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Eidolon

A relational, embodied approach to practice-based
research in art and technology

Beverley Hood

Critical review submitted for the
degree of PhD by Research Publications

The University of Edinburgh
March 2026

Abstract

The materials that form this PhD by Research Publications were published as a multimodal practice-based research project titled *Eidolon*. The PhD materials include a portfolio detailing a live immersive performance, an artist film installation, a virtual reality film, a fully illustrated monograph, a peer-reviewed journal article, and this critical review summarising the research methodology and contributions.

Developed over five years, the research employed an interdisciplinary, distributed dissemination strategy, with publications spanning from 2016 to 2018. The research has reached large and varied audiences through presentations at international exhibitions, conferences, and events.

Eidolon developed from an ongoing interest in the relational impact of technology on the body, relationships, and lived experiences, explored as a creative critique through digital media, performance art, and writing. The research reimagines our embodied and relational encounters with technology by engaging with art as an interdisciplinary research practice, undertaken in collaboration with NHS medics, technologists, professional performers, and the cultural sector. It uses creative practice as a means of critical inquiry into real-world concerns about current and near-future existence, reflecting upon the implications of our digital and technologically entangled lives.

The research addresses how creative practice can be used to examine how science and technology affect our relationship to and experiences of the body, each other, and the world. Here, by teasing out the emotional, physical, and psychological presence of humanlike patient manikins used in medical training. The research examines performance art practice as a relational approach to investigate technological concerns in new ways, i.e., as an artist and creative practitioner, not as a roboticist, programmer, or engineer. *Eidolon* explores what new insights this can bring, not on the technicalities of science and technology, but its affective sociotechnical potential and implications. This is achieved by assembling a novel grouping of an artist-researcher, professional performers, medics, and technologists to provide new insights and experiences, sitting at a crossroads between the arts, public engagement, and academic research.

The research contributes to the fields of interdisciplinary and collaborative creative research practice, placing the artist at the intersection between art, science, and technology. *Eidolon* was undertaken through a mixed, emergent methodology that combines practice-based research with theory, grounded in philosophy and science and technology studies (STS), drawing from feminism, posthumanism, new materialism, and phenomenology. It extends previous work undertaken by artist-researchers within the context of science and medicine, adding a relational, embodied approach, drawn from participatory performance, collaborative, and digital art practice.

Lay Summary

This PhD by Research Publications, titled *Eidolon*, explores the impact of technology on our bodies and relationships through a variety of creative works. Over five years, the research resulted in the production of a live performance, an artist film installation, a virtual reality film, an illustrated book, a journal article, and this critical review. These works were shared with diverse audiences at international exhibitions, conferences, and public talks.

The main focus of *Eidolon* is to understand how technology shapes our experiences of the physical body, in this case, explored through high-tech medical manikins used for simulated medical training. By collaborating with medics, technologists, and performers, the research aims to provide new insights at the intersection of art, science, and public engagement.

The project addresses how technology affects our relationship with the human body, how collaboration across disciplines can lead to new knowledge, and how performance art can offer fresh perspectives on technological issues and their social implications.

The research uses creative practice as a way to critically explore these questions, drawing on philosophy and various academic fields. *Eidolon* contributes to understanding the complex interplay between art, science, and technology, emphasising the role of artists in these discussions.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Edinburgh College of Art for providing the context and opportunity to undertake this research. My sincere thanks also go to all the collaborators who joined me on this creative journey. Special thanks to Babs McCool for the initial introductions that serendipitously led to this research, and to Dr Michael Money Penny for his generosity in keeping the doors of the Scottish Centre for Simulation and Clinical Human Factors (SCSC^{HF}) open to me for four years. I am deeply grateful to my creative collaborators, Pauline Goldsmith, Freya Jeffs, Stanley Pattison, and Huld Märtha Hølvold, for their generous contributions, openness, persistence, and immense performance skills. Gratitude also to Jeremy Weller, for being a critical friend and dramaturgical steer, to Dr Tom Flint for extending the immersive journey into new territories and George Mikrogioannakis for his expert ears. Special thanks go to the photographers Lindsay Perth, Alicia Bruce, Emma Bowen, and Rebecca Milling of Copystand for their sensitive capture and documentation of the work throughout its development. Additionally, to designer Marco Scerri for bringing his deeply considered skills to the monograph publication design, Nicola White, for her attentive, astute essay and Professor Dame Marina Warner, for allowing me to re-use her evocative words. I am thankful to Professor Ed Hollis for his rich, astute, and big-hearted advisory support and to Dr Kristin Mojsiewicz for lending her keen eyes and ears to the writing and a shoulder to lean on. Finally, thanks to my sons for putting up with having creepy manikins around the house.

Contents

Abstract.....	1
Lay Summary.....	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
List of figures.....	5–6
Introduction.....	7–8
Background to Practice.....	9–27
The practice of practice	
Beginnings: media art	
Situated in residence	
Digital art as a technological critique	
Early warning system	
Performative media – Interaction and the experiential turn	
Digital Performance	
Participation	
The Eidolon Project.....	28–38
Summary of the research project	
A multimodal approach	
The setting	
Reconstructing (simulated) bodies	
The Process of Collaborative Making.....	39–60
Emergent, situated, instituent practice	
Devising with performers	
Positively squishy interdisciplinary approach	
Entering into the ‘not-knowing’ together	
Sharings and splitting	
Moving into experimental movement	
Bringing shape to uncertainty	
Dissemination.....	61–75
Going public with a multimodal distributed artwork	
Performance	
Artist film installation	
Monograph	
Virtual Reality (VR) film	
Summary of Contributions.....	76–81
Conclusion.....	82–83
References.....	84–94

List of Figures

Figure 1: Hood, B. (1996) *Les Yeux Enchantés*, net.art project.

Figure 2: Hood, B. (1997). *Anonymous Drawing Room*, interactive installation.

Figure 3: Hood, B. (1998) *encounter*, net.art project.

Figure 4: Hood, B. (2001) *translocale*, networked performance.

Figure 5: Hood, B. (2004) *Ersatz*, interactive installation.

Figure 6: Hood, B. (2006) *Madame I*, digital film still.

Figure 7: Hood, B. (2012) *Glitching*, digital performance.

Figure 8: Hood, B. (2001) *translocale* projected CuSeeMe interface.

Figure 9: *Human patient simulator, or manikin* (2015) Photography by Lindsay Perth.

Figure 10: *Scottish Centre for Simulation & Clinical Human Factors* (2014). Photography by Beverley Hood

Figure 11: *Standard Man high-fidelity Human Patient Simulator* (2015). Photography by Lindsay Perth.

Figure 12: *Eidolon devising workshop with actor Stanley Pattison* (2015) Photography by Beverley Hood

Figure 13: *Eidolon workshop using SCSC^{HF} control room* (2015) Photography by Lindsay Perth

Figure 14: *Eidolon performance sharing, smots™ interface* (Hood, 2016)

Figure 15: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon Monograph*, English translations of 'Les Revenant' by Charles Baudelaire. Design by Marco Scerri.

Figure 16: Hood, B. (2014) *Eidolon performance sharing Q&A session*. Photography by Lindsay Perth.

Figure 17: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon performance plan*.

Figure 18: Hood, B. (2015) *Eidolon performance sharing*. Photography by Lindsay Perth.

Figure 19: Hood, B. (2015) *Eidolon movement workshop with Freya Jeffs*. Photography by Lindsay Perth

Figure 20: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon performance*, The World Congress on Biomedical Ethics, Edinburgh. Photography by Alicia Bruce.

Figure 21: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon performance*, Edinburgh Art Festival. Photography by Alicia Bruce.

Figure 22: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon performance*, Edinburgh Art Festival (Hood, 2016) Photography by Alicia Bruce.

Figure 23: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon installation-like setting*, CSAC, Western General Hospital, Edinburgh. Photography by Lindsay Perth.

Figure 24: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon performance*, SCSC^{HF}. Photography by Beverley Hood.

Figure 25: Hood, B. (2018) *Eidolon performance*, Pine's Eye' opening event for Transimage 2018 conference, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh. Photography by Chris Speed.

Figure 26: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon artist film 'ManiDance'*. Screenshot.

Figure 27: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon monograph*. Photography by Rebecca Milling.

Figure 28: Hood, B. and Flint, T. (2017) *Eidolon360 Virtual Reality (VR) film*. Equirectangular screenshot.

INTRODUCTION

This PhD by Research Publications comprises a critical review and a portfolio of practice-based research documenting the multimodal creative research project titled *Eidolon*, published from 2016 to 2018. The research portfolio comprises an intimate, live immersive performance, an artist film installation, a virtual reality film, a fully illustrated monograph with texts by myself, Dr Michael Money Penny, Nicola White, and Professor Dame Marina Warner, and a peer-reviewed, solo-authored journal article. To fully grasp the scope and complexity of the research, engagement with the creative practice outlined in the accompanying portfolio is essential. This portfolio includes short summaries of each project part, accompanied by images of the final work, links to video materials, and textual publications. It is recommended to explore the portfolio in detail at the beginning of the *Eidolon* Project section of this review, starting on page 28, which includes references to relevant pages in the portfolio.

The review presents my experimental multimodal approach to practice-based research, undertaken as a distinct ecosystem, incorporating multiple interdisciplinary collaborators through various media, processes, and methods of making, and shared through a distributed dissemination strategy. The review is set out in short sections, each punctuated by headings, and weaves together a mix of academic and descriptive language registers. The term *Eidolon*, selected for its rich poetic associations and meanings, denotes distinct yet linked aspects of the research, the project, and the artworks, and is consistently referred to with the standalone italicised title *Eidolon* for clarity. The review is illustrated with images drawn from the extensive documentation created during the research development, production, and dissemination stages.

This format provides an overview of the research and critical context, outlines the research methodology, and frames the contributions to knowledge. It summarises the development of new thinking and experiences concerning the relationship between technology and science, to the body and lived experience, through digital media, performance, and writing. Situated within my ongoing creative inquiry, the research employs a feminist approach to technology, examining its impact and affect on our sense of self, our understanding and experiences of our bodies, and our relations with one another and the world. *Eidolon* explores our embodied and relational encounters with nonhuman, humanlike bodies, reimagined as material practice.

The next section briefly establishes the foundations of my critical creative practice from the 1990s onwards. It grounds the specific origins of this research within the context of practice-based inquiry, cultural theory, media art theory, and digital performance studies. The review then sets out the *Eidolon* research project, describing the nature of the artwork, the journey of the research process, and its dissemination through performance, exhibition, and writing. This is interwoven with a summary of the conceptual and theoretical context for the work, grounded in philosophy and science and technology studies (STS), drawn from feminism, posthumanism, new materialism, and phenomenology. The writing articulates my

emergent, situated, interdisciplinary, and collaborative methodological approach, extending from digital arts and performance into a multimodal practice that bridges art, science, and medicine.

The complex interdisciplinary nature of the research and its resonance with contemporary issues concerning science, technology, and digital culture, with vast attendant social, cultural, personal, and political implications, means that the work crosses boundaries with a significant array of research domains and fields. For this critical review, the key theoretical and methodological concerns have been centred as most pressing. This is intended to enable the reader to grasp the key concepts, processes, and methodological approach within this complex piece of research. However, it is acknowledged that there are broad entanglements and crossovers with other areas of research, theory, and practice not fully contained within the summary nature of this critical review.

The multimodal, interdisciplinary, and collaborative approach to this creative research raises complex, unsettling questions about contemporary attitudes towards relational experiences and embodiment as knowledge. Importantly, this is art practice as a method of critical inquiry that also extends practice-based research methodologies. The review concludes by framing this distinct methodological approach, pointing forward to subsequent research, and summarising the intellectual and methodological contributions this distinct practice-based research makes to understandings of relational embodiment, interdisciplinarity, and collaboration across various fields of practice from contemporary and digital art to performance and art-science collaborations.

BACKGROUND TO PRACTICE

The practice of practice

The work presented in this critical review builds upon a significant body of existing practice-based research, which has established the distinct imaginative and intellectual work undertaken by artists as a vital critical creative form; art practice as research inquiry (Barrett and Bolt, 2007; Borgdorff, 2010; Candy and Edmonds, 2010; Johnstone, 2023; Nelson, 2013; and Sullivan, 2009). *Eidolon* adds to this field as a piece of creative practice-based research undertaken by myself as the practitioner, with accompanying critical reflection on the methodological approach. This exemplifies creative practice researchers, Linda Candy, Ernest Edmonds and Craig Vear's assertion that practice-based research involves distinctive core features: 'the centrality of practice to the research, the role of artefacts in research and the forms of knowledge that arise from it' (Candy, Edmonds, Vear, 2022, p.27). Here, the creation of artwork occupies a place as the subject, methodology, context, and outcome of the research (Borgdorff, 2010). It is a generative creative process, through which new insights, understandings, and products come into being, with the potential to extend the frontiers of research (Borgdorff, 2010). As Candy and Edmonds emphasise, this new knowledge, insight, and understanding must be in a form that can be shared, in this case, through public performances, exhibitions, conferences, talks, and textual publications (2010).

In the *Eidolon* research, there is a profound reflexive relationship between practice, theory, and evaluation, echoing frameworks outlined by Candy and Edmonds (2010). It was crucial in *Eidolon* to adopt methods of evaluation and reflection appropriate to the research's methodological nature, choosing purposefully discursive and relational approaches over traditional lab-style social science methods. This sensitivity was vital, particularly in the institutional medical setting where there is a significant emphasis on efficacy and safety. It was essential to utilise methods that did not alienate collaborators and audiences, who might otherwise feel themselves judged, and to acknowledge the institutional anxieties prevalent in such closely monitored fields.

In my research, reflexivity and evaluation manifest as an experimental, iterative, and fluid approach that also borrows from the fields of design thinking (Brown, 2008) and performance research (Cocker, 2013; Heddon and Milling, 2006; Kozel, 2007). This combination of approaches is specific due to my own academic proximities; as an artist-researcher working extensively with performance, located within a Design School. This provides what Candy and Edmonds describe as a very 'particular viewpoint from which the works are considered during the process of making and evaluating them' (2010, p. 127). Undertaken as a critical and creative approach, the research sits within innovative communities of practice (van Schaik, 2010) extending across digital arts, contemporary art, performance art, and art-and-science collaboration.

Building upon this brief contextual overview of my creative research, the following writing will set out the origins of my practice-based methodology through the emergence of media art in the 90s and the early stages of my performance art practice.

Beginnings: media art

My artworks have variously been described as interventions (Byrne, 2006) and embodied techno-interfaces (Casini, 2021; Mondloch, 2018), for which relational thinking, intimacy, and embodiment play a crucial role (Pfefferkorn, 2025). My sensitive and poetic approach to creative research seeks to reimagine and reconfigure the impact of science and technology on our relationships and experiences with ourselves, and with one another, as a material practice.

The origins of my creative research practice in digital media and performance lie in the context of media art in the mid-90s. I graduated from the pioneering Electronic Imaging course at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design (DJCAD), Dundee, in 1996, which was established by photographer Colin MacLeod and video artist Professor Stephen Partridge in the 1980s (Rewind, no date). I graduated at the cusp of media arts and net.art practices, creating projects including short artist films, interactive multimedia for CD-ROM, and net.art. These projects set an early precedent for the thirty years of my work that followed, critically exploring the effect of the emerging digital culture of the 90s on the body, relationships, and human experience. This period was formative in setting a particular context of practice and approach, as an experimental, responsive, and critical way of developing and producing work. Creative AI researchers Anne Ploin et al.'s (2022) landmark report about human/AI creative complementarity acknowledges this specificity of practice, i.e., that historically media artists have typically used 'the technology itself ... to stage a conversation about technology and society' (Ploin et al., 2022, p. 11). My early projects aligned with the media/net.artists' way of working in the 1990s, approaching technology as an artistic medium with a critical and irreverent perspective. As artist and theorist Joanna Zylińska notes, such artistic practices demonstrated a sharp understanding of the new medium's potential, its undefined boundaries, and modes of operation (2020).

In the 90s, my practice was strongly informed by feminist and cyberfeminist media arts practices. My approach drew from and built upon key theoretical works, including the *Cyberfeminist Manifesto* by feminist studies scholar Donna Haraway (1985), *A Cyberfeminist Manifesto for the 21st Century* by cyberfeminist media art collective VNS Matrix (1991), and *Zeros + Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture* by cultural theorist Sadie Plant (1997). Key artworks I created at this time include *Les Yeux Enchantés* (1996), a pseudo love letter net.art project, created for the *elevator* net.art exhibition in 1996, curated by recent graduates from the Electronic Imaging course. The artwork takes a feminist, or more specifically, a cyberfeminist approach, as

outlined by Mia Consalvo (2002), as a means to toy with social and cultural constructs in relation to technological intimacy. Although I use the term 'cyberfeminism' here, I generally resisted adopting this label, as well as 'media art', as explicit descriptions for my work; I found them overly specific, and, in retrospect, historically timestamped. Overall, both then and now, I define my research as a relational and embodied approach to contemporary art practice.

Les Yeux Enchantés was created in response to the flurry of personal information that exploded onto the digital landscape in the mid-1990s, during the nascent stages of widespread public internet use. The work was created as a purposefully intimate yet critical experience, confronting the burgeoning phenomenon of online oversharing, where the disclosing and consumption of personal and intimate information amongst internet users was becoming increasingly common.

Central to *Les Yeux Enchantés* is intimate content presented as a personal love letter. However, this intimacy is carefully mediated through the browser window, using the newly launched 'frames' feature. These elements act as a portal that not only gives access but also interferes with the viewer's interaction with the content, deliberately disrupting and slowing the process. This manipulation of digital viewing mechanisms serves to critique the rapid consumption habits fostered by early digital culture, encouraging a more contemplative engagement with personal data.

The work offers a critique of early digital culture through an autofiction approach; a literary genre that originated in the 1970s, blending factual and fictive autobiographical details with theory that allows for exploration of both personal and broader socio-cultural issues. *Les Yeux Enchantés* builds upon this style, resonating with the approach of American author Chris Kraus, established around the same time in the 1990s (although she rejects the label 'autofiction'). Kraus undertakes 'writing from the circumstances of one's own life' as a clumsy, hybrid, and personal way to communicate (Kraus, 2024).

Les Yeux Enchantés aimed to offer up, yet simultaneously disrupt, easy access to personal, sensitive information as a critical prompt to question such accessibility, which has since increased exponentially. The design of the artwork required the viewer to actively navigate and scroll through small, segmented 'frames' of content, piecing together each line of text magnified from a zoomed-out perspective, as shown in Figure 1 (Hood, 1996). This method demanded a distinct, slower form of viewer engagement, for the time.

The work contributed to the then-emerging field of net.art. Technically, it was a website that employed an innovative, early use of frames as a device for accessing and navigating through non-linear layers of image and text content distributed over the internet. It also operated as a critique of the desensitising effect of accessing and sharing personal content online, a concern that remains acutely relevant today.

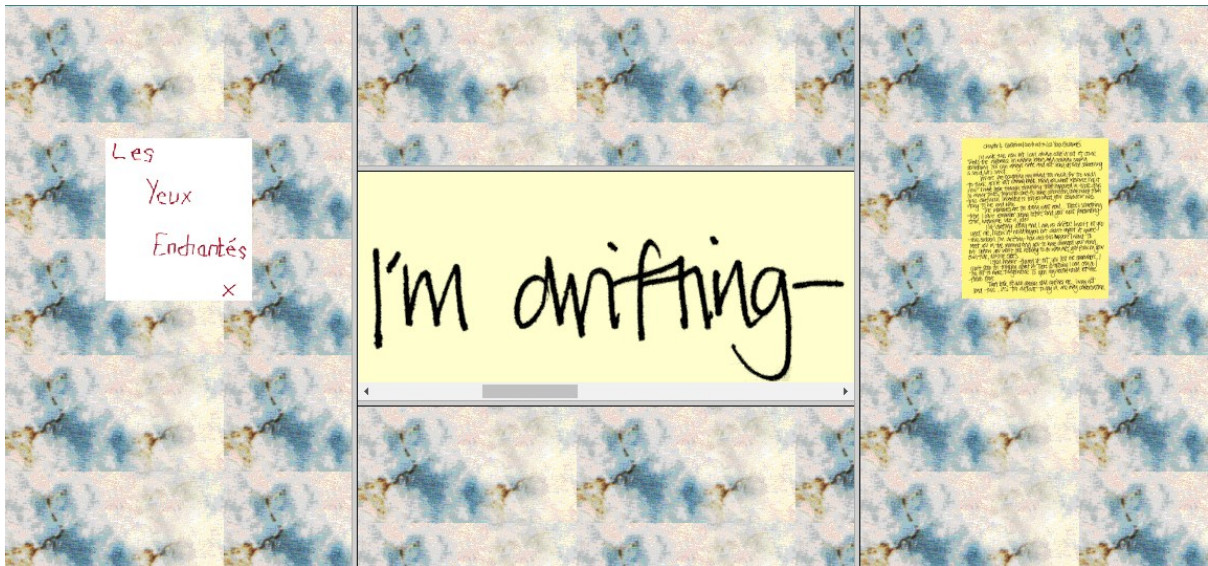


Figure 1: Hood, B. (1996) *Les Yeux Enchantés*, net.art project.

Les Yeux Enchantés serves as an early example of my creative practice, where personal, intimate, vernacular approaches are blended to form a disarming relational method of sociotechnical critique. This approach deliberately mixes familiarity with unease, providing a gentle, yet provocative entry point for deeper reflection on the impact of technology on both the personal and socio-cultural. These themes are foundational to my creative research and will be further explored and expanded upon in the section discussing the *Eidolon* research later in this review.

Situated in residence

My evolving creative research practice was often undertaken in the context of residencies. This fostered a situated practice that reflected upon the context and environment of making, drawing from Haraway's critique of situated knowledge, as 'the ethical task of acknowledging our ability to reflect on ... stories, visions, and dreams critically, while widely awake' (Haraway, 1985, pp. 152-3). This residency work was foundational to the approaches adopted in *Eidolon*, as will be further outlined ahead, and typically involved me working in situ with various Scottish, UK, and international organisations.

Early residencies included the European Media Artist in Residence (EMARE) in 1997, at C³ – Centre for Culture & Communication in Budapest, Hungary, where I created the interactive drawing installation *Anonymous Drawing Room* (1997). The centre was distinct in its focus on supporting media art practices in the late 90s and early 2000s as part of a network of organisations across Central and Eastern Europe, funded by the Soros Foundation. C³ was a key institution in creating a thriving international media arts community. Its activities complemented the work of tech sector-directed approaches, such as the Xerox PARC Artist-in-Residence Program, at Xerox's

Interdisciplinary Palo Alto Research Centre, California, USA, in the 1990s (Harris, 1999), and the Canon ARTLAB, Tokyo, Japan, which brought artists together with Canon's computer engineers to create ambitious media artworks from the 1990s to the early 2000s (Shikata, no date). The EMARE residency at C3 was my first experience of collaborating with a small team of programmers to create a custom computer drawing programme, which ran on a high-end Silicon Graphics computer.

The resulting interactive artwork, documented in Figure 2 (Hood, 1997), tracked gallery visitors' mouse movements while viewing the net.art project by fellow EMARE artist Gerhard Adt, and translated these digitally plotted movements into 'automatic' line drawings. These were subsequently printed at automated intervals by the drawing programme and displayed around the gallery space. The work was intended to make a playful link to the genre of 'automatic' drawing and to re-emphasise the sensorial, physical aspects of digital interaction, at the peak of emerging techno-fetishistic virtual rhetoric.



Figure 2: Hood, B. (1997). *Anonymous Drawing Room*, interactive installation.

Back in the UK in 1998, I undertook an online artist-in-residence 'My House & Your House' hosted by Furnace, Lancaster, during which I created the net.art project *encounter* (1998). The residency was an early instance of an online residency, undertaken as an experimental process for both myself and the organisers. In this instance, I worked in residence remotely from my home in Edinburgh, supported by the Furnace staff in Lancaster, via email and phone calls. The resulting artwork

encounter, was a durational digital project that documented a month-long conversation conducted over email, Internet Relay Chat (IRC), and video conferencing between two anonymous artists (myself and Chris Byrne). The public website where this conversation was uploaded served as the foundation for the resulting net.art project, as shown in Figure 3 (Hood, 1998).

The *encounter* artwork explored the relational affect of technology on the burgeoning area of online relationships and dating in the 1990s. The project is an early example of creative research inquiry into a subject that remains intensely relevant today. It aligns with the work of key researchers, including psychologist Sherry Turkle, who has written extensively on the subjective and emotional side of our relationships with technology (2011, 2015).

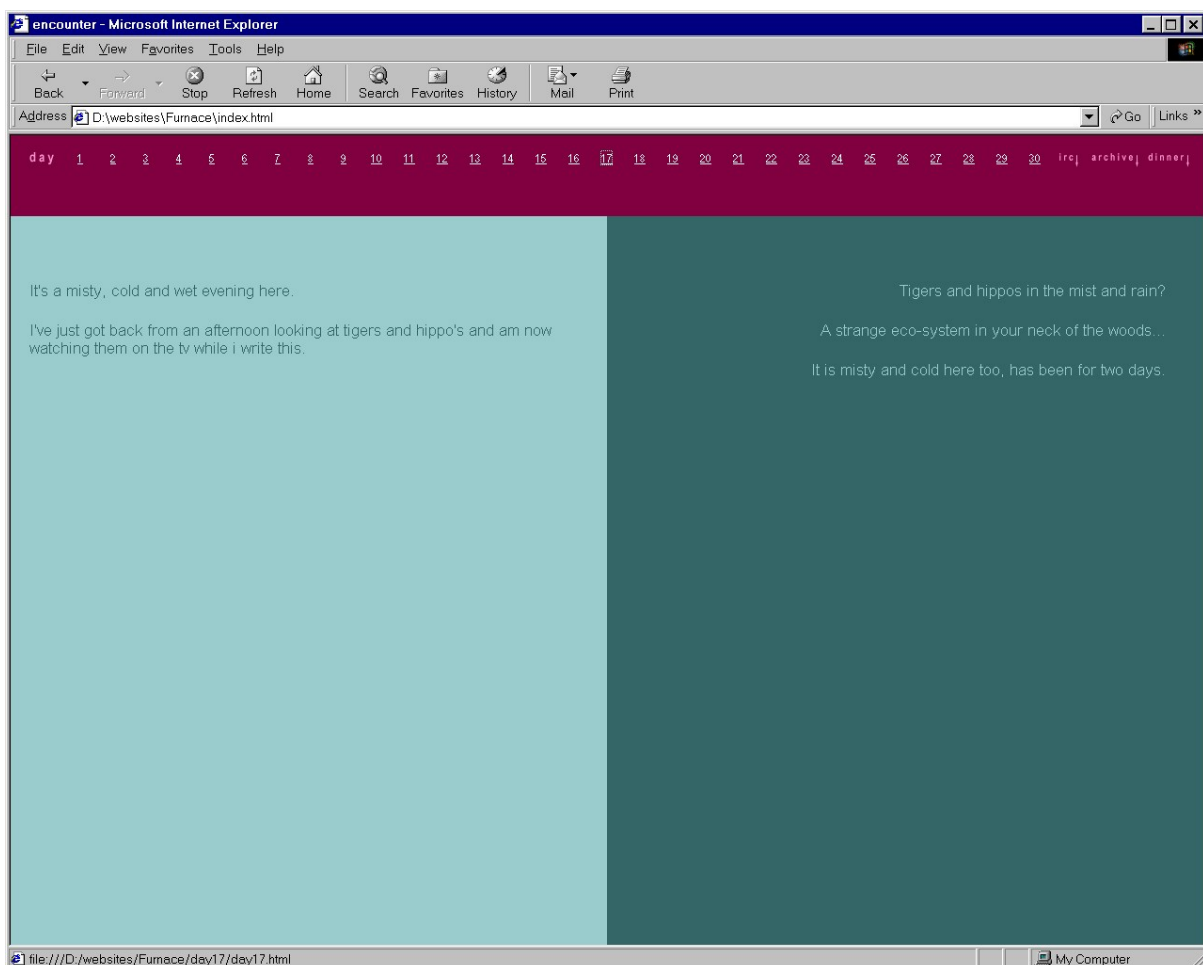


Figure 3: Hood, B. (1998) *encounter*, net.art project.

In the early 2000s, my work contributed to the pioneering creative practice research undertaken by Candy and Edmonds at the Creativity & Cognition Studios (CCS), within the LUTCHI Research Centre at Loughborough University (Candy and Edmonds, 2002; Hood, 2002). The CCS arose from the Creativity & Cognition conference series, instigated by Edmonds and Candy in the early 1990s as a critical platform for exploring the intersection of art and technology (2019). Building on the model of the

1967 Experiments in Art and Technology (E.A.T.) program, which paired artists in New York City with engineers at Bell Labs, CCS similarly facilitated collaborations between artists and technologists. These partnerships, structured under the COSTART (COmputer SupportT for ARTists) project, provided a critical platform for studying the creative process (Zhang and Candy, 2006).

As one of the artists paired with technologists, my collaboration was closely observed and documented by researchers. The insights from these interactions contributed to Edmonds and Candy's influential research on creative practices, which has been widely published and cited. Further details on this research can be found on the COSTART website (Candy, no date).



Figure 4: Hood, B. (2001) *translocale*, networked performance.

Additionally, in 2000, I was commissioned as part of New Media Scotland's inaugural digital art commissions and residencies, which connected artists with organisations across Scotland to create new works using digital technologies. The New Media Scotland commission was undertaken as an artist residency in partnership with Stills Gallery, Edinburgh, an organisation with a long history and remit of supporting and presenting photography and lens-based media in Scotland. This was Stills' first foray into co-commissioning and hosting a residency focused on digital art practice. The resulting artwork, *translocale* (2001), is a hybrid networked performance presented both in-person and online using video conferencing servers, documented in Figure 4

(Hood, 2001). The work was co-commissioned with the Scottish live art organisation New Moves International for the 2001 annual National Review of Live Art festival in Glasgow.

The *translocale* performance marked my first collaboration with professional dancers, in this case with the dance company Dudendance. The performance operated as an intervention within online video conferencing, which was in its nascent stages of development in the early 2000s. *translocale* utilised a custom-built computer programme to repurpose the networks and servers of the CuSeeMe video conferencing client as a platform for a performance. The work activated the performers as a transitory bridge, mediating interaction and movement across the physical and virtual environment. A digital broadcast stream of the dancers leapt from server to server, country to country, temporarily visible to those connected to each video conference, before disappearing off to the next. Their movements crossed the physical and virtual realms, connecting the in-person and online environments, and traversing the overlapping relationship between these spaces.

I have also undertaken several residencies that bridge academia and the art world. From 2003 to 2004, I was a Leverhulme Artist in Residence at the Edinburgh Virtual Environment Centre (edVEC), at the University of Edinburgh. Working closely with technologists researching virtual reality and virtual environments, I used state-of-the-art 3D body scanning and motion capture technologies (mocap) to create the interactive self-portrait installation *Ersatz* (2004). The artwork presents a projected life-sized digital figure that responds to the audience's movement and proximity, as shown in Figure 5 (Hood, 2004). The 3D body scanning data that constituted the digital figure was both extremely high-resolution (for that time) but also somewhat messy, containing many errors, glitches, and data gaps. An important aspect of my creative research is an attentive consideration of the inherent characteristics and implications of emerging technologies. In *Ersatz*, this approach led me to purposefully present the body scan data in its raw, 'natural' state as a series of digital vertices, complete with all its attendant errors, and without the data clean-up by a technician that was customary at the time.

Audiences experiencing the installation were presented with a highly embodied, life-sized figure, clearly connected to life due to the naturalness of the motion capture and the simplistic movements captured, such as standing at rest or posing in the 'body scanning' stance. At the same time, the figure appears as though a digital ghost, perforated, incomplete. There is no pretence here that this is an actual, living person; however, the figure retains some physical characteristics that create a provocative unease, marking a slippery overlap between the digital and the physical.

From these early days of my artistic career, the projects resulting from my evolving digital art practice were often presented to audiences outside traditional art spaces, in venues such as artist-run exhibitions, media art festivals, conferences, and symposia. This has led to my work being largely presented to audiences outside the mainstream art world. However, as confidence in and knowledge about presenting digital and



Figure 5: Hood, B. (2004) *Ersatz*, interactive installation.

performance artwork within the contemporary art sector has grown over the past twenty years, my work has been integrated into contemporary gallery and museum programming. As an artist, I align with Ploin et al.'s assertion that artists working with technology typically speak from the edge, using the tensions in their position in the art world as a challenge (2022). This perspective has given me significant experience in presenting and working outside mainstream gallery and museum systems, a topic I will revisit later in this critical review in relation to *Eidolon*.

Digital art as a technological critique

Throughout my almost thirty-year career, I have used my creative practice as a critical means to explore pressing social, cultural, and personal concerns related to specific technological advances of the time. This critical creative approach is echoed by many artists coming from the media art world (e.g., Cornelia Solfrank, Hito Steyerl, and Shu Lea Cheang), and as Ploin et al. (2022) observe, the exploration of the boundary between art and technology is not new and is often a central question for technology-based arts (2022). Crucially, I approach technology as an artist, not as a roboticist or engineer. I am interested in its affective potential rather than purely technical concerns; its effect on our bodies, experiences, and lives, our past, present, and near futures. My work is resolutely not techno-fetishistic; rather, it is a critical, embodied, and experiential inquiry.

As an artist working with emerging technologies, I have followed the development of various technologies over recent decades. From the development of the internet in the 90s, video conferencing platforms, mobile phone devices, and 3D scanning technologies in the 2000s. More recently, I have worked with medical technologies such as next-generation MRIs and genetic engineering. Typically, I have engaged with technologies that have real-world applications and those on the cusp of being embedded into our daily lives, rather than with future-facing, speculative technologies. My reasoning for this is echoed by the approach of American artist and technologist David Young, in that it involves asking, 'how do I find what's interesting in that threshold of the technology that's emerging, and in what we do with it?' (Ploin et al., 2022, p.15).

Although the technical aspect itself is not my primary concern, as Ploin et al. note, 'artists that are working to exploit social implications of these technologies are doing work that is crucial for technical development as well' (2022, p.13). This has been the case in various specific instances within my previous projects. For example, Jamie Shotton, Senior Researcher at Microsoft Research Cambridge, who led the Kinect motion sensor development team, incorporated documentation materials from my interactive installation and performance project, *Glitching* (Hood, 2012), into his keynote speech at the International Conference on 3D Vision 2013 in Seattle, USA. The *Glitching* project documentation was specifically used to discuss the Microsoft team's work on noise reduction for the Kinect sensor.

My creative approach resonates with Zylinska's assertion that artists working with technology undertake a 'postconceptual mode of artistic production', which is driven by concepts, but is also reliant on material enactments and visualisations (2020, p.96). Expanding upon this, in discussing the work of AI and media artist Trevor Paglen, Zylinska crucially identifies the artist's role as being allegorical, as opposed to illustrative; that is, the artworks serve 'as parables, revealing a hidden story, with a deeper moral meaning, beyond what's on show' (2020, p.96).

The allegory, albeit a non-literal one, is a crucial poetic approach in my work, revealing and unearthing new and unexpected ways to see the world. For example, my short artist film *Madame I* (2006), created for mobile phones, features a 3D animated character voiced with AI-generated speech, to tell a tale of the disembodied nature of our contemporary networked lives (Figure 6). The digital film was inspired by a French neurological study published in *Revue Neurologique* in 1905, which documented a patient's experience with Cotard Syndrome, leading to her loss of proprioception, or bodily awareness. The patient's predicament in experiencing this disorder of the bodily self, involving illusions of bodily dissolution and somatosensory feelings of unreality, along with her lucid, poignant description of it, as documented within the article, are transposed through the film into 21st-century digital life. From inside a mobile phone, *Madame I* contemplates the nature of her disembodied predicament. The film poetically evokes this detachment from the physical world as 'a consciousness that has lost its moorings to the physical world, and forces us to look to our own disembodied existence' (The Herald, 2007).

As an early creative critique of the ethical implications surrounding humanlike digital avatars, its themes remain relevant, especially as contemporary tools such as Apple Memojis and AI voice services proliferate, and continue to resonate with the concepts explored. These technologies extend and multiply the film's original examination of our evolving creation of virtual selves. By projecting ahead and intellectually scaffolding our current engagement with digital identities, the film sustains an essential dialogue on the ephemeral nature of digital existence versus the enduring quest for presence.



Figure 6: Hood, B. (2006) *Madame I*, digital film still.

My creative research embraces Zylinska's call, which stresses that artists can be tasked with helping society to look around askew and to recognise 'the human capacity for telling stories, having visions and dreaming dreams' (2019, p.152) by exploring the matters that should matter 'in an affective, effective and non-moralistic way.' (Zylinska, 2019, p.153). My ethos resonates with Ploin et al.'s assertion that 'artists ultimately work to address human, rather than technical, questions' (2022, p. 78). Creative AI researchers Mercedes Bunz et al., writing about the work of the Creative AI Lab at King's College with the Serpentine Gallery, describe creative practices that explore technology's wider societal deployment as conceptual or integrative approaches (2022, p. 91). Crucially, of relevance to my research practice, they add that 'artistic research projects can offer blueprints for different

configurations ... thus serve as a space for the working out of alternative ethical metrics and values, beyond optimisation, efficiency or profit' (2022, p. 93).



Figure 7: Hood, B. (2012) *Glitching*, digital performance.

My creative research has actively resisted corporate tech sector values, such as optimisation and efficiency, in favour of new possibilities for meaning, purpose, and affect. For example, the *Glitching* project (Figure 7), mentioned briefly above, purposefully explored and exploited the qualities of computer game characters' movement, specifically the glitches, disruptions, and imperfections, derived from characters in contemporary sports and action computer games, not as something to fix but as a feature to explore. The project, presented as both a performance and an interactive installation, re-described these awkward digital disruptions, playfully scrutinising their relationship to real bodies. The work functions as a provocation and a way to rethink the role of the body in our digitally enmeshed contemporary lives. The work offers a critical reminder of the artificial nature of the digital avatars we are presented with, despite their evermore extraordinary embodiment, fluidity of movement, and seeming naturalness, which becomes ever more realistic and convincing.

The ongoing relevance of these themes is exemplified in other artists' recent works, such as Nina Davies' performance projects, exploring dance in popular culture (no date), and the immersive performance *We Should Have Never Walked on the Moon* by Rambert and (LA)HORDE Ballet, presented at the Southbank Centre in 2025 (no date).

Both of these performances specifically refer to the movement of digital characters and the role of the body in the digital age, through dance.

Early warning system

The *Eidolon* research and my wider arts research practice are activated as a critical, creative means to socialise ideas and address pressing contemporary concerns about the impact of technology and science on what it means to be human. However, I am clear that this occurs with the context of culture and the power of ideas, but also acknowledge that, in and of itself, the work's impact is limited by wider social and political neo-liberal and capitalist forces. I recognise both Zylinska's assertion that digital art embraces a conviction that 'art is a social object' (2020, p.141), but also her warning about the efficacy and bombastic claims of art to solve social ills. Zylinska astutely steers the value of socially engaged digital arts practice towards 'its ability to redraft the conceptual and discursive boundaries of human perception, human value, and human cultural practice, while drawing us as its human recipients, into the recognition of our becoming (with) machines' (2020, p.142).

My creative research approach aligns with media theorist Marshall McLuhan's statement in response to his landmark publication *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964), that 'art, at its most significant, as a DEW line, a Distant Early Warning system that can always be relied on to tell the old culture what is beginning to happen to it' (Schickel, 1965, p.67). The continued relevance of McLuhan's notion of art as an early warning system is exemplified in its continued use within media theory research (Kitnick, 2021) and its adoption by researchers working at the forefront of the relationship between emergent technologies and creative practice, such as Zylinska, Bunz, Milne, and Jäger at the Creative AI Lab, as already mentioned (Bunz et al, 2022).

McLuhan's assertion has also been adopted by other key creatives working with digital technologies, such as the Brighton-based artist group Blast Theory (2020). Since the mid-1990s, the group has made 'interactive art to explore social and political questions' (Blast Theory, no date). Their projects include *Karen* (2015), an app artwork that provides audiences with a one-to-one experience with an over-sharing, data-profiling, remote personal advisor/life coach. *A Cluster of 17 Cases* (2021) is an interactive artwork by the group based on the 2003 SARS outbreak. The work demonstrates the arbitrary personal nature of a pandemic spread and was developed during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Keenly resonant with my own research approach, Blast Theory describes their key concerns as being how to 'invite the public to occupy a position inside a work that is meaningful to them and that gives them a real insight into the areas that we're interested in' (2020). Similarly, a key approach in my research has been to enable audiences to occupy redrafted positions in relation to technology and the materialities of the body. As I will outline next, this has been undertaken through interactivity, participation, and performance practice.

Performative media – Interaction and the experiential turn

My artworks, created using technology, have typically involved a level of interactivity, participation, and tactile viewer encounters. This has ranged from a simple interaction via the hand and a computer mouse (*Les Yeux Enchantés*, 1996; *Anonymous Drawing Room*, 1997) to more complex encounters involving the full body and sensors (*Ersatz*, 2004; *Glitching*, 2012). As digital performance researcher Steve Dixon notes, 'all artworks are interactive in the sense that a negotiation or confrontation takes place between the beholder and the beheld' (2007, p. 559). However, a performative or experiential encounter activates the physical relationship between the viewer, the work, and, in the case of my work, technology. This resonates with dancer and theorist Susan Kozel's approach in her groundbreaking publication *Closer: Performance, Technologies, Phenomenology* (2007), which brings together performance, digital technologies, and the philosophical practice of phenomenology, as 'a method for *how* to discover, create, and listen as we come closer to our technologies' (Kozel, 2007, p. xiv). Kozel emphasises performance's potential to develop and extend our understanding of wider social engagements with technology on a corporeal level (2007).

My methodological approach embraces, accentuates, and enacts the performativity of encounters with technology, which can be considered through art theorist and curator Dorothea von Hantelmann's writing on *The Experiential Turn* (2014). Identified as a key paradigm essential to a generation of artists working in the 90s (my formative years of practice), the performative or experiential impact and effect emphasises the situational, spatial, discursive, and relational context; that is, the dynamic discourse between the work and the audience or viewer (von Hantelmann, 2014).

Von Hantelmann recognises that the experiential nature of artworks has become commonplace, alongside an experiential turn that has evolved throughout wider society and aesthetics (2014). My creative research fulfils her specific criteria for being intentionally performative, in that my methodological approach purposefully shapes the audience's experience. This is not a passive engagement; accessing the work typically requires some level of physical interaction from the viewer. The nature of this encounter is highly considered and choreographed as an embodied experience. Following von Hantelmann's assertion, my creative research employs a tactile phenomenology of the body within the physical world, with the bodily situatedness of the viewer placed in a subjective and intersubjective active encounter with digital media.

However, this is not a didactic approach to the audience experience. Von Hantelmann quotes minimalist artist Robert Morris from 1971, whose work was crucial in establishing the discourse around the experiential turn. Morris wanted 'to provide a situation where people can become more aware of themselves and their own experience rather than more aware of some version of my experience' (2014). Von Hantelmann cites this as a crucial shift from the spectator-object relationship to a felt

and lived experience, opening up new potentials for the audience's experience to be charged with signification.

My methodological approach to working with technology builds upon this; it questions the situation the artwork produces, how the viewers are situated, and the meanings inscribed into the situation. My adoption of performance has complemented and extended this approach by offering a fertile means to engage audiences and present ideas, which I will explore further in the following section.

Digital Performance

From the earliest days of my creative research practice, I have been interested in how performance can extend, trouble, excavate, and manifest the potential and tensions in our lived experiences of technology, science, and digital culture in new ways. I began working in performance during my undergraduate studies, as part of an exchange programme at Nova Scotia College of Art and Design from 1992 to 1993, where I took courses in performance art, alongside sculpture, studio practice, drawing, and printed matter. Whether the artwork I created was performance, drawing, or object-based sculpture, it was performative and experiential, making clear reference to the body, often as encasings, garments, or physical extensions.

The way I have used performance is distinct from the traditional performing arts, although they sit in close proximity, and the collaborators with whom I work more commonly engage in stage, theatre, TV, and film. My performances have not typically been shown within conventional theatre settings but have more often been presented in intimate, informal spaces that create a softer bridge between audience, performer, and technology. My use of technology is akin to Dixon's assertion that digital performance expands 'traditional notions of theater, reexamining the accepted boundaries and roles of actors, technicians and audiences' (2007, p. 582).

My approach draws from performance art, originating from contemporary art training and practice (sculpture being my first degree), as opposed to performing arts or theatre studies. As defined by theatre and performance researcher Gareth White, it is 'a set of conventions and aesthetic principles that belong to the tradition of fine art rather than that of the theatre' (2013, p.2). Although, as White acknowledges, the borders between these traditions and practices are porous (2013); my performative approach is typically experimental, aesthetic, experiential, and non-narrative led.

As a young artist, I was influenced by feminist performance art practices of the 70s, which employed tactics engaging audiences in participatory or publicly enacted ways, often making them complicit in the work. Key examples of works include performance artist Marina Abramović's *Rhythm 0* (1974), where she invited audiences to use a set of props, including a candle, lipstick, a gun, and knives, to do to her as they wished. Another significant influence was American artist Adrian Piper and her *Mythic Being* series (1973–75), which saw Piper roaming the streets of New York adopting a

persona of a young black man, an invented 'other' alter-ego. Additional pivotal works include Japanese American artist Yoko Ono's feminist Fluxist performance *Cut Piece* (1964), an early instructional work inviting the audience to cut away portions of her clothes, and Austrian artist Valie Export's live street theatre performance *Tapp und Tast Kino/Touch Cinema* (1968), which allowed the public on the street to watch and touch Export's body through a makeshift wearable TV. These works leveraged feminist critiques of the cultural objectification of the body, challenging the neutrality of the relationship between viewer and object or subject, and reversing the interactive relationship between looking and touching (Dixon, 2007).

It was clear from the early days of my practice that, although not a requisite for performance art, my lack of traditional performance training, accompanying nerves, and resulting discomfort would not make me naturally suited to live events. This initially led to forays into video performance practice, where I used myself as the documented performer within the context of art installations; these were recorded, mediated, and then re-presented as short videos alongside sculptural objects and photography. Here, there was a strong influence from historical feminist video art performed to camera, including key works such as *Semiotics of the Kitchen* by Martha Rosler (1975). Additionally, there was also a notable correspondence with a burgeoning international cohort of contemporary artists working with an expanded video performance practice in the 90s, such as Pipilotti Rist, Matthew Barney, Georgina Starr, and Mona Hatoum. These artists also integrated performance with video, sculpture, and other media. From these very early stages of my practice, I strongly connected with these expanded approaches, adopting and embracing an experimental, multimodal approach that combined multiple media and elements, often intended to be experienced as a distributed, disparate whole. I will elaborate further upon the multimodal nature of my practice in more detail later.

For now, returning to my early performance works, my creative practice was emerging as one that probed the hybrid territory between humans and machines, physical and digital reality, exploring the potential, frictions, and slippage between technological aspirations and lived reality. However, it quickly became evident that my limited performance abilities would constrain the expanse of my ideas and imagination, which were conjuring up scenarios far beyond my own skill set. For example, the already mentioned *translocale* (2001) was envisioned as a networked performance where dancers perform live, in-person, while simultaneously weaving another level of 'dance' as an automated, digitally broadcast stream leaping from server to server, country to country, around the globe (see Figure 4). The inclusion of dance in the performance was driven by its inherently physical nature, an art form that Dixon describes as being the 'most embodied, dependent intimately on the state of the body' (2007, p. 211). The performance both unsettled and revelled in the supposed clash of materialities between the physicality of dance and the ephemeral nature of the digital.

From my initial forays into tango lessons and some exploratory workshops with amateur tango enthusiasts, it quickly became clear that professional performers would bring both technical and aesthetic rigour, as well as conceptual depth, to the

performance. This enabled me to focus my efforts on leading the creative direction. Here, as with future works, I took the role of 'lead artist' and brought together an ecosystem of collaborators, tasked with providing conceptual, formal, and technical input and engagement. Involving other creatives with established practices of their own introduced a new level of engagement with, and critique of, the overall project concept and ideas, elevating the aesthetic and performance experience for audiences. This was a crucial factor in *translocale*, a work that was conceptually and experientially challenging for audiences, most of whom would have never experienced online video conferencing in 2001. Bringing in the professional dance company Dudendance gave the audience a movement aspect of the work they could understand, grasp, and hold on to.

The tango was specifically chosen as a dance that is stereotypically understood to be passionate and sensual, as well as a traditional partner dance. The work was presented in a milonga-style tango setting, with the audience informally seated at round tables. The live space was set up with a spot-lit 'performance' area, which was live-streamed to the video conferences via a webcam, and an adjacent 'rest area' with a table and chairs. The performances lasted several hours, so the dancers periodically took breaks in the 'rest area'. The CuSeeMe video conference interface was presented as a large wall projection in the performance space, displaying the live broadcast stream of the dancers and the live online video conference users, as depicted in Figure 8 (Hood, 2001).

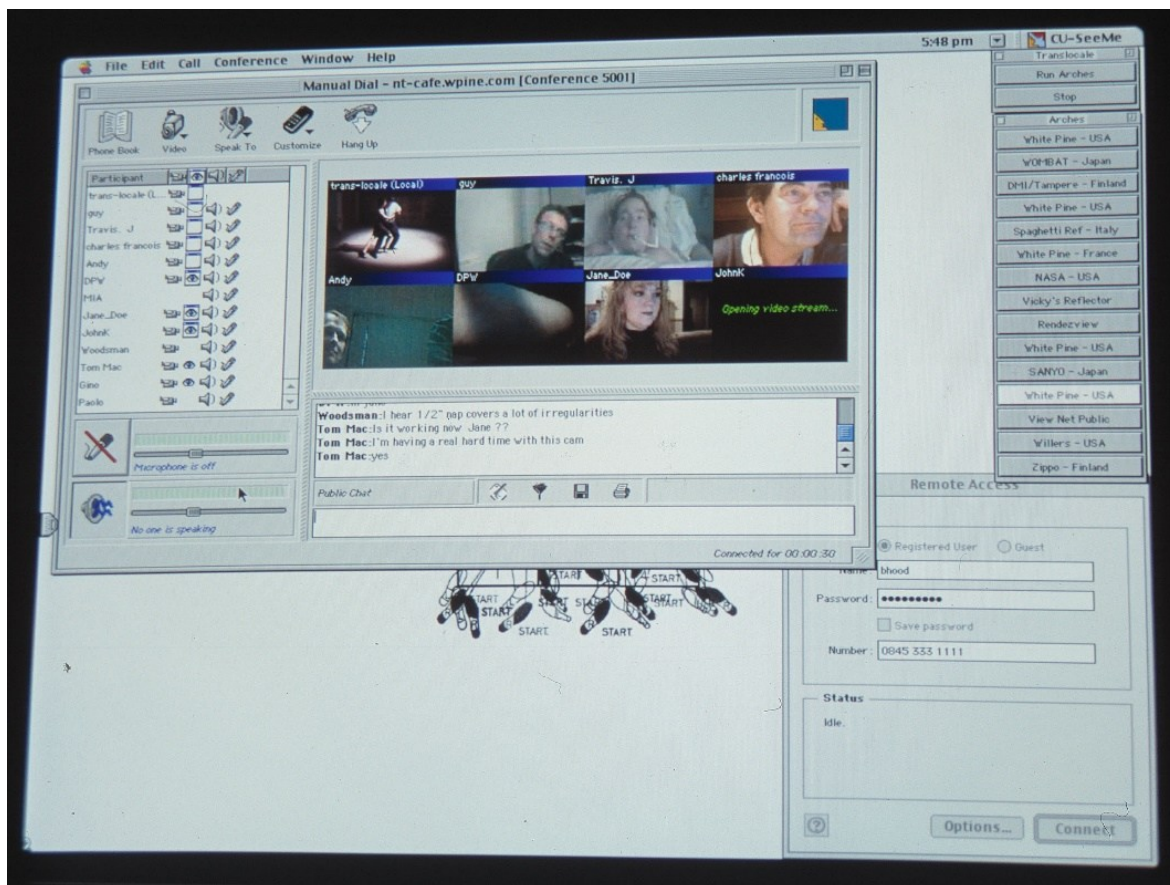


Figure 8: Hood, B. (2001) *translocale*, projected CuSeeMe interface.

Audiences could watch the performance in person, live within the performance space, or participate remotely by logging into the online conferences, details of which were publicly shared as a list of IP addresses and timings. In some instances, audience members were able to move between these two viewing experiences within the performance space itself. For example, at Stills Gallery in Edinburgh, there was an in-person performance space on one level, accompanied by a mezzanine level space set up with a computer connected to the CuSeeMe video conferences. In this case, the audience could move from watching the performance in person to online, and see themselves broadcast via webcam into the online video conferences. This latter scenario enabled audiences to chat and discuss the performance with other video conferencing participants, while manually following the list of server IP addresses and timings, essentially hopping from server to server and chasing the performers. The hybrid conditions of *translocale*, as a networked performance that bridged in-person and online interactions, established an embodied techno-interface (Mondloch, 2021). This interface provided audiences with an embodied participatory encounter with the material world, encompassing both digital and physical.

Participation

Audience participation has been a crucial aspect of my creative research since the 90s. At times, this involvement is subtle, as when viewers unknowingly take on an interactive drawing role in *Anonymous Drawing Room* (1997); at other times, it is more overt, such as when attendees are invited to participate as dancers within the interactive installation and performance *Glitching* (2012). Audience participation, as a performance style, can be challenging; it asks the audience to become part of the action. This request can strike fear into many, making people fearful and embarrassed (White, 2013). Shifting the performative context to one that requires audience participation flips the conventions and understanding of how we should behave at an event. This results in an experience that feels different, for both those who enact and witness, and requires the audience to exist in a new register as performative social selves (White, 2013).

My methodological approach to performance throughout my creative research purposefully guides and supports the audience, attempting to foster a path through uneasy sociotechnical situations. This approach resonates with the ethos of Chris Hardman's early Walkman-activated walk-through performances, part of the *Walkmanology* series in the early 1980s (Hardman, 1983). Dixon notes in his writing about the work that 'audience members are not intimidated by the demands of audience participation' (2007, p. 582). Hardman himself describes the central element of his approach as an 'audio-guide'. Unlike a narrator emoting from the distant edge of the proscenium, this experience offers a more intimate muse, inside your head, enticing you to 'come out and play' with an inadvertent cast of passerby actors and spectators, without fear of failure (Hardman, 1983, p. 44). In *Eidolon*, as with my wider performance work, the audience is not put on the spot but rather invited into a form of

social play. Here, the emphasis is on performance as process, rather than final product, the possibilities of audience participation, and a blurring of the boundaries between actors and audience. These themes will be further explored in the subsequent discussion to highlight how *Eidolon* exemplifies these dynamics.

This section has provided a background to my research, summarising the foundations of my critical creative practice from the 1990s onwards. It has briefly established the specific origins of the research within the context of practice-based inquiry, cultural theory, media art theory, and digital performance studies. It has also given an overview of how the early creative works function as feminist, relational provocations, and as ways to rethink and reimagine the role of the body and our personal and social experiences in our digitally enmeshed contemporary lives. The writing that follows will explore the key role that the *Eidolon* methodology and resulting artwork have played in the development of my specific approach to creative research.

THE EIDOLON PROJECT

Definition of 'eidolon'

in British English

noun

- 1. an unsubstantial image; apparition; phantom*
- 2. an ideal or idealized figure*

in American English

noun

- 1. an image without real existence; phantom; apparition*
- 2. an ideal person or thing*

Word origin

*C19: from Greek: phantom, IDOL
(Collins, 2024)*



Figure 9: *Human patient simulator, or manikin (2015) Photography by Lindsay Perth.*

Summary of the research project

The following section of this critical review will focus on the *Eidolon* project, a multimodal artwork undertaken as creative practice research comprising several parts: a live performance, an artist film installation, a virtual reality film, a fully illustrated monograph, and a peer-reviewed journal article. The work was developed in collaboration with the Scottish Centre for Simulation and Clinical Human Factors (SCSC^{HF}) and its team of medics, nurses, and technicians. I took on the role of 'lead artist' working alongside actors Pauline Goldsmith, Stanley Pattison, and Huld Märtha Hølvold (referred to as Magnus Sinding in accompanying publications), and dancer Freya Jeffs. Theatre director Jeremy Weller provided dramaturgical input.

The following will provide a summary of each part of the *Eidolon* project, including references to the relevant sections of the accompanying portfolio. This will be followed by an overview of the conceptual context and multimodal approach used in the research.

The *Eidolon* **performance**, which was developed and disseminated between 2013 to 2018, is documented in the accompanying portfolio (Hood, pp. 3 - 9). It brought audiences into the medical simulation environment, together with professional performers, health professionals, and human patient simulators. The performance was an intimate participatory experience for small audiences, typically ranging from 10 to 25 people. It intertwined performers and the public, with the humanlike presence of the technologically embodied patient simulators. Composed of a series of short vignettes or scenes, intricately woven together, the performance was structured as an immersive promenade that actively invited the audience to engage directly with the performance, encouraging participation rather than passive observation. The duration of the performance was flexible and varied, ranging from 15 minutes to 2 hours, depending on the specific combination of vignettes being performed and the setting.

An **artist film installation** of *Eidolon* was created in 2016, and the details are documented in the portfolio (Hood, pp. 10 - 13). This installation, intended for gallery presentation, was an abridged version of the performance developed as a method to widen audiences' access to the research. The installation consisted of two single-screen films, each approximately 18 minutes in duration with sound, presented in a continuous alternating loop on two digital screens set side by side (one film playing at a time). These films, developed from two vignettes titled 'ManiChat' and 'ManiDance', derived from the live performance, were filmed using the smots™ CCTV-style audio-visual system. The footage captured by the system was then edited and composited into two multi-feed, single-screen films. The installation featured these films on a continuous loop, alternating between the two display screens.

The **virtual reality film** *Eidolon360* was developed in 2017 in collaboration with Tom Flint at the School of Computing, Edinburgh Napier University. Documentation of this part of the project is available in the portfolio (Hood, pp. 14 - 16). Developed as an experimental VR film, with a duration of approximately 7 minutes, *Eidolon360* was

intended to engage audiences with the project's research ideas through an immersive and experiential digital medium. The work was presented as a singular, personal viewing experience that used technological mediation to resonate with, build upon, and deepen the thematic ideas explored in the live performance's *ManiHistory* vignette, which delves into the poetic origin story of medical simulation. Specifically developed for exhibition in gallery and conference settings, audiences experienced the film wearing a VR headset, with the staging varying between seated arrangements and reclining on a hospital bed, depending on the presentation context.

The *Eidolon* **monograph** was self-published in August 2016 to coincide with the presentation of the performance and installation at the Edinburgh Art Festival. Additional information about the monograph can be found in the portfolio (Hood, p. 17). The monograph was distributed by art bookshop venues across Scotland, including the Fruitmarket Gallery in Edinburgh and Streetlevel Gallery, Glasgow.

The **peer-reviewed journal article** *Eidolon: The technological body* was published in *TechnoeticArts: A Journal of Speculative Research* in 2016. This publication consolidated a paper presentation of the same title at Consciousness Reframed 2015 at DeTao University, Shanghai, China. Details of this publication are documented in the portfolio (Hood, p. 18).

These multiple parts of the *Eidolon* project were presented as part of public performance events, exhibitions, conferences, and talks between 2016 and 2018, as detailed in the portfolio (Hood, p. 4, 11, 15, 19). *Eidolon* was performed at simulation centres including the SCSC^{HF}, the Clinical Skills Assessment Centre at the Western General Hospital, Edinburgh, and the Clinical Skills Centre at the Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, and exhibited within arts venues including the Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, Stockholm Kulturhuset, Sweden, and Museo del Traje, Madrid, Spain.

A multimodal approach

The *Eidolon* project exemplifies key aspects of my creative research methodology, characterised by its multimodal nature, interdisciplinary and collaborative processes, diverse media forms, and a distributed dissemination strategy. Multimodality is a phenomenon and discourse that integrates various modes, resources, processes, events, and media to function as a collective whole, shaped by and situated within specific social, cultural, and material conditions. Established through linguistics and social semiotics by Kress and van Leeuwen (2001), the concept has evolved into an interdisciplinary approach adopted by creative and digital technology research, significantly influenced by the exponential rise of new digital media forms as outlined by technology and learning researcher Carey Jewitt (2013). Drawing on Barthes' semiotic notion of 'relay' between content-based relations, van Leeuwen emphasises how different resources and representations do not merely replicate but convey distinct, complementary contents (2011, p. 6). This principle crucially shapes the *Eidolon* project's approach, establishing a methodology that explores the potential of

disparate yet interconnected representations and iterations that resonate and complement, rather than replicate; these operate as incomplete propositions, open to a variety of meanings and interpretations (Leeuwen, 2011, p. 6).

Eidolon's multimodal approach, which builds upon the concept of 'bricolage' as described by creative arts researchers Estelle Barrett and Barbara Bolt (2007), incorporates multiple elements, draws upon diverse fields, and pieces together varied practices. This multifaceted approach aligns with the foundational principles of multimodality that underpin my creative research. In *Eidolon*, this methodology brings together a constellation of interdisciplinary practices and practitioners, through relational and embodied methods to produce tangible instances of techno-embodied interfaces (Mondloch, 2018), i.e., artworks.

Additionally, the multimodal approach resonates with the philosophical concept of assemblage thinking (Bennett, 2010; Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, 1987; Latour, 2005). The *Eidolon* project itself can be understood as a multimodal assemblage comprising collaborators, technologies, audiences, and artwork iterated across various spaces, forms, and media. Here, a pivotal theoretical influence is the new materialist concepts of physicist and philosopher Karen Barad, who extends assemblage thinking through a focus on matter and materiality, as an ongoing process of iterative enmeshed becoming. Barad's theory of agential realism, particularly their concept of 'intra-action' as a dynamism of forces, where things constantly exchange and influence through 'material-discursive' relationships (Barad, 2007), is a crucial influence on my multimodal research practice, details of which will be expanded in the writing that follows. These concepts align with a recognised shift in focus from artefact to process and interconnected systems, or ecosystems, particularly noted among media arts practitioners (Krysa, 2006; Graham and Cook, 2010; Serpentine, 2020). In this context, the multimodal character of *Eidolon* constitutes an interconnected ecosystem encompassing collaborators, vignettes, spaces, artistic forms, media, and audiences, each contributing to the overarching narrative and impact of the project.

The multimodal aspect of my creative research also resonates with Haraway's notion of 'splitting', which fosters what she describes as 'heterogeneous multiplicities' of experience (1988, p. 586). In *Eidolon*, this concept manifests as a deliberately choreographed multimodal audience experience, staged across the multiple iterations of the overall project and echoed in aspects such as the multi-pathed performance structure.

Building upon these concepts, my multimodal approach to *Eidolon* explores an unfixed, iterative materialisation as open, tangible propositions that span performance, VR film, installation, and writing. These diverse iterations are interconnected yet distinct parts, functioning as overlapping, distributed echoes that not only broaden the dissemination routes but also reinforce and reiterate the audience's experiences of the research. This will be further discussed in the subsequent sections, highlighting the project's iterative and multimodal nature, reflected not only in the collaborative process of its development but also in its

realisation through multiple creative forms, methods of making, and dissemination strategy.

The setting

Eidolon was developed at the Scottish Centre for Simulation & Clinical Human Factors (SCSC^{HF}), located within the Forth Valley Royal Hospital in Larbert. SCSC^{HF} is a state-of-the-art professional NHS training facility, delivering simulation-based training to healthcare professionals, including doctors, nurses, paramedics, and students. As the sole provider of high-fidelity simulation training in Scotland, it offers a comprehensive and realistic medical training environment (see Figure 10). The *Eidolon* project marked the SCSC^{HF}'s first foray into working with the arts.



Figure 10: *Scottish Centre for Simulation & Clinical Human Factors* (2014). Photography by Beverley Hood

The facility is equipped with a suite of adaptable spaces designed to mimic clinical settings, such as operating theatres and hospital wards. Tucked within these are control rooms, equipped with two-way mirrors for discreet operation and observation of training scenarios. Additionally, the centre contains generic classrooms to facilitate instruction, monitoring, and review, alongside storage rooms for essential simulation equipment and medicines, all supporting a fully integrated approach to learning. The Centre's ultimate aim, as outlined by Consultant Anaesthetist and then Director of

SCSC^{HF}, Dr Michael Money Penny, is to serve both patients and people working in healthcare. He emphasises that patients benefit from a service that is safe, effective, efficient, and centred on their needs, and that better training leads to more skilled and, consequently, happier healthcare professionals (Money Penny, 2016).

Simulation-based training in healthcare is designed to provide practitioners with embodied learning opportunities in clinical skills. These encompass not only specific technical and practical knowledge, but also softer skills, tacit knowledge, and an understanding of medical algorithmic systems of thinking and protocols. SCSC^{HF} specialises in emergency medical scenarios and acute care, both within the clinical hospital environment and, at times, in more public settings. The intention is to draw out the aspects that both go well and that are more challenging, 'without the risk of patient harm' (Money Penny, 2016, p. 9).

The SCSC^{HF} sets out to create a simulated medical learning environment that achieves three types of fidelity: physical, conceptual, and psychological. The latter, psychological fidelity, was particularly striking when setting out on the *Eidolon* research, due to its resonance with my previous performance practices related to affect. Psychological fidelity is acknowledged to occur 'when the simulation activity elicits an emotional response from the participant as if the experience was real' (Carey and Rossler, 2023).

Eidolon appropriates the concept of psychological fidelity and probes it through a creative research practice approach grounded in feminism, posthumanism, new materialism, and phenomenology. This approach fosters a reframing and rehumanising of the spectacle of medical training and practice. *Eidolon* sensitively explores the emotive and psychological potential of the unique setting of the SCSC^{HF}, along with its synthetic, technologically embodied inhabitants known as human patient simulators, or 'manikins'. The latter term, common parlance within SCSC^{HF}, will be used in the writing that follows.

The *Eidolon* research focuses on the social, physical, and technical encounters and exchanges between people and these humanlike, technological bodies, as relational and material processes (Bourriard, 2002; Barad, 2007). It ruptures and shifts the day-to-day activities of the simulation centre by focusing on the ambiguous and uneasy interpersonal and intersubjective characteristics that surface at the edges and in between the cracks. It teases out the uncomfortably human facets, seeping into the fissures within systematic, medical algorithmic thinking and behavioural protocols typical of clinical simulation procedures. As Nicola White writes in her essay 'Synthetic Others', published in the *Eidolon* monograph:

Eidolon is a meditation on our synthetic others, an opportunity to gaze on and measure ourselves against them, to marvel at their special qualities and their meaning. They are 'model' patients, to a fault. When the medical professionals go out into the human community, won't they sometimes miss the quiet pliability of the manikin, its odourless obedience? (White, 2016, p. 33).

Building upon my previous situated research and artist residencies, as outlined in the Background to Practice section, I worked in situ at SCSC^{HF} from 2013 to 2016. This research was carried out under an informal arrangement that allowed flexible access to the facility as a visiting artist. This approach has lineage in the artistic practices of the Artists Placement Group (APG), which operated in the UK from the 1960s to 1980s. APG sought to reposition the artist's role within a wider social context by actively placing arts practice within non-art environments (Tate, 2004). This approach extended upon my previous residency experiences, enabling a more prolonged engagement similar to that pioneered by APG in non-arts venues. In these instances, APG's approach typically placed artists within industry and government departments, embedding them in the day-to-day activities of an organisation or company where they acted in a role with an open brief (Tate, 2004). Similarly, in *Eidolon*, this approach is mirrored through my open-ended, exploratory process of engagement with the SCSC^{HF} as a non-arts venue. This unique setting provided both a rich and challenging site for creative research production and, importantly, for presentation of the work to audiences.

Crucially, the *Eidolon* methodological approach aligns with British art historian Claire Bishop's critique of socially engaged participatory practice, drawing from philosopher Jacques Rancière's work on aesthetics and politics (2004). According to Bishop, such engagement negotiates with the social but does not set out to problem-solve or require concrete outcomes (2012). This is not a scenario where the socially engaged artist is drafted in under a neo-liberalist premise to 'fix' society, nor does it co-opt the service designer into streamlining and improving the efficiency of institutional processes. Rather, the research is approached as an aesthetic and conceptual inquiry, advancing the nature of creative research and the premise of performance itself. It aims to activate audiences to think about the materiality of bodies, in relation to science and technology, without serving a direct instrumental purpose. This approach is deliberately open-ended and exploratory, occupying a purposefully ambiguous territory. Here, the social norms and obligations of the simulated medical procedure are confronted rather than conformed to, by asserting the aesthetic, imaginary, and poetic aspects. Echoing Bishop's framing of the ethical imperatives of participatory art, and building upon my previously outlined creative strategies, such as autofiction (see p.11), the *Eidolon* project orchestrates 'highly authored situations that fuse reality with carefully calculated artifice' (Bishop, 2012, p. 39).

The writing above has outlined the in situ, physical setting for the *Eidolon* research project. The next section will summarise the theoretical context of embodied materialities that have informed *Eidolon* as a critical creative research methodology.

Reconstructing (simulated) bodies

My interest, or rather fascination, was piqued by the unique, high-fidelity simulation environment at SCSC^{HF}, with its suite of adaptable spaces that mimic clinical settings

such as operating theatres and hospital wards. The simulation environment powerfully evoked philosopher Jean Baudrillard's concept of the 'simulacra' as a physically and psychologically heightened, hyperreal setting (Baudrillard, 1983). It encapsulated and resonated with the concerns and provocations that I had explored, interrogated, and unsettled throughout my previous years of practice.

Particularly intriguing were the humanlike 'manikin' bodies that inhabit these simulation spaces. As an artist who had spent the past two decades exploring the relational materialities between technology and the body, primarily through digital media, the physically tangible, technological manifestation of these synthetic bodies was extremely inspiring. The SCSC^{HF} presented a unique opportunity to work with an artificial, humanlike entity embodied as a manikin, offering a new way to extend my creative research inquiry.

My approach was informed by the theories and practices of key scholars in phenomenology and new materialism. As previously mentioned, Kozel's research, which encompasses performance, digital media, and philosophy of phenomenology, has significantly influenced my work. Her phenomenological method places the human body and lived experience at the centre of explorations of live performance and digital technologies. In the *Eidolon* project, I adopted a deliberately experiential and embodied approach, which resonates with Kozel's methods that actively probe the ethical relationships between ourselves, others, and our digital representations (Kozel, 2007).

Additionally, as noted earlier, my approach incorporates insights from new materialism, especially the work of feminist theorist and physicist Karen Barad. Barad conceptualises reality not as bounded entities, but phenomena continually shaped through discursive material practices; as a mutual co-constitution in human-tool existence with boundaries that are dynamically enacted, rather than predetermined (Barad, 2007). *Eidolon* employs a performative approach to activate synthetic, technological bodies, fostering an unsettling and relational reality. This builds upon Barad's notion of a reality being constructed through ongoing, entangled intra-actions between others, both human and nonhuman, emphasising that these encounters are constantly changing and inseparable (Barad, 2007).

Eidolon extends my previous creative research in digital media into an experimental exploration of 'dynamically enacted' relational and material encounters, specifically with the physically tangible technological form of the manikin (see Figure 11). The SCSC^{HF} houses an array of these technological manikin bodies, ranging from complex top-of-the-range CAE Healthcare high-fidelity manikin 'Standard Man', costing around £150K and used for medical theatre re-enactments, to neonatal birthing simulators, and the Laerdal CPR training manikins, 'Resusci Anne' and the truncated 'Resusci Annie' (Laerdal, no date). The manikins are equipped with an array of mechanised physical responses designed for specific uses. These include interconnected pneumatic systems that create heartbeat, pulse, and breath, controlled by a computer motherboard housed inside the cavity of the body wall; tubing that carries liquid for tears; and inbuilt speakers to give voice. Other features include interchangeable

genitals, peel-away skin, breakable teeth (for intubation training), and wigs. The uneasy yet blunt artificial nature of the manikins is succinctly captured by White, in her essay for the *Eidolon* monograph:

We are brought forward to meet the patient. You could never mistake her for a real person. Her skin is smooth plastic, as is her hair. Her mouth gapes. (White, 2016, p. 26).



Figure 11: *Standard Man high-fidelity Human Patient Simulator* (2015). Photography by Lindsay Perth.

This stark artificiality must be transcended to achieve the physical, conceptual, and psychological fidelity outlined previously, which simulation training aspires to. The SCSC^{HF} must navigate its own artificiality to deliver successful simulated training.

Here, a hyperreal clinical environment, patient manikins, and a close attention to accuracy in the process of re-enactment create an extraordinary psychological resonance for the trainees, whether they are attending to a mock emergency intubation or a femoral hernia repair. The result is a profound level of conviction and commitment by participants to the simulated scenarios they experience (Hood, 2016).

As White notes, *Eidolon* uses immersive role-play, performance, and theatrical devices, playing with different levels of artifice to 'consider the existence of these technological bodies, the focus of all this human attention, the ones who endure daily disaster' (White, 2016, p. 25). In *Eidolon*, I adopt a critical creative approach that teases out the effects technology has on our perception of what it means to be human and alive, exploring the emotive and psychological potential of the simulation centre environment and the responsive synthetic, technological bodies within it. Here, the focus is on what visual culture scholar Silvia Casini describes as 'the emotional territory of patient simulators' (2021, p. 150).

Key to my research approach was consideration of the physical indicators required to create a strong sense of physical presence in the manikins and their affective implications. This included physical expressions such as placing the hand over the mouth to feel breath, seeing a blink, and feeling a pulse. Historian, critic, and novelist Marina Warner, in her essay 'On the Threshold: Sleeping Beauties' included in the *Eidolon* monograph, speaks of the humanlike body as being 'available for psychic entry' (2016, p. 58). In *Eidolon*, the performative process opens this up as an experiential possibility for the viewer, unveiling an often uncomfortable, rehumanising, and reconstructed psychological reverberance that leaks out around the technological, synthetic body. White ponders, in her writing on the *Eidolon* performance, whether the appearance of 'life' within the manikin resides more in our heads than in the body itself, and whether the feelings that inanimate figures stir up in us seem to hover in the space between us and them (White, 2016, pp. 27-28). My approach probes what Warner describes as a 'bodied imagination' (2024), bringing together the psychological and the imaginary, with performative embodiment.

Warner suggests that these artificial bodies serve as eerie reminders that 'even the most accurate and life-like simulacra can never possess vitality itself' (2016, p. 59). She notes that while such likenesses might strive to guarantee and perpetuate presence, they ultimately underline the absence of the subject they represent; 'creepily, they resemble someone or something who is not there, as in a mirror reflection with no subject' (Warner, 2016, pp. 62-63). In this context, I work with the manikin as a complex physiological and technological entity, a host for enacting the human desire to overcome death or, at the very least, to prolong life. This artificial body has taken on roles deemed too dangerous, unethical, and dehumanising to be undertaken by the living human body (Hood, 2016, pp. 153-154).

The *Eidolon* project contributes to a long legacy of artists making imaginative use of the body, in the form of mannequins and humanlike figures. As White notes, historically, artists have typically employed these figures as helpful, uncomplaining substitutes that have 'more stamina for holding a pose than human models' (2016, p.

29). The human patient simulator, or manikin, has also been a rich subject of inquiry for select contemporary artists, including artist-photographer Alicia Bruce (2014) and artists Christine Borland (2007, 2008, 2010) and Justine Cooper (2009). Their resulting artworks, created in photography and film, feature medical manikins in works that range from emotive aesthetic objectification to absurd formal portraiture. Bruce, Borland and Cooper's artworks aesthetically and conceptually reference the simulation setting, yet they are distinct from *Eidolon* in their intended presentation for contemporary gallery audiences. Medics have also employed creative methods to broaden the application of the simulation setting. Professor of Surgical Education and Engagement Science, Roger Kneebone, undertook a Wellcome Trust-funded public engagement fellowship in 2012 that brought together medics, creatives and the public, with the goal of changing views about healthcare and the NHS, and to facilitate skill sharing (Pugh, 2014).

My approach to the medical manikin and the SCSC^{HF} setting distinctly diverges from these researchers in both its situated and conceptual dimensions. *Eidolon* immerses audiences directly into the simulation centre itself, set within an intensified hospital environment, rather than through representations, such as artworks or Kneebone's pop-up operating theatres (Pugh, 2014). While not intended to impart specific skills or insights about the NHS (though these were incidental outcomes), *Eidolon* presents a unique approach. Conceptually, the project attempts a distinct creative critique that poses questions about how medical technologies and medical simulation 'shape understandings of what a body is' (Johnstone, 2023, p. 426). The concept and development of the *Eidolon* research leaned heavily on the potential of the uncanny to unsettle and reframe assumptions about the body, medicine, and relationships of care and power. As an audience experience, it draws upon German psychiatrist Ernest Jentsch's 1906 proposition of the uncanny as 'lack of orientation' (Sellars, 2008, p. 217), later expanded by Freud to describe the uncanny as a state of disquiet, an experience where one 'does not know where one is' (Freud, 1919, p. 2). This approach presented the audience with an immersive experience in a highly simulated environment, disrupted by performance and cast adrift from its intended purpose (Hood, 2016). My approach to *Eidolon* echoes Borgdorff's critique of art and realism, which describes the 'distinctive characteristic of artistic research is that it articulates both our familiarity with the world and our distance from it' (2010, p. 60). I purposefully employ creative strategies to play with the uncanny nature of the synthetic bodies of the manikins, which exist in a protracted, uncertain, and undecided state between life and not-life. 'They appear to be alive, yet are not' (Warner, 2016, pp. 61-62).

In summary, *Eidolon* aimed to engage audiences with challenging questions about where humanity and consciousness lie within the body, and the effects of technical mediation, on physical and psychological presence (Hood, 2016, p. 146). The section that follows will build upon this contextual setting, summarising the practice-based methodological approach and process of making.

THE PROCESS OF COLLABORATIVE MAKING

Emergent, situated, instituent practice

The adoption of an emergent practice-based methodology, as asserted by Barrett and Bolt, was key to this artistic research. Characterised by its powerfully generative and iterative nature, this approach is amenable to repeated tweaking and adjustment, essential for navigating the intricacies of creative arts research. Rather than a flaw to be understated or avoided, this flexibility is a positive feature, critical to the development of the project and its final form. Barrett and Bolt (2007) highlight that the intuitive, non-pre-determined, alternative logic of practice inherent in emergent methodologies is vital to achieve critical levels of complexity in creative arts inquiry (Barrett and Bolt, 2007). This emergent approach is underpinned by Donna Haraway's concept of situated knowledge, employing creative strategies that speak to Haraway's proposal for modest interventions, diffractive patterns, and the feminist modest or credible witness (1997).

My research typically begins with a period of close observation of the specific research environment in which I am involved, either as an artist in residence or, as in the case of *Eidolon*, through an informal arrangement as a visiting artist. This process serves as a foundational method. At the core of my research practice is an extended period of development conducted in situ, which enables me to immerse myself within and become familiar with the specific context.

In *Eidolon*, this situated approach unfolds as a long, thin thread woven between the demands of other professional and personal commitments. This extended period, often evolving over open-ended timescales, has proven to provide a manageable and appropriate working method, accommodating and sustaining the complex ecosystem of project contributors. It facilitates the navigation of fluctuating schedules of professional performers and technologists, access to multi-use spaces, and the tug of academic and teaching commitments.

An initial observation period in 2013 provided a rounded overview of the SCSC^{HF} environment, its activities, and the concept of scripted 'scenarios' used in medical training, i.e., emergency simulations enacted with participants ranging from medical and nursing students, paramedics, to doctors and nurses at various career stages. This period included an introduction to the three-stage method of medical simulation: briefing, simulation, and debriefing/evaluation. I learned about algorithmic decision-making protocols designed to establish appropriate clinical responses based on interpretations of multi-layered information such as heart rate and CO₂ levels, patient breathing patterns, and other contingent environmental circumstances. I was also allowed access behind the scenes to understand the inner physical workings and maintenance procedures for the manikins, experience the control room setup, including the 'Standard Man' software that operates the manikins and scenarios, and become familiar with the smots™ audio-visual system with its multi-camera live video

feed. Crucially, I was also schooled in the language and terminology used in the simulation centre.

As art historian Fiona Johnstone notes from interviews about my work, I entered into the everyday activities of the SCSC^{HF} as 'just another pair of hands... There would be doctors in training, and I would actually be becoming one of the team' (Hood, 2021, quoted in Johnstone, 2023, p. 426). This collegial 'joining in' ran parallel to engaging in less benign, more philosophical, and critical conversations about the role and activities of the simulation centre, which I consider important societal questions (Hood, 2021, quoted in Johnstone, 2023, p. 427). This approach re-emphasises the resonance of my practice with the groundbreaking work of the Artists Placement Group (APG), bringing new critical perspectives on organisations and society by placing artists in non-arts contexts.

Furthermore, both *Eidolon* and my broader research practice can be understood through Johnstone's (2023) application of art theoretician Gerald Raunig's notion of instituent practices (2006). Johnstone asserts that such creative methodologies are 'not situated in opposition to medical institutions but working, exploring and challenging from within' (Johnstone, 2023, p. 427).

Central to the instituent practices operating within the *Eidolon* project is the concept of allyship provided by 'intermediary figures', a crucial factor in navigating privileged access as an artist to environments not normally accessible to the public (Johnstone, 2021, p. 4). Key allies included Babs McCool, Charitable Arts and Wellbeing Coordinator at Forth Valley Royal Hospital, who provided light-touch advocacy and creative support within the hospital in her role as an intermediary. Another vital supporter was Dr Alistair Geraghty, whose initial welcome opened up the doors for a first visit to the SCSC^{HF}. Most significantly, Dr Michael Money Penny, Consultant Anaesthetist and Director of the SCSC^{HF}, played an essential intermediary role. His extensive support and generosity over several years, granting access to the centre, offering ongoing guidance, and sharing contacts within the wider medical training community, were instrumental to *Eidolon*'s creation and its broad impact. Johnstone underscores that the (artistic) labour involved in nurturing these relationships was crucial to the development process and the project's success (Johnstone, 2021). The instituent practice approach, rooted in an initial observation period, enabled me to integrate into the simulation centre, building key relationships and foundational understandings critical for engaging with its staff, environment, and inner workings.

Devising with performers

Following the initial bedding-in period, my focus shifted to a research phase that explored the concept of psychological fidelity and the SCSC^{HF}'s three-stage training method as a potential infrastructure for performance, intertwining medical staff, audience, and professional actors/performers. Supported by successful funding from Creative Scotland in July 2013, my intention was to disrupt, divert, and appropriate the

algorithmic thinking of the medical training process through a focused emphasis on relational sensitivities and bodily materialities. Drawing on relational concepts of inquiry from contemporary art research (Bishop, 2012; Bourriaud, 2002; Rancière, 2004; White, 2013), the aim was to probe the simulation centre's activities in new, non-institutionalised ways. My approach both paid homage to and critically questioned the strictures and requirements of medical practice and institutional parameters, which often restrict our understandings of bodies to a pathologised and medicalised view. This expanded sociotechnical perspective resonates with art historian Nicolas Bourriaud's concept of relational aesthetics, a perceptive, experimental, critical, and participatory model where artistic praxis creates a rich ground for social experiments. Here, art becomes a 'state of encounter', a social interstice that diverges from the prescribed uniformity of behavioural patterns and intersubjective communication zones (Bourriaud, 2002).

The intention in *Eidolon* was to explore participatory performance techniques as a means to create critical sociotechnical encounters or interstices, which challenge and provoke our perceptions of the body, presence, and mediated psychological experiences. The aim was to develop an innovative, ambitious, and unique experience that opened up a window to a world of high-level medical technology and psychological complexity, not normally accessible to the general public, creating a dynamic, challenging, yet highly stimulating creative encounter.

My method for mobilising audience engagement and participation initially explored the experimental theatre techniques of Bertolt Brecht, the renowned theatre practitioner, playwright, and poet. I was particularly drawn to the participatory, fragmentary, and tonal constructs employed in Brecht's works, such as *The Street Scene: A Basic Model for Epic Theatre* (1938), *The Decision* (1930), and *Fear and Misery of the Third Reich* (1938). In these works, audiences are transformed into active individual participants, taking a stake in the work. For instance, in *The Street Scene* model, participants assume the roles of demonstrators, eyewitnesses, and bystanders, providing multiple viewpoints, interpretations, and accounts that serve as the basis for a form of theatre connecting art and real life. Rather than theatrical imitation, Brecht proposed that epic theatre techniques should be adopted with a 'natural attitude' to performance, enabling bystanders/audience members to actively form opinions and contribute content (Hood, 2013). This concept of attitude was highly influential in shaping the development of *Eidolon*, an approach that leaned towards realistic, natural behaviours in performers rather than imitated characteristics.

My initial step was to recruit performers to workshop Brecht's methods alongside medical professionals from the SCSC^{HF}. The resultant method of performative workshopping was then applied to the simulated medical training procedures: scrubbing up, robing, psychological preparation, medical procedures, and follow-on debriefing, to create new and distinct performance scenarios.

In this workshopping process, I employed devising as a key performance method, aligning with Brecht's collaborative actor-creator method. As described by

performance scholars Dee Heddon and Jane Milling in *Devising Performance – A Critical History* (2006), devising involves a set of strategies for 'creating performance from scratch, by the group, without a pre-existing script' (2006, p. 3). The focus is on devising as a collaborative improvisation process, where the performance evolves entirely from its making process, building upon Brecht's epic theatre approach. In the *Eidolon* project, I use devising as a collaborative model, which Heddon and Milling assert can create performance experiences with multiple perspectives that unsettle the possibility of one, authoritative, 'version' or interpretation of events. Here, devising serves as a means to 'reflect the complexities of contemporary experience and the variety of narratives that constantly intersect with, inform, and in very real ways, construct our lives' (Heddon and Milling, 2006, p. 192).

Here, I purposely set out to engage performer collaborators who had experience and skills in the devising process, as well as familiarity and ease in working in close proximity to audiences. It was crucial to recruit collaborators who were prepared to go on a journey of discovery in a non-typical performance setting. Where possible, experience in the medical or scientific sector was useful, along with interpersonal skills suited to working closely in a small team over extended periods. Additionally, an openness to and interest in pushing performance practice and embracing experimental approaches were essential. Thanks to the success of the Creative Scotland funding application, professional actors Pauline Goldsmith and Stanley Pattison were recruited to the project in June 2014. Both Pattison and Goldsmith brought significant relevant experience as actors skilled in the devising process, adept at working closely with audiences, and had previously worked within a range of healthcare settings.

The collaborative approach was established as an exploratory one, with me assuming the role of lead artist, working closely with Goldsmith, Pattison, and the SCSC^{HF} team. This approach aligns with strategies of 'directed reality', as framed by Bishop, authoring the work from a clear conceptual premise through a partially unpredictable realisation (2012, p. 33). In *Eidolon*, I aimed to establish a collaborative space with minimal hierarchy, creating a horizontal context that recognises, weaves in, and values each collaborator's contributions throughout the process. The overall steering of the work is purposefully yet openly led by me, adopting the role Bishop describes as 'directorial instigator' (2012, p. 37). This role involves taking overall responsibility for the creative, conceptual, and formal direction; dissemination strategy; organisational process; and financial aspects.

Positively squishy interdisciplinary approach

My creative methodological approach goes beyond what Casini observes as typical of interdisciplinary projects, where the arts and humanities merely exemplify the science or act as key mediators or outreach agents for scientific endeavours (2021, p.146). As Casini notes in her writing on my artwork *Immobile Choreography* (2019), scientists

initially found it disconcerting that I did not attempt to explain the biomedical physics they were working on. There is a common expectation within the sciences that the role of the arts in projects is merely as an instrumental 'add-on'. Such attitudes carry the risk of relegating the arts to the role of an illustrative 'resonance chamber' for a specific technology or scientific project (Casini, 2021, p. 148).

My interdisciplinary approach unsettles and rejects this expectation, broadly aligning with Johnstone's definition of the emergent 'critical medical humanities' framework (2023, pp. 427-428). This extends beyond a two-way collaborative model (of the artist in partnership with a clinician, etc) to establish a complex network among multiple, interdisciplinary collaborators that raises complex questions about contemporary attitudes towards the body, scientific knowledge, and practices (Johnstone, 2023, p. 424). Here, my collaborative and situated approach to interdisciplinary creative research is reflected through Johnstone's reading of my work, drawing on Raunig's assertion of the transversal quality of instituent practices and their potential for transformational effect that 'goes beyond the particular limitations of single fields' (2006).

In my interdisciplinary approach, aesthetics and metaphor, rather than science, play the central role in conveying concepts and experiences. As Casini notes, aesthetics, imagination, and make-believe are key features of creative potentiality, fostering a 'what if' scenario within the zone of dialogue and friction in art and science collaboration (2021). *Eidolon* toys with the underlying deceit upheld at the SCSC^{HF} that the manikin is a real person, employing Haraway's feminist strategies of interpretation, translation, and stuttering, focusing on contradictory, differential positionings, and the partly understood (Haraway, 1988, p. 589). My critical and creative approach to *Eidolon* subverts conventional medical simulation practices of mimicry, instead embracing and highlighting the uncanny and absurd 'otherness' of the manikin's synthetic, technological body. Through this process, *Eidolon* continues my careful and attentive examination of the inherent characteristics and implications of specific technologies across my practice.

Exemplifying this experimental and subversive approach, from Day 1 of working with the actors, we plunged into a playful yet insightful 'positively squishy' methodology, a term I borrow from Design Anthropologist Tim Ingold's critique of science's disdain for "soft" methodological approaches (2016). Ingold underscores the potential of the arts to find new ways of working within the scientific field, where 'qualitative field-based inquiries with living people or living organisms are increasingly regarded as naïve and amateurish' and life is often reduced to data analytics and results (2016, p. 216). My adoption and application of this approach involves paying close attention to the activities of the SCSC^{HF} and its scenarios, while consciously avoiding being limited by conventional perceptions about the 'correctness' of behaviour, processes, protocols, and procedures.

I have held the term 'positively squishy' close, as an affirmation to navigate many exploratory, uncertain paths. This approach is similarly guided by Kozel's earlier discussed phenomenological methodology, which interweaves live performance

practice, digital technology, and philosophy. Reworking philosopher Merleau Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (1945), Kozel suggests it is both possible and even desirable to modify and improvise our reflective processes in ways that allow for the emergence of the seemingly illogical, nonsensical, preposterous, and ambiguous (2008, p. 19). My approach to *Eidolon* revels in the absurd, the edges, the activities, and potentials that exist outwith or in-between the 'official'. A key driver of this methodological approach is Kozel's phenomenological emphasis on resonance rather than truth (Kozel, 2007, p. xvi). Such phenomenological practices allow for the inclusion of a variety of experiences, unbound by narrow notions and logics, and provide scope for many dimensions of knowledge spanning bodies, thought, imagination, memories, and affect (Kozel, 2007, p. 5).

My methodological approach to *Eidolon* has embraced these practices, guided by a responsive way of working that enters into interdisciplinary collaboration as a 'relation of *correspondence*' (Ingold, 2016, p.10). This dynamic, iterative, and exploratory process fosters encounters that, as Kozel asserts, not only extend our human senses but also deepen our exploration of social and intersubjective relationships with others and our technologies, serving as a means to create, experience, and share knowledge (2007, p. 16).

Entering into the 'not-knowing' together

Central to the exploratory nature of the *Eidolon* methodology is a deliberate cultivation and embrace of the state of 'not-knowing', as articulated by both Kozel (2007) and artistic researcher Emma Cocker (2013). This approach is exemplified in a project blog entry made during the early observation period of *Eidolon*, when I was becoming acquainted with the environment and activities of SCSC^{HF}:

In order to participate I was given the role of Surgeon's Assistant. When I first stepped into the simulated theatre in my scrubs and put on my robe, mask, gloves and hat, I was somewhat nervous and daunted by the fact I had no idea what to do and it did cross my mind just how nervous I would have been if it was a real patient on the bed, not just Standard Man (Stan for short), the high definition mannequin (Hood, 2013).

This 'not-knowing', as Cocker asserts, requires confidence that the right decision will be made when needed, trust in intuitive responses, and the ability to navigate situations that may remain indeterminate, newly encountered, or ever-emerging (2013). Kozel takes the 'not-knowing' further, extending it into a state of 'forgetting'. She proposes this approach as a means to access the pre-reflective, which suspends and sets aside expectations of intellectual and cultural bias 'to reach new states of experience and meaning' (Kozel, p. 20). Drawing upon philosopher Gaston Bachelard's notion of creation as an exercise in freedom (1964), Kozel upholds methods that are

fluid and subjective (Kozel, 2007). She posits that creative methods oscillate between remembering and forgetting, existing not as mutually exclusive states, but rather operating as patches in the far-from-homogeneous fabric of knowledge (Kozel, 2007, p.20).

Building upon these philosophical underpinnings, this 'not-knowing' approach was directly applied in my collaborative work with the performers. For instance, I deliberately provided minimal preparation for the actors before introducing them to the SCSC^{HF} training environment. Upon arrival, Goldsmith and Pattison were dressed in scrubs and directed into a medical simulation exercise as Anaesthetic Assistants. They were tasked with performing tracheal intubation under the supervision of Moneypenny, a task at which Pattison excelled unexpectedly. This deep-dive, immersive initiation allowed them to directly experience the SCSC^{HF}, providing me with valuable insights into how they responded, engaged with, and adapted to the completely unknown simulation environment.



Figure 12: *Eidolon* devising workshop with actor Stanley Pattison (2015) Photography by Beverley Hood

We then undertook a series of devising workshops to creatively explore the concept of psychological fidelity, focusing on the relational and physical potential between the actors and the manikins (see Figure 12). As Heddon and Milling note, in devising, the 'social context is as much a catalyst as aesthetic concerns or questions' (2006, p.93). These workshops included context-specific performative exercises that expanded

upon Brecht's notion of the 'natural attitude', incorporating new ideas about ways for the manikins to be voiced by the actors. Specifically, we experimented with the manikins speaking as themselves, as self-aware synthetic bodies, rather than adhering to the standard conceit of being patients. A significant advantage of using a performative methodological approach is that research methods like devising offer rapid ways to test initial ideas, enabling quick evaluation of traction and potential for further development. Heddon and Milling describe these as moments as 'intuitive recognition in a group' (2006, p.10); my more colloquial description is a feeling for whether an idea 'has legs'. This approach stands in stark contrast to my projects developed using digital technologies, which typically require long, slow, often sedentary periods, extending over weeks, months, or even years to make progress, establish, and evolve.

Eidolon's experimental beginnings were recorded using the smots™ CCTV-style audio-visual system, installed throughout SCSC^{HF}, as shown in Figure 13 (Hood, 2016). This system, integral to its day-to-day activities, captures video, audio, and vital sign readings from any medical procedure or simulation (smots™, no date). The ability to play, pause, rewind, and analyse this footage enriches discussion and debrief sessions with trainees, significantly enhancing the fidelity of the training experience.



Figure 13: *Eidolon* performance sharing, smots™ interface (Hood, 2016)

This method of documentation became a vital part of the devising process, enabling us to record, playback, and closely analyse the in-progress performance material. The footage was transcribed, discussed, re-spoken, and edited, evolving through a many-versioned script developed iteratively over many months and years, with fragments tracing back to the beginning of the devising process.

For instance, transcribed dialogue from one early devising workshop scenario was developed into a vignette, included in all the final iterations of the performance. Goldsmith, voicing the manikin, melancholically laments life as a generic, technological body, while Pattison, in the role of an attendant medic, tells her not to sigh too much or she'll 'wear out her motor'. She asks him to make her 'feel alive,' prompting his playful improvised response, 'What would make you feel alive? I know, oxygen, let me give you some oxygen!' (Hood, 2014). We experimented with various materials and equipment around us, such as an oxygen mask and a light pen, to check the pupils of the eyes. As Pattison peers into the manikin's responsive eyes, Goldsmith playfully teases, 'I can see you. Peek-a-boo!', to which he replies, 'Stop it, that's creepy'. 'What do you do when I'm not here?' he asks, to which she replies, 'I don't exist'. The devising process unearthed key existential concepts about the manikin that resonated deeply with my overarching research, aimed at a creative reinterpretation and reimagination of its material affects and implications.

A naturalistic speech style was cultivated within the script text through a meticulously detailed verbatim speech transcription, crafting text with a vernacular, Brechtian quality that echoed its naturally spoken origins. This script was continuously tweaked, edited, and adapted through re-workshopping, reinforcing its naturalistic, vernacular character. This approach was key in establishing the tonal quality of the *Eidolon* performance, creating a performative ambiguity that often left audiences unsure whether what they experienced was scripted, off-the-cuff, intended, or accidental, even though the performance was entirely scripted.

The devising process was key in generating this vernacular quality. *Eidolon* exemplifies the potential of the devising technique, as described by Heddon and Milling, which lends itself to creating work that blurs the lines between rehearsal, scripted scenes, improvised moments, and re-enactments, making it difficult to distinguish fact from fiction, acting from not-acting (2006, p. 209). This nuanced tonal texture, challenging to achieve with conventional writing methods, continues to be a characteristic in my subsequent projects, including *It's all about the feelings...* (Hood, 2021-2023), a digital performance exploring AI and emotion developed in collaboration with actor Goldsmith.

These reimagined relational encounters between human and technological bodies are unsettling and messy. They present uncomfortably human fissures within the algorithmic thinking and behavioural protocols of typical clinical simulation. The manikin oscillates between a rehumanised self-aware consciousness and a docile plastic caricature, with the medic performing a new fantasy of absurd lucid dreaming, adjacent to the established simulation conceit of 'patient'. Here, the devising process functioned as 'an elaboration of the phenomenological experience' (Casini, 2021, p.

150), bringing a purposefully embodied, intimate, and humanising approach to the everyday lived experiences of the simulation centre, rather than focusing on its technical aspects. This strategy builds upon Kozel's phenomenological method, which respects sensations and inner voices, allowing unformed ideas, thoughts, or images to emerge directly from the experience of being within systems, thereby integrating the intellect with sensory experience (2007). This approach fosters a robust anchoring of concepts in tangible reality, enabling a partnership between thought and action (Kozel, 2007).

We utilised this intimate, sensory, and relational devising process to occupy the different spaces of the SCSC^{HF}, including the pseudo-clinical spaces and control rooms hidden behind two-way mirrors. The control rooms, typically staffed by technicians and medics running the simulated scenarios behind the scenes and equipped with computers, software, and microphones, became spaces both to observe and to reimagine (Figure 14). Along the corridor, we inserted ourselves into classrooms fitted with large screens, which are fed the smots™ audio-visual system.



Figure 13: *Eidolon* workshop using SCSC^{HF} control room (2015) Photography by Lindsay Perth

As part of the collaborative devising process, we engaged in playful experimentation through workshopping exercises involving the manikins and their associated physical parts and props. Performance exercises included the somewhat crude gender-switching with Velcro-attached genitals and wigs, as well as examining the range of physical responses, such as watery pumped tears and the beat of radial (wrist) and pedal (foot) pulses.

We also undertook performance exercises that introduced pre-existing poetic texts resonating with the themes of *Eidolon*, particularly those dealing with imaginings of uncertain and unsettling embodied materialities. A focal text was French writer Charles Baudelaire's poem 'Le Revenants', from his infamous book 'Les Fleur du mal' (1857), which tells the tale of a visitation from a ghostly, menacing, and physically nebulous being. For the *Eidolon* performance and accompanying monograph, we used several English translations of Baudelaire's original poem to enhance the ethereal, unfixed, interpretive nature of its subject (Figure 15).

The experimental devising process was used to deconstruct nuanced meanings of the poem across different translations, and to probe its reverberations with the manikin and the SCSC^{HF} setting. This settled into a form of performative reading between actors Goldsmith and Pattison, featuring a conversational relay that moved across and between different translations. This was staged as a pseudo-diagnostic consultation between medics, closely observed by the attending audience. Here, rather than discussing medical information, the 'consultation' focused on comparing and negotiating the nuances of the poetic translations, bringing a feminist differential critique (Haraway, 1988) to the ambiguous nature of interpretation, both creative and medical.

During the extended exploratory and experimental development period of *Eidolon* (2013-2018), the final form of the work remained largely ambiguous, open-ended, and emergent. Barrett asserts that innovation is derived from methods that cannot always be pre-determined, and 'outcomes of artistic research are *necessarily* unpredictable.' (2007, p. 3). *Eidolon* resonates with Borgdorff's description of the 'erratic nature of creative discovery', which includes unsystematic drifting, serendipity, chance inspirations, and clues as integral components, without the need for justification (2010, p. 57). This unpredictability and uncertainty, guided by deeply honed intuitional skills, is an approach I have embraced, though it is often an admittedly nerve-wracking process. Cocker acknowledges such approaches as both legitimate tactics within the arts and also potentially paralysing, requiring 'a degree of skillfulness and tenacity, a capacity to operate counter to expectation' (2013, p. 127).

In *Eidolon*, the unpredictable and exploratory nature of the development process was channelled into the creation of a series of short vignettes or scenes, which formed an interconnected yet loose and evolving performance structure. This approach enabled progress with specific ideas and materials without becoming stuck in concerns about how the overall performance held together. The devising process was used tactically as a creative method that lends itself to a layered, fragmented, and non-linear structure (Heddon and Milling, 2006, p. 192). This approach also follows Cocker's assertion that '[r]ather than waiting for the auspicious moment of not knowing to arrive, within certain practices it is possible to witness the use of tactical approaches or methods that seek to *produce* the conditions of uncertainty, disorientation or indeterminacy' (2013, p. 127). *Eidolon* builds upon Heddon and Milling's concept of postmodern performance, purposefully designed to 'awaken spectators to the implication in meaning-making precisely by being fragmented and nonclosure

The Revenant

Like angels with bright savage eyes
I will come treading phantom-wise
Hither where thou art wont to sleep,
Amid the shadows hollow and deep.

And I will give thee, my dark one,
Kisses as icy as the moon,
Caresses as of snakes that crawl
In circles round a cistern's wall.

When morning shows its livid face
There will be no-one in my place,
And a strange cold will settle here

Others, not knowing what thou art,
May think to reign upon thy heart
With tenderness; I trust to fear.

— *George Dillon (1936)*

The Ghost

Like angels with wild beast's eyes
I shall return to your bedroom
And silently glide toward you
With the shadows of the night;

And, dark beauty, I shall give you
Kisses cold as the moon
And the caresses of a snake
That crawls around a grave.

When the livid morning comes,
You'll find my place empty,
And it will be cold there till night.

I wish to hold sway over
Your life and youth by fear,
As others do by tenderness.

— *William Aggeler (1954)*

Figure 14: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon Monograph*, English translations of 'Les Revenant' by Charles Baudelaire. Design by Marco Scerri.

orientated' (2006, p. 205). Here, there is the potential to explore, open up, and create new ways of knowing, meaning-making, and experiencing through distinct approaches that appropriate, rework, or redeploy source material and situations. In the case of *Eidolon*, this results in the 'shaking loose of familiar meaning and inhabited meaning-making strategies' within the medical simulation environment (Heddon and Milling, 2006, p. 206).

Sharings and splitting

Drawn from performance research methods, particularly the devising process, 'sharings' or 'showings' of the *Eidolon* project-in-progress were a vital part of the iterative research methodology. These events present a work-in-progress as a performance for a select audience, typically a small gathering of professional and personal contacts from relevant fields. In *Eidolon*, the sharing purpose was to test out performance material, both practically and conceptually, gather feedback on the work to date and gain insights for future project development. The sharing events typically include discussions, such as a Q&A session, following the performance. My approach to work-in-progress sharing also draws from Brecht's experimental theatre techniques, particularly his *Lehrstücke*, or learning-plays (Hughes, 2011), which often involved audience participation and even questionnaires, leading to subsequent revisions and rewrites of the plays based on audience feedback.

The first *Eidolon* sharing, in December 2014, was presented to a small cohort of around 15 invited artists, performers, curators, academics, and medics. It included short extracts of the work-in-progress performed by actors Goldsmith and Pattison, alongside SCSC^{HF} staff members, followed by a Q&A discussion, as documented in Figure 16 (Hood, 2014). The event utilised the smots™ audio-visual system for both recording and playback during the Q&A session, and at times within the performance, as a mechanism for the audience to experience aspects of the performance as mediated material. The overall event lasted approximately 2.5 hours.

The process of assembling the non-linear, fragmented vignettes for testing within the sharing led to the beginnings of a multi-path and multiple-experience performance structure, which became an important characteristic of the work's final form. This structure involved splitting the audience into two small groups, who experienced different aspects of the performance in parallel. The groups were guided around the various spaces of the SCSC^{HF}, employing an experimental performance approach described variously as interactive, immersive, or promenade (White, 2013). My approach to *Eidolon* builds upon experimental theatre techniques employed by UK theatre companies such as London-based Punchdrunk (no date) and Edinburgh-based Grid Iron Theatre Company (no date), which have repurposed spaces, including disused industrial buildings, playparks, and airports, into settings for large-scale immersive theatre.



Figure 15: Hood, B. (2014) *Eidolon performance sharing Q&A session*. Photography by Lindsay Perth.

Eidolon critically embraces and expands upon these experimental theatre practices, adopting an approach aligned with Haraway's previously mentioned notion of 'splitting' to create a multi-pathed performance structure. Here, I deliberately choreographed an ambiguous audience experience that fosters what Haraway describes as 'heterogenous multiplicities' of experience, which are 'incapable of being squashed and standardised (1988, p. 586).

The multi-pathed performance structure, as documented in Figure 17 (Hood, 2016), steered the audience from the hospital entrance through the different spaces of the simulation centre, from classrooms to the simulated operating theatre, hospital ward, and control room. Audience members were required to wear hospital scrubs and perform surgical 'scrubbing up' rituals for the medical operating theatre scenarios, which the audience noted as a key aspect of the experience, establishing a seriousness and realism within the setting. The use of precisely orchestrated performative routines and procedures fostered a heightened psychological and embodied experience, as described by White in the *Eidolon* monograph:

I experience a queasy anticipation brought on by the hospital setting, the unfamiliar things to come. We are given lanyards, of course we are, before being brought upstairs to the simulation centre along bland corridors that wipe themselves from my memory even as they scroll by (White, 2016, p. 25).

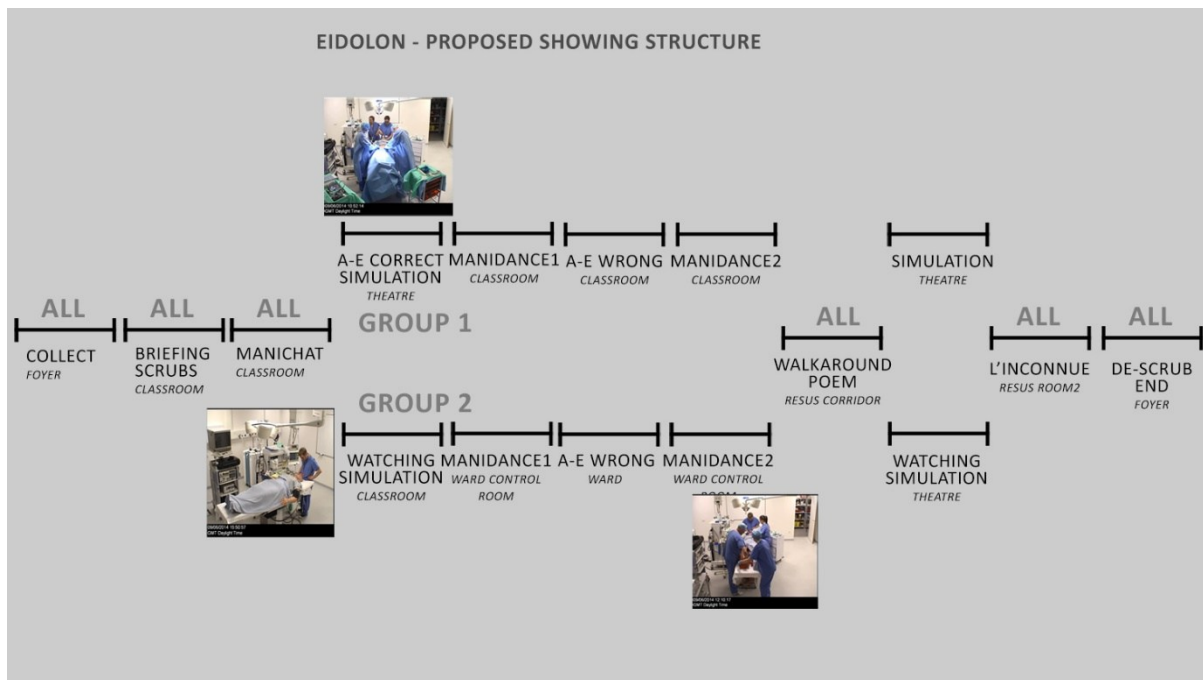


Figure 16: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon performance plan*.

Immersive, participatory performance techniques were tested out with audiences through the in-progress sharing process, with feedback discussed, reflected upon, and integrated into the ongoing project development. Sometimes, the audience was positioned as passive observers, either in situ within simulations with performers and SCSC^{HF} staff, or watching at a mediated distance through the smots™ CCTV-style audio-visual playback. At other times, the audience actively participated in simulations. They were handed surgical equipment and assigned specific medical roles with active responsibilities, such as Floor Nurse, Surgical Assistant, and Anaesthetic Assistant, working alongside professional medics within the simulated scenarios (Figure 18). Audience evaluation feedback noted the enjoyment of being an active participant, given responsibility and the privilege of experiencing scenarios that looked very real.

The devising workshops served as a method to discover alternative performative routes that deliberately disrupted, altered, and reimagined the existing procedures of the simulation environment. This approach fostered the development of performative vignettes that explored atypical events, settings, and situations. These vignettes were interwoven into the work-in-progress sharings; one moment, the audience might be participating in a simulated operation, and the next, they could be in a classroom, eavesdropping on a seemingly private encounter between a medic and manikin in the adjacent operating theatre, live-streamed on-screen via the smots™ audio-visual system. Or, they might be tucked away in a control room behind a two-way mirror, snooping on a performer engaging in a covert rebuilding, both tender and terse, of a disassembled manikin. These atypical vignettes set up experiences where the audience was privy to seemingly clandestine relationships and conversations between medics and seemingly conscious manikins. A key characteristic was a pervading uncertainty, creating a sense of unease and discomfort, often leaving the audience

unsure whether to act as observers or participants, whether to sit back or 'act' in a role.



Figure 17: Hood, B. (2015) *Eidolon performance sharing*. Photography by Lindsay Perth.

During the sharing's Q&A session, discussions revealed that the audience's perception of the manikin oscillated, shifting back and forth from subject to object as the performance unfolded. Audience members described the manikin's existential ponderings as ranging from depressed and mournful to plaintive moaning, with playful mentions that it could always be switched off. There was uncertainty about whether the vignettes streamed via the smots™ audio-visual system were live or pre-recorded; they were live. The Q&A session also discussed the heightened intensity of the simulation setting; the calming reassurance felt during the simulation scenarios, even as the situation escalated into serious emergencies; the delineation of roles within the medical theatre; the potential for other camera views, such as close-ups; and the mixed emotions of responsibility and terror associated with making mistakes, a concern in all types of theatre. The audience discussed their suspension of disbelief, seeing the manikin not just as a dummy made of plastic, rubber, and mechanics, but as an actual person. This provoked thoughts about the materiality and dignity of the body, whether living, deceased, or humanlike. Audience evaluation questionnaires noted specific enjoyment of the contrast of medical science with art, theatre, and poetry, and the tension/suspense that the performance created. The feedback from the initial sharing was subsequently collated and reviewed to evaluate the sharing's success on both a practical and conceptual level. The conceptual themes that the

audience raised largely aligned with the aims of the research, and the theatrical enactment generally worked in a pragmatic sense, in timings, technology, and moving the audience around this non-typical performance space. Key aspects that arose out of this reflective process included the heightened sensitivity of the medical environment, an imperative not to sensationalise the experience and the need to support audience members who might be overwhelmed.

Moving into experimental movement

The feedback from the initial sharing provided the rationale and next steps for the subsequent iteration of *Eidolon*, which involved developing two specific performance vignettes, funded by a University of Edinburgh Knowledge Exchange Award. The first of these, titled 'ManiChat', extended the early experimentation undertaken with Goldsmith and Pattison, voicing the existential ponderings of the manikin in conversation with an attendant medic.

Development of the second vignette, titled 'ManiDance' began in early 2015, featuring dancer Freya Jeffs. Jeffs was recruited to expand the small collaborative team, with the intention of adopting a relational and embodied research approach to develop experimental, movement-based performance material using the manikins and simulation centre environment. Jeffs and I established a collaborative method of working that has continued into subsequent projects, such as *Immobile Choreography* (2019). Specifically, we adopted an experimental movement approach, borrowing from but not strictly adhering to the protocols of conventional dance practice. This process entailed eliciting, collecting, and reviewing Jeffs' responses to ideas and movement prompts, a method that mirrored my previous approach with dancers in the *Glitching* project (2012). In *Eidolon*, we then stripped away formal 'dance-style' characteristics, natural to such a highly trained practitioner as Jeffs, simplifying them into more everyday, colloquial movement gestures.

This approach enabled the resulting choreographed material for *Eidolon* to maintain a characteristic that remained closely aligned with the everyday 'Brechtian', naturalistic, and vernacular texture of the overall performance. Moreover, this more naturalistic movement characteristic added a surreal, otherworldly, and unsettling feel to the performance choreography. It offered an ambiguous viewing experience for audiences, fostering an uncertainty that troubled the audience's ability to quickly settle into a passive understanding of the movement as conventional dance choreography. The resulting vernacular-style movement resonated with experimental practices of choreographers such as the highly influential German dancer and choreographer Pina Bausch, whose work also draws parallels with modernist and postdramatic theatre practices (Weir, 2019). While *Eidolon* draws from established experimental dance practices, it is distinctly crafted within the context of contemporary performance art and is uniquely situated in the environment of the SCSC^{HF}. Here, the choreography is

purposely stripped of traditional performing arts staging and distilled into simplified colloquial movements.

To explore this experimental performance method, the collaborative development process involved a series of experimental devising movement workshops with Jeffs at SCSC^{HF}, as documented in Figure 19 (Hood, 2015). Aimed at teasing out ways to explore and reimagine the relational materialities across the dancer's and manikin's bodies, this initially focused on ways for Jeffs to physically engage and interact directly with the manikins. Although Jeffs is physically strong, as is typical of professional dancers, the full-body manikins proved extremely cumbersome. Serendipitously, my ongoing observations at SCSC^{HF} led to the discovery of the oldest manikin in the simulation centre, a partly dismantled 'SimMan' model, hollowed out of its operational mechanics and stored in two large, purpose-built suitcases in a storage cupboard. This manikin, used only in parts or roughly screwed back together at offsite locations when a lighter, more portable manikin was needed without internal operational mechanics, served an unexpectedly useful purpose.



Figure 18: Hood, B. (2015) *Eidolon movement workshop with Freya Jeffs*. Photography by Lindsay Perth

Workshopping with Jeffs led to the development of a 20-minute movement-based vignette that rematerialises the embodied relationship between the manikin and dancer, cast as an ambiguous attendant medic. In the sequence, Jeffs activates the parts of the dismantled manikin, limbs, torso, etc., as a fragmented dance partner, transgressing the boundaries of appropriate medical behaviour. She teeters between delusional fantasy and pragmatic awareness of whether her partner is 'real' as she

alternates between attending to them with intimate tenderness and care, and abrupt, crude rejection, while rebuilding, reconfiguring, and dismantling them (Hood, 2015). In this way, this performance material connects back to themes from my early work, employing a feminist approach to explore personal, social, and cultural constructs in relation to technological intimacy.

The vignette was first presented as a sharing for the staff of SCSC^{HF} in March 2015, with their feedback incorporated into its future development and iterations. The resulting material evolved into the 'ManiDance' vignette, a key element of the *Eidolon* performance and subsequent artist film installation. The latter was produced as a short film created using footage from the smots™ audio-visual system, and became one of two films featured in the installation version of the *Eidolon* project.

Bringing shape to uncertainty

Alongside undertaking the development outlined above, I successfully applied for and was awarded a Small Arts Award from the private scientific research foundation, the Wellcome Trust, to undertake full project production. The funding was significant to the development of *Eidolon* in two ways. Firstly, it placed the project within the context of a funding scheme that is credited with developing sciart as a distinctive category of collaborative practice and situated the research alongside other creative practitioners' work funded by the foundation. *Eidolon* adds to and extends this roster of work in new ways through its conjunction of feminist, embodied, relational, and performative approaches to science and technology. Wellcome's Arts Awards, ran from 2007 to 2016 and succeeded the original Wellcome Trust Sciart scheme. These funds are collectively acknowledged to have nurtured the development of a 'new form of interdisciplinary work with clear links to other emergent models of art practice, including socially engaged art and a growing emphasis on academic research within the visual arts' (Johnstone, 2023, p. 425).

Secondly, the Wellcome Trust funding practically enabled the continued development and expansion of the *Eidolon* project's ambition. The next steps towards this involved spending the summer and autumn of 2015 in the simulation centre, reworking and reorganising the existing performance material; 'taking apart what we've already done and putting it together in a totally different order' (Hood, 2015). A crucial move at this stage of the research development was bringing theatre and film director Jeremy Weller into the team as project dramaturg. This was a key step in both advancing the research methodology's relational characteristics and fine-tuning the overall shape and structure of the performance. Engaging more directly with theatrical methods of structure and experimental narrative was crucial in bringing together what were then separate vignettes, or scenes of performative material, which were formally connected but lacked clear links or bridges between tone, texture, and content. Weller, with his background in socially engaged theatre practice and significant experience working with a mix of actors and non-actors to create performances that challenge

socially prescribed roles, often within the contexts of health, social, and judicial systems (Weller, no date), brought an unconventional skillset that aligned well with my performative research approach. His dramaturgical role in *Eidolon* proved invaluable, not only creating an interconnected whole from multiple fragmented vignettes to build a navigable non-linear structure, but also in developing an emotional flow attuned to the aim of cultivating distinct performative relationalities.

This process began with the collaborative team reviewing the already existing recordings of in-progress sharings and audience feedback sessions, both captured through the smots™ audio-visual system. This method involved a detailed watching, re-watching, and analysing the documentation through note-taking and discussion to assess its current successes, limitations, and potential. Weller was tasked specifically with focusing on structure and tone. The resulting reflections were subsequently fed back into the evolving, in-progress production, with Weller and I working iteratively in a resumed devising process together with the performers to tweak, adapt, and shape the work. Weller's input was key in bringing overall shape to the performance, asking difficult questions, and prodding, pushing us collectively to bring more focus through iterative discussion and performance revision. He also urged us to think specifically about the audience's experience, teasing out participatory performance methods that White describes as inviting spectators to participate in ways that are differently active (2013, p. 2).

Crucial to this refined, collaborative research development process was the excavation and cultivation of a deeper relational, intimate, and emotional tone. This approach was intended to experientially convey the overall research aims of reimagining embodied relationalities and materialities based on lived experiences within the simulation centre. A critical review of the existing material's formal, conceptual, and relational characteristics allowed us to develop subsequent adaptations that mined and played with the relationships and tensions between the performer roles, the manikins, and within the script text. This was undertaken as a practice-based exploration of what Kozel describes as 'notions of intersubjectivity ... through performative experiments' (2007, p. xix), serving as a catalyst for understanding how human beings encounter themselves and others through technology. Within *Eidolon*, relational considerations explored included which characters were more functional or dysfunctional, connected, restrained, or 'emotional': the manikins or the humans? Abrasive edges and heightened moments of tension and connection within the performance were identified, observed, highlighted, and purposely embraced as a means of crafting a performance texture of slightly raw relational emotionality. Here, the devising process was used to refine, redevelop, and heighten the performance materials, as well as to develop short interlocutor materials that bridged between, and sometimes interrupted, the existing vignettes.

Throughout the development of *Eidolon*, a Brechtian texture of 'real life' was purposefully maintained by continuing to use audio-visual recorded devising and a verbatim transcription script-writing process. This approach helped build a performance characteristic that felt intimate, akin to something between a rehearsal

and a finished work, where the spoken text appears not perfectly set and slightly askew, though, as previously mentioned, it is intricately scripted. We explored the idea of 'abrasive edges', which included adding new materials that occasionally punctured the performance flow, sometimes between separate vignettes and sometimes within narratives, to challenge potential audience complacency. For example, vignettes were abruptly interrupted by performers entering each other's scenes, questioning activities, chastising one another for misusing the manikins or equipment, and generally catching each other 'off guard'. This approach plays upon what Barrett describes as 'the subjective and personally situated aspect of artistic research ... its capacity to reinvent social relations' (2007, p. 7). Scripted questions such as 'What were you doing? Were you talking to that thing?' served as antagonistic ruptures in the conceits and suspension of disbelief that theatricality typically sucks an audience into. These interruptions were crucial for unsettling the audience, illuminating any complacency that may have arisen in their viewing experience, and redirecting attention towards the overlaps and tensions within human/human-like and real/not-real simulated scenarios. By breaching the suspension of disbelief, these disconcerting interruptions prodded the audience to reconsider the materialisation of the bodies and relationality before them. *Eidolon* operated in a kind of paradox; within this very clearly simulated environment, the audience was kept in a disconcertingly and somewhat absurdly 'real' and active experience. However, there was no illusion of emancipatory participation, echoing Bishop's critique of both Rancière and Bourriard's relational concepts that equate social participation to social inclusion (2008). In the *Eidolon* performance, the audience remains within a set hierarchical medical structure, and there is no illusion that this is somehow revoked. They are placed in support roles throughout, unsure and guided, not suddenly endowed with fanciful skills, increased power, or control. The audience participates within what media and technology studies researcher Alasdair Milne describes as a 'scaffold', a set of predetermined parameters that confine their engagement to the 'front end' of the performance (Milne, 2025, p. 111).

This approach resonates with the socially and technologically engaged performance research conducted by dancer and choreographer Farah Saleh, as detailed in her doctoral research study, *The Archive of Gestures* (2023). Although centred on the entirely different subject matter of Palestinian refugee experiences, parallels exist in the methods of audience participation in both bodies of research, which involve preparing, welcoming, and introducing the audience to an 'other' adjacent world. The logic of this other world in *Eidolon* is an invented logic of activities, derived, replicated, and adapted from the simulated procedures of the simulation centre. Saleh, on the other hand, derives her performative logic structure from actual refugee processing procedures. In *Eidolon*, the audience is greeted, introduced to the simulation centre, settled into its training spaces, and provided with scrubs, instructions, and assigned roles. These steps are undertaken through a method of informally but assertively guiding the audience, underscored by Saleh's interpretation of theatre theorist Max Herrmann's concept of 'social play' (Saleh, 2023, p. 47). The performative experience of social play flips the typically austere viewing experience of a visitor entering a

gallery space or a passive audience member disappearing into the dark of a traditional theatre, into an active, participatory experience.

Throughout the *Eidolon* performance, there is a constant undercurrent and tension between the performers, who appear to relate better with the manikins than with each other. Their encounters with the synthetic, technological bodies involve more tenderness and care than their person-to-person interactions. In *Eidolon*, I employ performative strategies to create an intersubjective space that upends the priorities, emphasis, and purpose of the previously dominant social space, namely, the training conventions of the medical simulation centre. This shift moves the focus from making medical processes more efficient and harmonious to an experiential consideration of bodies, both human and human-like, as material and relational, without any intent to 'fix' these conditions. I have purposefully followed White's suggestion that performative intersubjective settings set aside any aspiration of creating 'the harmoniously social' (2013, p. 19), and instead embraced a performative research method that resonates deeply with Bishop's 'relational antagonism' (2004, p. 79). This approach sensitively and playfully allows for both clashing and convivial spheres (White, 2013, p. 19), exploring potential ways to reshape and intensify how we think about and reimagine the impact of science and technology on our encounters with ourselves and each other. *Eidolon* attempts to squeeze into the 'gaps in ... surfaces and depths, and perhaps, on occasion, allow us to perceive ourselves anew' (White, 2013, p. 206).

In summary, *Eidolon* involved a process of collaborative making that employed an emergent, instituent, and relational methodological approach. It utilised performance research techniques, including devising and sharings, as a key method of engaging audiences as participants. The following section will outline the research dissemination strategy and provide further details on the project's resulting iterations.

DISSEMINATION

Going public with a multimodal distributed artwork

The following section details the distributed dissemination strategy for *Eidolon* undertaken from 2016 to 2018. Here, I co-opt the term 'distributed' from the established phrase in media arts practice, 'distributed authorship', coined by pioneering British artist and researcher Roy Ascott (2005). Ascott's concept, rooted in his work in telematics, explored digital networks as dispersed, interpersonal media capable of transcending conventional barriers of space and time, and positioned the artist in a participatory role as part of systemic processes. In *Eidolon*, I adapted aspects of Ascott's notion of the distributed as dispersive, interacting nodes, and as branching and converging pathways (2005, p. 283) as a conceptual framework to develop a multimodal dissemination strategy. This approach was realised through performance, artist film installation, and Virtual Reality (VR) film presented to a wide range of audiences. These presentations were augmented by a fully illustrated monograph titled *Eidolon* (Hood, 2016), with written contributions from myself, Dr Michael Money Penny, Nicola White, and Professor Dame Marina Warner, a peer-reviewed solo-authored journal article *Eidolon: The Technological Body* (Hood, 2016), and several public talks about the project. The following will summarise how the research was disseminated as a multimodal, distributed artwork, enacted through these multiple instances or parts.

Performance

The public dissemination of the *Eidolon* performance was undertaken through a collaborative ecosystem operating across multiple sites in Scotland. This strategy extended my ongoing practice of presenting artwork within non-arts venues. In 2016, iterations of the final performance were invited to be presented as part of the World Congress on Biomedical Ethics (IAB 2016) in Edinburgh (June 2016) and at the Edinburgh Art Festival (August 2016).

Practically, both of these opportunities required relocating the performance from Larbert to Edinburgh; a move achieved through the support of the collaborative project ecosystem. Crucially, introductions by SCSC^{HF} staff member Money Penny to Dr Nathan Oliver, Clinical Simulation Manager at the Clinical Skills and Assessment Centre (CSAC), at the Western General Hospital, Edinburgh, facilitated a new collaborative relationship with the simulation team there. Relocating to the Edinburgh site enabled the research to be disseminated through these international cultural and academic programmes, engaging a wide, interdisciplinary audience.



Figure 19: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon performance*, The World Congress on Biomedical Ethics, Edinburgh. Photography by Alicia Bruce.

The IAB 2016 provided a platform to perform for a diverse audience of mainly medical and healthcare professionals (Figure 20). The performance material was distilled into a 20-minute extract, determined through discussions with the organising committee to be the ideal duration to fit the conference's schedule. To ensure an intimate setting that would preserve the relational, embodied, and close-up experience of the performance, groups of no more than 25 delegates were transported from the main conference site, the Edinburgh International Conference Centre, to the CSAC at the Western General Hospital. The personal experiences shared by attendees underscore the performance's distinct impact within the programmed events:

For me it was a very impressive and moving performance, and, in fact, the most memorable moment of the whole conference (Louhiala, 2016).

The change in venue necessitated relocating my situated and instituent practice approach to the new CSAC setting and a return to previously established devising techniques to adapt the performance. This facility was equipped with a larger suite of simulated hospital wards, both shared and private, one control room, and a series of classrooms. Although technically a 'high-tech' facility, CSAC had a more limited integration of the smots™ audio-visual system compared to SCSC^{HF}, and it lacked access to the high-definition manikins, both of which had featured extensively in our performance material development. The smaller staff team at CSAC had less capacity

and experience for involvement in the project, and Oliver was primarily the 'intermediary figure' linchpin. Although access to the space was generously provided and supported, the staff were not integrated into the performance directly.

The revision process involved workshopping with performance collaborators in situ at the CSAC to determine which vignettes were suitable for this new setting, adapting the performance material accordingly, and exploring the new potentials of this environment to extend the work. This juncture also involved the recruitment of actor Huld Märtha Hølvold, who was brought into the cast due to illness within the team. As previously outlined, the *Eidolon* methodology embeds and activates 'emergence' in its development, forms, and outcomes. The work emerges through a process of iterative re-making; the pieces and parts of the work, including the vignettes and performers themselves, are swapped, changed, and shuffled, requiring collaborators to be agile and adapt to new configurations and settings.

The CSAC setting, located within a disused ward in an older wing of the hospital, operates as a high-tech training facility but has somewhat of an abandoned feel. The Western General Hospital itself has evolved in an almost organic or parasitic, haphazard manner over decades, resulting in a chaotic and disordered appearance. This is in stark contrast to modern hospital designs that aim to segregate the messier and more personal aspects of patient care from public areas. At the Western General, the juxtaposition of patients on hospital beds being wheeled through public corridors with cutting-edge facilities, such as world-leading neurology services, housed in dilapidated buildings, underscores the peculiarity of the setting. This disconcerting feel of state-of-the-art gone to disrepair uniquely amplified the disconcerting quality of the overall *Eidolon* project, described by Marina Warner as 'most fascinating and eerily seductive' (Warner, 2016).

The *Eidolon* performance was presented at the Edinburgh Art Festival (EAF) in August 2016, as part of the festival's partner programme of events at Edinburgh College of Art (ECA). Held again at the CSAC, the EAF performance took place on 20 and 21 August 2016 (Figure 21). These performances were adapted to a one-hour experience, a duration determined through discussions with ECA, EAF, and CSAC staff. This adaptation required further revisions through devising in situ at the Western General Hospital. As before, the performances were designed as a deliberately intimate experience for a small-scale audience, this time limiting attendance to a maximum of 15 people to foster deeper embodied and relational engagement, compared to the shorter, slightly larger audience experience at IAB 2016. The performances were repeated three times each day, totalling six performances.



Figure 20: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon performance*, Edinburgh Art Festival. Photography by Alicia Bruce

Both the IAB 2016 and EAF performances presented edited versions of the full performance material. Selected vignettes were re-workshopped to craft a coherent, yet non-linear extract that retained the overall project ethos within the emotional tone, form, and concept. The full surgical simulations originally devised within SCSC^{HF} were not feasible to undertake at the CSAC due to the more limited scope of the simulation equipment available. However, both sets of performances still included interactive, participatory experiences for the audience, where not only performers and medics were active participants, but the audience was also directly involved in scenarios. This included conversational exchanges with performers and carrying out basic medical procedures such as checking the pupils of the manikin's eyes and feeling its pulse, as shown in Figure 22 (Hood, 2016). Here, the work connects with participatory practices established in live art and fine art performance, which as White notes, invite the audience or spectator to speak or act 'in dialogue with the performers or the performance environment [and] participate in ways that are differently active to that which is typical of the theatre event' (White, 2013, p.2).

This dynamic performance approach fostered what Bishop describes as a 'temporary community' (2012, p. 18), where participants actively contribute their own experiences, rather than remaining cultural tourists or observers. Heddon and Milling's insights on the characteristics of performances crafted through the devising process emphasise how the allusions of participatory performance experiences rely entirely on the spectators' personal experiences (2006, p.205). In *Eidolon*, my use of participatory strategies actively immerse the audience in experiences of social and material

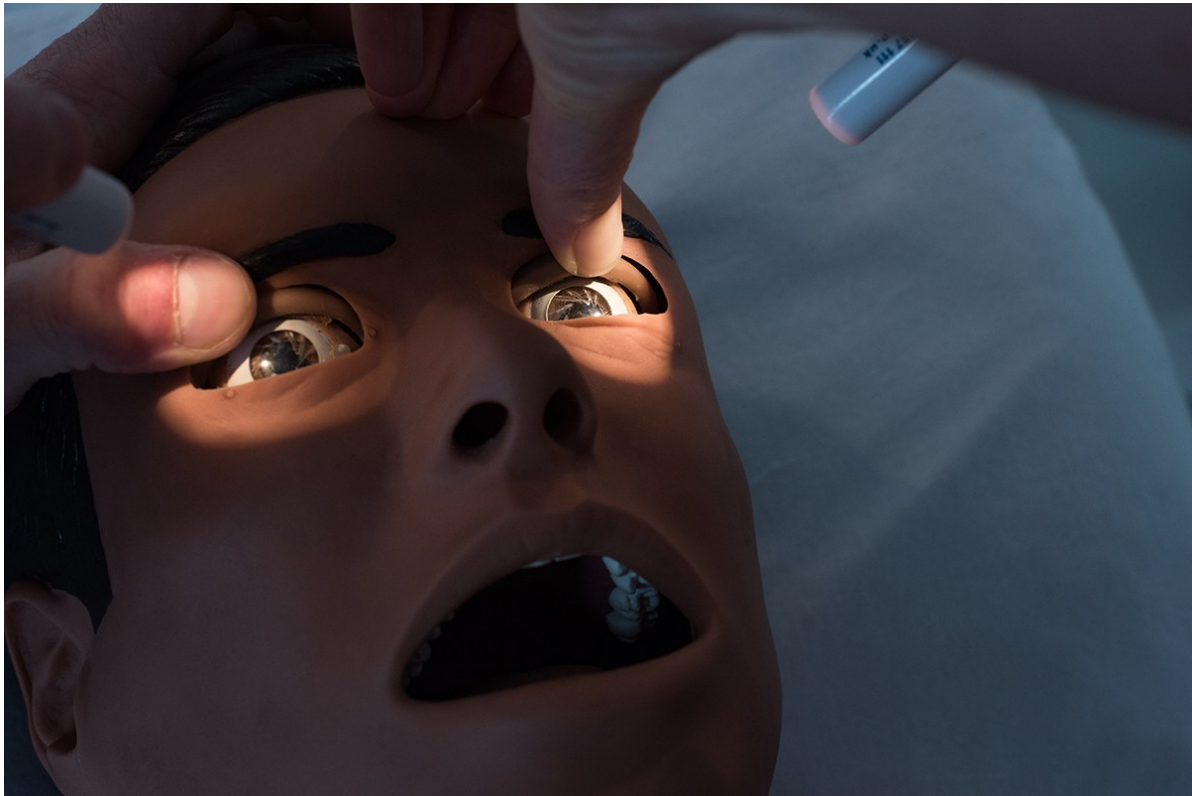


Figure 21: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon performance*, Edinburgh Art Festival (Hood, 2016) Photography by Alicia Bruce.

encounters that preserve what Bourriaud describes as 'moments of subjectivity' (2002, p. 20). The relational texture of the performance was crucial, involving dense, detailed encounters and interactions between performers, performers and manikins, and between performer/manikins and audience. By paying close attention to the subtle, naturalistic vernacular of relational behaviours, the intention was to create a resonant depth of experience for audiences, as evidenced by personal experiences shared by performance attendees:

'[I]t felt like I was kind of going through some transformation... it was like, this is real, but some of it's not real, but some of it is real, and that whole, I don't know, interface between reality and imagination, and it was remarkable... it felt like, if somebody had said, you've just walked through a rip in the fabric of time... it kind of scraped the brain... it was so important, it was off the scale, it was so different, you know. It's very rare you have that experience at an art piece... And even now, when I'm in a hospital setting, I still occasionally drift back to it and think, "Ooh, that was something else."' (Wimpress, 2026)

At CSAC, the main performance activities centred on the simulated ward, adjacent control room, and classroom, all equipped with the smots™ audio-visual system. However, I was keen to utilise the broader simulation centre environment, which included a large suite of shared wards and private side rooms, converted from an

actual, now-defunct ward rather than being purpose-built for simulation. The CSAC performances took advantage of this extended environment by incorporating a short, guided audience walk-through around these spaces. I transformed these adjacent rooms into an extended installation-like setting, creating a series of eerie mise-en-scène arrangements using the additional props, manikins, and related simulation parts found in storage cupboards. Heads, skins, limbs, penises, and breasts, separated from their bodies, mechanised and medicalised, were arranged and displayed on hospital beds and set in their own private rooms, as documented in Figure 23 (Hood, 2016). The integration of this broader environment and its objects into the *Eidolon* performance added another disconcerting dimension to the audience's relational and embodied experience.



Figure 22: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon* installation-like setting, CSAC, Western General Hospital, Edinburgh. Photography by Lindsay Perth.

In Autumn 2016, I returned with the collaborative project team to the SCSC^{HF} at Forth Valley Royal Hospital, Larbert, to prepare a public presentation of the full-length iteration of the *Eidolon* performance. For this event, a small audience cohort of up to 12 people per performance was assembled through a publicly available sign-up process to experience the extended 2-hour performance. The decision on audience size was based on both the desire for intimacy of experience and practical logistics. The performance was presented over the course of two performances on a single day (9 October 2016).

Further collaborative devising workshops were held at SCSC^{HF} to prepare. These sessions focused on integrating performative materials developed at CSAC with additional unused vignette materials into the original high-fidelity setting, utilising the wider pool of manikins and resources. The intention was to perform all the vignettes at these events, including a medical procedure scenario, and it featured the full cast performing alongside SCSC^{HF} staff.

This extended version of performance fostered the most intense experience of all the performance iterations, with some audience members becoming queasy and needing to step out to recalibrate. The audience was divided into two groups and led through the various spaces of the SCSC^{HF}, including training rooms, theatre, ward, and control

rooms, along adjacent, overlapping circuits. Audience members were required to change into hospital scrubs and assume specific roles with their incumbent rituals and protocols. For instance, those serving as surgical assistants in the operating theatre undertook a full surgical scrub process, donning gowns and gloves, as illustrated in Figure 24 (Hood, 2016).



Figure 23: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon performance*, SCSC^{HF}. Photography by Beverley Hood and Lindsay Perth.

The *Eidolon* performance immersed audiences in a state of uncertainty, aligning with Bishop's assertion that artistic practice can sustain contradiction and embody critical negation, qualities that cannot be reconciled by quantifiable means or reduced to logic, reason, or morality (2012, p. 16). Blending in-person experiences with mediated encounters through the use of the integrated smots™ audio-visual system, it oscillated between live and transmitted activities, existing somewhere between rehearsal and performance. Feedback from attendees, as described below, illustrates this experience:

I loved the sustained uncertainty and the way it both occupied and moved between the simulated and the real, the experienced and the mediated, the live and the (possibly) recorded, rehearsal, performance and response. Was I a performer, participant, actor, or nurse? ... Great stuff – very thought provoking (Andrews, 2016, Facebook Messenger message to author, 9 October).

The attendance of medical professionals at these performances led to an invitation to present an extract of *Eidolon* on 25 October 2016, as part of the 'Professional Clinical Work Based Learning' module for Advanced Nurse Practitioner students at Edinburgh Napier University. This one-off performance required relocating to the Clinical Skills Centre at Chancellors Building, Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, a purpose-built facility with a layout similar to SCSC^{HF} but with more limited resources, akin to CSAC. Consequently, the performance necessitated another period of in situ workshopping, returning to the devising process to adapt and adjust to this new environment and, in

this case, the specific medically trained audience. As with earlier performances at IAB 2016 and EAF, the adaptation process involved selecting the most appropriate vignette materials for the setting, continuing the iterative process of remaking, swapping, and reordering. Due to restricted access and the time pressures of the intensive setup at the Clinical Skills Centre, this adaptation involved a smaller cast featuring Goldsmith and Pattison.

The event was presented as a 40-minute extract followed by an extended Q&A for an audience of approximately 30 attendees. Here, my relational, embodied approach elicited rich discussions about the evocative and ambiguous nature of the performance, its role as a pedagogical tool, and the sharing of poignant and profoundly moving first-hand personal experiences from healthcare professionals, some of which were voiced for the first time. One powerful discussion focused on how the attending nurses manage care for unconscious, end-of-life, or recently deceased patients. An attendee deeply connected with the 'ManiChat' vignette, finding parallels with their habit of talking conversationally to patients, whether conscious, intubated, unconscious, or deceased.

The performance resonated with the professionals' real experiences, unearthing both a real and otherworldly affect. Linking back to the instituent praxis approach embedded into the research, it was carefully and sensitively crafted to include a procedural precision that was close enough to their actual professional activities not to jar or detach them from the experience, while introducing poetic characteristics that prompted them to think about familiar aspects of their work differently. This approach follows previously mentioned theoretical concepts, drawing on Kozel's proposition of 'forgetting' of expectations, and Heddon and Milling's concept of postmodern performance. These concepts are proposed to serve as a way of setting aside or suspending a homogeneous approach to knowledge with the potential to shake loose familiar, inhabited meaning, by appropriating, reworking, or redeploying source material and situations (Kozel, 2007; Heddon and Milling, 2006). In a follow-up interview, an A&E nurse described how the performance had heightened her experience of the intimacy of patient interactions in trauma care. She noted, 'that boundary gets very blurred when you're working in a stressful environment like A&E... where I work in trauma... You get desensitised... [the performance] reminded me of something that I hope I hadn't forgotten, which is that there's a humanity' (Macnamara, 2026). After watching the performance, she noted that touching patients felt as jarring as returning from time off, which can feel overwhelmingly intimate and require 'a couple of shifts to get back into having those blurred boundaries again' (Macnamara, 2026). In this way, the performance activated the audience to experience the intimate materiality of the real and technological bodies they encountered, without serving a direct instrumental purpose.

Following on from these performances in situ, in 2018, I was invited to expand the settings for *Eidolon* beyond simulation centres to cultural venues, offering a radical shift to more typical conditions for live performance. A short 15-minute extract featuring the 'ManiHistory' vignette was presented at the 'Pine's Eye' event for the

opening of the Transimage2018 conference at the Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh, on 18 April 2018, and at St Cecilia's Hall, Edinburgh, on 28 June 2018, for the 'Different Ways of Seeing' event organised by the Scottish Medical Humanities Group. Both instances featured actor Hølvold performing a revised version of the 'ManiHistory' vignette, recounting the origin story of the CPR manikin, Rescusi Anne, and its connection to the infamous death mask of L'Inconnue de la Seine, enacted using a manikin and printed imagery (Figure 25). These performance materials were carefully re-devised, adjusted, and rehearsed for a static, seated audience in an auditorium and gallery audience setting.



Figure 24: Hood, B. (2018) *Eidolon performance*, Talbot Rice Gallery, Edinburgh. Photography by Chris Speed.

Each of the above performance iterations was carefully considered, tailored, and adapted to specific audience groups and different performance settings. It was imperative in each instance that the performance experience would bring different types of audiences along a journey, relevant and resonant for both specialist and non-specialist audiences. This precise and detailed approach cultivated active audience participation and was crucial in crafting the distinctive relational and intimate experiential nature of the *Eidolon* performance.

Artist Film installation

Alongside presenting the live performance at CSAC, as part of the Edinburgh Art Festival (EAF) in 2016, exhibition space within the partner venue, Edinburgh College of Art (ECA), was also made available. In response to this opportunity, and recognising that the performance could only accommodate a modestly scaled audience due to its purposefully intimate nature, an artist film installation version of the work was developed. The installation, which builds upon my earlier digital film practice as outlined in the Background to Practice section, was presented as a solo exhibition at ECA from 28 July to 28 August 2016. The *Eidolon* installation comprises two multi-screen digital films developed from two vignettes from the live performance, 'ManiChat' and 'ManiDance'. The work was produced as a gallery-based iteration of extracts of the performance material.

The two films are multi-screen digital compositions developed from material recorded at SCSC^{HF} using the multi-camera setup integrated into the smots™ CCTV-style audio-visual system. This setup was used to film the two vignettes, performed in the SCSC^{HF} spaces by Jeffs and Pattison ('ManiDance') and Goldsmith and Pattison ('ManiChat'). Here, the vignettes were adapted using the devising process, and the performances were directed specifically toward the multiple camera perspectives of the smots™ system, without audience participation or involvement. The recorded materials from these multiple feeds were digitally composited together and edited into loose narratives that echo the overall structures of the live performance vignettes (Figure 26).

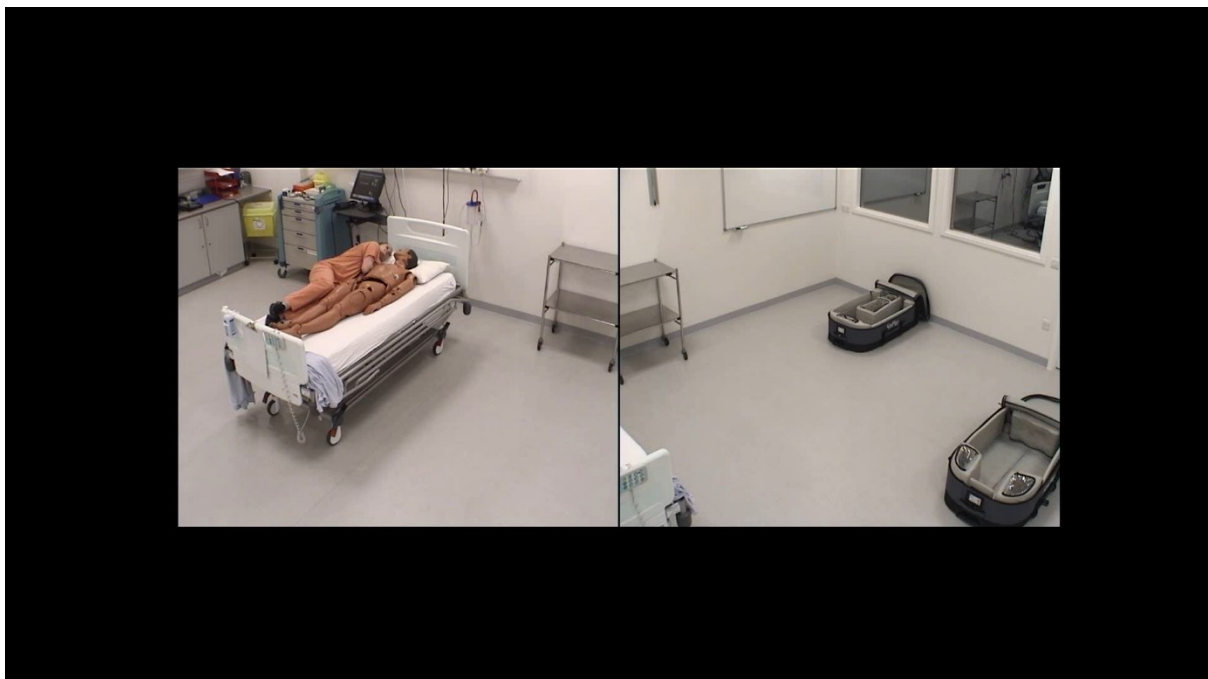


Figure 25: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon* artist film 'ManiDance'. Screenshot.

The resulting digital films were presented at ECA on two large-format digital screens set side by side within a large studio space. Each film had a duration of approximately 18 minutes, and they played in tandem; one screen was black while the other played, giving an overall installation duration of around 36 minutes. The intention was that the audience could dip into the work at any point, producing a durational installation experience that plays on a loop, rather than being presented with specific start times that required watching from start to finish.

The installation films are:

- ManiChat - delves into the relationship between a human patient simulator, or manikin, and an attending medical staff member (Pattison), set within a simulated medical operating theatre, and observed by CCTV-style cameras. The manikin (voiced by Goldsmith) melancholically meditates on its life as a generic, synthetic body.
- ManiDance - is a duet acted out between a dancer (Jeffs) and a dismantled patient manikin within a simulation hospital ward, observed by CCTV-style cameras. The dancer wavers between delusion, misunderstanding, and awareness of the condition of her artificial partner, passing through an emotional spectrum of tenderness, care, and rejection.

The *Eidolon* artist film installation introduced new and wider audiences to the overall concepts of the research. It also reinforced and echoed the experience of those who had attended the live performance by reiterating key material from the two aforementioned performance vignettes. Within the installation, I created a distinct, contemplative experience for audiences in gallery form. The installation extended my multimodal methodology, exploring the central relational and embodied approach to sociotechnical concerns through a distinct iteration of the project, conveying complementary and overlapping experiences that add to the collective whole.

Monograph

The fully illustrated *Eidolon* monograph was published in 2016 to accompany the EAF exhibition and performance (Hood, 2016). Intended as a critical and reflective device, the monograph consolidates the various threads of the research into a tangible format that brings narrative, critical insights, cultural associations, and pragmatic information together.

A self-published book, the monograph contains introductions by myself and Dr Michael Money Penny, a specially commissioned essay 'Synthetic Others' by Nicola White, and a revised essay 'On the Threshold: Sleeping Beauties' by Professor Dame Marina Warner.

My introduction provides a brief overview of the *Eidolon* project, including its aims, themes, ambitions, and the collaborative context. Money Penny's contribution outlines the aims of the SCSC^{HF} as a centre for training and skills development.

The commissioned essay by White was written in response to her attendance at an in-progress sharing of the work in 2016. Occurring fairly late in the development process, White's visit offered a detailed impression of the production's final form and character. The essay interweaves different writing registers, ranging from first-hand, memoir-like experiences to cultural theorist-style analysis. White, with her background in curatorial practice and as an award-winning fiction writer, was invited to produce this text, exploring the project's experiential impact and its broader cultural and historical contexts. The essay provides readers with an experiential glimpse into the project, enhancing their interpretation and understanding of the research in a distinct and imaginative way.

Warner's essay 'On the Threshold: Sleeping Beauties' was re-published in the monograph due to its thematic alignment with the research, particularly its exploration of humanlike bodies and Warner's broader concerns about feminism and the arts. The essay discusses 'The Sleeping Beauty', the oldest surviving waxwork at Madame Tussauds London, exploring its history and its relationship to the lives and tragedies of real and imagined women's bodies.



Figure 26: Hood, B. (2016) *Eidolon monograph*. Photography by Rebecca Milling.

Working closely with designer Marco Scerri, the monograph features a distinctive visual design inspired by the aesthetic characteristics of the simulation environment

itself, as illustrated in Figure 27 (Hood, 2016). It encompasses a creative edit of the extensive documentation accumulated through the making, performing, adapting, and exhibiting processes. The publication includes a wide array of documentary photographic imagery by Alicia Bruce, Emma Bowen, and Lindsay Perth, as well as my own work, alongside digitally screen-grabbed images from the smots™ system. These images capture a sense of the collaborative production process, the overall aesthetic and formal characteristics, and provide a documentary glimpse of the live performance experience.

The monograph played a pivotal role in the *Eidolon* research, a largely ephemeral work primarily constituted by performance. It unifies different threads of the project, including performance, image, and text, into a conventional critical platform of printed matter that enables audiences to grasp the project as a whole. This approach not only disseminates *Eidolon* effectively but also serves as a lasting legacy of the research, making this complex multimodal research accessible and comprehensible.

Virtual Reality (VR) Film

Following the public presentations of performances, the installation, and the publication of the monograph, I undertook the complex process of collating the substantial amount of footage and other data generated for reporting and documentation purposes. The prospect of creating a single filmic documentary was considered but dismissed as both cumbersome and not fitting to the multimodal, fragmentary nature of the work. Instead, I created a series of four short digital films by editing and compositing aspects of the project footage together to document the performance vignettes 'ManiChat', 'ManiDance', 'Scenario', and 'ManiHistory', links to which are provided in the portfolio (Hood, p. 8). These films served as summary documentaries, distinct from the longer films crafted as artworks in themselves for the *Eidolon* installation.

The vignette 'ManiHistory', which recounted the story of the Rescusi Anne manikin, and its relationship to the mysterious and infamous death mask of L'Inconnue de la Seine from the late 19th Century, seemed to resist being captured adequately. This was partly due to the material often being performed in between spaces within the simulation centres, outwith the smots™ system's range and reach. The footage captured never seemed to do justice to this particular vignette. This situation was taken as an opportunity to expand on the documentation of this particular aspect of the work differently, with the potential to explore new possibilities.

A Virtual Reality (VR) workshop at Glasgow School of Art in November 2016, undertaken as part of my ongoing practice of engaging with emergent technologies, led to a serendipitous introduction to Tom Flint, a creative technologist and Associate Professor at Edinburgh Napier University. VR piqued my interest as a technological extension of the immersive characteristic that I'd been aiming for through the research's performative methods. This opportune timing evolved into a new

collaborative partnership with Flint, formed to pursue the development of an experimental 360-degree VR film version of the 'ManiHistory' vignette. This VR film was created with the intention of expanding my relational and embodied approach, already applied in performance and digital filmmaking, into an exploration of immersive technology. By using intimate proximity, the aim was to bring audiences into a key historical story of simulation training. Specifically, I aspired to produce an emotionally resonant and experiential filmic recounting of the origin story of Resusci Anne, the CPR training manikin, and its link to L'Inconnue de la Seine, a mysterious drowned woman found in Paris in the late 1880s, whose death mask became the face of the CPR manikin.

The collaborative process began with a period of technical experimentation that involved testing various 360 VR camera options and workshoping through the technicalities of image quality, sound, and the logistics of 360, equirectangular film post-production rendering and re-stitching methods. Once the production pipeline was established, the slightly compressed VR image quality was offset by pairing it with a higher-level audio quality. This was achieved through close collaboration with professional sound designer George Mikrogianakis to both record and post-produce the soundtrack for the film.

Alongside the more technical experimentation with Flint, I undertook devising workshops with actor Goldsmith to adapt the original 'ManiHistory' material into a standalone scripted monologue to be filmed using the 360 VR camera. What emerged was an interesting insight into the nature of performance, connection, and intimacy through the VR medium. For example, it quickly became evident that eye contact between the performer and the viewer was vital in maintaining the audience's attention and connection. The simple act of performing with almost constant eye contact with the camera (which would be quite peculiar in person) created an intensity and intimacy of experience, with a strong emotional hold.

Another key aspect explored was how to immerse the audience in the experience, from the embodied perspective of the Resusci Anne manikin, whose origin story is being told. This required careful consideration and experimentation with the 360 VR camera position, which led to filming directly from Resusci Anne's manikin's point of view by positioning the 360 VR camera at the manikin's face.

Eidolon360, the resulting VR film, is designed for public exhibition in galleries and conference settings, and screened through the Gear VR headset (or a cardboard VR headset). The audience experiences the film in 360 degrees, from the perspective of Resusci Anne's reclining body, as depicted in Figure 28 (Hood and Flint, 2017). They are placed in an intentionally fixed position, either reclining on a hospital bed or seated upright in a swivel chair. Through this setting, the audience is temporarily transported into an inert, humanlike body, an intense experience, which some viewers described as feeling like they were dead. The film features Goldsmith as an attendant medic, who narrates this key origin story of medical simulation, creating an intimate, relational experience that rematerialises and rehumanises the pathologised bodies of the Resusci Anne manikin and the L'Inconnue de la Seine death mask. The film presents a

reconstruction of these interconnected narratives to create a deeply personal, immersive experience.

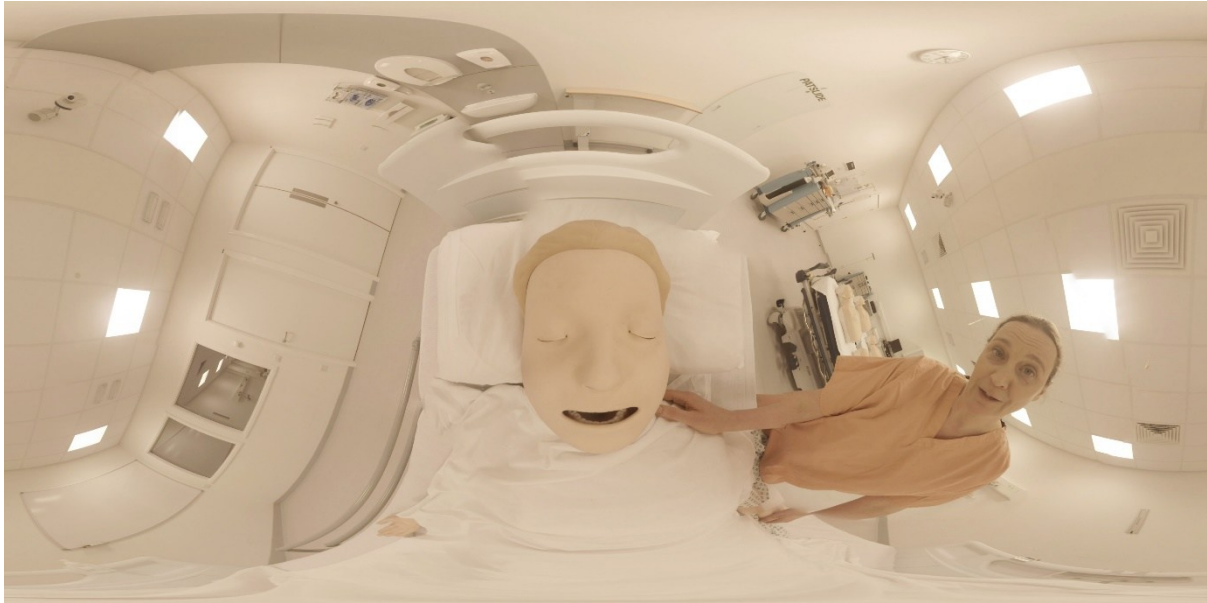


Figure 27: Hood, B. and Flint, T. (2017) *Eidolon360 Virtual Reality (VR) film*. Equirectangular film still.

Eidolon360 added to an evolving field of immersive digital artist film practice, and the work of key practitioners, including Chris Milk (2015), Marina Abramović (2019), and works such as 'Notes on Blindness', by Peter Middleton and James Spinney (2016). These contemporaneous VR/AR/XR activities align with my research approach to *Eidolon360* as an experimental exploration of the potential of immersive digital filmmaking to create intimate, experiential, relational, and emotional encounters for audiences. *Eidolon360* builds upon my previous digital arts practice and adds a new material, technological, and experiential dimension to the *Eidolon* project's relational reconfigurations of the materialities of the body.

In summary, the *Eidolon* project employs a relational, embodied creative research methodology, realised through a multimodal, distributed dissemination strategy, across performance, artist film installation, VR film, and textual publication. These disparate yet interconnected iterations operate as a collective, but unfixed whole, holding an ambiguous space for critical thinking, reinterpretation, and provocation.

SUMMARY OF CONTRIBUTIONS

This section of the critical review addresses the contributions of *Eidolon* as a multimodal creative research project. This will be outlined through a summary of the research's impact, the methodological contribution, and its contextualisation through interdisciplinarity and theoretical underpinnings drawn from philosophy, STS, and the arts.

The methodological approach to *Eidolon* involved a purposefully distributed dissemination method, from its development stages to its finalised, multimodal form, which enabled critique, testing, and consolidation of this expansive project. The peer review process was vital in pushing the boundaries of the research, ensuring its rigorous exploration and evolution through scholarly feedback.

Eidolon was disseminated through various public platforms, including performances, exhibitions, and textual publications, reaching a diverse audience, including medical professionals, academics, the cultural sector, and the general public. In addition, talks about the research were presented at several international conferences and events, as detailed in the Portfolio (p. 19), including the TaPRA Conference at The Royal Holloway, London in 2014, Consciousness Reframed at DeTao University, Shanghai in 2015, and Society in Europe for Simulation Applied to Medicine at the Sorbonne University in Paris in 2017. A peer-reviewed paper detailing the theoretical framework and performance structure of the work in progress was published in *TechnoeticArts: A Journal of Speculative Research* in 2016. The diverse and ongoing presentations of *Eidolon* in various academic research, teaching, and professional contexts continue to extend the project's broad influence and impact.

At its core, *Eidolon* drew on interdisciplinary approaches and philosophical inquiries into technology, blending these to explore and extend critical understandings of the embodied relationship and experiences between humans and technological systems. This theoretical foundation not only supported the project's methodological rigour but also enhanced its relevance across various disciplinary boundaries.

Eidolon contributes a relational and embodied research approach that creatively reimagines and subverts the unique context of medical simulation and the humanlike bodies of its patient manikins. The project reinterprets the concept of psychological fidelity in medical simulation education, and its underlying deceit that requires trainees to perceive and treat manikins as 'real people'. Participants in medical simulation training are expected to suspend their disbelief in the artificiality of the setting to react and perform as if in a real-life medical emergency, to obtain meaningful learning experiences. By adopting a critical creative and relational approach, *Eidolon* introduces new dimensions and uncertainties to this deceit and disbelief, subverting the typical simulation scenarios and expected participant responses. It does so by treading a fine line between re-humanising the synthetic, technological bodies of the patient manikins, while highlighting their inherent, uncanny 'otherness'.

The project embedded professional performers within an operational medical simulation centre environment, utilising actual medical instruments, equipment, and medications. As the intended audiences included medical professionals, authenticity and believability were crucial, requiring close attention to detail in medical processes, procedures, and apparatus. As collaborator Hølvold notes in follow-up correspondence, the specific context of the project presented 'a really interesting exercise for me in terms of the research involved', which, as a performer, created a 'really fascinating challenge' (2017). *Eidolon* extended, pushed, and enhanced the experience and skills of all collaborators, performers, and medics alike through detailed, immersive roles within this reimagined simulated clinical environment and their interactive encounters with audiences. This approach fostered a method of collaborative working across interdisciplinary domains, enhancing capabilities in research, improvisation, devising, collaborative verbatim writing, intimate live performance, and performance for installation and Virtual Reality (VR) film. Consequently, *Eidolon* contributes a unique artistic methodology for developing interdisciplinary creative work within a non-arts setting.

The research employed artistic intervention to reimagine embodied relational constructs and materialities within the medical simulation context. As an artist in a world of healthcare professionals, I did not fit into standard roles, which offered the privilege and potential to do things differently. Here, my 'not knowing', activated and enacted through creative research, enables a potential rejuvenation by unsettling and shaking up the illusory fixedness of known, set experiences, allowing them to be encountered from fresh perspectives (Cocker, 2013, p. 130). For medical professionals, *Eidolon* provided 'an opportunity to see an artistic performance in a familiar space but in a new context' (Money Penny, 2017). It reframed their familiar work environment, prompting a shift in understanding of this professional context and nudging them to rethink their relationships and interactions with the manikins, with patients, and with one another. As Money Penny notes, *Eidolon* furthered the medics' idea of the manikins as people, enabled useful conversations about the performance they 'buy into' within training, and encouraged them to 'think about their relationship with the equipment they train on' (Money Penny, 2017). By repurposing equipment used in medical training, particularly as medical simulation environments and patient manikins become increasingly life-like, *Eidolon* refocused attention on key questions regarding their implications, understanding, and the experiences they elicit.

As Casini articulates in her writing about my creative research practice, this process of unsettling and reimagining becomes metaphorical, noting that my scientific and medical collaborators often first encounter surprise, then pleasure that their views of their everyday technologies could be re-coloured, enhanced, and seen in a new light (Casini, 2021, p. 148). In *Eidolon*, I adapted the assumed learning methods for health professionals, leading them to encounter re-orientated versions of their own performative processes and procedures. The SCSC^{HF} staff experienced this as a collaborative process during the project development itself, while wider healthcare professionals experienced these adaptations through the work's distributed

dissemination at professional conferences, performance events, exhibitions, and training modules for healthcare professionals, as previously outlined.

The *Eidolon* project situated my critical creative research in a unique and complex environment that brought together a highly accomplished interdisciplinary group of creative practitioners and medical professionals. This set the context for the development of a distinctly agile methodology that constantly challenges and re-examines creative practice in performance and digital media, in ways that are creatively and critically engaged, adaptive, and responsive.

Eidolon expanded the uses and purpose of the medical simulation centre. As Money Penny notes, *Eidolon* expanded the medics 'view of the simulation centre as a place of learning, which used to mean a setting specifically designed for healthcare professionals to learn but now includes a much wider audience' (2017). The non-specialist general public typically visits people in hospitals or are patients themselves, but rarely get the opportunity that *Eidolon* provided; to see and experience the simulation centre and the equipment, processes, and environment used to help train the healthcare professionals they encounter.

On a practical level, the performance was 'useful to show members of the public what happens in a real medical operating theatre, the care involved, the equipment used and the communication between healthcare professionals' (Money Penny, 2017). Much of the public's understanding of what happens in a medical operating theatre comes from the film and TV industry, which is often highly dramatised and inaccurate. For non-specialist audiences, *Eidolon* presented an opportunity to be part of a medical team in a safe but realistic manner (Money Penny, 2017), and increased overall awareness of simulation-based medical training. Despite the purposeful sense of uncertainty embedded throughout the project, the central underpinning of authentic medical training processes presented audiences with a reassuring experience of medical care itself.

The research's focus on uncertainty and empathy highlights relational, intersubjective, and sociotechnical concerns. This focus resonates with and 'showcases' medical simulated training's emphasis on 'soft' non-technical skills, such as leadership, communication, and situation awareness, rather than purely technical skills training (Money Penny, 2017). The simulation centres I worked with had not previously included empathy within this soft skillset, but as a result of the *Eidolon* project, this became a real training concern. This initiated new thinking about training courses that could address relational skills in empathy, through the use of VR technologies, for example, in end-of-life training scenarios.

As a result, follow-on funding was sought to collaboratively pursue the potential of scoping out a new training approach to teaching empathy using VR technologies. Although unsuccessful in this case, *Eidolon* demonstrated the real possibility and pragmatic potential of the arts to create tangible impact and change in medical and scientific practice. This has been further established in my subsequent research, particularly *Surface Echoes* (Brown and Hood, 2022-2025), a ScotPEN Wellcome-

funded creative research project amplifying the voices of people living with eczema, undertaken in collaboration with the Grant Chair of Dermatology, Sara Brown. The project resulted in creative materials that have since been integrated into various contexts, including undergraduate medical training at the University of Edinburgh, stakeholder engagement practices at the UK charity Eczema Outreach Support, professional dermatology practices in the NHS, and presentations at arts, qualitative research and dermatology conferences.

Interdisciplinary collaboration is crucial to the *Eidolon* methodological approach. Casini outlines this as a space that enables dialogue and exchanges across disciplines, alongside a culture of experimentation that serves as the connective tissue between the arts and scientific community, and within collaboration itself (Casini, 2021). *Eidolon* resulted in a research methodology that enabled all collaborative constituents, across the arts and medicine, to examine, develop, and extend established working practices, methods, and approaches. In the process of creating *Eidolon*, I, as the lead artist and researcher, navigated, listened, and paid attention to the different languages and methodologies at play across the constituents within our collaborative ecosystem. This established a collaborative 'trading zone', a conceptual metaphor drawn from philosopher of science Peter Galison (1997), which has been used to study exchange and collaboration across different cultures and languages within science, technology, and the arts (Casini, 2010; Gorman, 2010). Casini notes that my approach is distinctively non-didactic, almost undisciplined before being interdisciplinary, prioritising exploratory, relational, and embodied practices to sow the seed of a culture of dialogue and collaboration across areas of expertise and communities (2021, p. 146). In this way, I assume the position of what Galison describes as an 'agent' (1997), facilitating trade among a group of interdisciplinary collaborators who maintain their specific languages, fields, methods, and approaches, while being open and curious to exchange, and prepared to explore beyond their comfort zones.

My attentive, non-didactic approach to interdisciplinary collaboration instils confidence, buy-in and commitment from my non-arts collaborators. As noted by Money Penny, as a result of *Eidolon* 'the [simulation] centre is now much more open to getting involved in arts projects,' (2017). These relationships continue longitudinally beyond the lifespan of individual projects. With Money Penny, there are ongoing discussions on potential projects and future ways to work together. The above-mentioned *Surface Echoes* project with Brown followed on from a previous collaborative creative research project that we undertook together from 2017 to 2021. It also expanded the range of creatives with whom she has engaged in her research.

For the *Eidolon* project, the support and advocacy from 'intermediary figures' was crucial in establishing this interdisciplinary collaborative space (Johnstone, 2021, p.4). At SCSC^{HF}, Money Penny brought openness, curiosity, and a speculative intent to extend and meaningfully bridge the SCSC^{HF} community's knowledge and practices with the arts. This institutional and personal commitment at a senior staff level set a

team ethos for all medics, nurses, scientists, and technicians involved, and fostered meaningful exchanges across the interdisciplinary team.

The collaborative team's willingness to go on an exploratory journey was crucial for the whole team, including the creatives, who were often placed in settings outwith their typical creative process and experiences. As Casini notes, the resulting collaborative trading zone can 'inhabit and embrace the space between intentions and results, and frictions among the different actors in the collaboration' (2021, p.158). My approach to *Eidolon* acknowledges and addresses these frictions not as issues that need to be fixed, resolved, or smoothed over, but as points of productive tension. This methodology does not seek to provide easy, superficial solutions; instead, it surfaces, acknowledges, and examines differences and tensions as a way to rethink our relational and embodied experiences of science and technology, and of one another. Importantly, these frictions and gaps are viewed as potential sites for 'threshold discourse' (Casini, 2021, p. 160), which point to the limits and borders of our understanding of the material world.

The underlying principles of the *Eidolon* methodology resonate with Haraway's hopeful reconfiguring of the modest witness in the narrative of science, as a means of establishing and rebuilding what may count about the world and bringing back into realignment the technical, political, and possible liveable worlds (Haraway, 1997). These principles reverberate throughout current philosophy of technology research, including AI ethicist Shannon Vallor's assertion that scientific and technical expertise is currently largely divorced from humanity's social, political, and moral knowledge (Vallor, 2018). *Eidolon's* activation of these concerns through the use of participatory performance aligns with Bourriaud's assertion that artistic practice 'fills in the cracks in the social bond ... patiently re-stitching the relational fabric' (2002, p.36). Bishop (2012) upholds this view, suggesting that participatory practices, as acts that interface with reality, are crucial because they rehumanise a society rendered numb and fragmented, taking steps, however small, to repair the social bond (2012, p. 11).

In a longitudinal sense, the extended duration of the *Eidolon* research enabled a deeper inquiry than had previously been possible. This allowed for the development and unfolding of specific ways of working, which consolidated my relational, embodied, creative methodology. This open-ended approach offered the freedom to explore but also presented challenges in devising strategies for dissemination. These challenges were compounded by the reliance on engaging dissemination partners late in the process and by the complexities involved in integrating this somewhat unconventional project into existing cultural programmes. As an artist researcher, a key aspiration is always to bring my work to the public; however, working in such an open-ended way sometimes complicates this objective. In subsequent projects, such as the previously mentioned *Surface Echoes* (2025), I have typically collaborated with partners who provided at least a speculative guarantee of a presentation route, helping to mitigate some of these challenges.

Eidolon exemplifies speculative, experimental, and reflexive creative research, integrating experiential and aesthetic elements with the critical, intellectual role of

creative practice as a driver to generate new interdisciplinary understandings and experiences across the fields of art, technology, and science.

CONCLUSION

This PhD by Research Publications consolidates 30 years of creative practice-based research, characterised by an exploratory, situated, relational, and embodied approach. It contributes a distinct, rigorous and reflective practice-based research methodology informed by digital arts, performance, and interdisciplinary collaboration, grounded in philosophy and STS, which draws from feminism, post-humanism, new materialism, and phenomenology. This methodology creatively reimagines the materialities of our relational and embodied technological experiences across the physical, psychological, and theoretical realms. It pays attention to near-future horizons, offering creative practice approaches that develop new ways of looking at the material understandings of emergent relationships and lived experiences between technology, science, and the body. *Eidolon* contributes an experimental approach to practice-based research that deliberately embraces unstable potentials, the unease, and uncertainty of our contemporary sociotechnical experiences. It creates and holds an intentionally ambiguous, experiential, and critical space that opens up potential for thinking differently and anew.

The *Eidolon* methodology is multimodal, incorporating a multipart artwork, realised through a collaborative ecosystem of contributors across multiple processes, methods of making, and spaces of production and dissemination. This multimodal approach contributes to both experimental, creative practice-based research and broader discussions about our technologically entangled contemporary lives. *Eidolon* exists in an ambitiously complex yet ambiguous and salient form, across performance, installation, monograph, virtual reality film, and writing.

The research introduces new ways of undertaking and thinking about relational and embodied approaches to creative and participatory research practice. It builds upon established theories to explore the impact and affect of our technologically materialised encounters on our sense of self, our bodies, our connections to one another, and the wider world. Central to this inquiry, it probes our embodied relational encounters with nonhuman, representationally humanlike entities that are rapidly evolving across fields including medicine, digital design, artificial intelligence, and robotics, and infuse our technologically entangled lives.

My distinct practice-based research contributes new approaches to interdisciplinary, collaborative creative research, relevant across various fields from contemporary, digital, and performance art to art-science collaboration. The *Eidolon* methodology serves as a template for subsequent interdisciplinary activities within my ongoing research practice, which purposefully emphasises the research process and experience over the final artefact. While not intended as a directly replicable model, this approach stands as a critical creative methodology that can be repurposed, adapted, and expanded according to varied needs, potentially useful beyond the realm of digital media and performance art research, extending into other disciplines and fields of inquiry.

My research continues to build upon the situated and instituent methodological approach established within *Eidolon*, evolving within the context of other non-arts settings and technologies such as MRI imaging and genetic research, and key technological areas of development, including Responsible Artificial Intelligence (AI). The *Eidolon* project established and consolidated an exploratory, interdisciplinary, collaborative, and multimodal approach to research. Leaning heavily into uncertainty and art's ability to sustain contradiction, *Eidolon* offers a creative, practice-based methodology that is a distinct, critical form of research.

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