

P17

Session 1 (Sound)

I: How was your experience?

P17: I guess I sort of, on a cognitive level, tried to go back and forth between really just experiencing the piece and also I couldn't help but tried to figure out how it worked, of course. For me one of the interesting aspects of it was the sound and **trying to interpret the sound**. So as I moved through the strings I would hear the sounds and try to tell "well, is this a physical sound that's coming from around me or is it a generated sound because the rain drops sort of sounded like they could just be the sound of the strings hitting each other, things like that and the wind could just be the strings moving but eventually I tried to suss out what caused them and can make the big whooping sound by moving through it quickly. But it made me feel very **calm so it was very soothing sounds**.

The darkness of the space and just having the strings all around me **really felt very enveloping**. Just felt surrounded by all of this. Moving through the strings was an interesting experience. When I first started playing with it, I used my hands to push the strings out of the way and then I wasn't quite sure why I was doing that so I just tried walking through them without moving them out of the way, just letting them brush over. But I found that a little odd, like they kinda ticked against my glasses and felt a little strange. There were a couple of times when I tried to spin but I got a little worried that I was going to make them tangled and things like that. But it was a neat experience, like the kind that, even when I push them out of the way, they still sort of fell against my body and a little ticklish and a little sort of can feel them all around me. So I think that it contributed to the feeling of being wrapped up in this environment.

I felt the darkness was a little disorienting, but it actually wasn't like it allowed me to just focus. I knew kinda where I was within the space, but I didn't have to worry about it too much and I didn't feel like I was being observed in a way. Like I felt a bit free-er because I was just in a space. Well I know that the system was watching me in a certain sense *laughter* but **it made the space feel a little more private**, I think. It was just my space that I could explore.

I: Let's go back to the beginning of your experience. Before you entered, what did you feel?

P17: I was standing there and looking at the strings, and I could hear some of the sounds. I was **trying to understand them**. I guess I just **felt intrigued**. I wanted to go in and I wanted to see what it did. It just seemed really interesting.

I: when you entered it, did you move right away?

P17: Yeah! Especially at the beginning, **I sort of put my hands together and parted them out of the way so I could move it without brushing them**. I think that was partially because I felt like I should clear it away from my face. And also partially because I didn't want to damage them, you know, by kicking them or whatever, so I moved them out of the way.

I: When you touched the threads away, did your body feel anything?

P17: Yeah. **I could feel them on the back of my arms**. And also I as I walked through they would brush against my back and sort of fall down behind me and so I could feel them sort of falling back into place behind me and around me and slipping off each other, things like that, which was a very cool experience.

I: when did you notice the sound? You heard the sound before you entered and then you said you kind of made a connection with the sound of your movement, a little bit, but when did you notice that?

P17: I think **the rain sound** was the first thing I noticed and at first I thought it was supposed to be a sound of the strings hitting each other and I wasn't sure if it was audio or just physically the strings made that sound. But eventually when I listened to it more, it sounded more and more like rain. So that was the first thing that I heard. I think I moved pretty slowly at first since there wasn't a whole lot of wind and as I got more confident in the space, I sort of made... moved through it a little bit quicker and I got this really strong **whoosh of wind**, so that was the second thing that I heard. And then I just sort of played around a little bit to try and hear the different sounds, I tried to stay still at one point to see if the rain would stop and entirely but it never did. So even when I came out of the piece and stood, I can still hear that sound. **I tried a couple of other things to see if it made different sounds** but those were the only 2 that I noticed.

*I: how do you **feel** about the rain sound? Wind and raindrops sound?*

P17: I liked it actually! I mean, even though we've sort of had a lot of wind and rain recently it still felt **very calm and very soothing**. I really liked the wind. I didn't quite but I was sort of tempted to just go running through it, you know **to see how big of a wind whoosh I could get**. I thought that was neat.

*I: at one point you said that the fiber optics were actually, you felt kind of **enveloping**... can you describe a little bit more about that experience?*

P17: Yeah, so at one point where I just stood there, but I can't, I'm not as small as the space in between the strings so **they sort of formed around me and so I could feel that, although they were very light, I could feel their presence all around me**. And just as I moved they would sort of slide against each other, they would slide against my back. **It felt encompassing without being claustrophobic because they're so light**. They didn't put any pressure on me. They didn't make me feel like I couldn't move but they were definitely a presence there.

I: can you find any examples or images you think of when you think about that experience in your real life? Or any image or words could capture that experience?

P17: I guess it's sort of felt just like being outside or specifically **being in a forest or being somewhere it is windy in that same way**. Where there's stuff around you, you're moving through the branches or you having leaves blown against you. And so you're being surrounded by things, but not fully, I guess. That's the closest thing that I can think of.

*I: you mentioned enveloping experience was kind of calm and relaxing experience. Was it always the same or **any changes during the session**?*

P17: Like I said, **I sort of bounced back and forth in my own head, like between whether I was just experiencing it or trying to figure it out**. So I think I started off just enjoying it and then I had a period of trying to figure it out, and then I went back to just experiencing and playing around with it a bit. But I felt the sort of the calm and peacefulness throughout the whole experience.

Session 2 (Visual)

I: How was your experience?

P17: It was very different than the first time. **This to me, felt much more exploratory. Like it wasn't so calm, I felt a little bit more actively engaged.**

I love the effect of the topography at the base of the strings. And so to me it felt like as exploring a **landscape** and sometimes it reminded me of the **sea**. Like I was on the bottom of the ocean and these were sort of **bright life forms** that were running around. Sometimes it seemed more like **stars**, like **as I was swimming out in space in the starscape**. It was really intriguing.

I sort of wanted to move around it and see what it did. The green light seem to sort of follow me, although not fully. It would come over and then run away again. I don't know, at all, with the blue light was doing. That was just the mystery, which was kind of cool! That it was just doing its own thing and show up in different areas. There were a couple of times, it seemed to me when I moved the whole length of strings where the entire floor would just light up and that was very, very neat so I tried to get it to do that a couple of times because I really liked seeing the full thing of it. Because of the way the lights work at the bottom, **I was much more aware of the bottom of the strings and much less aware of the strings that I was moving through and the ones that were around my body.** I was very focused on looking at the lights. I actually didn't use my hands as much to push them out of the way because I've gotten a way of seeing what was going on so I just walked through it a little bit more. But there were also times where I'd get the strings on me and so I'd have the ends of the strings around my head and I could see the lights on the corner of my eyes and that was sort of cool. **It felt like I was really wrapped up in it at that point. The lights were all around me. Yeah!**

*I: Let's start again from the beginning of your experience. So **before you entered it, what did you see?***

P17: Watching it warm up, even. I was very aware of the bumps and stuff in it and so it looked like a star scape at that point to me. And then **when the specific blue and green lights came on, they almost looked like animals, like they were these little lumps and things that were sort of moving around in there.** The blue lights seemed to cluster around a couple of bumps in the middle so it seemed like little animals or something there and the green light moved around a lot. Before I even entered it, **I spent some time watching it and trying to see what it was doing and then I walked in through it and see how it would react.**

*I: **When you walked in, did you see the same thing from outside?***

P17: It got a little hard to tell as I was moving through it, I couldn't always tell because the strings are always moving, sort of clusters together. It seemed that when I moved, the strings around me tended to be green, not all the time. And then if I stood still for a little bit, there'd usually be some green around me and then it would run off. **When I was in it, it was harder to see to always see the discreet entities like the green light as its own thing whereas the blue light was a little bit more stable.**

*I: **did you feel similar thing from the blue and green lights, before you entered, you said that they seem like animals. Did you feel similar thing when you went it?***

P17: I did. The green light, once I started moving through it, **the green light seemed more animate, like it seemed more animal whereas the blue light almost seemed more like a plant or something.** It seemed like it creep very slowly. It didn't seem quite as animal-like.

*I: **if it's an animal, did you try specific actions?***

P17: **Mostly I tried just moving around and see if it would follow.** There are a couple of times, like when I came out of the strings a couple of times, and I would try wiggling one set of strings or just try just moving along the outside and it didn't seem to react to that as much. It wasn't looking just for motion, as much so much as it was looking for body, I assumed. There were a couple of times where I tried just

spinning or making the strings go in circles but that didn't seem to do anything in particular. Mostly, **it was almost like a dog where it would run up to you and sort of "pay attention, pay attention!" and then run off again and then come back, that kind of teasing back and forth.**

I: you kind of mentioned that the landscape looked like the sea and also the stars scape as well. Can you describe a little bit about those 3 different images?

P17: Yeah. When it was all illuminated as white, as it was warming up that was when it looked most like stars to me, like a star scape. And then with the different colors, it looked more like land, possibly because of the blue and green colors; it made me think about the ocean. This was like a coral reef or just like the ocean floor or something and these were some of the fish or the **bioluminescent creatures** that lived down there. And I read a lot of sci-fi and so to me it was sort of felt like that, there's a lot of description and science fiction of sort of **alien life forms** and so in a way that was sort of what it felt like as well. So I think that's where the space metaphor is coming forward too of this was a way of exploring some different way of life.

I: you mentioned when you walked around it fiber optics was around your body and then you felt it kinda wrapped. And also you mentioned from the first session you were kind of enveloped by the fiber optics, right? Are those like similar experiences?

P17: They were similar but also different. This one felt like a bit more of an active wrapping I guess and the first one I moved through it as I was very aware of the strings, that they were around me. Whereas here, possibly because the lights are moving and everything, it actually felt like I was getting tangled in the strings not just that they were around me but they were sort of actively wrapping around me. **It wasn't like an alarming or scary experience but it just felt a bit more like they had some agency to them,** almost. Or maybe just that I was moving through it more rapidly because I was trying to follow the light or catch the light or whatever. I was focused so much on the ground that I was paying less attention to the strings and so I got them caught on my glasses and on my hair and things like that a little bit more.

I: were you aware of any other senses in this environment?

P17: I definitely still felt the **strings around me.** They were brushing against my body. I wasn't sure at first whether there were sound, sort of sounded like there might be but in the end it seemed like there was. Although I was aware that **there're certain sounds that the strings make just when they slide against each other so I was aware of that.**

I: what about the floor?

P17: Oh that's interesting. **I was more aware of the floor the cushy fabric,** it would slip around a couple of times, especially around the edges so I was more aware of that when I was walking. I could see the shapes and the strings. There were times where I felt almost expected that I was going to step on something because there was an **illuminated bump in front of me or whatever. It seemed like there should be something there, but of course, there wasn't.** and I was more aware of, when I walked I was kicking the strings, I would see the bursts of light going off of my feet. I was more aware of that and my path through the space, I think.

I: Now let's compare 2 different experiences, the first and the second. The first one it was more calm and relaxing experience. And this one was more exploratory. Can you describe a little bit more about those differences?

P17: Well the **first one was darker. I felt I was paying less attention to where I walked and how I walked.** There were aspects of my movement that it was reacting to but I wasn't as actively engaged in a certain sense.

Whereas this one, because there was light around and I was watching that light, **I felt much more active.** I was following it, I was more aware of where I was in my whole space because I could see the blue off to one side and the green over here. **It felt more alive, I guess whereas the first one felt more meditative.**

I: Did you say that you, in the first experience, you were only the person and all in the space or something like that?

P17: Yeah, **I felt like it was a very private space.** It was just me as sort of in the darkness and moving to the sound.

This one it almost felt like **there was another presence in the space** because the light seemed like another being in a certain sense. I still felt like I was the only one exploring this space, the only person there but it felt like there were **other presences around.**

I: so those other presences actually affect your movement?

P17: Yeah, because **I was reacting to the light, specifically, almost as a sentient thing.** It didn't seem like just my space anymore. **It actually seemed like I was in their space.** This is the environment that belonged to the lights and I was coming in and playing around with them.

I: You mentioned exploratory and images of the sea and the landscape. Do you have any words or images to capture this experience in this session?

P17: Yeah I think those were totally what I would use "**exploring an alien landscape almost or playing with the life form.**" There were moments where **it seemed like a game** too, not really, but just a little. I felt like when I activated the whole floor and it all turned blue or something, that almost felt like "OH! I won!" I did something that triggered some sort of other state. But that wasn't the dominant way that I related to it.

I: I was wondering when you actually played with the agents light, did you feel anything from inside of your body?

P17: I guess **curiosity** was a large part of it. **The same sort of playfulness that you get with an animal, when you sort of know what it's gonna do but it's still unexpected and a little bit of affection towards it.** "Oh it's come back!" or "oh! It's running away!"

I: Do you remember how long you spent in each session?

P17: I actually have no idea. I think I spent more time in the second session than in the first but I don't have any idea what the length was.

I: Do you know why you stayed longer in the second session?

P17: I think **there's a little bit more to figure out.** It just took me a little longer to figure out what was going on. It seemed more complex and it was just a little bit more engaging. The first one was nice and calm but it sort of felt like a while "oh ok, I heard the rain, I've heard the wind" I experienced what this is whereas this one seemed more like it was likely to do something different or to surprise me at the end and **so I stayed longer because I felt like there was more to see and was more engaging.**

I: So this time you didn't really pay attention to the fiber optics.

P17: No, not the upper part of it. I was really looking at the bottom although there were a couple of times that I came out and realized that I had gotten some tangled or stuck up so I went back in and straightened them out *laugh* It just bothered me to see because the lights would be up because they were stuck on another one and it seemed out of place.

Session 3 (Both)

I: How was your experience?

P17: This one was really interesting! It felt really different from either of the two even though I sort of assumed that it was just the 2 of them put together. **The combination of them made me re-interpret them both differently.** I had sort of been interpreting the lights as animals as a seascape, but with the addition of the sound that sort of didn't work as much for me. It felt much more, for whatever reason, **it seemed much more like an alien world that I was sort of walking on the surface of some planet and it there was wind and stuff like that.** That's what it felt like. The green light felt less like an animal somehow. Like it's still definitely was moving around and animate but it didn't feel to me like it was paying enough attention to me somehow. **Overall it felt, it actually felt disorienting at times.** My attention was drawn up from the floor to the sound because it was coming from above and all around and so I felt like I was **much more in a 3D space**, which was cool but also sort of just kinda threw me off a little I guess. I felt like I was being buffeted by the wind and I felt a little unsteady, not in an unpleasant way but definitely, it seemed like the lights were more active, although I don't know if they actually were.

I found myself making bigger, broader gestures like I would tend to walk back and forth, the whole length of the thing partially **because I really liked the wind noise**, so if I could kinda get that going. There seem to be different noises I don't know if that was actually true. But like there's the rain and the little wind but there's also like more of a clicking noise that I had heard before and there is a different wind noise as well, a more vortex or almost like a helicopter circling around. And for whatever reason, I seem to always trigger that sound when I was down at the far end. I don't know if that was actually spatialized in that way. But there were some times that if I walk down there and if I stood still, like this vortex sound would just spin around me and the lights would start to play, it was really cool! But it felt less like it was responding to me, I think. It felt more like it was doing its own thing and I was just sort of able to walk around in the middle of it.

I: Okay, you said this session light was more active. What did you mean by that?

P17: It seemed both blue and green seemed they were moving around a lot more. In particular like we're watching it right now, too the green seems more spread out in the second one, at least from my perspective, it felt more like it was constrained spotlight that was moving around. Whereas this time it felt like it was spread out more.

I: And also you mentioned that this one is more like an alien world. That means you don't get an intimate relationship with it?

P17: Yeah, I think that's right. It felt more like there were these presences, I guess, and **they were moving around but they weren't necessarily following me. Like they were doing their own thing and it wasn't something that I had any access to.** I know that my presence, my walking through it activated it but I didn't feel like it was actually paying attention to me. **It was just being sort of stirred up by me so it moved when I came around but it was doing its own thing.**

*I: How did you feel about that? What was the **difference from the second session**?*

P17: So the second session, it felt much more like I was playing with the light, that it was a thing that responding to me whereas **this one felt more like it was just moving around me. Maybe even avoiding me or something**, I don't know.

I: How did you feel about that?

P17: It felt, I think that was why it felt a little **bit more disorienting** like I felt... I didn't feel that same sort of connection. I felt that "this is weird" like I don't know what's going on. I guess alien is sort of the right word. It just seemed really strange.

I: okay. The first session was more calming and relaxing. Did you feel that kind of qualities here?

P17: Not as much. Partially because the lights were pretty active so it always kept me watching it or moving around to try to do something with it. And the sound seemed less calm this time, maybe because of how I was interpreting the lights, this sort of this landscape. **It felt more like this is wind on a desolate planet or something like that. It didn't feel as comforting. In the first time I experienced the "it's windy, it's rainy, you're at home, you're inside, you can hear it outside, it's cozy" whereas here it felt more like there's wind on you, you're being rained on that kind of thing.** In a good way, I felt much more part of the environment here. I was in this place and I was experiencing these things much more, whereas in the first session it was more I was hearing the wind but I wasn't necessarily hearing the wind.

I: You mean the sound in this session was more realistic?

P17: Yeah, or not even that it was realistic, **I just was interpreting it that way**, I was moving more, so I was generating more wind as I moved through the space. **It felt more like I was in a windy place rather than just hearing them.**

I: what about the thread?

P17: **I was more aware of the strings this time because my attention was pulled upwards by the sound.** Especially when I would stand over there and hear the whirling sound I tended to look up. I was more aware of the structure above me and the strings hanging down. And because I was moving in them a lot more, I got tangled in them a lot more and so **I found myself batting the strings away and trying to make them nice and flat again.**

*I: overall through the 3 sessions, how do you experience with the **strings**? We don't experience strings in real life, right?*

P17: It was definitely an interesting sensation. It's hard to find an analogy for, I think, still, you know like walking into a **forest** or someplace where there's things hanging down that you're encountering is the most apt metaphor.

I: I think I'm curious. Your attention was, from the 2nd session, you paid attention to the light. I was wondering the fiber optics strings around you distracted or ignorable or kinda helped to pay attention to the lights?

P17: Yeah, that was a good question. In the 2nd session and in this 3rd session, I would say the fiber optics helped me relate to the lights, I guess. I think that if I didn't have the strings and I was just seeing these lights at the bottom, I'd have a lot more trouble parsing it visually. So knowing that the strings connected to the lights, I thought that was my connection to it, it's how I made sense out of it. so even in

the 2nd one **when I wasn't really paying attention to them, I was still aware of them.** The lights were hanging from the stings and that's what I was actually moving through.

I: What about the 1st session?

P17: In the 1st session it was different because it didn't have the lights at the end. I felt more, it was almost more... I wasn't relating to the strings themselves, it felt more like I was just moving through a space that happened to have all these strings into it or almost that the strings were what was keeping track of me, you know? And I wasn't relating to them, it was more like just an environment of strings but they weren't individualized the way here, I could wiggle one string and see that specific light move.

I: What was the strongest session among the 3?

P17: I think the 3rd one was the strongest. It had the most impact on me. **I think the 2nd one was the one that I enjoyed the most.** The 3rd one I found that I couldn't quite make sense of it. It seemed a little weird, a little disorienting so I was a little thrown by it. I mean it was still an enjoyable experience but a little strange, whereas the second one was just fun, I think.

I: So if you had another chance to experience one of these sessions, you'd like to try the 2nd one?

P17: Yeah, I think so. Just watching it right now, I think in the 3rd session, one of the more dominant feelings I had in addition to a little bit of disorientation was being kind of mesmerized. I just want to stare at it. it's kind of hypnotic and so I felt less like I wanted to move through it and engage with it, I just sort of wanted to look at it because it was doing something and I wanted to see it and it was just sort of mesmerizing in that way.

I: but you didn't see that in the 2nd one?

P17: The 2nd one was, it seemed like when I left it alone, it didn't do quite as much. It seemed like I needed to interact with it in order to get it to do stuff and so I wanted to interact with it because that was more fun.

I: it's mesmerizing, does sound kind of affect it too?

P17: I think it does, yeah. I think the wind sound [is] kind of lolling, kinda puts you to sleep a little bit. Yeah!