Queensland University of Technology

Wild Release:

Making Albums for Audiences in a Short-form Economy

by

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Statement of Original Authorship

"The work contained in this thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for an award at this or any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made."

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 4

ABSTRACT 5

INTRODUCTION 6

CONTEXTUAL REVIEW 9

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND PROPOSED WORK 18

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK & METHODOLOGY 19
- Narrative theory as conceptual framework 19
- Practice-led Research: Definition, challenges and a solution 22

THE CREATIVE PRACTICE AND OUTCOMES 25
  - Mode of Practice One: Fieldings as release and distribution experiment 26
  - Mode Of Practice Two: Fieldings as a set of aesthetic and musical rules 28
  - Mode Of Practice Three: Fieldings as a character I play 30
- Uncovering of meta-narrative tools for future use 33

CONCLUSION 36
- Should artists continue to release records? 36
- Summary 37

APPENDICES 39
- Appendix A - References & Precedents 39
- Appendix B - Creative Output 40
- Appendix C - Social Media Style 41
- Appendix D - Fieldings Press Collateral 42

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ABSTRACT

The importance of making full length albums has been questioned in light of recent changes in the music industry, and there have been a variety of responses on the part of artists and labels. Many of these responses have been highly specific, and may not lend themselves to being scaled up effectively or to innovative ways of rethinking the relationship between artists and fans. Here I make the case that responses thus far are lacking, and point to the need for more broadly applicable and sustainable response techniques. Using a practice-led research project, I seek out such response techniques. I explore three modes of practice: creating a release and distribution experiment; creating a set of aesthetic musical rules; and creating a character for performance. Following this I detail new operational knowledge in the form of narrative tools each mode of practice has uncovered, demonstrating the potency of using narrative tools in order to (re)engage audiences with the album as a musical form.

INTRODUCTION

There is a tense discourse, both scholarly and in mainstream music press, surrounding the continued relevance and commercial viability of the album in the digital age. It is wide-ranging and complex, with multiple perspectives expressed by both proponents and critics of the relevance today of the album in popular music. It inevitably leads to the question: should artists and labels continue to produce and release albums at all? This question in turn points to a key operational challenge faced by recording musicians in the contemporary music industry landscape about how artists might (re)engage audiences with the album format, both in terms of listening and purchase.

Here I seek solutions to this key operational challenge via a targeted exploration of the current popular music industry landscape in the United States, United Kingdom and Australia as well as my own experience as an independent musician, producing and releasing music in Australia. First, I attend to current arguments both for and against the continued production and release of albums, and "unpack" responses to the tension created by this discourse. I pinpoint two key weaknesses in responses thus far: firstly, their specificity (and therefore lack of scalability); and secondly, their continued reliance on a relationship between artist and fan that is largely commercially transactional. Based on these two weaknesses, I outline my avenues of enquiry for this research: namely, (1) *How can we utilise the trend towards short-form digital consumption to re-engage audiences with long-form works?* (2) *What techniques can we apply to the creation of long-form musical works that make them conducive to short-form delivery? (3) How can we approach Questions 1 and 2 while maintaining a strong and meaningful sense of authorial agency?*

Following this, I make the case for narrative theory as a vital conceptual framework for this research, pointing to key principles which allow for the reframing of my creative work and its outcomes in such

a way that leads to new operational knowledge in the form of narrative tools. I pay particular attention to the way such a framework enables the destabilization of the accepted relationship in the music industry between audience (fans), author (artist) and text (album). I also briefly define and explore practice-led research, showcasing its potency as a methodology for answering my research questions.

Finally, I examine my creative practice in critical detail, including its proposed design, execution, and outcomes (both successes and challenges). I detail three specific modes of practice: creating a release and distribution experiment; creating a set of aesthetic musical rules; and creating a character for performance – exploring precedents and inspiration, as well as the work itself and responses to the work. I conclude by demonstrating how each mode of practice led to the discovery of new operational knowledge in the form narrative tools. I show how each narrative tool is flexible and able to be used by artists at multiple levels of the industry, and capable of shifting the questions and challenges confronting artists regarding the continued importance of making and releasing albums.

Given this exegesis is centrally concerned with relevance of the album, it's essential to define it as a term. Throughout, I use the word 'album' to refer to musical works by artists that fit the post-Beatles era conception of an album: works that tend to be thematically or narratively unified, or could be considered intentional 'artistic utterances' (Letts, 2010). This definition of the album comes, in part, from the fact that the 33 ⅓ rpm long-playing record could fit more music than any format before it: roughly 40 minutes. With the LP, labels and artists saw an opportunity to repackage collections of old singles as something new, and these "anthologies", as Hajdu puts terms them, brought with them the need for a "anthologizing rationale". Further, as the format rose in popularity rock and pop artists began to understand and use the album as a creative form, rather than a sales and marketing technique for generating new interest in old material (2016). Given the notion of album as 'artistic statement' springs from practical length considerations, it is important to point to these in this definition. With regards to length, I use the iTunes definition, which requires albums to be identified as EPs if they have "one to three songs with one song at least 10 minutes long and a total running time of 30 minutes or less,

or four to six songs with a total running time of 30 minutes or less.” (‘iTunes Store Music Style Guide’, 2017). Based on this,

any release with seven or more songs, or fewer than seven songs but a running length of more than 30 minutes is classified as an album.

CONTEXTUAL REVIEW

In this section, I explore discourses about the role and value of the album, and the kinds of arguments offered both for and against the continued production and release of albums. I discuss economic, cultural and behavioural trends on both sides of the argument. I also analyse several “responses” by artists and labels to this discourse, and point to two emerging trends: disruptive *release* tactics, and disruptive *distribution* tactics. Further, I use the operational challenge of engaging audiences with albums as a measure for the effectiveness of each example response. Namely, did the artist manage to engage audiences with their album as an album, and to what extent? I make the case that responses thus far – while often effective as one-off approaches – have failed to provide models, tactics or tools that can be utilised by artists at different levels of the industry in a sustainable way. Through this critical approach, I set the stage for exploration of the album in my own research: the proposed work, conceptual framework, methodology, creative executions and outcomes.

Evidence for and against the continued production and release of albums can be found in economic and cultural contexts, as well as in the behaviour of audiences. From an economic standpoint, the record-breaking sales performance of global pop stars’ records (Beyoncé, Adele, Taylor Swift) forms an argument for the album as commercially viable and “worthwhile” form of music production and release. However, this is undercut by an overall decline in albums sales year-on-year and the rise of streaming services. The music press’s canonization of albums demonstrates a continued cultural importance, but this is complicated by the ongoing discourse (often in the same publications) regarding the impending “death of the album”. In addition, the rise in vinyl sales provides broad evidence of a musical culture in which albums are still important to artists and audiences alike, and therefore still relevant and important to produce and release (Sarpong, Dong, & Appiah, 2016).

Recent record-breaking sales by global pop-stars, in terms of both speed and volume, make a clear (if limited) economic argument for the album format’s continued commercial viability. For example, in 2013, Beyoncé’s self-titled album sold 828,773 copies (as digital download) worldwide in its first

three days to become the fastest-selling album in the history of the iTunes Store (Caulfield, 2013). In a similar fashion, Taylor Swift's *1989* sold 1.2 million in its first week (Caulfield, 2014), a figure surpassed in the U.S. only by Adele's *25* which sold 3.3 million in its first week (Caulfield, 2015). These albums did not just sell in large numbers, they did so rapidly, showing that, at least for established stars, the album can be a format very much "worth" producing and releasing. However, evidence from long-term music industry sales statistics, the rise of streaming, on-demand music services and the predominance of singles weakens the argument for the continued production and release of albums. For example, Covert (2013) shows RIAA data that tracks physical versus digital sales from the 1970s to 2012. From the advent of iTunes there is a clear shift, not just from physical to digital sales but from the purchase of albums to the purchase of singles. In 2000, Americans bought close to a one billion CD albums and digital sales were negligible. This shifted by 2007, when digital singles overtook whole album CDs, selling 819 million units compared with 500 million units. However, despite a generalisable long-term trend away from the sale of physical albums and toward singles and digital streaming, recent available data paints a more complicated picture. Data from mid-2016 shows a continued decline in album sales of approximately -14% from 2015 to 2016 ("United States 2016 Mid-Year Music Report," 2016). Taken on its own, this is further evidence to suggest a declining relevance of the album. This conclusion is muddied when taking into account an even larger decline in single sales for the same period of -24.4% from 2015 to 2016 (Christman, 2016), as well as the continued rise of on-demand audio streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music, and Tidal. While the decline in single sales (or music sales of any kind) can be attributed at least in part to the rise of streaming services, it is harder to draw conclusions regarding what that rise says about the relevance of the album as a format. Reports from industry bodies such as RIAA and APRA/AMCOS – along with data available from the streaming services themselves – tend to speak to total revenues or total number of songs streamed ("2016 Mid-Year RIAA Shipment and Revenue Statistics," 2016; "APRA AMCOS Year in Review 2014 - 2015", 2015). Spotify Insights produces a large volume of data, but this tends to be psychographic or pop-culture based. For instance, Van Buskirk uses Spotify Insights to reveal that listeners prefer acoustic and traditional music in Autumn, but beach-oriented genres in Summer (2016a); that people prefer listening to the Beatles on a Thursday (2016b); and to

reveal the listening habits of US college students (2015). Without visibility around individual album streams it is not possible to make a definitive statement regarding what streaming data says about the continued production and release of albums. However, emphasis by industry bodies and streaming services on total revenue, total streams and consumer behaviour shows album streams and sales being less pertinent to how success is *measured*, suggesting the production and release of albums may be considered less critical overall than in previous eras.

If the economic evidence suggests making and releasing albums is only "worth" it for an elite few artists, the language that the music press use to write about albums serves to complicate the argument. In particular, there is a lionization and canonization of albums most obvious in taste-making publications that points to the importance of the album as a cultural object. A case for this is made by "unpacking" small sections of language from two Pitchfork reviews: Greene's (2016) review of Kanye West's *The Life of Pablo* and Berman's (2016) review of Empress Of's *Me*. Greene describes ...*Pablo* as "the first album that's just an album … it's probably his first full-length that won't activate a new sleeper cell of 17-year-old would-be rappers and artists". Firstly, the phrase "the first album that's just an album" implies previous Kanye West albums have higher than typical cultural influence. Second, the term "sleeper cell" with its terrorism associations is evocative on its own, but as a descriptor for "17-year-old-would-be rappers and artists" becomes even more powerful because it combines an evocation of intense violent acts with the potent creativity of youth. Taken as a whole, the quote attributes a level of cultural influence to Kanye West albums beyond that of a regularly successful rapper. It implies that Kanye West albums are usually not *only* albums: they are cultural objects that spark creative movements and youthful uprisings. This in turn implies that albums in general can and do have cultural significance. Berman provides a second example, describing Empress Of as an artist "stepping up as an avant-R&B auteur with pop star potential—like a Björk unleashing her inner Beyoncé." In this example, using the term "avant-R&B auteur" adjacent to the term "pop star" implies that Empress Of is someone who has enough talent and indie credibility to craft an album that is a complex statement piece as well as someone who has looks and hooks enough for wide-appeal. The subsequent comparison to a Björk/Beyoncé figure emphasises and crystallizes

these ideas. This language implies that the album *Me* is more than just another debut release: it paints *Me* as an artistic step forward that places Empress Of in the same frame as two of contemporary music's most venerated artists. While these are two very specific examples, it is worth noting publications like Pitchfork tend to (re)produce this kind of discourse over and again, canonizing albums by artists both established and new, and pointing to the cultural importance of such albums. This reinforces artists' and audiences' understanding of the album format as worthy of continued production and release. At odds with this is the nearly two decades long discourse surrounding the album's impending death. The rise of peer-to-peer networks towards the end of the 1990s is strongly associated with the music industry's ongoing claims of crisis (Arditi, 2013; Preston & Rogers, 2013), and concerns about the death of the album arose from this broader conversation. Banerjee (2004) discusses the death of the album, pointing to digital downloads as the cause, while more recently, Walker (2014) refers to the album as the "latest victim" of digital music and streaming. Similarly, Ellis-Peterson (2014) points to playlists as taking over from the album for the "short-attention span generation" citing variety and the opportunity to listen to music curated by celebrities among reasons for this shift.

Finally, there are two related trends in audience behaviour that provide arguments for and against continuing to produce and release albums: first, the rise in purchase of vinyl albums, and second, the identification of a new kind of music listener who streams, skips and is spoilt for choice. Sales of vinyl albums have increased year-on-year since the mid-2000s (Negus, 2015; Brennan, 2017). The numbers make up a small piece of total industry revenue at around 2% (Sarpong, Dong & Appiah, 2015), but point to a specific and significant music consumption behaviour that supports the notion that artists should continue to produce and release albums. Woodward and Bartminski (2015) look beyond sales figures to understand why this small but devoted group of consumers has contributed to the re-emergence of a retro-format. By contrast to Negus, who discusses vinyl as a fetishized object, Woodward and Bartminski explore the historical link between the physical long player record and the album as an artform. They point to the notion that vinyl records were "materially designed for the idea of an album as a listening experience" (p. 8). Listening on vinyl means listening to a record from start

to finish and paying close attention to when the disc needs to be flipped. The rise of vinyl albums sales demonstrates not just renewed interest in the object itself, but in the act of deeper listening, from beginning to end, of the musical work the object represents and contains. In contrast to this is the emerging model of prototypical contemporary music consumers. Negus describes the new music consumer as less loyal than the conventional, "imagined" music fan. This consumer seeks access to music (over ownership) and is confronted by vast, often overwhelming choice. Lamere (2014) explores the act of "skipping" as a key behaviour for this new consumer, showing that close to 50% of songs on Spotify are skipped before they finish. Negus digs into this behaviour to further define the new music consumer:

> The artistic impulse for coherent albums and artistic statements is irrelevant, far less interesting than forum discussion with other fans, or a hundred related pop-up tangential issues. The new music consumer assumes the ability to shuffle or dip into decontextualized tracks with no awareness of history and background, qualities, and knowledge usually conveyed with the physical package. (p. 156)

Additionally, starting with the rise of "free culture" and peer-to-peer networks and continuing with services like Spotify and YouTube, this new consumer is likely to value music, both in economic and cultural terms, differently than in the past (Lessig, 2014; Rogers, 2013). They are the music consumers who opt for playlist curation and the use of streaming services over purchasing on iTunes, or going to an actual record store ("United States 2016 Mid-Year Music Report", 2016).

There is strong evidence on both sides of the argument for the continued production and release of albums, but it is important to highlight that evidence for and against is not mutually exclusive. While established global stars can still sell and make significant money from albums, the vast majority of artists cannot and album sales are still on the decline. Often the music publications that canonize an album or publish end-of-year "Best Of" lists, are the same publications proclaiming the album's death. There is a vocal and passionate group of makers and consumers who are invested in the album

as a format, but for many consumers, streaming, shuffling and skipping is the listening practice *du jour*. This paints a complex picture of the research question: Should artists continue to produce and release records? Despite significant shifts in behaviour and technology, there appears to be a strong desire for the album to remain culturally relevant (and hopefully commercially viable). This leads to a key operational challenge for all artists regarding how to (re)engage audiences with the album, and responses to it elucidate just how formidable a challenge it can be.

Responses fall into two main categories: disruptive *release* tactics and disruptive *distribution* tactics. Here I will explore each category of response, giving artist-based examples and discussing each example's effectiveness in addressing the operational challenge of engaging audiences with albums. It is important to note, however, that the degree to which such tactics are successful is likely to depend on the profile of the artist in question as much as the innovative or provocative spirit of the release or distribution method itself (Arditi, 2013; Battan, 2014). As such, measuring the effectiveness of each response with regards to engaging audiences requires considering the context of previous release tactics and their results.

Disruptive release tactics include surprise albums, artist leaks and album release as spectacle. Zoladz (2015) highlights a trend toward the sudden or "surprise" release online of albums by pop and rock artists. These tactics respond to the key operational challenge of engaging audiences with albums by making a bold and novel grab for the attention of the new music consumer and the music press. Notable examples of the surprise or leaked album include Radiohead's *The King Of Limbs* (2011), which was released by surprise a day ahead of schedule and with little pre-promotion (Leas, 2015); Björk's *Vulnicura* (2015), which was deliberately released months early in order to draw attention away from unofficial leaks (Brown, 2015); Beyoncé's visual album *Lemonade* (2016) released as a viewing event on HBO, pre-promoted with a provocative Super Bowl performance and initially only available to stream on TIDAL (Wilson, 2016); and Brooklyn indie band Tanlines' humorous roll out their album *Highlights* in mid-2015 with a Google Calendar invites to preview it via conference call (DeVille, 2015).

In terms of effectiveness, Radiohead's *The King Of Limbs* did engage audiences by creating a sudden buzz and selling 400, 000 copies through the band's website alone. However, Leas notes the initial "fevered excitement" diminished in the following weeks as the album was deemed, by fans and critics alike, as lacking in comparison to previous Radiohead albums, in particular *In Rainbows* which boasted much higher sales and sustained attention (Thompson, 2008). By contrast, Björk's sudden release of *Vulnicura* was not a premeditated move. According to Brown, days after discovering the album had been illegally leaked, Björk and her team made the decision to offer a digital pre-order of the entire album on iTunes. Though there was some negative fallout, with distribution partners refusing to work further with Björk due to diminished physical sales, the album debuted at number 20 on the Billboard 200 with 23,000 sales in its first week. Björk's previous record *Biophilia* only sold 15, 000 in its first week (Brown, 2014). The effectiveness of Beyoncé's release of *Lemonade* as experience or spectacle is typified by the cultural impact that it made, starting with a Super Bowl performance described in the *New York Times* as a moment of "political ascent" (Caramanica, Morris, & Wortham, 2016). This impact continued with the broadcast of the complete visual album, consumed by close to 800,000 viewers on the night of its release (Callegari, 2016), and rounded out its press cycle with months of cultural commentary, critical praise and a formidable social media footprint (Hoffman, 2017). In terms of sales, *Lemonade* is Beyoncé's worst performing album, but the events surrounding its release arguably make it her most impactful. Finally, Tanlines' release of *Highlights* via conference call can be shown as effective in gathering indie buzz for the band, with articles appearing on Stereogum, Pitchfork, The Verge and Rolling Stone. In addition, the most streamed song on Spotify from the record has in excess of 1.7 million listens.

Disruptive distribution tactics include pay-what-you-want, legal bit torrent download, and novel or anachronistic physical formats such as cassettes, 7" vinyl, sheet music, USBs hidden inside other objects, and accompanying collateral (zines, newspaper albums). These tactics can be seen as attempts to address the operational challenge of engaging audiences with albums by playfully and provocatively subverting trends towards short-form digital consumption. Notable examples include

Radiohead's 2007 pay-what-you-want release of *In Rainbows*, Beck's 2012 release of *Song Reader* as a book of sheet music, and LA-based singer-songwriter Emperor X release of various titles by burying cassettes and sharing the GPS coordinates online. The effectiveness of Radiohead's experiment is evident in album sales, with *In Rainbows* selling in the millions (including 1.75 million in physical CDs), while previous Radiohead albums had only sold in the hundreds of thousands. Thompson notes that the buzz created by the (then) unconventional approach is likely to have led to this spike in sales. Beck's *Song Reader* was effective in a similar manner, spawning swathes of concerts in local music scenes across the world, and thousands of covers of the album's songs across the web (Roig & San Cornelio, 2016). Conversely, Emperor X garnered attention from NPR and Pitchfork, but admitted he had little idea who was listening if anyone (Greenspan, 2010).

The examples discussed here show a range of mostly established artists, seeking either to subvert or capitalize on shifts in technology and audience behaviour. To varying degrees each response was successful in its attempt to address the key operational challenge of how to engage audiences with albums: at the very least generating buzz that may not have been generated otherwise. However, none of these responses is particularly scalable as a solution: pay-what-you-want downloads and video albums may work for Radiohead and Beyoncé but these ideas probably will not work for a local band in a local scene (Arditi, 2015). Beyond this, most of the tactics described above treat the relationship between artist and fan as a commercial transaction. That is, an artist makes a product (album) and fans wishing to listen are asked to pay money for that product (album). In addition, these responses all seek to control (to varying degrees) the way a fan interacts with an album by asking that it be considered *and* consumed as a single product or in a particular way, and mostly ignoring the ever-evolving ways that fans and consumers are interacting with music. With these issues in mind, the key operational challenge of how to engage audiences with albums remains unanswered to some extent, and there is a notable need for responses to this challenge that are scalable (can be used by artists at any level) and that explore possibilities beyond a relationship of commercial transaction.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND PROPOSED WORK

My research seeks to meaningfully address the tension and key operational challenges described above by uncovering methods for engaging audiences with albums that are applicable at any level of the industry. In order to do this, I have focused on three questions:

> (1) *How can we utilise the trend towards short-form digital consumption to re-engage audiences with long-form works?*
>
> (2) *What techniques can we apply to the creation of long-form musical works that make them conducive to short-form delivery?*
>
> (*3) How can we approach Questions 1 and 2 while maintaining a strong and meaningful sense of authorial agency?*

To answer these questions, I undertook a practice-led research project between 2013 and 2015. I created a new musical act named Fieldings, based around a distribution and release experiment wherein I wrote and produced a full-length album over time and serialised its release. I released collections of one to three songs every few months, utilising a set of aesthetic guidelines to ensure cohesion and further exploring these guidelines through Fieldings as an artistic alter-ego. In addition, I sought to destabilise the nature of the relationship between artist and audience as one of commercial transaction, by using key concepts from narrative theory to frame and "unpack" my creative practice, and identifying how this in turn contributed to the uncovering of new operational knowledge. Though this creative practice has been quite specific, throughout this exegesis I will show how it uncovers new operational knowledge which is applicable to artists at any stage of their career.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK & METHODOLOGY

Narrative theory as conceptual framework

> Narratology concerns the study of narrative and proposes the isolation of characteristics common to all narratives whether they be literary, filmic, musical or painterly ... [Narrative theory] functions less as a determinant of meaning and more as an indicator of the ways that texts are endowed with meaning in general. (Childs & Fowler, 2006, pp. 151 - 152)

At each stage of research, I have used narrative theory as the conceptual scaffolding for designing, implementing and reflecting on my approach. I have focused on exploring the notion that a text is a communicative event between author and audience and therefore inherently unstable in meaning. Specifically, I have drawn on narrative theory to inform my critical understanding of the relationship between author, audience and text—whether in relation to making meaning through musical texts or in assessing the outcomes of my creative practice. In order to understand my own creative practice using narrative theory, I have utilised and expanded on a number of terms defined by Phelan (1996, p. 5): *narrative worlds*, referring to digital and non-digital spaces as cultural context and storytelling devices; the *narrator*, referring to the artist as narrator, story-teller and creator of musical and lyrical style; and *character* as artist-creation and as the result of artist narrative.

Before exploring the notion of a text as a form of communication (between author and audience) that is unstable in meaning, let us briefly consider an alternative: one where neither author nor audience are valued in judging the success of a work. Wimsatt and Beardsley (1998) argue that a text alone should be the source for understanding and judging the success of that text. They suggest that the "design or intention of the author is neither available nor desirable" to the process of assigning a text meaning or merit (p. 749). For example, if examining 'For Emma' – from the Bon Iver record *For Emma, Forever Ago* (2008), an album where artist Justin Vernon sequestered himself in a cabin in the

woods post relationship break-up – Wimsatt and Beardsley would have us look only at the music and lyrics:

> *(So apropos:*
> *Saw death on a sunny snow)*
>
> *"For every life..."*
>
> *"Forgo the parable."*
>
> *"Seek the light."*
>
> *"...My knees are cold."*
>
> *(Running home, running home, running home, running home...)*
>
> *"Go find another lover;*
> *To bring a...to string along!"*
> *"With all your lies*
> *You're still very lovable."*
>
> *"I toured the light; so many foreign roads for Emma, forever ago."*

Superficially, we might glean from the line breaks that the lyric represents a conversation. We might also interpret that scene to be in Winter (*"Saw death upon a sunny snow"* and "*... My knees are cold"*) and between two people in a romantic relationship ("Go find another lover"). If we were to continue, there would be myriad more interpretations we could glean from the lyric. Further, we might interpret the sparse arrangement of acoustic guitar, dryly recorded drums, middle-distant, slightly dissonant horns and falsetto vocals as a musical representation of the winter alluded to in the song's lyrics. What we would not do in considering this song as text is take into account Vernon's statement about the album: *"It's about my struggles through years of dealing with the aftermath of lost love and longing and just mediocrity and just bad news, like life stuff."* (Mason-Campbell, 2008). We would not consider any statements of intention or biographical detail, interviews or liner notes. We would also not consider my own set of responses as they influence my interpretation of the text above. For Wimsatt and Beardsley all that we need to understand a text is contained in its language—its grammars, syntax, semantics—and our "habitual knowledge" of said language (p. 753).

By contrast, Iser (1998) argues that beyond the text one must also consider the "actions involved in responding to that text" (p. 956). For Iser, the meaning of a text is the result of a rich and nuanced dance of imagination between author and audience. The author (in having created the text) sets some of the "steps" of this dance but the audience (because of their particular, individual responses) adds their own flourishes, which in turn continue to shape that "dance" for the audience. While Wimsatt and Beardsley barely acknowledge the audience and wish to disregard the author when it comes to making sense of a text, Iser emphasizes the importance of both author and audience in making meaning from a text. Though his definitions are broader, Phelan's (1996) understanding of narrative and meaning are roughly aligned with Iser in his view of the relationship between author, audience and text. This is evidenced in Phelan's definition of narrative as a "multi-dimensional purposive communication from a teller to an audience" (p.3). In a similar fashion to Iser, Phelan's definition makes space for multiplicity of meaning, and some degree of authorial intention as well as acknowledging the existence of the audience and its role in narrative meaning making. In comparison to Wimsatt and Beardsley, Iser and Phelan acknowledge the role of authorial intention, while also acknowledging the responses (associations, reactions, beliefs and biases) of the audience. In the context of 'For Emma', this means there is room for Vernon's statement to color an audience's perception or understanding of the lyric. There is also room for the audience's responses to the lyric to build its meaning, resulting in a more nuanced, multi-layered, multidimensional meaning for the text.

When texts are viewed as a communicative event between author and audience, the meaning of those texts must be viewed as unstable—able to be shaped in terms of meaning, rather than having inherent meaning. This is not to say there is no meaning, or to diminish the role of the author (as per Wimsatt and Beardsley), but to also acknowledge the role an audience plays in deriving meaning from a text or giving meaning to it. Iser and Phelan each make room for the roles of both author and audience in shaping the meaning of a text, and this is vital to the framing and "unpacking" of my research throughout this exegesis. Firstly, because it provides a framework for exploring the roles an audience plays in interpreting and perpetuating the narratives associated with a musical text, and secondly because it allows for the exploration of my role as creator/author of the musical texts.

Further, these concepts are particularly important to this research because if our understanding of a musical work shifts from "product" to "text" that relationship increases in flexibility. If we loosen our understanding of "musical artist" to become simply "author" and our notion of fans and consumers to become simply "audience" we shift to a relationship model that is less constricted by historical meaning, more easily transmuted, and therefore more conducive to the uncovering of new operational knowledge relevant to creative practice. This use of narrative theory is significant in that it allows us to reframe and posit solutions to operational challenges in the music industry, reconfiguring commercial *transactions* as *interactions*. Most importantly, this shift allows for the asking of broader, more thoughtful questions: we no longer ask how we get consumers to pay for music, but rather how they *interact* with music and how we might interact *alongside* them.

Practice-led Research: Definition, challenges and a solution

Sullivan (2009) considers a key characteristic of practice-led research to be the equal emphasis placed on the artist-practitioner, the creative work and the critical process as they are interdependent domains. Sullivan also argues this interdependence leads to the generation of new knowledge via a "reflective and reflexive process" (p. 42). In critically self-assessing a creative work, or reflecting on the actual making of that work, or in simply making the work itself (the first time and in subsequent iterations) a creative practitioner uncovers new knowledge about the process in which they have engaged. Sullivan highlights the "direction" of obtaining this new knowledge as particular to practice-led research: knowledge is generated through "imaginative leaps" in moving from the unknown to the known. This is as opposed other fields of inquiry where knowledge is generated by moving from the known to the unknown (p. 48).

Similarly, Candy (2006) defines practice-led research as a methodology that emphasises the peculiar and particular essence(s) of creative practice as well as generating "new knowledge that has operational significance for that practice." (p. 3). Candy (2011) states that while the making of the "artefact" (be it sculpture, installation, novel, or musical work) does have significance, practice-led research has the unearthing of new operational knowledge at its core (p. 36). This is where Candy (2011) potentially differs from Sullivan in the shape of her definition of practice-led research. For instance, Candy's practice-led research might be imagined as a cycle of making and reflecting with a nucleus of new operational knowledge generated by the kinetic energy of the making/reflecting cycle - a variant of action research, whereas Sullivan's definition might be more accurately imagined as a machine with equally important component parts (artist-practitioner, creative work and critical process) mapping an unknown landscape.

These differences can ultimately can be viewed as semantic when it comes to the fit between my research and practice-led research as a methodology. Both definitions hold significant space for new operational knowledge. This is a broad defining trait of the methodology, and given the specifics of my research (a highly individualised artistic practice that has lead to a set of more broadly useful narrative tools) such a methodology will allow me to shed light on the nature of the new operational knowledge I've uncovered.

However, the differences between Sullivan and Candy's definitions do point to a key challenge of practice-led research: where do the findings (that is, the new knowledge) lie, and what speaks best for the findings. Haseman and Mafe, although not without their critics (Graham, 2016), elucidate this at length:

> *The materiality of the creative work impacts on both the content and reading of that content. This is further complicated by the nature of that "expression" with the necessary exegetical accompaniment, which is typically linguistic. Issues of translation of meaning from one medium to another are immediately encountered. How to speak in a way that complements the work? Are we explaining it? Defining it, amplifying it? Finally, where exactly do research findings lie? (2009, p. 216)*

Given the nature of my research, these questions are all pertinent though not without workable solutions. Namely, I recommend that the best method of reading this research is through the form and content of the creative works and the accompanying appendix, alongside the exegesis.

THE CREATIVE PRACTICE AND OUTCOMES

My research began with my seeking solutions to a key operational challenge facing musicians in the current music industry landscape: how can artists engage audiences with albums. In particular, I looked for solutions that were applicable to musicians at any stage in their career. I started with three questions:

(1) How can we utilise the trend towards short-form digital consumption to re-engage audiences with long-form works?

(2) What techniques can we apply to the creation of long-form musical works that make them conducive to short-form delivery?

(3) How can we approach Questions 1 and 2 while maintaining a strong and meaningful sense of authorial agency?

To answer these questions, I created the musical act Fieldings, a project which hinged on three modes of practice: Fieldings as a release and distribution experiment, Fieldings as set aesthetic and musical rules, and Fieldings as a character I play. Each mode of practice is aligned with a research question:

Question	Mode of Practice
How can we utilise the trend towards short-form digital consumption to re-engage audiences with long-form works?	Fieldings as a distribution and release experiment
What techniques can we apply to the creation of long-form works that make them conducive to short-form delivery?	Fieldings as set of aesthetic and musical rules
How can we approach Questions 1 and 2 while maintaining a strong and meaningful sense of authorial agency?	Fieldings as a character I play

In addition, in order to uncover solutions that are more broadly useful, I attempted through each mode of practice to explore possibilities for relationships between author (musical artist), text (albums) and audience (fans/consumers) that move beyond those that are commercially transactional.

Mode of Practice One: *Fieldings as release and distribution experiment*

Precedents and Execution

Fieldings as a release and distribution experiment began with the idea to serialise music over time *and* space using sculpture. I was influenced heavily by the work of Mark Swartz, a Sydney-based sculptor and installation artist who works primarily with wood. His ‘Urban Masks’ (2012) (see Appendix A) are self-described as an attempt “to create a new Urbane religious iconography referencing that of traditional South African Mask culture, Art Deco architecture and a certain weary look at city life” (2012). At this time, I was also taken with somewhat “impractical” information dissemination techniques like dead-drops and geocaching (see Appendix A). Dead-drops are an esoteric way of using USB technology in a public context: drives are cemented into walls and usually contain a random assortment of files (“Dead Drops”, 2010). These have been used most notably in the past by Nine Inch Nails, as part of the release strategy for *Year Zero* in 2007; the campaign saw USBs featuring tracks from the album left in bathrooms at NIN concerts around the world (Paoletta, 2007). Geocaching involves a version of urban orienteering where participants hide small objects around a city, then share its coordinate publicly so others (often strangers) can track and find said objects (“Geocaching”, 2000). As discussed in greater length in my contextual review, songwriter Chad Matheny (aka Emperor X) utilised a version of geocaching to release tapes in and around Los Angeles (Greenspan, 2010). Both dead-drops and geocaching have become an anachronistic yet playful way of exploring a city. They sat alongside Swartz’s work as a natural aesthetic companion to form the basis of the physical element of my experiment.

From these precedents, I conceptualised the “hanging garden dead-drop” (see Appendix B). This was to be a hanging, wooden sculpture with a retractable USB that could be moved from one public location to the next. I built four hanging garden dead-drops in total. The dead-drops were variations on a visual theme (influenced by Mark Swartz), and each was designed to contain one to three songs from a cohesive long-form release (to be “assembled” over time). That is, a long-form release made

up of songs that were recognizable as part of an aesthetic whole even when encountered individually. The songs were included in any order, with the ultimate tracklist to be included in the final dead-drop. The final “tying together” of the songs was the using of geo-location functionality in Instagram to build a narrative map of metadata that would provide cohesion for the songs across space as well as time. My intention in using hanging garden dead-drops was to take a playful approach to answering my first question. The concept would force short-form consumption by only releasing a handful of songs at a time, whilst simultaneously being a tool for serialisation, leading to engagement in my long-form work (whole album). The hanging garden dead-drop would build a longer-form narrative, connected to the lyrical and musical themes of the album by the cohesive visual of four wooden sculptures disrupting “mundane” spaces. In addition, it would do this via the narrative map of geolocation metadata showing how the pods moved through both time and space.

Outcomes

The hanging garden dead-drop was executed only partially as planned, and the core of the concept remained intact throughout execution. I created four “hanging garden dead-drops” and hung them in parks around Sydney. However, because they were heavy and difficult to install, I moved them less frequently than originally intended which created a smaller set of geographical metadata. Conceptually, the hanging garden dead-drop was successful as participants in the music industry and listeners were drawn to the concept once they understood it. As a novel form of release it generated interest with radio tastemakers: this email correspondence from Tim Shiel (Double J) to Simon Winkler (Triple R) is one example of the interest the concept generated, resulting in spot rotation on Triple R.

> Hey Simon and Lauren! So great to see you last week in Brisbane. Just a quick one to point you in the direction of an artist I discovered just ten days ago but I'm so excited about - she's from Sydney, calls herself Fieldings, and is making really accomplished, interesting experimental folk/pop music. You might know her from her previous work under the name the Understudy. Check it out if you get a sec: https://soundcloud.com/fieldings

> I've CCed her too in case you want to get in touch, or she might tell you a little bit more about her unique release strategy *(she's releasing an album in stages, available as a 'dead drop' via these pods that she's hanging from trees around different parks in Sydney) [emphasis added]* ... OK that'll do. Lots of love! (personal communication, 14 September, 2014)

Logistically, the hanging garden dead-drop was less successful. This was largely because of the degree to which it was difficult and/or time consuming to retrieve the music from the pods, when the same music was simultaneously available online for free download. After the first dead-drop, I experimented with timing, but this had little impact on results. Ultimately, the mechanism for actually getting to the music—essentially taking a laptop to a public space and playing with a wooden pod until you find where the USB is hidden—proved too high a barrier to entry for the intended audience.

Mode of Practice Two: *Fieldings as a set of aesthetic and musical rules*

Precedents and Execution

In order for Fieldings' music to work as both long-form and short-form content, there needed to be a sense of cohesion between the songs. As a set of short-form works the songs or song collections needed to be complete, yet also give the sense that the whole might be greater than the sum of its parts. Given the distribution experiment that accompanied the songs, there needed to be a sense that the audience should "collect the whole set". In addition, the songs were recorded over an extended period, but still needed to sound and feel like they came from one time and place. To achieve this, I planned to use a set of aesthetic rules for both the music and the visuals. I conceptualised these as largely having to do with the instruments and images I would use. Before writing began, I made a short list of textural and sonic elements I would use: I was interested in using pressed vinyl and 808 drum kits, field recordings, two or three synth sounds (all built using MIDI saxophone as the starting

point) and vocals with limited types of reverb. From a visual standpoint I collected images of colour field paintings and sought to experiment with these as well as collage and iPhone photography (see Appendix A). By using a set of aesthetic rules, I hoped to answer my second question (*What techniques can we apply to the creation of long-form musical works that make them conducive to short-form delivery?)* by creating a musically and visually consistent narrative world. This world could either be consumed as a whole, or consumed over time through serialisation. When explored in long-form it would make narrative sense as a cohesive singular object, and when taken in bit-by-bit over time it would make just as much narrative sense. There are four sets of recordings under the Fieldings moniker created with adherence to the rules explained above: two EPs and two singles. Together they form an eight song long-form work (https://soundcloud.com/fffieldings/sets/fieldings-wild-release/s-Uxq3P). The songs are just as enjoyable consumed as a single idea as they are in pieces, and they form the first chapter of what is becoming Fieldings' authorial voice.

My set of aesthetic rules shifted only slightly from my original plan. From the point of view of aesthetics and music, I started with a thematic prompt: "where the mundane becomes sublime." This was the launching off point for lyrics, melody and arrangement. Song lyrics were written around small moments that contain profundity: an evening of twilight anxiety ('Come Easy At Me') or following the commute of a lost love ('Idioglossia'). The sonic palette was deliberately limited: drum samples, a set of custom electronic synths (crunching drones, twinkly arpeggios, fluttering texture), acoustic guitar (e.g. in 'Who Turns The Light?', 'Idioglossia', 'Come Easy At Me'), field recordings (for example, thunderstorms in 'A Pleasant Stutter') and YouTube samples were the staple elements (for example, snippets of Martha Stewart in 'Things You Should Know'; a review of a cassette player in 'Come Easy At Me'). Arrangements were similarly limited with repeated musical figures and only a small range of drum patterns. These musical elements were sign-posted with a "matching set" of visual aesthetics for release artwork. I used high-saturation, a split focus lens and collage to reframe everyday objects: a view of clouds from an airplane, a self-portrait, and a waxing moon became magical and/or psychedelic (see Appendix B). The "matching" art for each release also pointed to the sets of songs being part of a greater whole by giving them the feeling of being part of a set.

Outcomes

Responses to this approach suggest it led to a cohesive authorial voice. In an email conversation regarding my work, Triple J presenter Tim Shiel wrote: "It's … full of lovely moments though, this one. There is a very strong authorial voice coming through all of your work and I feel it's unique. Do you feel like the album is sort of taking shape?" (personal communication, 17 November, 2014). In a similar vein, this observation came from songwriting colleague Chris Frank, also in an email conversation: "I love how consistent this record is sounding. The palette is unique and the more I hear of it the more I like it, which is a good sign" (personal communication, 25 February 2015). Beyond the observations of colleague and friends, quotes from press also demonstrate a clear cohesion of style, with Fieldings works being described as "atmospheric" (Tone Deaf, 2015), "cinematic" (Triple J Unearthed, 2015) and "hauntingly exhilarant" (Little Indie Blog, 2015).

Mode of Practice Three: *Fieldings as a character I play*

Precedents and Execution

In order to create a strong sense of authorial agency while I explored my first two questions, I created the character Fieldings. Fieldings would not only be a cohesive set of musical works, but also the compelling character *creating* those works. This would be the character of an artist that sat neatly alongside and played into the aesthetic of their music, which I would describe as such:

> Fieldings would be a loner, an intelligent observer and a playful contrarian. The type of person who never made overt reference to it, but probably smoked pot. Fieldings would have

a mildly absurd sense of humour and be someone who saw alien faces in potato chips and took photos of weird footpath graffiti (see Appendix C).

In creating this character, I was drawn to the subtle, shifting and mysterious characters inhabited by Bob Dylan, his "multitudes" as Yaffe terms it (2011), more than I was drawn the more overt character creation of Bowie's Ziggy Stardust, or Stefanie Germanotta as Lady Gaga. While the latter examples explicitly explore alter-ego via costume and makeup, Dylan's characters are less obviously separate from himself. The lines are blurry. Despite Fieldings not sharing my name, I was more interested in trying on a character that was a subtly different version of myself, more than I was in creating a distinctly different character to step into via theatre.

I sought to create the character Fieldings in a hope to explore and answer my third research question *(How can we approach Questions 1 and 2 while maintaining a strong and meaningful sense of authorial agency?).* I hoped that by creating a cohesive sense of artistic identity, one more compelling than simply using my own personality to tie the work together, I would generate more interest in the music itself. Beyond this, creating the character Fieldings would be the most overt way I could play with the relationship between author, text and audience. It allowed for me to say and do things through the character, that I would not usually, and to be more playful with the way I approached talking to audiences and presenting my own work.

Fieldings as a character was deployed using Instagram and Twitter as the core "tools" or format, although radio and digital PR also played a part. For Instagram and Twitter, I built an editorial framework: things Fieldings would talk about and ways Fieldings would talk about them. This editorial framework carried flavours of the thematic prompt from my musical work – "where the mundane becomes sublime" - but it also explored other areas ideas. For instance, ways to self-promote without sounding like you're self-promoting, styles of photos to be included, subject matter for those photos and what filters to use. Live music photography was always black and white and other "mundane observation photography" in full colour, or filtered with a split focus lens (see

Appendix C). Beyond social media, I created messaging for Fieldings to be used on all press outreach (see Appendix D).

Outcomes

The clearest demonstration of the success of building Fieldings as a character is in the consistency of language used across multiple publications and radio. For instance, both *The Guardian Australia* (Tan, 2015) and *Tone Deaf* (2015) refer to Fieldings' single A Pleasant Stutte*r* as featuring "found sounds from a Dulwich Hill thunderstorm and a 1970s car safety ad". Further, Fieldings is consistently discussed in press as a producer interested in found sound (Tan, 2015), sound design (Shiel, 2015) and the "moment where the mundane becomes sublime" ("All I've Heard Muse: Fieldings", 2015; "Premiere: Fieldings Drops Alt-Pop New Single 'A Pleasant Stutter'", 2015; Bastiani, 2015).

Overall, the combined use of these three modes of practice did correlate with audiences engaging with *Wild Release* as an album, though not the same extent as they engaged with individual tracks. (Note that with eight songs and a running time of just under 30 minutes, Wild Release meets the iTunes criteria for 'album' rather than 'EP' but might be considered an EP, or mini-album by other digital streaming services, or by other definitions.) Data from Soundcloud shows that listens to songs with the album as the entry point total 679 since April 1st 2016 (the first time that data type was collected). By contrast, listens to the most popular tracks from the album, 'A Pleasant Stutter', total 1300 in the same period ('Soundcloud: Fieldings Stats', 2017). Beyond these listener statistics, it is difficult to to gauge the ways in which fans engaged with *Wild Release*, and not possible at all to verify a causal relationship between modes of practice used and any engagement with the album as a whole. It possible, and likely, that the techniques I employed resulted in connection to Fieldings as an artist as much as they resulted in connection to *Wild Release* as an album. To this end, the techniques are valuable tools, but not necessarily just for engaging audiences with albums.

Uncovering of narrative tools for future use

As noted earlier, Fieldings is just one hyper-specific response of many possible to my research questions. However, each mode of practice uncovered narrative tools with genuine operational use that can be employed more broadly by artists of any level. Here I will demonstrate how each specific mode of practice has lead to the uncovering of new operational knowledge in the form of narrative tools.

Mode of Practice	Narrative Tools
Fieldings as a release and distribution experiment	Use release/distribution techniques not just as publicity tactics but as narrative statements
Fieldings as set of aesthetic and musical rules	Use aesthetic and musical rules not just as sonic branding activities but as narrative through lines and entry points for audiences to an artist's work (given we have less control over the entry point than ever before)
Fieldings as a character I play	Think of character in music not just as a branding activity but also as driver of narrative arcs.

One: Release and distribution techniques should be viewed not just as publicity tactics but as narrative statements

The value of using a hanging garden dead-drop for release and distribution lies not in the specifics of the technique but in the story using such a technique tells about Fieldings as an artist. In practical terms, as a mode of release a hanging garden dead-drop is somewhat clumsy. In terms of artist narrative, such an experiment positions Fieldings as a playful and whimsical innovator. It alludes to the type of music one might expect from Fieldings, both current and future. It creates a sense of expectation for future releases. As such, I posit here that release and distribution tactics can be highly effective when used as narrative statements, a means by which to weave an artist narrative over time

that gives greater nuance to an artist's body of work, and provides audiences with reasons beyond the music to engage with that work, and the artist themselves. Artists become talked about as innovators, iconoclasts or pranksters not just because of their music, but because of how they bring that music to the world.

Two: Use aesthetic and musical rules not just as sonic branding activities but as narrative through lines

Initially, the aesthetic guidelines I employed for Fieldings were designed to ensure cohesion once the album was "assembled". This attempt was demonstrably successful, with industry press and peers alike pointing to the consistent sonic palette in private and public communications. The Fieldings sound become a recognizable brand. More important than this, by using a set of aesthetic and musical rules I was able to create songs that felt connected no matter the order in which they were consumed. As such, my second mode of practice uncovered a second narrative tool: using aesthetic and musical rules to create narrative "through-lines" for musical works. This is significant because it points to the importance of understanding that listeners encounter an artist's music in multiple ways, with no fixed entry point. It's no longer necessarily true that audiences hear a single first, then purchase and listen to an album in order. Instead they may hear a song randomly in their Spotify "Discover Weekly" playlist, and then dig through an artist's back catalogue haphazardly, seeking to quickly ascertain if the artist or band in question is worth their time. Using aesthetic rules as narrative through lines accounts for this way of encountering and consuming music. It considers the possibility that any and every song is an entry point, and therefore should be recognizable as the artist in question.

Three: Think of character in music not just as a branding activity but also as driver of narrative arcs.

Fieldings as a character I play was originally a mode of practice designed to build a compelling extra layer of experience for listeners of Fieldings' music. Through this practice I explored and expanded

the aesthetic rules from Mode Two, building a character separate from my myself as author of musical works. Though this started as an exercise in image and artist branding, it became a far more powerful tool. Fieldings the character was not a static entity, but a driver of plots in a narrative world already built in part by the distribution experiment and the aesthetic guidelines. For many artists, the stories that are told relate to the production and release of albums--where an album was recorded, what it was written about, or why it was released in a particular manner. Using Fieldings the character as a driver of narrative arcs meant that not all "stories" needed to begin with the release of music. Instead, they might begin with adjacent activities as long as they were consistent with the type of character I had created. For Fieldings this meant that "stories" began with the curation of musical events and art installation performances, as well as the release of music. For artists more broadly, using character as a driver of narrative arcs means an opportunity to tell more stories about themselves and their work more often.

CONCLUSION

The tense, ongoing discourse about the continued relevance and commercial viability of the album as a release format is multifaceted with compelling arguments for and against. The most compelling argument on the side of the proponent is cultural, with the most salient evidence being the continued canonization of albums by influential industry media. The most convincing arguments against the album's continued relevance and viability are economic and behavioural. The total decline in album sales and music industry revenue, as well as the well-documented rise of on-demand streaming services and associated skipping and shuffling behaviours, are key pieces of of evidence for the negative. Evidence for either side of the argument is intertwined, with one side serving to complicate other rather than simply rebut it. This gives rise to an operational challenge for artists regarding how to (re)engage audiences with the album. As detailed by this exegesis, responses thus far to this challenge fall into two main categories: disruptive *release* tactics and disruptive *distribution* tactics. They tend to be successful for the specific artists employing them but none is scalable as a solution, leaving the key operational challenge of how to engage audiences with albums unanswered.

I sought to find a scalable solution to this operational challenge through creative practice framed by the following questions: *How can we utilise the trend towards short-form digital consumption to re-engage audiences with long-form works?* (2) *What techniques can we apply to the creation of long-form musical works that make them conducive to short-form delivery? (3) How can we approach Questions 1 and 2 while maintaining a strong and meaningful sense of authorial agency?* Using a conceptual framework drawn from narrative-theory, I detailed and analysed my efforts, via practice-led research, to answer these key questions using three modes of practice: Fieldings as a distribution and release experiment, Fieldings as a set of aesthetic and musical rules and Fieldings as a character I play. Finally, I demonstrated how answers to these questions have led to the discovery of a set of narrative tools:

1. Release/distribution techniques should be viewed not just as publicity tactic but as narrative statement
2. Use aesthetic and musical rules not just as sonic branding activities but as narrative through lines and entry points for audiences to an artist's work (given we have less control over the entry point than ever before)
3. Think of character in music not just as a branding activity but also as driver of narrative arcs.

Should artists continue to release albums?

Out of my three modes of practice and my three narrative tools, a fourth overarching tool emerged: musical works should be designed with multiple modes of audience consumption in mind. In a sense, this is the tying together of the three first tools, but it has the potential to encompass considerably more. When artists think of albums not just as expressive objects but as designed objects, there is a shift away from expecting audiences to consume on the artist's terms and a shift towards considering the many and varied ways the audience actually does consumes music. The question of whether or not artists should continue to make records then becomes "What *kinds* of albums should artists make given their audience and how that audience tends to listen?"

Future research suggestions

Given the new operational knowledge laid out in this exegesis, further research efforts to uncover scalable solutions to the operational challenge of re-engaging audiences with albums would be best focused on audiences and designing *for* those audiences as much as they are focused on artists and artistic expression. One suggestion is to roll elements of creative methodologies like lean product development or design thinking into the album creation process and test outcomes with small audience groups before releasing more widely. Another possible starting point for research would be an album project designed from the outset using the narrative tools uncovered by my practice. Such thinking would embrace both the positive and negative realities of the current music industry landscape and create a fertile

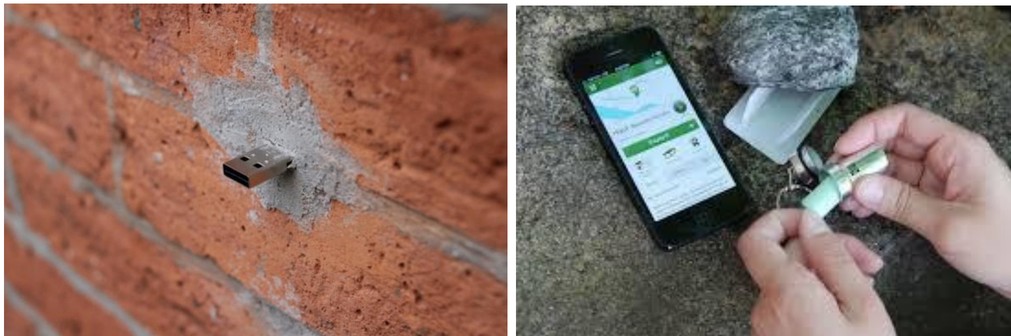
ground for long-form musical works that transcend our current conception of what an album is and can be.

APPENDICES

Appendix A - References & Precedents

'Urban Masks' by Mark Swarz

Dead Drops and geocaches



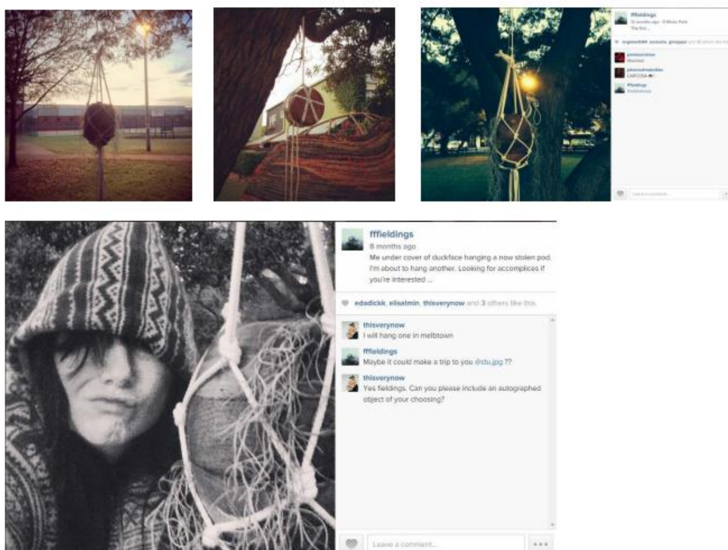
Mark Rothko, No. 61 (Rust & Blue) - example of Color Field Painting

Appendix B - Creative Output

The Album *Wild Release*: http://bit.ly/2m3H3wR

Album Art:

Hanging-garden dead-drop:



Appendix C - Social Media Style

Live photographs, B&W

Photographs of other objects, colour, manipulated

Fieldings @fffieldings · Apr 22
art marketing and sexiness

Fieldings @fffieldings · Dec 10
keen awareness of unborn listeners

Fieldings @fffieldings · Dec 3
forgot that it can rain in the northern hemisphere

Fieldings @fffieldings · Nov 17
serene limbs

Appendix D - Fieldings Press Collateral

FIELDINGS COLLATERAL

About the latest release:

A Pleasant Stutter is the latest single from Sydney producer, Fieldings. It's a dark cut, featuring found sounds from a Dulwich Hill thunderstorm and a car safety PSA from the 70s. You know how it is to wonder what people do with their boyfriends and girlfriends when you can't see them? The song is about that. Out now as digital release through Catch Release/Gaga.

Quotes on APS

"Hearn's lead vocal cuts like a knife through the fog, an elegant siren at the centre of it all" - GoldFlakePaint (UK blog)

" A scintillating burst of electro-pop" - GoldFlakePaint (UK blog)

"World class atmospheric alt-pop" - Tone Deaf

"With the release of this new single (Fieldings is promising) to be one of the country's most exciting new artists" - Tone Deaf

"This is such a cool song. Love it." - Zan Rowe, Triple J

"This gives me sea legs, which shouldn't be a compliment but I totally mean it as one. It's an anxious, nerve racking, cold sweat of a song." - Max Quinn, Triple J

"Super cinematic. Worth a careful listen." - Veronica Milsom, Triple J

Bio

Fieldings (aka Lucinda Hearn, formerly The Understudy) is a producer/singer from Sydney. She is concerned with small movements and repeating patterns – those moments where the mundane becomes sublime.

Fieldings came to life in 2014, with electro/tweet performance called Feed (for Art Month 2014) and an EP released in June (Wild Release, Vol I). In September, Fieldings released her second EP (Wild Release, Vol II) and was selected to play BigSound, alongside **D.D Dumbo**, Holy Holy, Bad // Dreems & **DMAs.**

Hearn has shared other stages with **Juana Molina**, Mark Kozelek, **Neon Indian**, An Horse, Collarbones, Holly Throsby, Kira Puru, Pikelet and Laura Jean.

Live Hearn is joined by Dave Pearce (Kira Puru, The British Blues) and Ed Montgomery (ex-Sparkadia).

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