FOLK DANCING DOCUMENTATION AS A CREATIVE TOOL FOR VIDEO ART

YIANNIS CHRISTIDIS
Cyprus University of Technology
yiannis.christidis@gmail.com

NICOS SYNNOS
Cyprus University of Technology
nicos.synnos@cut.ac.cy

ABSTRACT

This paper explores how both sound and image of a documentary under production footage can serve as a narrative tool for a sound-oriented video art piece ('Folkofolk'), and at the same time communicate the ideas of the final documentary itself. It discusses possible uses of existing footage derived from an ethnographic documentary in production, which maps and records the existence of German-speaking folk dancing groups. The information of the gathered original footage seeks to understand how the notion of place is interpreted through the folk dancing soundscape as a whole, and wishes to highlight the everyday sound's social character. The footage of 'Folkofolk' features recordings of assorted German-speaking folk dancing groups in Berlin and Vienna. Based on the social properties of place, 'Folkofolk' seeks to explore, in a wider level, an alternative narrative of how folk dancing soundscapes potentially create a sense of place and community through creative film editing practices that are close to video art.

Keywords: Folk; Video art; Sound design; Composition.

1. INTRODUCTION

Research on one's experience, must always take the nature and the dynamics of the on-site space into consideration, as well as the individuals' spatial and social position. In such a context, this paper intends to creatively listen in detail to both contextual and actual spaces, where resonances of people dancing and music get together, and drive such a procedure to a dialectic representation. Thus, it wishes to discuss the transformation of the above into a video art piece, forming a precursor of a documentary which will be justifying the sense of place in the dancers' space. How, however, can this meaning evolve? Would it be possible to communicate the meaning of a documentary film through video art? The communication of an idea, a concept or a very particular set of data has always been a challenge, as representational methods can be endless. The narrative through which the information is transmitted is also challenging, as audiences vary similarly to the creators. It is this exact narrative which is discussed throughout this paper.

Tracing a way to embed sound and video compositional techniques in a narration style that will promote the comprehension of any concepts appears challenging. This challenge can acquire also certain hues when it comes to art. Video art and sound art form compositional tools that are dedicated to experimenting with conventional narrative styles, or often use the connections of the classic scheme between middle, beginning and end by Aristotle style in their favour. The constant presence of narrative, though, clears the ground for every possible experimentation with it.

An attempt to conceptualize video and sound art as a means of structured narrative, (such as a 'usual' documentary), without being one, is made. Structuring a debating approach of Bondebjerg's (2014) study on 'narrative, emotion and memory', the paper intends to link the above through a structurally unconventional method of documentation presentation. In other words, it wishes to examine whether and how fragmented audiovisual information presented in a form of video art, can function similarly to a documentary, to communicate its ideas. Acknowledging the difficulties, the paper firstly attempts a review of the audiovisual tools that are used in sound and video art, and then, after expanding the term 'documentary', seeks for ways of alternative image and sound narratives. What makes the research more challenging is the inclusion of a subject already containing rich acoustic and visual information, like folk dancing, which is expressive by default, in a representational level.

2. FROM SOUND COMPOSITION TO SOUND DESIGN

Sound is experienced through its resonances, often having acquired an organized structure, like in the form of music, speech, or a common machinery pattern we might hear in our everyday life. In parallel, it can be met and studied in non-organised forms, such as high or low fidelity

sound streams in nature or in an urban environment. Such streams are considered unnoticeable till they are given the appropriate attention; they also form key elements of our sonic world, and consequently, our everyday life, as Barry Truax in the classic field of acoustic communication have stressed in the past (1984).

Over time, the given importance of sound allowed the respective academic communities to advance theories and approaches to an extent that would produce both qualitative and quantitative data concerning what we hear in our everyday lives. Such (sonic information) data would provide scientists or artists/composers with 'raw' material to produce experimental and/or artistic sound works, apart from what most people understand as 'music'. But also, the debate around the definition of music was triggered relatively early. The first concepts of sound art developed in the beginning of the previous century and have opened discussions around the nature of sound as music and vice versa. Back in 1913, Russolo's manifesto entitled 'The Art of Noise' explored the customization of our ears to everyday sounds and raised questions regarding the form and the conventions of music in public (Russolo, 1967). Since then, and following the invention of ground-breaking sound tools with controversially musical attributes like Termen's Theremin in the 1920's, the generation of theories regarding electroacoustic sound (Schaeffer, 2009) and the re-consideration of silence in musical terms by Cage in the early 1950's, micro or macro-sounds have been gradually welcome to certain compositions by sound artists. Even mainstream music composers may now use soundscape information in their work. Soundscape refers to an acoustic field which is defined based on the subjectivity that the position of the listener creates; most would agree that its examination should include extensive study of the interactions between the listener's actions or feelings, and the sound(s) occurring at every moment. Sonic occurrences in one's audible area are instantaneous parts of a space in time, where a soundscape creates the sound field and involves multi-levelled interactions. If sonic events can be recorded and organized accordingly, one can have the opportunity to create a pre-recorded multi-levelled sound experience, namely a soundscape composition, focusing on the aforementioned dynamics. The latter has been also described as

> a form of electroacoustic music, [...] characterized by the presence of recognizable environmental sounds and contexts, the purpose being to invoke the listener's associations, memories, and imagination related to the soundscape. (Truax, 1996)

The definition suggests the direct relation of whatever is recorded and reproduced to a reference on the listener's experience. One should not forget though that the purpose always lies on exploring a tight and dynamic signified context of the sound itself. Bits of sounds, either recognizable or not, form potential material of sound art pieces, and demonstrate attributes that can be embedded in sound(scape) compositions, regardless of the theme. These bits communicate ideas: the degree to which such ideas are abstract or

descriptive is decided by the composer, who draws the finite time frame where all the sonic action takes place.

The nature of the above dynamics changes from the moment the moving image appears, and the sound(scape) composition now functions in combination with the listener's eyes. An audiovisual environment is there to be 'received,' and the nature of experience itself changes accordingly, as the acoustic experience becomes audiovisual experience, a main part of which is sound design.

From everyday sound to music, and from noise to silence, what people feel when exposed to sonic information and action while exposed to moving image is of distinctive quality, which is also connected to the qualities of the respective pieces of information. For instance, considering the absence of sound itself as a crucial aural quality, fear has been attributed as our reaction to silence and the feeling of abandonment is recalled (Sorensen, 2009, p. 135). Thus, bits of silence during some crucial moments in a horror film can be justified. The presence of sonic information, in whichever form, is essential for the listener to feel a level of security. Overall, emotional attitude towards what we hear is expressed in various aspects of our everyday experience. Musical scores or sound design in films enhance the viewer's experience and make the audience develop emotions and feelings about on-screen characters or events. To better describe the acoustic experience for a viewer exposed to any kind of visuals, we firstly need to conventionally standardize the forms of the content exposition. What seems important is the process of 'ear-viewing' of any content. Since Walter Murch's intervention in the cinema industry regarding the role of sound design in the moving image in the late 1970's (Rothbart, 2012), the acoustic experience of the screen viewer has been given particular importance.

3. VIDEO COMPOSITION

Far from cinema halls, video art is exposed in exhibitions and galleries, festivals, or in online platforms through the web. As a performative medium, it has been an evolving expression through the last decades. Whether classic structured elements of the moving images are used, whether real actors or human voices are featured, and whether newly film material or existing footage is the main source, video art as a transgressive, and often debatable means of expression is characterized by a distinguished property of exposure. Often avoiding strictly narrative audiovisual techniques, it uses moving images and (when allowed by the projection conditions) sound as a form of expression to communicate stories, ideas, or emotions.

From Nam June Paik's early works to some of the recent Bjork's music videos, and from Wolf Vostell's *Sun in your Head* (1963) to Marco Brambilla's *Civilization* (2012), the means of video recording, exposing sync-on-sound and displaying has been evolving over time. Through the

years, the editing processes have changed, and artists have experimented with the way their vision has been depicted on a screen.

Avant-garde experimental animation filmmakers like Oskar Fischinger, Hans Richter, Viking Eggeling, Norman McLaren and Len Lye created abstract forms of film material using design elements such us shapes, lines and type, often in an effort to visualize sound. Such artworks may provide space for a further discussion regarding the prime elements of the film. In the digital era, where motion graphics flourish again after years of almost stillness, their relation to sound seems to be equally intimate such as that of the early avant-guardians of film. The new approaches the creators acquire, offer space for extensive experimentation thus highlighting the role of the sound design in video art pieces. As video art is not required to follow realism, fragmented pieces of video can purposefully create new narratives, and thus a variety of ways to tell a story evolve. Already, the complex property of editing explores the "possibility of reading film or video works as functional sites, particularly when they exist in relation to a particular place or event". (Hardbord, 2007, p. 56)

Considering the above, what appears challenging is to apply detailed sound design techniques in a video art piece of a specific thematic and commence a discussion about its role on the meaning of the whole artwork.

4. DOCUMENTARY GENRE AND ITS NARRATIVE

Styles like the *vérité* aesthetic, the voiceover narration or the dialectic character empowered by diagrams, charts and animation data, are elements often met in documentaries, and usually differentiate, on principle, the particular genre from fiction in an intellectual way. Such elements initially imply that the epicentre of the documentary is closer to the core of the shot, rather than its aesthetic nature. Documentaries are also presenters of facts and actions that exist as they are in the real world, and they are considered to document this very truth as it is. However, Nichols' approach to the term does not constrain in a "reproduction of reality", but empowers the genre attaching representational characteristics (2001). Besides, he characterizes it to be "one of the longest-lived and most richly varied of genres, offering many different approaches to the challenge of representing the historical world". (Nichols, 2001, p. 35). One, though, trying to decode the genre's qualities, should probably focus on the narrative itself: a story is told, and its evolution is revealed to the audience, which, consequently, as active viewers and listeners, follow it as it happens. Either this is considered as 'the communication of an argument', 'meaning transmission' or 'experience', in documentary films, the procedure is usually standardized: in a certain amount of time – for as long as the film lasts – the director and his/her team narrates a story using audiovisual means. Via a strategic use of essential storytelling tools, such as shots, colours, editing, music, or the aforementioned voiceover, the pre-decided and carefully organized functional and aesthetic values actively contribute to the narrative of the film, connecting its understanding with its purpose. The fact that

the documentary story is told within a specific amount of time cannot be unseen, as it is only within this time the (usually absent, during projection) director attempts to document the truth in a specific encoded context. By placing images and sounds in order, an argument close to the truth is finally presented. Considering, however, the ambiguous definition of truth, one should probably step back and reconsider the purpose of the documentary film. As audience leaves the cinema hall, turns off the TV, or leaves a multimedia exhibition space, and as time since the end of the projection passes, the exact audiovisual sequence is forgotten, and the main idea (in both dialectic and aesthetic context) is the one that is finally recalled by the viewer, along with some images and sounds, vital parts of the story that has been told.

Our nature as "storytelling animals" (Gottschall, 2012) implies that in every aspect of our lives, we need to narrate our thoughts, emotions or arguments. In film, this happens in sequences. Regarding the narrative in documentary, the challenge focuses on complying with the functional conventions which work in favour of the way of telling a story. As a non-fiction genre, documentary necessarily uses codes that are connected to what is – by the director – considered as truth, so that the story is told. The ones told in a documentary context, seek to find a 'mirror' in the viewer's everyday life, so that the presented information is correlated to him/her, irrelevant to the performing context or cinema experience. As Bondebjerg (2014, p. 21) has pointed out, "non-fiction genres have different variations of rhetorical and narrative structures and they follow patterns of social and psychological involvement that are also used in real life experience and interaction." To another extent, Carmona (2017, p. 7) has approached film narrative to take the form of "an act of communication through and from experience from filmmaker to an audience and vice-versa," rather than focusing on the essence of narration. In parallel, Conolly (2009, p. 113) describes the contemporary era documentary as "a point of connection between practitioners and researchers in the fields of visual art, ethnography and visual anthropology," a description that confirms strong bonds of the genre with contemporary art, as the genre itself acquires a contemporary non-fiction media identity.

Regarding the above, it is considered important to seek how alternative narratives that are close – but not necessarily attached – to documentary, can communicate the meaning of the original film. In the case of this paper, the main idea of the film is the acoustic place of folk dancing and its meaning, along with the exploration of the folk dancers' social identity.

5. FOLK DANCING, DANCERS' IDENTITY & THE PLACE OF DANCING

Dance is a way of social, body, but also verbal communication, hence the default variation and complexity of dance dynamics. As people are engaged in a ritual procedure, their reactions to sound create a unique

space for investigating matters related to scientific fields reported above. Especially folk dancing can be practised either in festivals, celebrations or social events, or under no special circumstances, such as weekly meetings of folk dancing enthusiasts. No special premises or conditions are needed for folk dance to be enjoyed, as such a "participatory ritual practice" can even involve audience participation in public places (Wulff, 2015, p. 666). The fact that people may meet at specific times would support the characterization of folk dancing as a ritual, as the latter has been defined as a "repeated pattern of behaviour performed at specified times". (Nelson-Becker & Sangster, 2019, p. 154). The methods people learn are usually far from official dance schools, something that allows the access to anyone – from professional dancers to people who have never danced before. Being taught by non-formal educators, which seek the role of animator, involves procedures that connect directly to everyday life and its norms. It is important to understand that

> dance is not transparent, giving up its secrets to the uninitiated, but that it must be seen as an integral part of a total way of life. Unlike most dances in the West, in many other parts of the world dance is not simply entertainment. (Kaeppler, 2000, p.116)

Indeed, it involves complex dynamics and social extensions, which need extensive research to be discovered. Accordingly, in order to overcome potentially simplistic approaches on how to study the soundscape of folk dancing, we consider a cultural circle with assorted starting and ending points, where the dancers' characteristics can be traced on. Rhone (2017, p. 11) recently stressed the complexity of folk dancing, attributing a property beyond just synchronous movements to music; he describes it as "a purposeful blend of physical, cultural, historical, and artful music experience." Apart from the music experience though, a social aspect is included, often exposed through the soundscape, that bonds and mingles with the whole experience from the beginning. Social debates evolving from folk dancing, can indicate a dynamic way of demonstrating collectiveness through body movements, and possibly bonding between the dancers. These individuals can be members of a dedicated folk dancing group, a local community, or just residents of a geographical region; whatever their origin might be though, folk dancing appears to be able to offer multiple spaces for a sense of community to grow. As an expression of a cultural value, the ritual of folk dancing involves a connection to traditional hues, such as music, costumes, and even attitudes. When not practiced in private regular group meetings, rehearsal rooms, social centres or spontaneous gatherings, it can be met in public, usually on special celebration days. In most folk dancing occurrences, people dance in pairs or in circles, and follow certain rhythmical patterns with their bodies, and often with their voice. Hence a revelation of more than plain social images gradually occurs, exposed through sound, which gets enhanced by the action of dancing itself. As folk dancing can be practiced by non-professional dancers, it interestingly negotiates its

artistic identity precisely because it involves particular social and cultural connotations (McCarthy, 1996). Such dimensions connect to regular everyday activities and can regulate the way of living of the members (Enem, 1975).

Dancing has been observed already in the very distant past (Lawler, 1947). Even from the very first drawings on walls, or the Cretan clay figurines, holding hands and dancing in a circle around a fourth, playing the lyre (German, 2005, p. 117), we know that dancing has been practiced in special religious rituals. Certain countries or regions have developed their own codes of dancing, which often relate to the everyday way of life, the climate and the wider locale of each area. Particular cultural elements are boosted through folk dancing, like the vine harvest, wedding ceremonies or wheat picking, and hence its social character. This character, however, is maintained even in the regular everyday life: folk dancing groups gather, and apart from getting together and dancing, they socialize, eat and drink together, and also seek solutions to any group/community's issues, while in parallel they organize their future actions. It appears that a folk dancing gathering acquires characteristics of an almost sacred procedure (Wulff, 2015), as such resonant micro-rituals are important for the everyday function of the community. Being a collective procedure, it is according to social identity theory, that a part of one's self-concept highly relates to the significance and relative dynamics of the group membership, where he or she belongs (Turner & Oakes, 1986). The actions of the individuals, when in a folk dancing group, are highly dependent on the nature of this group, the dynamics between the members and its identity and purpose.

Having the above discussion in mind, the debate on the role of dancers' self when performing folk dancing requires expansion. How does a folk dancer see him/herself as an individual, being part of the group of folk dancing? Research-wise, such an issue would need extensive ethnographic research to be explored. However, potential responses to the above questions are able to create space for experimentation with the documentation footage of folk dancers.

We hear a place, we listen to it, and we also respond to it. As part of a constantly evolving soundscape, sounds come from certain sources and identify places, signify or describe meanings, habits or sentiments and within a certain space – a place –, they form soundmarks. Pistrick and Isnart stress the importance of sound towards the creation of the place, as they focus on its sensory experience, which also includes cultural dimensions.

> To know about a place means to know about the particular sonic properties of this place. Spatial experience therefore incorporates a certain auditory knowledge. This pronounced interconnection between sound and place implies that sounds take actively part in the social construction of our spatial and temporal environment. (Pistrick & Isnart, 2013, p. 506).

If we consider some real-life situations, we might better understand how certain sound attributes can convert space into a meaningful place through sound. Architects take acoustics into major account every time they design a building. Churches with large domes are constructed to trigger awe to the visitor, as sound elements get impressively and uniquely amplified in the reverberated space. Turkish baths' acoustics contribute to an emotional stimulation and justify Foucault's characterization as "heterotopia" (1984), while in everyday life, it is proven that "the driver's emotional experience of quality car sound (…) would help to sell a car." (Cleophas & Bijsterveld, 2012, p. 120) A complex connection between sounds and emotions is evident here: triggering a particular sound, or even everyday sound elements are able to cause emotional involvement to the listener, who inevitably participates in this communication model. Moreover, this type of connection demonstrates its particularity also in the other way around: "Internal states, emotions, social constraints, deep knowledge, all can affect what we hear and how we interpret it". (Hafter, Sarampalis & Loui, 2008, p. 138)

Space can obtain a character of a personal construction, while the formation of such a construction can be sound oriented. Similarly, sounds can enhance the bonds of people who interact within a place. Hence, certain acoustic-oriented interrelations drastically develop on the basis of the aural experience within a place. It is also important to consider that sounds create spatial impressions: they have the ability to deliver a sense of size (volume) and distance, and due to this function, they can define the auditory space, and consequently place. In space, the volume of spaciousness is determined by the senses and thus it becomes evident that "sound dramatizes spatial experience." (Tuan, 1977, p. 16).

6. EXPERIENCING VIDEO ART AS DOCUMENTATION
6.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Considering the above discussion, a question evolves concerning the way the above qualities could be represented in a fragmented audiovisual work. Accordingly, the research question is formed likewise: how can fragmented sound & image composition work as a documentary narrative? How does the viewer feel when exposed to such footage, and what does he/she remember? In order to explore the above, it is considered essential to focus on the ways we understand audiovisual information when it is not clearly narrative or argumentative, in relation to the information itself. Based on the experience of the narrative itself, as it "provokes the emotion during the act of communication" (Carmona, 2017, p. 13), a video piece has been prepared, and put into test.

Through what is heard in a dancing space, and through certain composition techniques, a video art piece is created, the sound design of which is a sound composition itself. Under such circumstances, it is intended that the dynamics of the resonating folk dancers are depicted on screen. Such structures, if listened carefully, create new soundscapes, the

main live source of which is the human body. Being a great instrument, even if it does not produce sounds in a conventional way, body and its resonating movements remind our ears of an energetic human presence. The importance of the sounds the body produces gets even more significant, when the functions under investigation deal with folk dancing, which is itself a ritual that involves the body and its movements in the first place. A distinctive common place is then created, which hosts the sounds of dancers, the music, and thus elements of a temporary social identity within the space. In order to artistically explore the latter, a video art piece, entitled *Folkofolk* has been created by Yiannis Christidis, in 2019. In order for the aforementioned research questions to be explored, a questionnaire has been developed, trying to trace elements which would demonstrate the viewer's understanding. Its development and distribution took place within the context of the research as described below.

6.2 THE RESEARCH CONTEXT

The research team consists of a small film crew which has facilitated documentary filming of folk dancing procedures during TERPSICHORE, a Horizon 2020 program. The purpose of the crew has been to document the meetings of the groups performing folk dancing regularly, in the regions where TERPSICHORE partners were based. More than 10 folk dancing groups have been observed and filmed during their practice during the period 2017-2019, in Berlin and Wien. Most groups have been regularly meeting every week, doing dancing sessions, in common multi-use spaces like cultural centres, NGO spaces or warehouses, but also in open-air public venues like squares or parks.

Regarding the questionnaire, a purposeful sampling strategy has been followed, as precise and useful results were intended to be gathered. Thus, people who were sent the link for it to answer, have a genuine interest in documentary and/or dancing, and vary, from simple enthusiasts and amateurs to academics and researchers. The questionnaire link was also posted in assorted social media groups focused on video art. The questionnaire was designed to explore how successfully fragmented video excerpts can work as a documentary narrative, hence the nature of the questions, which were targeting to the audience's understanding on the main communicated ideas.

6.3 THE VIDEO & SOUND OF *FOLKOFOLK*

An on-going ethnographic study and the filming of German and Austrian dancers for the creation of an academic/poetic documentary, generated the footage used in *Folkofolk*. The footage seemed ideal to interact with a potential composition as the one discussed above, and to form the basis for the sound-oriented video art piece. During the shooting, the documentary footage aesthetic policy has been following simple rules:

long and medium stable shots which record the action happening, and close-ups on dancing feet. Such shots facilitated the focus on both editing and sound design. Through the editing process of *Folkofolk*, the viewer is not only wanted to get lost in time, but also to observe some of the procedures and the sound action happening while folk dancing in a nonlinear way. Most importantly, viewers are wanted to visually follow the editing-on-sound process, so that they focus on the sound detail, which has been based on what is heard in a folk dancing space, and then morphed. While creatively working with the above subjects to create *Folkofolk*, the structure has been based on three factors.

The first has been the conceptual space and its properties. The long, stable shots facilitated this purpose, as the movement of the dancers in there attributed the property of space. The second factor refers to various sounds that have been observed. The soundscape composition which is heard throughout the video is based on claps, footsteps and other human sounds that resonate during a group dance, which were morphed. Along with the music, it is these sound textures that create certain dynamics in the space, so this has been the basis for experimentation on in *Folkofolk*. The third factor is the editing technique. In order to experimentally approach the identity and the place of the folk dancer to the viewer and communicate the initial meanings, but also to create a reasonable flow of the *Folkofolk*, acknowledging the absence of a structured scenario, the viewer is exposed to jumping frames on time, partially in sync with the sound composition.

As it is obvious, demonstrating a fragmented audio reality addressing the nature of the dancers' identity has been a clearly experimental choice. This adds to the fact that the video's purpose has not been to create an artistic video art masterpiece, rather to test people's understanding and feelings when exposed to non-conventionally edited footage.

7. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The best answers regarding the exploration of the research questions would have been given by people related to video or/and sound art. Thus, an open-ended questionnaire has been posted online to various related groups on a social media platform, but also circulated through targeted email, achieving a feasibility sampling method. Most thematic questions were of qualitative nature, addressing image and sound comments separately, before challenging the participants to evaluate their experience as a total. After being notified, participants had to watch the 2'43" long video on an online platform, being advised to use headphones, and then complete the questionnaire. The discussion below commences from the responses of 26 participants (X01-X26), who completed the questionnaire, and wishes to creatively approach possible ways of how people feel or remember such fragmented video sequences in relation to the main idea of the film.

7.1 FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

Regarding the moving image, participants used the word 'dance' and 'folk', characterizing the overall theme as well-received. Apart from the vast majority who used the above words, what people saw was also described as an 'experimental' (X05, X07, X09, X12, X22) video or film, as a 'music video' (X15), or even as an 'art student project' (X02). Considering the imagery representation method, apart from few cases, the majority refused to have 'learnt' something from this short clip. Few of them, interestingly enough, explained their gained knowledge with regards to the 'steps', 'dance in general', 'communities', and even the audiovisual tools themselves. For example, X06 stated that he learnt to "appreciate sound design as opposed to the dominant visual or the expected sound of the happening shown". Reflecting on the above, one can only suggest that the meaning of 'learning' itself is challenged, even in the very direct process of watching a video. Also, we should consider that few insisted on the costumes or dancing figures, elements that are traditionally of great interest to documentary films. It appears of great interest, though, that X04 noted that "dance creates communities" and X05 said that "some dancing figures are similar even if they come from different countries/cultures". To add to the above, X07 indicated cultures convergence, X23 stated a comprehension of "common characteristics on different dancing", while X08 stated "that all folk dancing steps suggest the same feelings when you experience it". The above observations seem to fit the debatable, in this paper, documentary function, and offer space for discussion, after reviewing the reflection on sound.

7.2 SOUND

The words 'abstract', 'rhythmical', were often used to describe what viewers' ears have been exposed to. References to known musical themes or compositions, 'dark mood sound sfx' or emotional attitudes were expressed, and also the nature of the relation to the image was stressed at this point. X06 wrote about "fragments of sounds and soundscapes that where selected out of the recordings of the events shown on the video, that where manipulated time-wise and probably volume-wise, rearranged and mixed to create another entity or maybe another narrative". With such a description being an exception, comments like 'disturbing', 'anxious', 'disjointed' or 'industrial' seem to attribute an effectiveness of the sound design to trigger emotions – however not necessarily related to the discussed acoustic place. Regarding viewers' understanding and gained knowledge towards sound, it seems that in this case viewers' attention is drawn by the sound (design) as the medium/technique during the screening. X07 indicated that "the audio created a discord that contrasted and disjointed the visual imagery", while also here, half of the participants refused to have learnt something from what they listened. In the case of sound, participants demonstrated a more dialectic

attitude: responses that 'did not learn anything' were fewer compared to the image section, and the use of sound as a narrative or emotion provoking tool was stressed.

7.3 MESSAGE & EMOTIONS

As far as the message itself and any emotions created, a universality of human connection has been described by X07, who supported that "the local is global/universal and this is achieved through focusing on the human connection elicited by dance." Two participants felt "curious" and other two declared "interested", watching the video piece. Other than that, a plethora of emotions has been observed: "uncomfortable", "restless", "confused", "puzzled", or "restless" have been used to describe them, while almost a third of the participants revealed a negative attitude (either bored or uninterested) to continue watching. X17 insisted on the message being that "dancing is a social activity", X22 felt anxious, while X23 felt confused but "waiting to see more". The variation of the above observation is confirmed by the responses to a question of quantitative nature, regarding not only the message (that participants had to 'create'), but also its clearness. With regards to the message/idea that has been received, the chart below clearly shows a subjectification of the experience, the clarity of which, appears slightly negative, but also relatively equally shared between the participants.

How clear do you feel any message/idea (that you received) was? 1-5
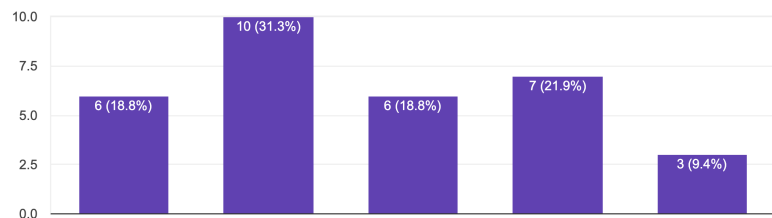
32 responses

Figure 1: Clarity of the message.

7.4 MEMORY AND EXPERIENCE

"The couple dancing in the bar.., that played again and again in a loop" was something that was recalled by X01; X05 also stated the scene in the bar to be memorable, as X22 did, while X13 stressed the same scene by describing "a guy with long hair moving back and forth in a reddish room" as something that was easily remembered.

Figure 1: Screenshot of *Folkofolk.*

The composition of the scene with the train seemed well remembered by two participants, while a third observed "the people dancing in costumes under the train lines, the counter-existence of a cyclical to a linear pattern, of a cyclical pattern made of flesh and tradition to a linear pattern made of steel and modernity" (X16).

Figure 2: Screenshot of *Folkofolk.*

The opening scene which did not follow fragmented video/audio techniques was also remembered by X10 and X26, while X12 also reported the closing scene, along with the first one.

Figure 3: Screenshot of *Folkofolk.*

As in the case of the previous thematic areas, also here, regarding what is easily recalled by the video piece, the audiovisual technique itself has been reported as significant, something that justifies its dialectic importance in the documentation presentation. Apart from this, distinctive worn clothes (X04, X14, X17), moving legs (X07, X10, X14, X24), smiles (X17, X20) and other human elements were noted to be remembered. Considering such elements would have been extensively discussed in the documentary itself, such a case potentially creates an open space for discussion regarding an alternative narrative, using fragmented video pieces with no clear structure.

Quantitative data which evolved from the questionnaire, showcase interestingly enough, that more than half of the participants found the video narrative to be from totally unclear to relatively unclear, while the others' responses demonstrated that the narrative was clear enough.
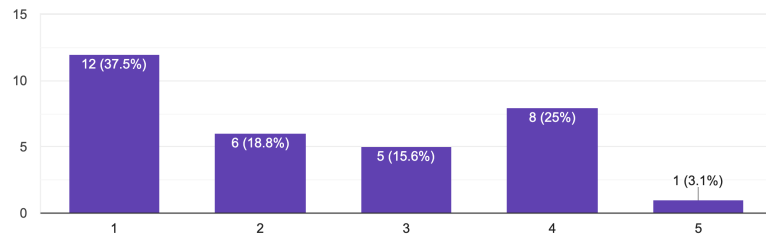
How clear do you feel the narrative was? 1-5

32 responses

Figure 5: Clarity of the narrative.

The chart above clearly feeds the discussion around the understanding of video art in terms of narrative, but also contradicts the purpose of the narrative itself. Such a finding forms an important element of the research, as the narrative itself in the case of video art proves to take a subjectified structure, and such a property directly addresses the core of the research question.

8. CONCLUSION

The above paper attempted an accompaniment and argumentation on a video art piece, based on already recorded documentary footage, within the wide thematic of folk dancing. The ways such footage can be used are endless, and this work has just showcased one of them, compiling a film experimenting with the narrative style and the main idea, that the sound of people dancing, creates a unique place. In this context, the dancer's social identity through unity is given importance, in relation to the dance and the soundscape.

The audience that watched the film seemed to have understood the main debate of the documentation, regardless its non-linear narration and fragmented audio-video presentation. What appears important is that the majority of the viewers distinguishes the notion and dynamics of folk dancing (comm)unity, without focusing much on the narrative method. However, each participant receives and interprets the documentation organized in a short, fragmented video art piece in his/her own ways, a thing which is justified by the above analysis. What seems of great importance, is the fact that the audiovisual narrative tools themselves do play an important role, and are commented from the moment an alternative structure is followed. In other words, when loops, non-diegetic sound or non-structured images are projected, it is common that the viewer notices these, rather than the thematic epicentre of the sequence. The variety of emotions which would probably fit to a respective documentary film, also seem to adequately emerge, while the degree of understanding reveals thought-provoking qualities.

Overall, one could support the effectiveness of footage organized in such a style, and justify further research with regards to the microlevels of understanding of the (non) narrative tools that are used in such videos.

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10. FUNDING