The Separate System?

A Conversation on Collaborative Artistic Practice with Veterans-in-Prison.

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Introduction

Military veterans occupy a unique and at times privileged position in a Nation's cultural memory and imagination. As they continue to embody in life the dedication and sacrifice given to the defense and protection of nations, they provide a continued reminder of the battles that were fought, often in the name of security and freedom. One can imagine a veteran quite easily. Please do so, and continue to do so throughout this chapter. What do they look like? What might they have experienced to afford themselves a space of sentimentality (and indeed pride) in the uniformed processions and commemorations that take place each year? Although to have served one's country is an extremely individual and personal affair, veterans tend to appear to us through ubiquitous imagery which unites all experiences in highly choreographed ways.

Since 2009, Armed Forces Day (formerly Veterans' Day) has been celebrated in the United Kingdom, to observe all those who have served and who are still serving. This change of name and focus from veterans to those who continue to be involved on active duty is significant for the public imagination. It enshrines the virtues of sacrifice for wars yet to be fought. Dominant imagery often features older retired military personnel in front of new high-tech weaponry which echoes both the valour of continuous sacrifice, and the ongoing necessity for warfare. Being a veteran, according to these public representations, is simply the final stage in the life of a soldier. A life, which post-service, is forever marked by its violent occupation. And as wars continue to be fought in the same space as wars of the past are

commemorated, both visible and invisible 'traces' of violence are evident upon the body of soldiers as well as those witnessed at sites of memorialisation (Walklate and McGarry 2016). Remembrance is an aesthetic, and its experience collective.

As the title of this chapter might suggest, there is perhaps another politically fraught and complex violence to 'trace', i.e. the violence committed by military veterans post-deployment or post-service. Such violence is now widely acknowledged through a very specific discourse which constructs the veteran who commits a criminal act as a distinct subjectivity *and* a distinct problem for juridical and political categorisation (leading to the notion of 'veteranality', see Murray 2013, 2015, 2016). Although there has been an appreciation of these violent legacies of war in popular culture for some time, for example through cinematic depictions such as those portrayed through Martin Scorsese's acclaimed *Taxi Driver* (1976), and more recently *Jarhead* (2005) and *American Sniper* (2015), the aesthetic of the convicted veteran has received little attention in criminological debates. This strikes us as rather odd, yet important in its absence. Particularly as experiences of war and of criminal justice systems are experiences of two of the most prominent systems of security. Recognising, as Schept (2014) did, that to reproduce imagery, as a means or an end of critique, can *confirm* or *ratify* the very characteristics central to your point of departure, the more or less dominant imagery of the veteran is not reproduced here. Rather we rely upon your imagination, as a reader, and active viewer. We contend that without your imagination the challenge we set out is futile.

The military veteran in prison connects two criminological themes which have developed at the same time, yet separately. The first refers to studies of war by criminologists, which, since Ruth Jamieson's (1998) seminal chapter, called for a more careful analysis of the complexities connecting war and crime, and which has been dubbed the 'criminology of war'. The second, i.e. scholarship which addressses the sociall and political implications of veteran populations in prison (Treadwell 2016; Murray 2016), forms a 'criminology of

the convicted veteran'. Drawing upon our research partnership and the recent commision of the critical video installation made by artist Katie Davies (and co-author here) with veterans-in-prison titled *The Separate System*[1], we suggest that a theoretical and methodological relationship between visual criminology and socially engaged artistic practice connects these criminological themes.

The Separate System is a collaborative commission produced by military veterans through creative workshops in two prisons. Taking the form of both a single channel cinematic film and a multi-screen immersive installation, the piece explores the distinct ('separate'), yet interconnected, spaces of the military, custody and 'civilian' life. Exploring these spaces and the experiences within them through the notion of work, an everyday activity that unites these worlds and is familiar to us all, the film communicates what we, as a civilian audience, do not understand about the unique set of relations, actions and responsibilities held by the individuals within these spaces. The piece was produced as part of FACT's (Foundation for Art and Creative Technology, the UK's leading media arts centre, based in Liverpool) *Justice* strand of their Learning Programme, a long-term creative digital programme which aims to approach working within the context of the prison system from a critically engaged position.

Viewer, Researcher, and Referee

Having suggested our reasons for writing this chapter, as the research partner (EM), artist (KD) and producer/curator (EG) of this coproduced artwork, it is also necessary to explain our reasons for collaboration. The research partnership is in the first instance a partnership between the 'Reimagining the

[1] The Separate System (2017) Katie Davies with Andy, Billy, Callum, Danny, Gaz, Gaz, Jay, Jonno, Mark, Mark, Paul, Rob and Trevor. Commissioned and produced by FACT. Supported by the Armed Forces Covenant Fund and Paul Hamlyn Foundation. With thanks to HMP Altcourse and HMP Liverpool. Available at https://vimeo.com/228801873

Veteran' research group[2], led by EM and the 'Justice' strand of FACT's communities programme, led (at the time of the commision) by EG. Starting from the premise that experiences of veterans in the criminal justice system required new forms of thinking and analysis, our work together focusses upon the lived-experiences of veteran groups, as shared with us through socially engaged art (SEA). Through a range of narrative visual and participatory methods, defined by commissioned artists, works seek to critically engage with war and justice 'from the margins'. A central tenet of this multidisciplinary exchange is to place the creative agency of veterans at the center of knowledge production and artistic production.

In this mode of collaboration, EM has a carefully defined and continually tested role during production and post-production, or in other words the making of artworks and their *political life beyond the gallery*. Inspired by McNeil (2017) our model suggests a 'community of co-inquiry' which combines creative practice, artists' own research (referred to as practice-as-research), and socially based research designs with knowledge exchange. The collaboration does not lead to specific ownership over artworks produced. It sits outside usual approaches in visual criminology which often 'investigate pre-existing or "found" visual materials', 'produce visual data', or encourage participants to 'produce their own images' to stimulate discussion (Pauwels, 2015, 2017). Instead, our approach suggests a critical dialogue whereby the criminologist-researcher is, at the same time, as a privileged viewer, a researcher, and a 'referee'.

To identify as a privileged viewer is to acknowledge that the artworks are not 'found', produced or co-produced by EM. Yet, through this research partnership, the criminologist-researcher is implicated in them through knowledge exchange which takes place throughout the creative process. While the relationship between criminological research, practice-as-research and traditional art evaluation is reaffirmed at the start of each project the

[2] The Reimagining the Veteran research group is a strand of the 'artivism' project at the Centre for Crime, Criminalisation, and Social Exclusion (CCSE) at Liverpool John Moores University.

overall responsibilities for the criminological work is always understood as 'artivism' (art with activist qualities). Engaging in 'the boundless imagination of art and the radical engagement of politics' (Jordan, 2016:1), artivism proposes artworks as a platform with political currency as artists go further than merely 'represent' injustices. They create cultural commentaries that seek lasting change, and ask of each work a) what can be learnt from its creative methodology, and b) what is the potential of the evidenced or suggested experiences in each work (content or form) to advance, challenge and or impact upon wider academic and political concerns (see Murray and Jackson, 2019). The *Separate System* cannot be analysed without an understanding of the principles which underpin the artist's (KD) philosophical dispositions and practice-as-research. For KD, practice-as-research inhabits a space between academic, research and artwork audiences. Committed to the principles of collaboration mentioned above, Davies aims at producing art with an exhibitable political message. In the remainder of this chapter we will shed light on the potential of our collaboration, detailing the theoretical and methodological knowledge exchange. We will use the format of a conversation between criminologist-researcher, practice-as-research artist, and curator on the occasion of a public screening (and subsequent debate) of the artwork[3].

The Separate System

Elsewhere, a criminological commentary of this work has been offered (Murray and Degenhardt, 2017). Asking what this form of engagement with veterans in custody offers to criminological scholarship on war and the military? And, what might veterans in custody gain through their collaboration with artists? Using three selected stills from the video-installation, i.e. 'The Faceless Body', 'The Space of Separation' and 'Civvie-Street' or 'War

[3] At and event entitled 'To Serve' in April (2017) *The Separate System* was premiered at FACT through a single screen production. Chaired by Emma Murray, a public Q and A followed this screening, taking the form of a conversation between criminology, SEA and FACT's community programme.

Landscape', we reflect upon the personal, symbolic, material, relational and transformative aspects of the veterans' experiences. In the conversation that follows, the intentions of the production and dissemination of the work are shared in an active dialogue with criminology.

EM: What does this artwork hope to achieve?
KD and **EG** explain:
It does not intend to produce or invoke sympathy for the veteran offender;
It does not aim to be specifically critical of the Criminal Justice System or the Military;
It does not offer a 'solution' or an answer;
It does not offer a singular, absolute narrative;
It does not offer its audience a reenactment;
It does not present a biography;
It does not engage in a hierarchy of experiences;
It does not aim to support historical narratives about conflict or to support the instrumental narratives around current conflicts.

EM: These intentions seem to have clear synergies with criminological concerns of 'veteranality', They seem to foreground experience and voice; experience and voice in relation to power, violence and vulnerability. The voice is productive. It tells us as much about power and subjectivity as it does about each individual story (Mazzei *et al* 2009). One cannot claim authenticity or coherence. Yet in bearing witness to the testimonies (Walklate *et al* 2014) we hear a version of their truth, in all its rawness.

On Co-Production

EM: Increasingly those involved in criminological inquiries orient themselves in participatory research. When taking this approach to research one enters into a different form of knowledge production which raises questions of the relationship between data generation and data analysis, and with

'participants' (e.g. the veterans-in-prison), considering participants 'research-partners' or 'co-researchers' (Bergold and Thomas, 2012). For those interested in visual studies, participatory methods (Pauwels, 2015) often address, in part at least, notions of power in dominant visual representations, and indeed the power of representation per se. Co-production is also key to SEA. Could you expand upon its specific approach to participation?

EG: Socially engaged art practices come from a long heritage of art interlaced with political and social contexts, including the Dada and Fluxus movements of the twentieth century, whilst remaining outside of occupying a particular movement or style. SEA instead encompasses a wide range of approaches and methodologies, from new genre public art to community arts. This form of art uniquely operates *within* the social context which it considers, rather than simply representing or responding to a subject. The artist is already an integral member of, or enters into, the community with which they create the work. This necessarily is a space of conflict and contradictions, through which issues of collaboration, authorship and power are revealed, emphasised and consistently negotiated between the various actors involved in the process of artistic production – 'participants', artists, curators, institutional directors, producers, collaborators, organisational professionals, audiences. Artist and educator Pablo Helguera recognises such mutable and contradictory spaces and relationships as being integral to this specific form of practice:

> "...the uncomfortable position of socially engaged art, identified as art yet located between more conventional art forms and the related disciplines of sociology, politics, and the like, is exactly the position it should inhabit. The practice's direct links to and conflicts with both art and sociology must be overtly declared and the tension addressed, but not resolved." (2013: 4)

The particular approach of FACT's Learning Programme team to this practice, as demonstrated in the production of *The Separate System*, is through long-term, deeply embedded strands of artistic research with communities, which takes place over many years. It responds to knowledge developed through the processes and outcomes of each particular project, and consistently builds upon the unique experiences gained through these processes without ever settling into the role of the 'expert' within any one context. This particular approach has been described by Lynn Froggett as being:

> "developed and delivered through collaboration, participation, dialogue, provocation and immersive experiences. The organisations focus on process and seek to embed themselves within the communities among whom they work. This puts them in a position to respond to the specific needs and agendas of communities and hence to widen audience participation." (2010: 7)

Importantly, this ethos of collaborative art production, centered around a process of exchange and mutual learning –whether exploring artistic techniques or developing the conceptual framework for the artwork– is crucial to the formation of the conditions of an agonistic space in which meaningful art is created. And, as noted by Chantal Mouffe (2005) rather than creating a consensus – it is participation, the multiplicity of voices, and the mobilising of democratic ambitions that is the role of critical artistic practice.

What must be understood about the work produced through such processes, and what is unique about the *Justice* programme at FACT, is that it is an artistic programme *operating within* a prison setting but does not fall under the usual parameters of education, time-passing activity or therapy. The intention of the programme is to produce art, art which can be received by audiences and approached with the same level of criticality as any other

work. The work does not seek to provide social solutions or to act as a panacea for its producers but instead to offer the potential to create and communicate a "certain formation of the contemporary world, a certain shaping, a certain perception of self in the world" (Jean-Luc Nancy, 2010: 9).

On Seeing and On Self

> *The relation between what we see and what we know are never settled.*
> (Berger, 1972, 7)

EM: When employing SEA in visual methodologies, particularly by use of technology, seeing and knowing one would assume are essential in any attempt to *communicate* a formative of the world and a perception of self within it. Seeing is never neutral or passive and knowing, subjective (Armstrong, 2017). Accompanying the prevailing imagery of the veterans' place in society is an ever-emerging literature which focuses on the 'veteran' as an 'object' of study, to be understood at a distance. The consequence, as Paul Higate (2013: 107) notes, often is a 'tendency towards atheoretical positive framing', which is driven by "concerns of policy and 'resettlement' turning on instrumental labour market indicators". He continues that when approached this way, concerns of embodiment "are little more than philosophical distractions and may be difficult to translate into tangible policy". At the heart of such a-theoretical work is causation. When I say causation, I refer to those narratives which ask *Why?* Is it the individual pathology of the veteran, their childhood experiences? Is it exposure to the military institution? Is it the business of violence or is it a lack of post-deployment services? Asking '*why?*' dominates. '*Why*' is then quickly followed by *What – what* should the response be?

I am interested in a different analytical point of departure. Much as Mc Sorely (2013) argued when considering the body in a critical analysis of war, I believe that new ways of thinking are important. A starting point is to ask *who*

and how? Who are these men? Who do they claim to be and how do they narrate their 'self'? Who is involved in their representation? Who do they aspire to be? Who do they resist? From whom do they set themselves apart? Upon whose regimes are they produced and assumed (Murray 2015)? How do certain moral, political, economic, military, geopolitical or juridical concerns set the criteria for how subjects are recognised? And, how do those criteria include and exclude? This mode of addressing the issues is bound up with notions of agency. Knowing that the creative agency of veterans as co-artists guided the project, can we explore how identity and agency shaped *The Separate System*?

EG: Issues of identity have been key to the work produced with veterans, relating directly to a context over the past decade in which the very particular identity of the veteran has seen a perhaps unrivalled shift, from obscurity to notoriety. Encouraged by the introduction of the Armed Forces Community Covenant and Armed Forces Day, a process of solidification has taken place in our collective psyche, bringing this community to the fore whilst in doing so also reducing the complexity of that community to a series of hero/victim tropes which appear throughout our contemporary popular media. In becoming an emblem for conflict and nationalism, 'the veteran' becomes an identity for consumption and instrumentalisation. Entangled in political, economic and social agendas, the agency to self-determine one's own identity is undermined as 'the veteran' becomes concretised through reinforcement and repetition across multiple arenas from political briefings to whiskey advertisements. Such 'poetics of relation' are incited by both the real and the mythic to symbolise their causes. The disruption of this absolute identity shaped the production and dissemination of this artwork.

EM: Some time ago now, C. Wright Mills (1959) suggested that scholars should exercise their sociological imagination through the reflective study of biographies. To take this line of enquiry is to subscribe to the belief that "neither the life of an individual not the history of a society can be understood without understanding both' and the 'intricate connections'

between individual biographies, and the subjectivities that are realised, are connected to the 'kinds of history-making in which they might take part" (C. Wright Mills, 1959: 4). To take this line of enquiry is also to pay careful attention to the distinction between 'the personal troubles of milieu" and the "public issues of the social structure" (Ibid, 8). In contemporary western culture, where some have argued that a 'hyper-visual' state prioritises the visual over all other senses (Mellor and Shilling, 1997 cited in Brown and Carrabine, 2017: 3), seeing has a unique sociological purpose. What is most powerful about *The Separate System*, I contend, is how veterans can imagine and then reimagine themselves. Before projecting their body across the prison wall, and knowing that in some way it will now be included, at least in the public spaces which house it. Does this resonate with the journey you have just been on as co-artist?

KD: Created over nine months, the final video installation was produced with two groups of veterans within two prison settings. Significantly, these men were central in shaping the artistic and theoretical underpinnings of the final edit. They decided the final form, edit and narrative structure in collaboration with the artist and this production process was vital and central to these men having agency over how their personal experiences and identities as both veteran and offender would become represented and understood by their audience. It seems important to relay however some of the discussions around identity, the creation of cultural memory and modes of representation that were deliberated constantly throughout the project. Indeed, how the state creates complex and relational representations of itself as a monopoly of power, replacing the brutal reality of conflict with a materially realized appearance. The positioning of the 'us and them', the tactical maintenance of inside and outside and the definition of borders and territories: these are the points of reference that make such imaginings possible. That there are nations and civilizations beyond the immediate boundaries that are inherently different. That these imaginings of a territory must be defended and so must engender massive sacrifices of life.

EM: It is precisely in the sharing of these affective reflections that this work is able to access and express the violence which the veterans embody, and their vulnerability, as both personal and structural. This seems to be particularly poignant in an age when 'war' and 'peace' might not be so easily demarcated and set apart as once may have been the case (Degenhardt 2010, Evans 2013). Could you expand upon how this shaped the final form, edit and narrative structure of the installation (*if* at all)?

KD: The men often spoke about their sense of responsibility to national defense and how one must be prepared to die for one's country. Acting together and imagining the nation under threat is an action of unification. To act on these significations, to 'do your bit, dig for victory, remember that loose lips sink ships or to keep calm and carry on' and to understand that participation through these actions in unifying the community, *is* to form the representation of a nation at war because it is the action itself that produces the meaning of representation. It is within this core polemic and within this imagining of the nation that the veteran offender becomes snared. In this narrative their offence obliterates their protector and often 'Hero' status and much discussion between the groups focused upon how they grappled with their own identity as veteran as they returned home, already singled out as 'other' from the mass of ordinary people and now, having offended, see themselves rubbed out from the narrative of nation and conversations of remembrance: intentionally forgotten and invisible.

On Techniques of Inclusion and Visibility

EM: In this disclosure by veterans that they feel rubbed out from the Nation's memory, we are urged to have a conversation concerning inclusion and visibility. Having this conversation from within a prison makes the invisible even more pressing. On inclusion I'm keen for you to explain your practice in response to the arguments by visual sociologist, David Berreby (2008) that the structure, shape and interaction of the contemporary art milieu excludes rather than includes. A separate but interrelated issue for veterans-in-prison is

visibility through your mode of inclusion. Armstrong (2017, 420) perceptively suggests that "what prison is, arises from how it is represented". She argues that space and function should be understood as relational. To make visible is less about visibility and more about a process which 'transforms the epistemological into the ontological' (Ibid: 420). This is also important for representations of the military. Concerning the 'techniques that make things visible, audible, tangible, knowable' (Mol, 2002 cited in Armstrong. 2017, 420).

KD: Through the installation, the veterans have the opportunity to create a zone of inclusivity through their use of footage, edit structure, sound, space and scale to really connect with their audience on their own terms. By inclusivity, we mean that a dialogic relationship between artwork and audience is not only formed but becomes paramount for this project. This distinguishes video installation from other types of cinematic experience which demand a spectator audience. Focusing on the specific dialogue that video installation seeks to initiate through multiple modes of address, *The Separate System* is concerned not with a formal analysis but with the discursive and paradoxically public space of the private experience that video installation creates through artwork-viewer inclusivity.

Smithson (1971) recalls that spectatorship is an immobilisation of body and mind as passive, mute and still and that, "somewhere at the bottom of my memory are the sunken remains of all the films I have ever seen, good and bad they swarm together forming cinematic mirages, stagnant pools of images that cancel each other out" (Smithson 1996, 138). Smithson bemoans the morass of images, which he refers to as a flux contained within the rectangle of the movie screen, with no intelligible order:

> "No sooner have we fixed the order in our mind than it dissolves into limbo. Tangled jungles, blind paths, secret passages, lost cities invade our perception. The sites in films are not to be located or trusted. All is out of proportion. Scale inflates or deflates into uneasy dimensions. We wander between the towering and the bottomless. We are lost

> between the abyss within us and the boundless horizons outside us" (1996, 141).

Smithson understood the cinematic experience as wrapping spectators in an uncertainty of narrative, truth and situation, their immobility to intervene rendering the film goer to be ' a captive of sloth…the hermit dwelling among the elsewhere, forgoing the salvation of reality' (Smithson, 1996, 141). It is this distinction of the cinematic -as endless blur in flux– that led to the conceptual positioning of *The Separate System*. How can the nuanced journeys and experiences of these veterans be represented as a mode of empathetic address, as a sense of presence that can become more of a discussion and questioning rather that a narrative transcription?

This question was discussed constantly across the 46 sessions in both prisons as the project developed and what emerged was a determination to call upon the embodied knowledge and social experience of the audience as performer. Triggering their own social experiences and understanding became our goal and our intention was to call on their understandings of the social order, of their own individual private and public feelings about how their identities become represented and performed within the fabric of society. Drawing on Claire Bishop:

> "An installation of art is secondary in importance to the individual works it contains, while in a work of installation art, the space, and the ensemble of elements within it, are regarded in their entirety as a singular entity." (2005, 6).

Through its representations, partly narrative, partly a description of events, situations and political motives, it was our collective hope that immersion in the installation would make tangible the veterans' experiences of transgressing social boundaries precisely because of the situational positioning that video installation presents its audience as participants.

Implicating the Audience

EM: Mitchell (2002, 166) argues for an approach to visual culture which disables what is familiar and self-evident in the methodology of seeing, in such a way that seeing itself is the problematic, what we see 'a mystery to be unraveled'. This seems important for how you position and perceive the audience. As a privileged viewer, researcher and chair, I was aware of the project's aspirations and content. Yet, at the single channel cinematic screen premiere, and at the two-screen immersive installation, I watched the audience intently until I realised I was part of it. Stood in the space *between* the military institution and the institution of the prison – I was stood in 'Civvie-Street'. As obvious as that may seem, I (perhaps ignorantly) believed I knew the work. Yet, to be a spectator is an activity in which, as Rancière writes:

> "There is no more a privileged form than there are privileged starting points. Everywhere there are starting points, intersections and junctions that enable us to learn something new if we refuse, firstly radical resistance, secondly the distribution of roles, and thirdly the boundaries between territories." (2009, 17)

I may well have been aware of the work's ambitions and content, but the space it affords its audience cannot be prepared for –only participated in. We have heard how important the imagined audience was to veterans as they exercised their creative agency through this production. How important was the imagined agency of the audience in those deliberations?

KD: Key to the construction of installative video work is that the viewer physically enters a designated viewing space and, unlike the viewing space of painting, sculpture, or that in the tangle of indexical meanings for the cinematic spectator, the video installation is to be regarded as cinema's antithesis, as the context of the artwork is site specific. The main aim of this installation, comprising of four projections and surround sound, was to

understand a narrative of Sovereign violence demarcated across three territories; the conflict zone, the return to the public space and the eventual incarceration within the judicial system. Entering the installation along a narrow corridor which opens out into a large room, two eight-foot video projections on opposing walls represent the aspects of the conflict zone and the prison cell and the further two projections show subtitles relating to these two large projections. The sounds of these spaces are, in turn, located with the two video images while from the corridor, the continual sound of the prison is ever present and at times bleeds across into the main space where the audience stand: the public space.

For this reason, the viewer's presence in the space is vital, as they occupy their current position in relation to the veterans. Their own place and identity in society. This physical positioning of the audience was thoughtfully conceived by the veterans through their own critical engagement, demarcating the first aspect of the installation: that it makes a direct address to the viewer (setting up a dialogue) and subsequently their presence and engagement with that dialogue creates a totality, completing the context for the artwork.

The production process and creating the installation was their opportunity to reclaim their positions in the public performance space. Firstly, through exclusive staging or a negotiation of terms around what the artwork is representing and secondly, by making the installation space itself the context for public performativity (both imaginatively and physically) by establishing a discursive and meaningful dialogue with an audience and by including the audience. Therefore, how the audience understands the artwork is akin to a pseudo co-authorship between the audience and the artists-veterans. *The Separate System* reinstates the audience's interpretive perspective within a representation of public space precisely because both the veterans and the audience via the artwork produce its meaning.

EM: Understanding 'public space' in this way is to call into question discursive processes of identification once more. Unveiling dominant hegemonies to one's audience, in what Chantel Mouffe (2005, 165) refers to as an 'agonistic public space', is arguably to question social relations and social order through personal reflection.

KD: The audience of this new theatre reflect not on what is real in these literal scenarios, but on what is real in their reflection. This is a reality of multiple versions and ambiguous truths as the imagination writ large. Imagination forms contrary to the process of memory. Rather than an introspective turn back to the known and understood of the memory loop, the imaginative process projects forward in the absence of the empirical evidence or factual truths because it is a practice in process, a strategy of anticipation. As memory and imagination are dialectically bound through mindfulness, it is only through calling on what can be collectively remembered (drawn from the resource of cultural memory) that the installation audience are in the position to form their new critical community, narrating new constructions as they engage in a continual and iterative process of imaginative construction because of the mnemonic participation of remembering.

Claire Bishop (notes an initiation of a bodily response remarking that within the installation we are more than a pair of disembodied eyes that survey the work from a remove or distance. Rather:

> "Installation art presupposes an embodied viewer whose sense of touch; smell and sound are as heightened as their sense of vision. This insistence on the literal presence of the viewer is arguably the key characteristic of installation art." (2005, 6)

In order to understand the core principles of video installation and the direct address that installation proposes, it is vital to examine the set of equivalences and oppositions that underpin and form the strategy of its critical dialogue. Rancière (2009, 2), places "the question of the participation

of the spectator at the heart of the discussion of the relations between art and politics" and he does so through a rationale of the political implications of theatrical spectacle. Referencing the multiple critiques of the theatrical spectacle, Rancière confidently proposes that throughout its history, the critique of spectacle "can in effect be boiled down to one basic formula" which he positions as "the paradox of the spectator … This paradox is easily formulated: there is no theatre without a spectator" (2009, 2). He continues to explore the passivity of the spectator, seated and immobile and separated from the ability to know and without the agency to act. Rancière understands this separation as an enforced ignorance precisely because there is no opportunity for the viewer to take action, hence their position and definition as spectator to the developing theatrical scene noting:

> "What the theatrical scene offers them is the spectacle of pathos, the manifestation of an illness, that of desire and suffering –that is to say, the self-division which derives from ignorance. The particular effect of theatre is to transmit this illness by means of another one: the illness of the gaze in thrall to shades." (2009, 3).

His notion is that passivity and therefore lack of agency and action manifests as a dividing mechanism or as a desire for illusion and inactivity from the spectators themselves, forming a mode of oppressed obedience. From this principle, Rancière also draws on the contrary and deduces that a "true community is therefore one that does not tolerate theatrical mediation; one in which the measure that governs the community is directly incorporated into the living attitudes of its members" (Rancière, 2009, 3). This sentiment of communal recognition is supported by Benedict Anderson's (1991, 6) statement that "communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined", precisely because they are engaged in the act of participation via imagination.

Inherent within Rancière's paradox -that there is no theatre without a spectator- is the truth that the two terms are dialectically bound. One opposes and defines the other through their negation. Observing the potential in these oppositions, Rancière also points to the dialectical relationship between the collective and the individual and that, if a lack of action and agency creates the self-division of the individual, then conversely a choreography of sentiments and wills could activate a new kind of spectator and as such, a new kind of spectacle. This community where, as Rancière (2009, 5) suggests, "no one remains a static spectator", rather "everyone must move in accordance with the community rhythm", creates a group opposed to the self-divided individual to form a community of "selfpresence" and a community whose individual and collective agency forms an active power -and of course a new kind of theatre as well.

It is in forming this dialogue with an audience and demanding their imaginative participation, rather than benefiting from their seduction as spectator, that the veterans involved transform their audience -from spectator to participant via their own imaginative engagement. In the broadest sense, imagination is used as a way to visualise either what has already been seen and experienced or conversely, what may be about to transpire. Imaginative capabilities also conjure up what is not there, what is not physically present or known to be true. A significant aspect of the imaginative process relies on an ability to recall, using memories to reconstruct what has already been experienced in order to make imaginative constructions of any kind.

Therefore, it was intention of the co-artists to create an "immediate and localised aesthetic intervention" (Broadhurst 1999, 169), demanding of their audience a quality beyond mere spectatorship as they enter into a process of critical deconstruction through imaginative engagement. To make use of the imaginative capacity or the memory of their audience requires creating a concealment of part of their narrative. This concealment, forming the rupture or gap within the artwork, is the strategy by which each installation

makes its artistic address: to ask the audience to participate in their completion by bridging this gap with their own imaginative projections.

Also: by setting up a process of making strange what we understand as familiar. The installation space of *The Separate System* directly challenges its audience to instigate an awareness of public memory, historical narrative, public space and communal experience by asking them to work on what is being proposed through collective engagement. The very nature of the installation zone, demarcated within the gallery space, has its own protocol and its own cultural parameters which are defined as everything that is oppositional to the lethargy and passivity of sitting and watching the cinema of spectacle. The installation space is shared, open in the sense that it initiates the mobility of the viewer to approach and encounter the work. Most significantly it is communal, containing temporal rhythms and cycles and as a whole poses rhetorical questions or open-ended propositions and challenges. Here the artistic narrative to be experienced and entered into is in conjunction with the audience's capacity or inclination for engagement.

EM: In revealing our (i.e. the audience's) aesthetic sensibilities and encouraging our own narration, we might say that the audience then in turn embodies the liminal spaces once occupied by the work's production. There is a form of political participation which, by virtue of its unpredictability, has the potential to 'de-position' their world view. The audience is faced with a "tangled bundle of coexisting logics, each beating to its own rhythm' which must be 'apprehended' before 'comprehended'" (Allen, 2011 cited in Armstrong, 2017, 422).

KD: Enabled by a physical positioning of the body, this physical and intellectual capacity constitutes the definition of the embodied experience, but what this embodiment constitutes is a *destabilisation* of what the viewer sees and feels and what they know to be true. The viewer is therefore called to question their subjectivity within the decentering process, activating their critical faculties. It is by proposing an allegorical account in which aspects of the narrative are concealed that video installation makes its claims to

audience participation by demanding their complicity as the narrator, their own imaginative constructions revealing what is left unsaid and un-signified. This is what constitutes audience agency, as the right to have their say in the meaning of what the artwork represents to them as agency does not come without the work of action, participation and collaboration. This agency forms a dialogue between the veterans as artists and the audience that takes place through the mediation of the meaning.

A Concluding Note

You never look at me from the place which I see you.
Jacques Lacan (1977)

EM: I'll close our conversation by asking what the criminologist-researcher might learn from this creative methodology? And, what might we take from it (in an artivist sense) in our endeavours to effect change? And in our attempt to occupy the space in between the field of 'criminology of war' or 'criminology of the veteran' questions now arise, such as: What does it mean to have served in the British military and to then serve a prison sentence for a violent offence? What does it mean to participate in the audience? Finally, what does it mean for artist-veterans themselves? Through the narratives spoken over the moving images of *The Separate System* we witness both the personal and structural violence expressed by the artists-veterans. However, it is important to note that when presented with this opportunity to reimagine (and reproduce) themselves to their imagined and implicated audience, KD and veterans chose 'work' as the central theme, thereby resisting a predictable rehearsals of the violent spectacles of both State institutions which shape their political identities and separate them. Instead, through the frame of 'work' in the military and in the prison, they overcome that separation. Through their audible narratives and selected imagery, the difficulties of transferring that work and their skills into the civilian space is

shared. The connections between a criminology of war and a criminology of the veteran is the public space –placing us all in the middle. The choreographed imagery of the veteran is thereby re-organised through the notion of work. Collaborative work.

Immersive installation at FACT, 2018.

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