

A practice-based inquiry into the creative possibilities of archive audio-visual material in live performance:

Highlighted by the British Library's 'Save our Sounds' Campaign whose aims are 'to preserve as much as possible of the nation's rare and unique sound recordings' (2015), public audio archives have received much attention in recent years. The idea; once these recordings are digitised, is to make them open access and available to the general public. But beyond listening to, enjoying and learning from these recordings, can we re-contextualise them in the production of new creative work and reach new audiences? Can the archive offer new possibilities for audio visual performance whilst maintaining a grip of the 'authentic', or a representation of the past?

These questions are explored via practice in live audio-visual performances. The findings have been disseminated via masterclasses and a paper presentation at the Crosstown Traffic International Conference at the University of Huddersfield.

'Action Space Live' is a series of concerts utilising audio-visual material from the Action Space Archive held at the University of Sheffield (see 'Action Space' collection on Figshare). Analogue tape recordings are mixed and manipulated to create distinct and unique sound collages, created in response to 16mm film projected onto large screens. These streams of sound (Simon Connor) and film (Huw Wahl) are selected, mixed and manipulated in reaction to each other in an improvised performance.

The research suggests that a performative approach can offer a visceral experience of archive material, in what Julia Noordegraaf calls 'a direct sensation of the past' (2015). When re-contextualised into new creative works, such archives can 'serve as found arks of lost moments in which the here-and-now of the work serves as a possible portal between an unfinished past and a reopened future' (Foster, 2004; 15).

Bibliography

British Sound Library. (2015). *Save our Sounds*. Retrieved from <https://www.bl.uk/projects/save-our-sounds>

Foster, H. (2004). An Archival Impulse. *October*, 110, 3-22. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3397555>

Noordegraaf, J.J. (2015, December). *Participatory Archiving. Audiovisual Archives in the Digital Age*. Paper presented at Netherlands Institute in Saint Petersburg (NIP)

Wahl, H. (2016). *Action Space*. UK: Distrify.com.