, marks, and gesture has been extremely generative. In this paper, I approach listening, drawing and sounding as interconnected practices that can facilitate and mediate the unfolding of new perceptual experiences through their interactive potential. Informed by the experience of listening, I developed the act of drawing as way of drawing together my body and the surfaces of Langshi, so that drawing, listening and sounding became participatory and enactive perceptual processes.



FIGURE 1: 走, 聽, 畫 - WALK, LISTEN, DRAW, LANGSHI VILLAGE, 2018.

Towards Listening

My drawing research began in 2016 with a focus upon visually depicting the sounds that I heard around me in places of historical significance in Australia and China. However, as practical research developed, I came to understand the importance of examining the reciprocal nature of my bodily interactions with these places and how I contributed to their sounds. These moments of realisation occurred by listening to my processes of drawing and being mindful of how the gestural act of moving my body produced a sounding through which I situated myself in relation to the surfaces, topographical elements, animals, water and people of places. This significantly shifted my drawing methodology from adumbrating sound experience, towards drawing as a responsive act of agency and bodily interaction with materiality. This section delineates how the evolution of my drawing methodology and tools were informed by my practical research and the development of a particular conception of listening.

In my early attempts to draw the sounds I could hear, I faced challenges in the disparities between my bodily experience of auditory space and the composed illusion of visual space on a flat, stable piece of paper. Contemporary philosopher Casey O’Callaghan likens sounds to “event-like individual[s]” and asserts that “hearing does not resolve the edges, boundaries, and filled volumes in space that I see” (O’Callaghan 2016). Furthermore, “audible individuals require time to occur, unfold, or stream. In contrast, visible material objects strike one perceptually as being wholly present at a given time” (O’Callaghan 2011, pp. 153-154). I realised that sound unfolded ephemerally through my body and through places while visible phenomena mostly persisted in space and time. The crinkle of a leaf or buzz of a fly existed momentarily and could only be accessed through memory and imagination for mental evaluation, creative interpretation and translation through mark-making. I found that trying to depict the entirety of a sound in visual terms contradicted my temporal and spatial experience of sounds.

In his study of the kinetic basis of representational drawing, artist and writer Philip Rawson observes that “drawings are done with a point that moves...a tool acting as some kind of surrogate for the hand with its fingers, has made a mark that records a two-dimensional movement in space” (Rawson 1969. p.15). In speaking of the experiences of both making and viewing a drawing, Rawson emphasises the dynamic relationship that exists between the eyes and point in motion, stating that the eyes “observe by continually scanning the visual field in a series of movements to and fro...And where drawing is concerned it seems quite clear that the movements suggested by the traces of the drawing-point ought actually to guide the motions of the eyes...One learns thus, by assimilation, advanced scanning procedures from artists whose own highly developed performances have been recorded by their drawing points” (Rawson 1969. p.17). Rawson’s exposition of drawing as a process of recording the correlated movements of the eyes and mark-making tools, articulates the intimate connection between drawing and visual perception which exists in traditions of drawing practice that influenced my early experiments.

As an artist who was formally trained in Western traditions of life drawing, perspective and visual composition, my approach to drawing had been deeply informed by practices that foregrounded the translation of visual experience onto a two-dimensional surface. My early experiments derived their methodology from an understanding of drawing that was grounded in visual perception: I interpreted the movement of sounds by tracing their trajectory upon pieces of paper placed beside me on the floor, intending the marks to generate an illusion of three-dimensional spatial depth and progression. However, the static nature of this surface was incongruent with my experience of the spatially diffuse

and ephemeral qualities of sounds that I heard, and I began to investigate malleable drawing surfaces that could allow me to respond to the movement of sounds dynamically. In my search for a soft and pliable surface, I 'wet-mounted' two to three layers of Chinese paper together which imparted both strength and flexibility.² While these long, flat scrolls of paper possessed edges and a finite drawing surface, their protean malleability echoed the amorphous nature of my listening experiences through a material that was responsive to my movements. By dipping the paper in water, then scrunching, twisting and drawing as they slowly dried, I was able to overcome the urge to compose an illusory visual space with marks and lines. This manual intervention upon the structure of the drawing support emphasised the agency of my bodily involvement, leading me to focus upon my experience of situated, embodied listening.

Contemporary artist and writer Salomé Voegelin proposes an immersive approach to listening practice that emphasises the active participation of the listener. Voegelin asserts that the co-productive process of listening holds the potential to change the way we understand our perceptual experiences:

Focused listening is radical as it makes us 'see' a different world. The aesthetic materiality of sound insists on complicity and intersubjectivity and challenges not only the reality of the material object itself, but also the position of the subject involved in its generative production. The subject in sound shares the fluidity of its object. Sound is the world as dynamic, as process, rather than as outline of existence. The sonic subject belongs in this temporal flow. (Voegelin 2010, p. 36-37).

Voegelin's approach to the agentive nature of listening and the notion of sound as an unfolding process has been a vital influence upon my interpretation and reworking of the drawing support. By reimagining the surface of drawing as malleable and mobile, I developed approaches to listening and drawing that allowed me to interact bodily with the surfaces, topographic features and atmospheric contingencies of places. These approaches foregrounded my awareness of being an active, creative practitioner moving through places such as Langshi, and generating experiences of listening that were particular to the drawing processes and tools that I had adapted or reworked.

In my research, I chose to examine the works of creative practitioners and writers who practiced within the fields of philosophy, sound art theory and expanded drawing, and who have engaged with ideas of listening, sound culture and embodied perception. By focussing upon writings and practices of writers such as Voegelin and O'Callaghan, who explored the perceptual and spatial qualities of listening and sound, I was able to develop and contextualise the four methodologies of listening through 'touch,' 'sounding,' 'space' and 'durations' that emerged during my practice-based doctoral research project. This paper focuses specifically upon how drawing with the Möbius Scroll enabled me to generate sounds by touching surfaces and in doing so, create experiences of listening with my body that were particular to those interactions.

My integration of listening and drawing as tactile, co-productive processes, took an expanded approach to the notions of surface and mark-making that can be seen in the practices of Czechoslovakian artist Milan Grygar and contemporary Australian artist Joyce Hinterding, each of whom incorporated sound

² Entirely self-taught from glue packet instructions and YouTube videos, I have used a traditional method of 'wet-mounting' Chinese paintings and calligraphy since 2008. This process involves adhering two or three layers of paper together with wheat starch paste glue.

and listening into their drawing practices in distinct ways. In the late 1960s, Grygar performed his tactile “acoustic drawings blindly...just by touch,” where he passed his arms and legs through a white paper “drum skin stretched in space” and drew with inked hands, thereby producing an experience where, for him, “there was nothing but the body and the echo of the body, sound” (Grygar in Bosseur and Broniarski 1993, p.117). In a different approach, Hinterding augmented the experiences of her audience by inviting participants to touch her graphite antennae drawings and listen to the ambient frequencies that these actions generated. Pieces such as her 'Wave Form: Induction Drawings' from 2012, use graphite to “depict derivations of simple loop antennae that resonate to the local electromagnetic environment” which includes the energy from the bodies of visitors who touch their surface (Green 2012, pp.115-117).

I observe that in each of these artists’ practices, touch performed an essential function in creating audible reverberations of a visible trace or mark. By making bodily connections with, or ingressions through, the surface of the paper while mark making, both artists extended the sounding capacities of their own and their audiences’ bodies to generate experiences of listening through drawing. In the following sections 'Looping the Scroll' and 'Linking Inner and Outer Worlds,' I will examine how looping my paper scroll into a Möbius strip possessing a singular, non-orientable surface, enabled me to develop processes of mark-making and listening that integrated with my bodily movements and haptic perception.

Looping the Scroll

In numerous experiments where I had used malleable lengths of Chinese paper to draw my response to sounds, I would instinctively flip the paper over to draw on both sides as I found that my auditory experience extended beyond the boundaries of the four edges. However, this process interrupted my flow of listening and the opposing faces of this drawing structure continued to speak of two separate visual spaces. To address the incompatibility between the finite drawing surfaces and the spatial and temporal continuity of my listening experience, I transformed the lengths of Chinese paper by adding a half-twist and adhering the two ends, thereby shaping it into a Möbius strip. The Möbius strip is a non-orientable surface with a single side that was discovered almost simultaneously in 1858 by the German mathematicians August Ferdinand Möbius and Johann Benedict Listing (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2019). By looping the scroll into a Möbius strip, I produced a structure that allowed me to draw continuously without having to turn the paper over. This structure altered my processes of making marks and shifted their relationship with the surface of the paper.

In his phenomenological study of drawing, art historian David Rosand asserts that in drawing “the mark activates the surface, disclosing dimensions latent in its suggestive blankness” and “a line releases the allusive or generative charge of the surface.” Rosand’s analysis emphasises the agency of the drawn mark and the passive neutrality of the surface, however, as drawings can reveal the “processes of its making and, ultimately, the nature of the surface on which it operates,” the “generative” potential of the surface plays an important role in affecting the drawing’s unfolding and its visible outcome (Rosand 2002. pp.1-2). By creating a structure that I called the Möbius Scroll, I reworked the relationships between the surface and the process of mark-making. The paper surface was now a structure partaking in the dynamism of the three-dimensional space that my body moved in, and by passing the Möbius Scroll between my hands as I drew upon its singular surface, I disrupted the directional orientations of ‘rear,’ ‘front,’ ‘top,’ ‘bottom’ or the sense of a beginning and end.

To consider this development in relation to the Chinese shanshui traditions that the Chinese paper scroll originates from, I will discuss how the appreciation of scroll paintings were interactive, visual experiences. Curator and writer Chang Tsong-zung observes that in the practice of appreciating paintings, poems or calligraphy, literati scholars were “not only encouraged to drift and wander visually with the brushwork, he was also invited to physically turn the album leaf and shift the long hand scroll.” Chang speaks of the notion of “游 yóu” or “wandering” through Chinese landscape painting as an essential process of its appreciation, whereby the brushwork and the composition engenders a sense of visuospatial motion and in doing so, alludes to the rhythms of seasonal change (Chang 2008, p. 72).

The revelatory process of unrolling a scroll to view sequential scenes imbued paintings with a narrative capacity, whereby the concurrent tactile and visual experiences created a temporal and spatial journey through imagined landscapes. The eleventh century Northern Song Dynasty artist Kuo Hsi (also spelt Guo Xi) identified three distinct “views” that comprise the standard compositional formula of shanshui painting. Art historian Wen C. Fong states that “the ‘high-distance’ (kao-yüan), ‘flat-distance’ (p’ing-yüan) and ‘deep-distance’ (sheng-yüan) views” are each a “mode of representation [that] corresponds to a way of seeing...[and] reduced, transposed and re-created nature” (Fong 1969, pp. 393-394). These carefully constructed views created layered scenes within paintings that imparted illusions of movement, a dynamic quality that was further animated by the manual experience of unrolling handscrolls.

My adaptation of the scroll takes a distinct approach in its relationship to handling and perceptual experience. By reworking the traditional scroll form, I chose to optimise experiences of listening and moving while drawing, and in this regard, the looped construction of the Möbius Scroll departs from traditional practices of unrolling scrolls to visually wander through different ‘views.’ Furthermore, the singular, cyclical continuity and non-orientable surface of the Möbius Scroll precluded sequential relationships between my drawn responses to sonic events. In works such as ‘走, 聽, 畫 - Walk, Listen, Draw,’ my experiences of listening within Langshi are layered in ink like a palimpsest, articulating a collection of responses that are overlaid with earlier moments of listening that were diffused by misty rain. Numerous auditory moments enliven the same space over and over, transforming the surface of paper with each iteration.

Making the work ‘走, 聽, 畫 - Walk, Listen, Draw’ involved drawing while listening and moving within the topography of Langshi. This ambulatory process shifted my understanding of drawing and listening away from visually interpreting sounds, towards a method of drawing that was alert to my bodily responses to sounds and surfaces. This process required me to learn to draw with a scroll that looped down to my knees while walking along the riverbank and climbing the mountains, juggling ink pens as I listened and drew on a path that became articulated by the haphazard marks on paper. My hand was like the needle on a seismograph responding to my footsteps on varying surfaces, and marks made by listening to boat motors, wildlife and farmer’s electric carts were shaped by the rhythm of this walk. My looped trajectory of walking along the riverbank, through bamboo groves and farms, up the mountain and back again, enabled me to traverse and interact with the traditional elements of shanshui paintings in their materiality. While my decision to engage with the shanshui tradition had been influenced by its appeal to my aesthetic sensibilities and a desire to connect with places from my cultural heritage, I found that making works within Langshi required a careful consideration of my cultural and social context as an artist researcher in the twenty-first century and the specificities that this entailed.

Northern Song Dynasty (960-1127) scholar and poet Su Shi observed that “mountains, rocks, bamboo trees, shadows, waves or mists” have no constant form, and in their eternal variance are ideal subjects for conveying the 氣 qì - breath energy that animates nature (Shi referenced in Jullien 2016, pp. 281-282). These visual tropes are often depicted in shanshui paintings and reflected the literati’s relationships with the natural world, which was inflected by philosophical and spiritual beliefs grounded in a fusion of Neo Confucian, Taoist and Buddhist teachings (Lee 1962, p. 4). Similarly, painterly motifs such as bamboo had been associated with “gentlemen” since the fourth century, becoming synonymous with gentlemen scholars in the eleventh century due to its “upright and enduring” character (Bush 2012, p.102-103). The symbolic nuances of the visual motifs within shanshui paintings carried cultural and spiritual meanings that could only be grasped by those who were educated within this tradition. Furthermore, Chang Tsong-zung observes that “traditionally the literati created art for other literati...It is an art made for an audience as cultivated as the artist, and who very often are also friends and colleagues” (Chang 2008, p. 66). Literati practices involved social and cultural dimensions that emphasised the function of paintings, poetry or calligraphy as devices for cultural and intellectual exchange amongst the educated elite.

Audiences in the twenty-first century may now have access to some of the aesthetic or intellectual notions within the visual motifs, however, differences in social and cultural contexts preclude an understanding which would be identical to that of the literati’s. Instead, these differences could open the potential for multiple possible readings and forms of engagement with the shanshui tradition. In the context of my interactions with Langshi using Möbius Scrolls, I developed a dialogue with the elements of rocks, water and bamboo that was informed by my understanding of these motifs. However, in my reinterpretation of the structural form and visual conventions of this tradition, I integrated my methodologies of drawing, listening and sounding which have their origins in Western concepts and practices. In this regard, my research processes reflect the cross-cultural fragmentation and exchange that occurs as an effect of global mobility. This was also evident in how the display of these pieces within cultural institutions in different countries affected the audiences’ interaction with the works.

The works '走, 聽, 畫 - Walk, Listen, Draw' and '浪石響: 山, 江, 竹子 - Sounding Langshi: Mountain, River and Bamboo' were experienced by audiences in cultural and social contexts that were distinct from that of the eleventh-century literati tradition. These pieces were exhibited in a gallery in Sydney, Australia and a museum in Ningbo, China; both public spaces where the audience were not allowed to touch, let alone handle the Möbius Scrolls. Twenty-first century museums and galleries that function according to Western museological principles, employ social conventions and modes of display that are distinct from the intimate social gatherings of the literati. The gallery and museum contexts generated an understanding of these pieces that foregrounded their status as art objects to be preserved, which contrasts with the function of literati handscrolls as mediators of social and cultural exchange.

In engaging in a dialogue with the shanshui tradition, these works served as a departure point from which to examine the contextual specificity of my cultural background as an Australian Chinese artist with a Western-centric education, and the contexts of my international audiences. In the section of this paper titled 'Sounding and Extending Drawing,' I discuss the importance of recognising the contextual specificity that I brought to my role as an artist researcher when I interacted with the local people during Sound Feedback Drawing processes. The following section focusses upon how processes of drawing, listening and sounding with the Möbius Scrolls connected my internal awareness with the materiality of Langshi.



FIGURES 2 AND 3: 走, 聽, 畫 - WALK, LISTEN, DRAW, LANGSHI VILLAGE, 2018.



FIGURE 4: 浪石響: 山 - SOUNDING LANGSHI: MOUNTAIN, LANGSHI VILLAGE, 2018

URL TO PROCESS VIDEO EXCERPT: [HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/384404460](https://vimeo.com/384404460)



FIGURE 5: 浪石響: 江 - SOUNDING LANGSHI: RIVER, LANGSHI VILLAGE, 2018

URL TO PROCESS VIDEO EXCERPT: [HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/356086038](https://vimeo.com/356086038)

Linking Inner and outer worlds

The softness of the Möbius Scroll and its protean malleability allowed the structure to integrate with the changes in my movement as I interacted with rocks, water and bamboo in Langshi. To borrow an analogy from philosopher Elizabeth Grosz, we can understand our body's interactions with exterior elements such as "sand, with rocks, with grass" as "linkages" generative of "a psychical interior, an underlying depth, individuality or consciousness, much as the Möbius strip creates both an inside and an outside. Tracing the outside of the strip leads one directly to the inside without at any point leaving its surface" (Grosz 1994, pp. 116-117). The non-orientable loop of the Möbius Scrolls facilitated the linkages between the materiality of Langshi and my body, emphasising their potential to generate dynamic processes of relation. The scrolls of '浪石響: 山, 江, 竹子 - Sounding Langshi: Mountain, River and Bamboo' embodied these relationships and acquired their forms and marks through the dynamic interactions between my body and stone, water and bamboo. The capacity to enable this dialogue between my outer sensory perception and inner experiences was fundamental to the Möbius Scroll's efficacy. This was most evident when I began using the scrolls to touch surfaces and generate sound in processes of Sound Feedback Drawing.

In his phenomenological study of listening, contemporary philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy asserts that "sound has no hidden face; it is all in front, in back, and outside inside...to listen is to enter that spatiality by which, at the same time, I am penetrated, for it opens up in me as well as around me, and from me as well as toward me: it opens me inside me as well as outside, and it is through such a double, quadruple or sextuple opening that a "self" can take place" (Nancy 2007, p.14). Nancy's examination of the spatiotemporal immediacy of sound and its capacity to generate simultaneous internal and external

sonic resonance in the experience of listening, echoes the spatial fluidity of the Möbius strip's non-orientable structure. The single, continuous surface of the Möbius Scrolls that I employed in processes of Sound Feedback Drawing processes allowed for a continuity of sounding and moving that harmonised with my spatial and temporal experiences of listening.

While touching surfaces through the Möbius Scrolls to create marks on paper, I concurrently generated sound feedback by using microphones and speakers. Sounds created by the actions of my hands coming into contact with stone, water and bamboo were recorded through microphones, then amplified and emitted through speakers to reflect against the curves of rocks or bounced between the interstices. I located these reflected sound waves by gesturing with microphones taped to my wrists and in doing so, generated sound feedback that articulated the relationships between my body and the rock formations through changes in frequency, volume and timbre. This process of drawing, sounding and listening enabled me to generate a distinct auditory experience of this place that would not have been possible without extending my drawing processes into the realm of sound through the use of these technologies.

Experimental composer Alvin Lucier is an important forerunner of sounding acoustic spaces with feedback whose practice has influenced the direction of my research. His piece 'Bird and Person Dying' (1975) uses binaural microphones worn in the ears of the performer, who responds to electronic bird calls with small head movements while walking slowly through the space. Played through speakers, the feedback from this interaction generates a space whereby the audience can partake in the composer's experience of listening.³ Lucier's practice planted the seeds for my own sounding processes and elicited my curiosity of the spatial and bodily dynamics of listening. After many years of simply recording with microphones, I attached speakers to the headphone output and began listening to how the sounds of mark-making could interact with the places that I was drawing in. The auditory feedback that was enabled by the integration of sound into my drawing processes added another dimension to the awareness of my bodily emplacement and agency within places such as Langshi.

In his discussion of the sensorimotor experience of sound, philosopher Alva Noë observes that auditory experiences "represent how things sound in relation to oneself...The patterns of change as one moves make the world available to perception" (Noë 2004, pp. 160-161). My body's relationship with these rocks evolved as I moved closer or further away, searching for 'sweet spots' where the sound feedback intersected with the microphones placed on my wrists. By manoeuvring the Möbius Scroll as an extension of my body to touch rocks and other surfaces, I enacted a perceptual world on and through paper, upon which my inner responses to external sounds and surfaces could be drawn and heard.

The process of touching surfaces in Langshi as a way of sounding and mark-making emphasised these processes of drawing as ways of connecting my inner awareness with external stimuli. This understanding resonates with the enactive approach to perception that has been developed by contemporary philosopher Evan Thompson.⁴ Thompson draws upon phenomenological theory to analyse the relationship between consciousness, bodily experience and the world in which the embodied mind is situated. In his enquiry into sensorimotor subjectivity, Evan Thompson poses the questions "how does

³ A performance by the artist can be viewed on the website Issue Project Room.

⁴ First proposed by Francisco Varela, Evan Thompson and Eleanor Rosch in 1991, the enactive approach to embodied cognition wove connections between phenomenology and Buddhist practices to propose a new methodology for cognitive science. This approach has influenced philosophers and researchers such as Alva Noë (Varela et al. 1991).

one's lived body relate to the world and how does it relate to itself?" (Thompson 2005, p.409). Borrowing a term from the writing of philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Thompson discusses "pre-reflective bodily self-consciousness" to explain how one becomes conscious of one's body as actively perceiving. This form of self-consciousness is noticeable in the processes of touch:

We not only feel the things we touch, we feel ourselves touching them and touched by them...one's body can also sense itself, as when one hand touches the other. In this case, the one touching is the thing touched, and the thing touched senses itself as the one being touched...There is a dynamic linkage of outward perception and inward feeling, so that one encounters one's own bodily sentience directly. (Merleau-Ponty referenced in Thompson 2005, pp. 412-413).

Merleau-Ponty specifies that these experiences alternate and are not concurrent. This form of self-consciousness allows us to distinguish our bodies from other things.

In moments of touching surfaces through the Möbius Scrolls, the enhanced, proximate sounds obscured sounds in the distance, drawing my attention to the internal processes of perception. The microphones and speakers amplified the tiniest sounds so that touching surfaces created a rich entwining of being aurally touched at the same time. The act of touching surfaces produced interdependent auditory and haptic feedback in a drawing process that did not rely upon vision, and which enabled me to "relate to the world" and my own body in a way that heightened these particular senses. My experiences of listening through touching surfaces were augmented and complicated by the technologies that I had adapted, whereby the cyclical feedback of sonic marks reconfigured my internal relationship with the places I was in. These processes created highly constructed interpretations of the stone, water and bamboo in Langshi that were articulated through marks upon the Möbius Scrolls and my Sound Feedback Drawing compositions, which were always exhibited together in an integrated installation.

In the context of the literati tradition, art historian Wen C. Fong asserts that "the philosophical approach of the Chinese landscape painter" entails reciprocal inward and outward observation:

Looking to nature he carefully studied the world around him, and looking to himself he sought his own response to nature. The interactive relationship between the two, as expressed by the term wai-chung, 'outer/inner' or 'exterior/interior,' is circular and dynamic; as the artist sought to describe the external truth of the universe, he discovered at the same time an internal psychological truth. (Fong 1992, p.76).

By developing an awareness of their "response to nature," the literati painters reflected upon their relationships with the world in philosophical enquiries that found expression through painting, poetry and calligraphy. Reworking the traditional scroll into a Möbius loop enabled a similar observation of the inner and outer awareness of my perceptual experiences, however, it took a different approach from this concept positioned by the philosophy of the literati.

In my approach of touching and sounding with the Möbius Scrolls in '浪石響: 山, 江, 竹子 - Sounding Langshi: Mountain, River and Bamboo,' my inner and outer experiences were dynamically co-productive. Through the processes of sounding, I was involved in affecting changes in the world around me, while generating a world of perceptual experience within. The integration of support and surface embodied by the Möbius Scroll extended it beyond a passive substrate for visual imagery, into a facilitator of sensory

agency. Using the Möbius Scroll to listen through touch and sounding, enabled me to enact the connections between my interior perceptual world and the shanshui tropes of rocks, water and bamboo. In doing so, I emphasised the ability of these drawing and listening processes to draw together my body and the materiality of Langshi.



FIGURE 6: 浪石響: 山, 江, 竹子 - SOUNDING LANGSHI: MOUNTAIN, RIVER AND BAMBOO, INSTALLATION VIEW AT AD SPACE, SYDNEY, 2020

URL TO SOUND FEEDBACK DRAWING EXCERPTS:

[HTTPS://SOUNDCLOUD.COM/CYZCHEN/SOUNDING-LANGSHI-RIVER](https://soundcloud.com/cyzchen/sounding-langshi-river)

[HTTPS://SOUNDCLOUD.COM/CYZCHEN/SOUNDING-LANGSHI-MOUNTAIN](https://soundcloud.com/cyzchen/sounding-langshi-mountain)



FIGURE 7: 浪石響: 山, 江, 竹子 - SOUNDING LANGSHI: MOUNTAIN, RIVER AND BAMBOO, INSTALLATION VIEW AT AD SPACE, SYDNEY, 2020

Sounding and Extending Drawing

The Sound Feedback Drawing processes of '浪石響: 山, 江, 竹子 - Sounding Langshi: Mountain, River and Bamboo' activated the sonic potential of surfaces through touch and reworked the relationship between the drawn mark and the support. The sounds of marks being made did not accrete over time but faded away to be replaced by sonic traces of new marks. These sounds find expression through an echo of materiality that describes the surfaces of rock, water, bamboo and paper that were touched or marked. By expanding my processes of drawing through sounding, I was able to sound out how I was emplaced within Langshi, and in some cases, affect my social experience of this place in ways that I had not anticipated.

In her examination of the evolution of drawing in the twentieth century, Catherine de Zegher observes that “if line can articulate and alter the background - which is to say, the order of our social reality, potentially - then drawing allows a rare open space for the conscious formation and critical development of subjectivity and so for social change” (de Zegher 2010, pp. 113 - 116). By foregrounding the co-productive relationships between line and surface in her analogy, de Zegher brings our attention to broader social and environmental responsibilities that we have as artists and people: “when we draw the ground, we tend to forget that it also draws us...As self-assured as we have become in imposing ourselves on the encompassing earth, leaving the erroneous impression that we are in charge, it often escapes us how interdependent we are with one another, with the many-voiced landscape...” (de Zegher

2010, 117). Creating sounds to affect the auditory environment of Langshi prompted me to critically reflect upon the perspectives that I brought to my role as an artist-researcher within this place, and to examine how these processes changed my understanding as a result. These effects were most evident in drawing, listening and sounding processes that engaged other people.

The process of making '浪石響: 江 - Sounding Langshi: River,' involved me in a reciprocal exchange with a local woman who was immersed in her daily task of washing laundry at the Li river. The percussive rhythms of her brush, fabric wringing and thwacks of her split bamboo cane on bedsheets and underwear, activated my microphones and speakers, which initiated a feedback sequence that melded her sounds with the sounds of my inky brush on paper. In creating and manipulating the tones of feedback with arm gestures, I involved both of us in the production of a Sound Feedback Drawing. I realised that by affecting another person's listening experience of this place, whether un/pleasant or neutral, I sonically drew them into an involuntary interaction.

Artist and writer Brandon LaBelle observes that "in listening one is situated within an extremely relational instant...sound and sounding practices may therefore function as the basis for creating and occupying a highly malleable and charged relational area, modulating the social coordinates and territorial boundaries by which contact and conversation may unfold" (LaBelle 2018, p. 8). LaBelle's notion of sounding and listening generating a "charged relational area," resonates with my understanding of the social dimension of my Sound Feedback Drawing processes by the Li River. By extending my embodied space of listening and sounding to envelop this local woman, I involved her in the production of an intersubjective experience of non-verbal social interaction. These interactions were inflected by the preconceptions that I brought to this place which were influenced by my interests in literati shanshui practices, and which affected the choices that I made during my research.

One of the first sounds I noticed in Langshi was the din of blue plastic 'bamboo' boats powered by noisy motors that affronted my aesthetic sensibilities. I was determined to avoid this 'noise' in my recordings and chose to make work at the riverbank at the break of dawn, thereby encountering this woman in her daily routine. This decision reflected my yearning for an idealistic past that was not part of the current reality of Langshi, and the exclusion of boat motors in my sound feedback compositions exemplify my deliberately partial approach to my interactions with this place. This interaction made me conscious of how the understanding that I brought to my relationships with the rocks, water and bamboo of Langshi differed greatly from that of the local people. The people who wash clothing on the river, farm the land and rear livestock in the mountains were not insensible to the beauty of their homeland and its significance to Chinese culture and traditions. Rather, their daily interactions and personal connections with this place extended beyond shanshui paintings, photographs and distant glimpses from a tourist ferry.

While my creative processes allowed me to engender distinct ways of engaging with Langshi, they also prevented me from connecting with this place at a lived, interdependent level of intimacy. Furthermore, by listening closely to women working and acknowledging their contributions to the sounds of Langshi, I was able to recognise how forms of women's labour in the land had been elided from the patriarchal literati shanshui traditions for centuries. Recognising the specificity of my context, methodologies and tools, and learning to be accountable for the ways that I chose to listen led to a deeper understanding of my responsibility and agency in my interactions as an artist and visitor.

Conclusion

By interacting with Langshi through drawing, listening and sounding, I actively constructed my experiences of this place by weaving Western-centric drawing and listening practices through my particular understanding of the shanshui tradition. For example, in the processes of '浪石響: 江, 竹子 - Sounding Langshi: River and Bamboo,' I engaged with sounds of the local woman's bamboo laundry 'thwacking' stick and used bamboo leaves dipped in ink to create marks and sound feedback. In doing so, I chose to subvert this traditional symbol of the scholarly gentleman. The symbolic association of bamboo with the literati scholarly elite meant that the many pragmatic uses of this material were overlooked by the shanshui tradition, and I deliberately addressed this elision through drawing and listening methodologies that were developed in a predominantly Western context. In this regard, the processes that I used to interact with Langshi embody a highly partial approach to this place, that reflects the culturally fragmented and integrated nature of my drawing, listening and sounding methodologies.

The Möbius Scrolls of '浪石響: 山, 江, 竹子 - Sounding Langshi: Mountain, River and Bamboo' contain within them the scars, tears, folds and marks from their life as the sounding medium between my hands and the surfaces of Langshi. This history of gestures is inherent to their form, implicit though not delineated. The Sound Feedback Drawing compositions articulate the reciprocal relationships between my body and Langshi through an expanded conception of gesture, line and mark-making. In the work '走, 聽, 畫 - Walk, Listen, Draw,' the rhythms of my movement across the surfaces of Langshi shaped the gestures that are expressed as visible marks upon the surface of paper, which in its crumples and folds, also embodies this trajectory of travel.

The Möbius Scroll integrated the surface and support in drawing to transfigure my body's relationship to Langshi, facilitating new ways of experiencing and interacting with Langshi's atmospheric, material and social contingencies. I found that by integrating actions of drawing, listening and sounding, not only was I extending drawing as a multi-sensory and embodied practice, I consciously mediated and transfigured my modes of listening, thereby enacting particular perceptual experiences of this place. In doing so, I developed a deeper understanding of the specificity of my interconnected practices and how I was positioned culturally and socially as a visitor and creative practitioner within Langshi.

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