

ACT 3: PHONOMADIC

NOV 10 - 14, 2015

WORKSHOP

PUBLIC LECTURE

EXHIBITION:

FRANCIS PATRICK BRADY (UK/SE)

Francis Patrick Brady (b. 1988, Toronto, Canada, Lives and works in Malmö, Sweden) is an artist, writer and lecturer living and working between Malmö and London. He received his Bachelor in Fine Arts at Chelsea College of Arts UAL in 2010. He has since developed a practice based in performance and role play within art conference and university institutional contexts, often subverting the usual course of interaction through spoken word or play. Having held performances and lectures at Royal College of Arts in London, Cafe Oto (London), Bristol UWE (Spike Island), BALTIC 39 (Newcastle) as well as a series of workshops at Chelsea College of Arts. Often discussing topics surrounding; "Technological Animism", "Text based adventure games", "Digital storytelling", "The Virtual Art Artefact" and the artists own term; "Pixelocracy". Francis Patrick Brady is currently studying on the MFA Course "Critical Practice and Pedagogy" at Malmö Art Academy.

www.francis-patrick-brady.com

Phonomadic is a so-called portmanteau, a word put together from the two words; phono and nomadic. **Phono-** is a word-forming element meaning "sound, voice". Derived from Greek phono-, comb. form of phone "voice, sound," from PIE root *bha- (2) "to speak, tell, say". Phonology is the branch of linguistics concerned with the systematic organization of sounds in languages. **Nomadic**; 1550s, from Middle French nomade (16c.), from Latin Nomas (genitive Nomadis) "wandering groups in Arabia," from Greek nomas (genitive nomados, plural nomades) "roaming, roving, wandering" (to find pastures for flocks or herds), related to nomos "pasture, pasturage, grazing," literally "land allotted," from PIE root *nem- "to divide, distribute, allot". Meaning; 1) a person who does not stay long in the same place or 2) a member of a people having no permanent abode, and who travel from place to place to find fresh pasture for their livestock.



PHONOMAD | C

**“The language of our epoch
is sharp and rapid as code”**

Yevgeny Zamyatin

Text by Francis Patrick Brady

Language doesn't care if you use it. Language is *played* and *steered*, whether through small spontaneous muscular movements of the mouth or the later translation of the vibrating air particles of speech into marks in stone, sand and paper; its *users* are the citizens of a self-governing slang. Language needs a medium, a habitat, which today is de-situated across many platforms and channels. The publics for oral and literary languages have grown beyond a protected intelligentsia (sacred scribes, printing press, novelists, radio, television, cinema) into a casual and plural composite of all media at once (the computer). Our contemporary tribal *user* reads and speaks his/her stories through a network of algorithmic arteries (Twitter, Tinder, Flickr, Scribd, Reddit etc.) which are folded through programming languages and an array of digital sensors (microphones, cameras, vibrators, infra-red, speakers) that sing to us from our pockets and in our homes. We speak with many voices, hear with many ears, see with many eyes. From local to global, microscopic to cosmological and the individual to the multitude.

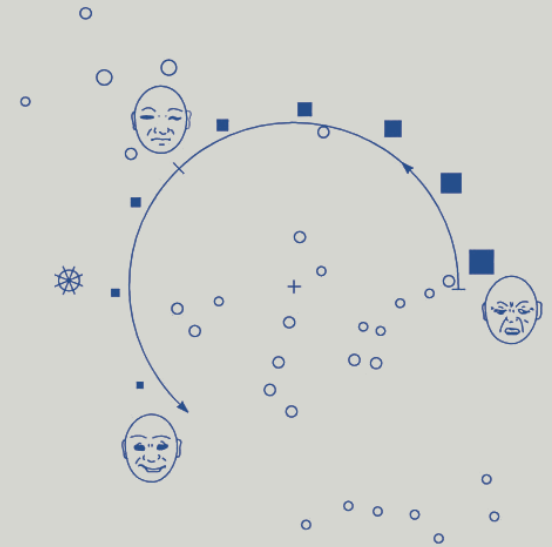
The workshop “Phonomadic” provides an open-source and reprogrammable set of “*game rules*” for the creation of a contemporary tribe. These rules will be redesigned and remodelled by it's participants to find a language for the future.

Ready-made prompt cards and props that contain symbols, images and phrases are used to generate an ancient futurism that uses the templates of the *past* in a browseological *present* to forge an archaeological excavation of the *future*.

If language and media can be *played*, in an archaic sense, then we can consider the workshop group as a *Temporary Autonomous Tribe*¹ (T.A.T.). Together we have the potential to create a new tribal folklore with rituals, myths and languages that evolve, mutate, die and reproduce themselves. Much like John Horton Conway's *Game of Life*, or Peter Suber's *NOMIC* the workshop will involve an *Allopoiesis*: “a process [or game] whereby a system produces something other than itself”.² Through activities and excersises the T.A.T. seek to discover counter-narratives and playful collective transgression that uses play as a galvanizing site for satire, noise, simulation, transmission, song and storytelling.

1) An appropriation and word play with the anarchist writer Hakim Bey's pirate utopian concept of the “Temporary Autonomous Zone” (1991).

2) From “Principia Cybernetica”. Definition of Allopoiesis by Klaus Krippendorf in “A dictionary of Cybernetics” (1989).



Towards the end of the 20th century a governmental project was conceived with aim to imagine a sufficient marking system that would safeguard the nuclear waste disposal site at Yucca Mountain range, Nevada, from future human intrusion. With the help from professional semioticians, artists, linguists and academics they attempted to create a markers and language that would be understood, at least, 24,000 years from now (plutoniums half-life). In the image above they attempt to reveal the placement of the stars in the sky as they would be when when the site might be considered safe to enter (generally a radioactive substance is considered depleted after 10 half-lives have a elapsed, therefore 240,000 years).

CAN YOU TELL ME A BIT ABOUT HOW YOU UNDERSTAND THE NOMADIC IN OUR WORLD TODAY?

a: I use the word *nomadic* in relation to the realms of language and speech and how our signified meaning, like that of our bodies, is often *wandering* in search of *pasture*. We seek to divide and colonize meaning through *definitions* and *borders*. The Greek sophists in the 4th and 5th century talked about the difference between *Physis* (Nature) and *Nomos* (Law). They saw that *law* as a man-made construct was enacted upon the physical and natural world. A student of Chuang Tzu (Chinese philosopher in the 4th century BC) describes certain functions of language as containing *Ward and Sector* words (referring to the manner in which Chinese cities were arranged in tight grid structures). In this logic chaos is seen to be a positive force of entropy given to words as *vessels* that are able to *spillover* with meaning. In the contemporary time where our digital maps have superseded our understanding of them, we need to see these divisions and attempt to *spillover* and *illuminate* alternative readings of the world.

HOW DO YOU SEE THIS IN RELATION TO THE CURRENT MOVEMENTS OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS?

a: The current movement of people has become a war of definitions. The press and politicians are taking sides with certain terms and squabbling over how to define and name the humans that are crossing their borders. In the UK the prime minister David Cameron uses the word “*swarm*” within the discourse about border control. This can be seen to totally dehumanize the people in question. By likening them to a swarm of flies or locusts he is stripping them of the same rights for self-definition as national citizens hold. The creation of otherness and difference between *us* and *them* occurs even within the term “refugee”, which is only used for an alien citizenry, that is moving across our man-made borders.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO CREATE TEMPORARY TRIBES?

a: It is a practice we already do, I have just “*Ward and Sector*ed” it. I see a lot of practices as tribe-building. Our collective energy builds up into group projects. Big and small. From a whole city or country, to a religious commune or art squat. We develop a language with definitions that help us understand and identify our tribe. Eventually the tribe will dissipate/collapse when our interest or consensus is deflated. What I would like from the exploration within the *Temporary Autonomous Tribe* is for a momentary understanding of the total creative processes

that occur at the beginning of all “tribes” the manufacturing of an *inside* and an *outside*. An *identity* and a *non-identity*. Once the tribe is settled and begins repeating or reproducing its own conditions and definitions it becomes a professionalised stable form reinforcing the environment. What is deemed proper and correct is synonymous with the professional. That which is worthless and incorrect with the amateur. ***Through role-play one might pretend that they are no longer a woman or that they are living in another country crossing over a border and that they are doing this one thousand years ago.*** When a group imagines these fictional roles and spaces together then the personal professional imagination is forced to confront the social and amateur one. This can create a critical awareness of the languages and roles of alternative places and times. How did you imagine the differences in borders one thousand years ago? How did you feel you acted in the role of a man? To fictionalize the creative process of being outside yourself can also temporarily activate it. There is an entropy that only the amateur outsider can attain through an awareness of our current definitions of the inside. These “errors” within our own presumption or the happy poetic mistakes, as McLuhan states in “The Medium is the message”: ***“The amateur can afford to lose.”***

AND WHAT DOES THIS ALL HAVE TO DO WITH SOUND?

a: *Sound* and *noise* are the keys to transgression. A written language cannot *spillover* before a verbal one vibrates and exits the normal everyday practices to *Ward and Sector*. The word *Digital* literally referring to the *Digits of the hands* counted and separated until maths holds a universal persuasion over our definitions of the world. We use polls and graphs as a form of statistical storytelling; counting the numbers of people within a border, using a website, playing a song on youtube or attending a concert. This is our modern method: Definition by numeration. *Sound* and *noise* are things that exist within the history of verbal storytelling as well as its antithesis. The shamanistic *sound poems* of modernity attempted to root-out resemblance. Using voice montage and “cut and past” recording techniques they ruptured the vessel of language and poetry. These techniques need to evolve to encompass the contemporary heterogeneous multi-medium of the computer code which commands the choirs of all the media capture devices that surround us. How do we tell a story with the many voices of a multi-headed digital hydra?

Answers by Francis Patrick Brady. Questions by Louise Vind Nielsen.

NOISE CULTURES : NETWORKS OF THE MARGINALISED

“WHEN MUSIC IS CENTRAL TO RITUAL, TO SANCTIONED TRANSGRESSION, IT IS EFFECTIVELY NOT MUSIC: IT IS THE NOISE THAT WILL GRADUALLY PROGRESSIVELY BE EXCISED IN THE SAME WAY THAT, FOR BATAILLE, WE MOVE CEMETERIES AND ABATTOIRS TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWNS.”

“Noise/music” by Paul Hegarty

Essay by Francis Patrick Brady. Edited by Louise Vind Nielsen.

The metaphorical “*outskirts of town*” describes the segregation of communities and cultures to the peripheries. Those whose ideologies or practices are *outside of mainstream acceptability*. Social distinctions between **noise** and **music** are fundamental to the definition of communities as *outsiders*. As the out-spoken preacher is *noise*, the eastern music to western ears is *noise*, rock and roll to 1950’s innocence is *noise* and death metal to punk is *noise*. ***I would like to briefly expand a short (and incomplete) definition of the outsider asking how the relations of his existence have changed through the development of communication technology and explain why there can no longer be an underground.***

The history of these musical and social peripheries are naturally implicated by aspects of religiousness, as Dan Graham describes in his essay-film “Rock My Religion” (1984). Early outsider musical styles and rituals from the early pioneers of America precipitates the formation of new churches and utopian philosophies. The two are mutually inclusive. In his book “Noise: The Political Economy of Music” (1977) Attali states that: “the noises

of a society are in advance of its images and material conflicts”. Examples such as the music formed alongside early American Transcendentalism that placed emphasis on natural intuition. Or the example given by Graham of the shakers who would dance round in a circle shouting “Stomp the Devil”. A communal hysteria aimed towards achieving a “collective purity”. Music introduces a tangible and bodily connection to the structure of ritual, being able to physically communicate belief, stick and bone, sound vibration. Defining a communal identity through sonic renunciation. Distilled into a form that relates to the physicality or materiality of its belief. To associate *noise* as a mutual and necessary element of the progressive margins of culture corresponds to its definition as a presence of disturbance and disruption, though not in the same way as avant-gardism. *Noise* is a diffuse force without purposeful revolution. Yet in many cases *noise* can provide the agitation that fuels and feeds the avant-garde.



The album cover of “Reek of Putrefaction” by Carcass (1988)

The kind of radicalism inherent to the fringes is a perpetual force. A continuing *noise* constantly ringing out. Luigi Russolo defines the birth of *noise* as heralded by the birth of machinery, which goes towards explaining the close relationship of developing technologies with these outsider groups. Communication technologies brought reproduction and amplification as propagation, from the whirr of the printing press to the hiss of the radio. The outsiders voices became loud and clear as Josef Goebbels famously said: “The radio will be to the twentieth century what the press was to the nineteenth.”



Nazi propaganda poster, promoting the use of the Volksempfänger (1936)



“Voices From Thelema” by Pietro Riparbelli (2008)

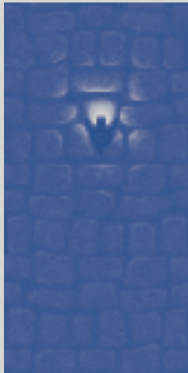
The American radio station WLAC was an early pioneer of rhythm and blues hosting night time shows airing Chuck Berry, Fats Domino, Muddy Waters amongst others. WLAC reached a large audience due to the stations 50,000 watt power AM broadcast signal. Radio spoke over distance to all. The work of sound artist Pietro Riparbelli’s “Voices from Thelema” (2008) responds to the mechanism of radio as a receiver searching for the ghostly remains and vapour trails of these alternative communities. The technology is not seen as a closed internalized system, but as a porous and mystical medium. This treatment of the medium relates to radio’s early use as a vehicle for preachers in North America in the 1920’s. Pioneered by S. Parkes Cadman the movement received a huge following with a reported 10 million listeners by the year 1946. Radio became host to many smaller and out-spoken partisan preachers for whom radio was a route to circumvent standard methods of communication. This televangelism shares traits with the D.I.Y. tape trading scene of hardcore music. Technology becomes a means to an end and a natural extension of the social realms ripe for a new mechanised spirituality.

“THE COMMUNITY EXTENDS ONLY SO FAR AS THERE EXTENDS AN EFFECTUAL TRANSMISSION OF INFORMATION.”

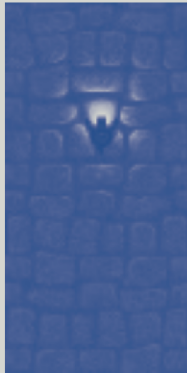
Norbert Weiner

Networks are the mediums of *power and noise* disrupting the course of the mainstream. As production costs of technologies became less and less the more prolific the marginalised voices became. American *hardcore punk* and consequently English *grindcore* or *death metal* bands from 1980-88 largely evolved due to the tape trading networks that would circulate the sounds of a generation that was too loud and too fast for radio. Tape trading depended upon cheap cassettes and postage costs of which teenagers could afford. These alternative routes shaped a widespread community that compromised of perhaps a handful of people in various cities. From Birmingham to Florida, Zurich to Japan, music was actively shared across great distances, without commercial incentive. Bands like Napalm Death, ENT (Extreme Noise Terror), Celtic Frost, Death and Deicide were all aware of each others music, all involved with a community unconfined to place, a movement without a centralized history. The satanic imagery of *death metal* presents a de-religicized and secular form of symbolism often considered a joke. It emblematised anti-establishment sentiments inherited from previous musical youth cultures, anti-social practices that were implied by rock'n'roll became overt and explicit in *death metal*. This can be seen in a wider historical sense as compounding the lineage of western secular musical forms through-out the 20th Century into what Dan Graham refers to as a “neo-religious firmament” - the creation of alternative systems of morality, ritual and community outside of or away from religion.

32-bit background textures from the video game “DOOM” (1993)



E / F



F / F

This region of history from 1988–93 is significant as a time of transition for underground and outsider groups and technology. Models of communities that can function over large distances. Ritual transgression or transcendence piped into your home. Unlike the 19th century American preachers, who pitched their tents on the edge of town, the new noise-makers exist through the Internet - A city with no centre for there to be outskirts. The decentralised network houses all communities in tandem. The movements between the *underground* and the *mainstream* become fluid as the two become interchangeable and response to each other. A true example of this is the 1993 video game release “DOOM”. Doom borrowed from the musical style of bands like Slayer and Metallica also containing high levels of gore as well as demonic and satanic themes. It's release as shareware, even though the only places to access the Internet were universities, encouraged its distribution to an estimated 10 million players in spite of its seemingly marginal subject-matter. In some respects the Internet standardizes the distinction of “the outsider”, creating pathways for escape from mainstream culture and incorporating the marginalized voices as part of the system. This begs the question: What relevance does the term *underground* have today?

PHONOMADIC

HOW TO STEER YOUR MOUTH LIKE A CALCULATOR
OR A NOMADIC TRIBE

Using the cards within this publication it is possible to create a temporary outside or break in the flow of normal speech acts or social dialogues.

Applying a poetic wisdom or an archaic and tribal approach to the controlling and computational functions of the mouth. The shapes it can make and the sounds it can produce are our bits, bytes and digits for a miscalculated calculation or the rolling of phonemes and syllables like so many dice.

This unplotted course seeks to sail towards meaning across noisy oceans and silent seas of fragmented signifiers as one searches for a home. The act of division within the naming of things is a game that is played when founding a settlement or community. It is always a temporary suspension of chaos.

This card game treats written and spoken language as an instrument to be played, broken, burnt, reassembled and temporarily activated by the fleeting participants of the game.

The game goes in two phases :

I. STORYTELLING II. MOUTH STEERING

Placing the cards face down, divide the cards into two piles :

I. LETTERS II. MOUTH SHAPES

STORYTELLING

Concentrate and imagine the inside of your mouth. Imagine the stored energy within all of the minute muscles that flex and form the walls that house your tongue. The nerves and senses running through the whole temple like Japanese telephone wires, carrying signals constantly. If you view every single small piece of this system as an individual within a giant city then they all form part of their own government which you no longer hold control of.

...

A set of playing cards is included in the booklet.



...

The freely elected members of your mouth start to talk, communicate, transmit and tell stories and jokes about their city. Try to imagine and tell one of these impromptu stories in as few words as possible. This can take any type of form :

TALE – A Story in the traditional sense

POETRY – A rhyme or focused piece of text

ANECDOTE – A story of a previous experience

SONG – A musical or sound based expression

JOKE – A comedic, satirical or slapstick expression

OBJECT – A physical piece of expression

RITUAL – An acted out repetitive expression

RECORDING/REPRODUCTION – A copy or recreation

Write down words relating to these stories on the back of the two piles of cards in a random order and then shuffle (Still keeping two separate piles).

MOUTH STEERING

Now you'll be calculating and training the nomadic muscles in your mouth into speaking the radical fictional story you have just imagined.

Shuffle the cards and take one from the mouth shapes and one from the letters (picking one of the two symbols) and place them in front of you. Take also one card and use the word that you have written on the back of that card.

This is the first word of your story.

NOISE/SOUND

You can speak this however you want and as loud or quiet as you want. Think about where your tongue and mouth muscles want to go as well as other improvised sounds that your mouth is able to make:

Pops, Clicks, Hums, Whistles etc.

Attempt to copy the mouth shape whilst making the sound of the letter.

This will be as difficult as learning a new language.

REPEAT

Repeat the word over and over and over until it feels comfortable in your mouth.

Try to make a few of these words so that your mouth can comfortably speak a short sentence or story and perhaps teach these methods to others or leave this temporary space behind forever.

