

The artistic retrospective is an exposition of the developments in a maker's body of work. Often staged to mark a monumental date, specific interest or as commemoration of the artist's death, they primarily comprise of objects recordings and images, items already made, finished and no longer in progress. The very act of retrospective, specifically that placed within a museum or gallery, is to reflect on, and give knowledge of something past; the retroactive view of a particular artist's practice. Functioning thus, it is an exposition *of* archive, a revealing of an artist's assembled work curated in logical and often chronological order. In this way, as Hans Ulrich Obrist states in *Ways of Curating*, 'collection making...is a method of producing knowledge' (Obrist 2014, 39).

The artist and curator work together to make an exhibition, and curatorial ambition for the artist's work has bearing on how it communicates intent. Obrist states the 'Latin etymological root, *curare*: to take care of' as the meaning of the term curator, and certainly they are custodians of meaning and knowledge of an artist's work and how it is made accessible to others (Obrist 2014, 24-25). The artist intends their work to be staged correctly, often focusing on the singular artwork; the curator works from this position to ensure its communication is articulate. Through artist/curator construction, whereby both parties work to their remits for exhibition, spectator attention shifts between 'the exhibited objects to the organisation of the exhibition space' (Groys 2016, 89).

Normally accompanied by explanatory texts and historicising information panels and brochures, gateways of accessibility and understanding are created for audiences to obtain knowledge. A visit to a substantial cultural venue like Tate Modern in London demonstrates this, and how a retrospective like Robert Rauschenberg's (2016-17)¹

¹ Tate's webpage for Rauschenberg's retrospective is orderly and instructional in terms of access, despite being informatively sparse in detail. Tate. (2017). *Robert Rauschenberg – Exhibition at Tate Modern* | Tate. (online) Available at: <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/robert-rauschenberg>

adheres to regulation, order, thematic and chronology. With abundant instructive information for guidance the formula for access within the structure of Rauschenberg's retrospective is didactic, pedagogically journeying the viewer through the collection with uncompromising life-stage and calendared regularity. Bustling along with others following the curator's route creates an experience akin to being in a crowded shopping area; rather like visiting a cultural Ikea. This experience (if one accepts it, not deviating from, or ignoring the panels) guides rather than invites interpretation, neutering capacity for encounter free of instruction. Order, formula and instruction are inattentive to the spontaneous, momentary acts within creativity, cloaking pathways and tangential sparks of ideas. Retrospectives like Rauschenberg's aim to detail a life's artistry, with directive and without waver, and in doing so, mask the myriad reasons for its existence.

A historic problem may be to blame for this dilemma. The retrospective both punctuates and bookends the (often dead artist's) collection of works, reflecting back with a firm message of this is past and complete, making chronology and regularity a logical solution. Its *retro*-ness affirms it as a demonstrative appraisal of activity past and over, so how do we negotiate its methodological antithesis, the incomplete? A retrospective like Rauschenberg's has no essence of being current or alive, as the artist, having completed their work, is often no longer with us. Their work is finished, making this impossible. As the conventional approach favours the complete (and of the dead), an anomaly proliferates for the work of the living artist. Essentially, it feels pre-emptive and too early – their retrospective cannot be fully *retro* as it is incomplete. Can the retrospective, a historical situating of artworks within specified times and genres, be useful to show the current, the alive and that happening now? Is it a possibility if the artist is still making, and what are the effects of performing and embodying delivery rather than displaying objects and records? In response and by addressing a living

artist's retrospective offered not as objects, but performance and gesture, this essay analyses an approach that differs from the conventional. Specifically, it includes my critical interview with Jordan McKenzie about his artwork *Retrospective 2027*, which questions the effect of divergence from the traditional with regard to interpretation and legacy.

Jordan McKenzie is a UK-based artist working independently and through collaboration from 1995. Exploring drawing in the expanded field and issues of sexuality and queerness, his work includes performance and socially engaged projects. However, despite exhibiting in significant venues there are no major writings on McKenzie's work. Examples of artwork include *Shame Chorus* in 2016 (fig. 1), a collaborative art and music project exploring sexuality with The London Gay Men's Chorus at Freud Museum (London), and *Carl An(t)dre*, a major commission of performing 'drone ants' rearranging bricks around Yorkshire Sculpture Park in 2013.² Others are *LUPA (Lock Up Performance Art)* (fig. 2) an artist run exhibition space operating from a garage in a council estate in East London,³ and his performed character construction *Monsieur Poo-Pourri*.⁴

Figure 1 image ¼ page centre

Figure 1. *Shame Chorus*, Jordan McKenzie (2016). Photograph: Christine Holka.

Figure 2 image ¼ page centre

² The work mimics Carl Andre's sculpture 'Equivalent' of 1966. Funded by the Arts Council of England.

³ Co-curated with Rachel Dowle, Kate Mahony and Aaron Williamson. LUPA was in operation between 2011-13.

⁴ Examples include *Monsieur Poo-Pourri Points at Things*, 2010 and *Monsieur Poo-Pourri Takes a Tour of his Estate*, 2010.

Figure 2. *LUPA (Lock Up Performance Art)*, Jordan McKenzie, Rachel Dowle, Kate Mahony and Aaron Williamson (2011-13). Photograph: Jordan McKenzie.

Retrospective 2027 productively complicates my curatorial strategy for the simultaneously staged exhibition and symposium of the same name.⁵ Set in the future, McKenzie's retrospective adds irregularity, unhinging experience from the conventional and ordinary. McKenzie sought to agitate the chronological polarities of retrospective by situating his eleven years ahead of its date of delivery in 2016, presenting a series of dichotomies and paradoxes in terms of concept and ontology of praxis. Including translated gestural and oral histories of artworks made by McKenzie between 2002-09, it increases the propositional shift in perception and alignment from the start – for if set in the future how can it be 'retro'? Through a parasitical devouring of the conventions that defy its logic, the event in the symposium supplants the retro- of the exhibition to become *future-* rather than *retro-*spective. It becomes part of current discussion rather than a staged exposition of the past.

Here I address how the historic and the contemporary can cooperate in artistic and curatorial strategies in retrospectives to accommodate transient artworks made by the living. Namely, this concerns *Retrospective 2027* by McKenzie, staged as a keynote performance in *The Alternative Document* symposium.⁶ Situating McKenzie's performed retrospective within a structure of colloquialism rather than exhibition (as the preserve of the predominantly visual) the aim was to set it adrift from its gallery-based origins. Strategically, this aims to challenge preconceived and conventional structural

⁵ The exhibition included documents that re-worked the events they referenced to become an artwork in their own right.

⁶ The Alternative Document symposium was held at Lincoln Performing Arts Centre in 2016. The accompanying exhibition of the same name was staged simultaneously at Project Space Plus, located in the building next door to the symposium.

alignments for retrospective by prioritising performance over object and debate over exhibition. This intent seeks to defy and refute the definitions of the ontology of retrospective, therefore shifting knowledge and expectation and becoming disorderly and irregular as a result.

However, what are the implications for our knowledge and understanding of the term and the work to which it relates, in this, and other instances? Is the artist playing tricks, attempting to fool his audience by injecting a falsehood and delivering the undeliverable in terms of realistic timeframes and actualities? What is the affect upon the cultural-academic structure in which it is positioned? Is this not so much a retrospective, but an activating document, one that becomes confined to history and archive upon its end (even though it supposedly has not yet chronologically happened)?

To examine these questions I interviewed McKenzie eighteen months hence from his 'yet to come' retrospective in the 2016 symposium. To add gravity to the discussion the interview was set in a Members Room in Tate Modern, home to Rauschenberg's comprehensive, yet formulaic retrospective, that was unlike McKenzie's in delivery and position. In the interview, we discuss the critical and perhaps polemical framework (as performance rather than objects and records) for McKenzie's event. Our discussion examined his orientation to the artworks referenced, and what it brings to their documentation through being 'reperformed.' Rebecca Schneider suggests through Philip Auslander and Nancy Spector in *Performing Remains: Art and War in Times of Theatrical Reenactment*, that reperformances recreate the original work and perform its documentation. The outcome for Schneider is 'embodied documentation' (Schneider 2011, 132). McKenzie's retrospective reacts to lens-based documentation and memory, and through Schneider's definition is a reperformance of a collection of his past works, whereby the live and embodiment

positions it in the now. What follows are excerpts from that conversation, which discusses, analyses and unravels the tensions in McKenzie's work in the symposium and the implications for viewer knowledge and understanding.

ANGELA BARTRAM: It is just over a year since you performed *Retrospective 2027* as the keynote to *The Alternative Document* symposium. This appraised your work through a retrospective set in the future to mark a sixty-year historical career of work commenced before the event in 2016. The three hours you spent performing the 'artist's talk' and tour through a fictional exhibition between 6.00-9.00pm on that Friday night were in themselves part of that portfolio, as a work was made in its own right. Proposed for the projected year cited as 2027, the retrospective introduced a chronological displacement and shift to normal proceedings, asking your audience to oscillate back and forth in time as they encountered the work through the oral histories performed. There were other audiences present too, for example the assistant who was with you throughout as you performed in the dance studio, and those receiving details second-hand from those that had encountered the work whilst enjoying the accompanying exhibition's private view in the building next door. As the artist, how did the event resonate with you, and of watching those watching you in the space in and beyond the time of encounter, and in terms of what you imagined this manifold knowledge communicated?

JORDAN MCKENZIE: I was aware that there were multiple audiences there: the people in front of me; me having gone through those actual experiences now being reproduced; and those already historicised that had just seen the work as part of an

earlier showing at this venue.⁷ Multiple engagements were happening, and this suited the artwork as it was already fractured, as those long, exhausting, durational drawing performances made between 2002-09 were each distilled into one gesture.⁸ For example, the translation of *DayIntoNight* (fig. 3), where I originally struck matches against a wall through the night from sunset to sunrise, was reduced to one match being lit and held until it burnt out for *Retrospective 2027*.⁹ It is interesting to consider the multiple uses of time, because the long duration of the original was distilled to a minute or so. I wonder if this is what retrospectives do, to distil to a fragment, as in a sense they all decontextualise by reducing what the audience sees to one action.

Figure 3 image ¼ page centre

Figure 3. *DayIntoNight*, Jordan McKenzie (2009). Photograph: Jordan McKenzie.

AB: By not translating experience or the happening with precision or in its enriched material, the document is also a decontextualisation of the ephemeral art event, so within a retrospective the effect is doubled. Carolee Schneeman said of the lens-acquired documents of her 1975 performance *Interior Scroll*, ‘these [still] images

⁷ McKenzie performed repeatedly to six groups of five people over the duration of *Retrospective 2027* at The Alternative Document symposium. These groups were escorted from the accompanying exhibition’s private view to the space of the performance, and returned once it had finished.

⁸ Works featured in *Retrospective 2027: DayIntoNight*, Vivid Projects, Birmingham, UK (2009) (fig. 3); *At Arms Length*, Spacex Gallery, Exeter, UK (2006) (fig. 4); *DIE*, Arnolfini Gallery, Bristol, UK (2002) (fig. 5); *Interior DIE*, NOW Festival, Nottingham, UK (2003) (fig. 6); *Drawing Breath*, Ikon Gallery, Birmingham, UK (2005) (fig. 7); *SPENT*, Centre for Recent Drawing, London, UK (2009) (fig. 8).

⁹ Performance at Vivid Projects, Birmingham, UK (2009).

become the work and a substantiation of it,' a duality in effect, which is both evidence of something happening whilst becoming a replacement (Jones & Heathfield 2012, 445). This duality presents a decontextualisation of the work and its history. It fragments the experience by reducing it to a 125th of a second; it sits between the event and further experience, providing an anchor to help imagine what it might have been like to be there, whilst also operating as singular, concise viewpoint of an aspect of the event. With this in mind, how is documentation fit for purpose to detail ephemeral and experiential artwork? Can it ever do the job comprehensively, and is it reliable means to create a record?

JM: The document in its' displacement from the original is unstable. Documentary photography does not explain the whole event, but a moment. It cannot describe the experience of being in a durational performance, the exhaustion, being bored, being present, watching, etc., so it is interesting to see what the limitations of a document are beyond marking it as having happened. I am not sure if a document, specifically in relationship to performance, can do much more. As with my actions distilling previous performances (for example the lighting of the match, or the movement of my arm to suggest graphite marking a surface in *At Arms Length*¹⁰) (fig. 4) they cannot convey the experiential qualities of the originals. A document can only present a snapshot, and so becomes an additional artwork.

Figure 4 image ¼ page centre

Figure 4. *At Arms Length*, Jordan McKenzie (2006). Photograph: Jordan McKenzie.

¹⁰ SpaceX Gallery, Exeter, UK (2006).

AB: Do the original records of your durational performances hold true, or do these gestural condensations in the retrospective make a new and more useful type of collective and singular document of that time? An embodied portfolio of experiential gesture perhaps, instead of a collection of singular snapshots. Indeed, is the retrospective a new artwork and document of those performances simultaneously and how might this function? Is the lighting of the match, for example, a different document of the original, a visual memory or landmark? Is it a re-enactment and reperformance of an archive, like a fractured memorial that represents the original performance and its document through renewed experience? Is *Retrospective 2027* a glossary of your works between 2002-09 made in such a way as to translate itself as new?

JM: A new artwork yes, although the separate gestures were a temporal visual standing in for a document, like a substitute.

AB: But not a static substitute (in a conventional sense), as you narrate the memories and descriptions of the originals. It concerns being present with the artworks again, yet looking back on and beyond their origins to create an anchor from which to do this. You reposition and reframe the histories of the artworks through reperformance, which gives the (new) audience the means to imagine the original actions to which the distilled gesture relates. Made anew in fact, so what does this bring to the histories to which they are indebted?

JM: It would be impossible to show what those performances were like originally, as experience is important, but a substitute is useful. Some were twelve, fourteen, twenty hours plus, and it was like being in a double register and a different frame of account in the retrospective. There is my memory of performing long ago, whilst this new audience see a representation as I convey what that might be - and absolutely failing

because it cannot be done. There were several types of audiences with me: the audience past, the ghost presences who experienced the originals; my knowledge and memory as the body that made those actions; and this present audience, who were not party to those historical actions being offered an interpretation instead. It offers a way in that is experiential rather than archival, and more in keeping with the work's origins.

AB: Perhaps assisted by being in a different type of location too, a non-gallery space within a performing arts centre rather than a gallery enhanced the distanced and fractural effect from the originals. I aimed to unsettle the preconditions of access by challenging cultural and academic placement and the structures that determine the exhibition and symposium by switching the parameters of the visual and the dialogic, the static and the conversational with your artwork. I deliberately scheduled your artwork in a dance studio, a place of rehearsal, try out and process (similar to an artist's studio in this respect), to move it beyond the tropes of the exhibition venue, and to increase the difference to the original actions performed in visual art spaces. Much in the same way as programming your work into the symposium rather than the exhibition, to align it with discourse rather than exposition, the choice of space added to that shift in positionality. The dance studio's black curtain 'walls' are opposite to the white of the gallery to which the originals are indebted, creating an encounter that is more theatrical than exhibition. In addition to gesture and structural alignment, this also allowed an acknowledgment of difference through use of space. A new-ness could therefore emerge, born of document perhaps, but given agency by precise and considered structural switches. Do you think these tactics helped forge a translation beyond documentary 'telling' of the originals, to be more than this in fact?

JM: Yes, being in a different location opens the work to other meanings, making it more active. It definitely became a work that was hovering between being archive and now, visual and performed, theatrical and provocation, tending more towards raising discussion rather than making a statement. The works referenced also meshed together by being gestured through one singular event rather than discreet documents. The cube drawings included¹¹ were originally performed in specific sites and the context for this one [the retrospective] is different being in one room. The actions bled into other actions and the 'cube' imagined rather than real. A crisscrossing of times and places was happening in this one site and as part of the symposium. Retrospectives are about ordering in a very clear way and this was not, so it defied what it was from the moment I made the first gesture. This retrospective concerned what happens when those temporal, chronological and spatial orderings unravel and become blurred, in the way that a conventional one does not.

AB: The dance space removed the references to the gallery to inform a displacement in context through site. It added to the work's context as retrospective being unstable: through difference in venue, situation, and gesture over object. How did this appear to you as the artist, and where did the changes in translation and delivery occur as a result?

JM: It felt like a delivery, but they were theatricalised actions anyway through the distillation, of taking something that had lasted twenty hours, with all that occurs through durational experience and turning it into something that might take two minutes. It felt as if I was theatricalising my own performances, and the site and change in circumstance and delivery assisted how that was understood to me certainly, and maybe to others despite their not being witnesses to the originals.

¹¹ *At Arms Length*, performed at SpaceX Gallery, Exeter, and OVADA Gallery, Oxford, 2006 (fig. 4).

AB: Yes it was theatrical, and I thought you were acting somewhat like a magician, with the audience waiting and anticipating to see what you might conjure up. The vicarious knowledge of the work grew to become a flurry of post-event discussion and comparison as more experienced it, and with it appearing slightly different with each performance that evening. There were also differences in that audience: those there primarily for the symposium or exhibition; those accompanying others; students; academics; others that came to see your work specifically. Various dynamics and levels of engagement and experience contributing to the growing oral document produced on that evening born of a conscious, or subconscious understanding of the dynamics of what it might in fact be, and of what they had seen.

JM: If they think they are watching me as choreography, as an act even, particularly with being in a theatricalised dance space, it adds to this effect. I did the same order, but not the same act each time, deciding not to choreograph it at all. The important aspect was to ‘remember’ the originals. I said things like “I think I was doing this,” and “I think I was doing that,” to bring a level of uncertainty for the document and retrospective. My memories may not have been that accurate, and I deliberately peppered it with those kinds of uncertainties, which choreography and rehearsal (which I also did not do) would change. Retrospectives have a lot of certainty (order in layout and linked elements) and I played with this convention by speaking as if there were other artworks in adjacent rooms. I was saying falsehoods like “of course this is a really big retrospective so if you want to go into other rooms afterwards and have a look at more work please do, but I’m going to focus on this series here,” creating fictions upon fictions, and myriad uncertainties. I intentionally misremembered dates and spoke falsehoods like “I think it was in 1992, maybe it was here, maybe it was somewhere

else.” This made the premise of the retrospective uncertain, as something that should be certain and give answers, but in this instance was not.

AB: Works in retrospectives tend to be out of time, because they are so historicised as accounts they are regimes of looking back. They tend to be complete works of an artist or oeuvre. Often a historical overview of the works of the dead offered as objects or documents, and beyond being alive and live. Your fictionalised version is divergent and polemic because it is the antithesis of these conventions – it defies a delivery of fact, object and completeness, offering a space of fictionalised provocation, gesture and *aliveness* instead. The futuristic year of 2027 confounds this for your retrospective. A fiction based on fact, separated from origin further through being set in the future. Sci-fi art perhaps, but one that relies on storytelling, which in some ways a conventional retrospective also does (even through instructive). Both approaches engage imagination through narrative: the traditional through factual and historical ordering and provision of information and yours through performance of oral description. However, yours, being less formulaic, creates a landscape on which the viewer can imagine and re-imagine, as its less prescriptive, gestural nature is open to difference, speculation and supposition through the enactment of oral fiction.

JM: *Retrospective 2027* is a fiction of that which has actually happened, marking and revisiting actual events through narrative account, oscillating between being historical document and contemporary experience, ricocheting between the past, the now and the future. It asks the audience to shift between imagining the past whilst being anchored in the here and now. A stacked up experience, which asks the audience to think in the future and simultaneously imagine the past, whilst being active in the present.

AB: What are the conflicts there, if one exists at all, as a looking back and moving towards simultaneously, a un-fixity that seeks to perpetually exist between two points? The retrospective of 2016 is now history itself as we meet over one year later in 2017, so I wonder how it would be if remade? Would it be different, would it be something else, would you remember and gesture the same works again and in the same way? Would it be a reshaping of the version in 2016, similar yet different? Perhaps you would remember the 2016 gestures and layer them onto future incarnations, as in your mind they are surely now linked to the originals. I doubt that is completely possible as memories change too, particularly as there are no documents (lens-based or other) of the retrospective. Indeed, this conversation might be its testimony, as it will provide a history through transcribed conversation.

JM: The retrospective made me think about aging, getting older and what that means for artists and significant memory. It was a comfortable way to consider one's own mortality and what one chooses to leave as legacy and imprint - whether that be culturally, artistically, socially, or academically. Materially it is easier to make a retrospective of physical 'stuff' and objects too. When you work in performance and with the ephemeral, one can challenge what a retrospective actually does, make it live (if indeed you still are). Traditionally retrospectives show documentation of performance and this did not, which is right for my work and the discipline. I have not thought how the gestures made on 2016 would become layers within another retrospective delivered in the same way, but yes, you are right they would as they are now part of the fabric of the work's memories.

AB: The retrospective of 2016 is set in motion, chugging towards 2027, and that is the opportunity of a retrospective that does not conform to logical and normative structures

- it allows for a re-think, change and evolution. Generally, the modus operandi for expositions of the ephemeral is the opposite, so it is exciting for the discipline to have an opportunity to engage beyond the lens-based and historically relegating archive. *Video Acts* at London's Institute of Contemporary Art (2003) is an example of an exhibition of lens-made documents of ephemeral and performance artworks that historically relegates and deadens the previously embodied. The exhibition attempted to demonstrate the experience of embodied and ephemeral artworks, but failed due to premise of the archival and past documents it displayed. For, it is impossible to access the past as an experience through such records - the moment is gone. A dichotomy of representation and misrepresentation; transience and experience is mistranslated and confused in its partial exposure. Usefully that type of thinking of a decade ago, from using photographic video or still images as demonstration of an event, is in productive development. To the kinds of conversations that we are having now in fact.

JM: That is what I wanted the retrospective to do, to move beyond that model. For if we think about the document as being something essentially visual, as photography or video normally, how might we represent it as experiential and temporal rather than existing as something which is essentially a digital archive, on paper or in text? This is a retrospective, or was, that references the past through re-embodiment and liveness. It is a new artwork, but also closer to the original rather than some other forms of (traditional) documentation in its' performative delivery. It suggests thinking about archiving and how we archive in relationship to the lived and tangible - this is crucial as experience is how we understand the transient. It is important to say this work is not finished, because in a performative and ephemeral context those actions live on: as body memories, as cognitive memories, as experiences and of me revisiting them physically and intellectually (as we are now). That is their legacy.

The strategies of the curator and artist are pivotal in the evolving translation of artworks. The influences of both are nowhere more relevant than with McKenzie's staging of *Retrospective 2027* in 2016, whereby each contributed to its defiance of retrospection to re-position it as an artwork open to modification and variation in delivery. This is evident in McKenzie's translation of memory as a reperformance of the originals, coupled with the precision of curatorial strategy. Groys states curating 'produces ephemeral constellations with their own limited career span,' so it is appropriate for this retrospective to be as momentary as the original experience (Groys 2016, 19). Here, it re-embodies the previously embodied. Indeed, as no images or footage exist of the retrospective in 2016, the memory of that embodiment is itself ephemeral and transient.

The reason for placing McKenzie's retrospective in a symposium rather than its typical preserve of exhibition aims to challenge the conventions of staging to find a solution to the deadening effect of traditional systems for recording events. Of course, I acknowledge that not all galleries function thus all of the time, and McKenzie exhibits within them still. However, the ephemeral and performance acquire a different authority through their placement within another type of tradition such as a symposium, one that activates through a structure of discourse and discussion. A retrospective as exhibition is static and immovable, a glimpse into the premise of work already complete; symposiums and conferences position the artwork as artistic 'research,' as that still up for debate, because of their conventions and contexts. Favouring colloquium over exhibition, this situates McKenzie's retrospective within academic discourse and criticality here, suggesting it is not yet complete, but open to discussion and development. Essentially, it retrieves the retrospective from the past to bring it into the

current.

The subtlety that a change in venue added for McKenzie's work heightened a further sense of currency and provocation within dialogue. Positioning the retrospective in a theatrical dance studio rather than a gallery space, a place where practice and process exists, gave additional agency and contemporaneity. Essentially, the process orientation of the space allowed the performance to appear unfinished, active and being *worked*. For Groys 'there is a crucial difference between the [art] installation space and the theatrical space. In the theatre, the spectators are positioned outside the stage; in the museum, they enter the stage, find themselves inside the spectacle' (Groys 2016, 19). By unsettling its foundations by place and programming, McKenzie's exposition was thereby removed from the traditional and set adrift to elicit a more radicalised and unbound situation, whereby the audience could re-appraise their understanding of what a retrospective might be in their own terms. In this subtle, but affirming displacement, the didacticism so often experienced when visiting a gallery retrospective is overcome, allowing an opportunity to gain understanding free of prescription and instruction to emerge.

Diana Taylor states in *The Archive and the Repertoire* that we must 'expand our notion of the archive to house the mnemonic gestural practices and specialised knowledge transmitted live' to reach beyond the confines of the document, which is relevant for McKenzie's work to which embodiment and the body are central (Taylor 2003, 36). The performance positioned McKenzie's as an agent provocateur, and un-settler of the conventional. The interview with McKenzie's addresses his position to *Retrospective 2027*, and how the use of gestural and oral translations of previous artworks offers a re-investment in their histories by revisiting them beyond their past.

Their memories undergo a re-activation and embodied rediscovery in this new situation. What this means for the original artworks, which are so historic for McKenzie that they do not feature on his website,¹² is meaning extends beyond their original lifespans.

The archive and retrospective for Obrist are the finite response to the gallery and museum's 'desire for architectural and artistic permanence' (Obrist 2014, 47). Reactions to the traditional here 'increasingly question the fetishisation of the object,' a particularly relevant point in relation to McKenzie's performance (Obrist 2014, 47). The ephemeral and non-object specific defies categorisation, allowing a transitory encounter through embodiment and gesture, one that is impossible to make a conventional return to. One cannot choose to revisit McKenzie's retrospective in the same way as Tate's exhibition of Rauschenberg's work for example, as it has a limited duration of an evening instead of months, and becomes a memory in and of itself.

With the most recent memories of the works included, their gestural layers infuse the narrative to be more pronounced than the original to which they relate if the retrospective were restaged. Context and decontextualisation are significant in terms of what each brings to the artwork and whether the event is in itself a re-worked document of those past. I propose that the work is both document and new artwork by the change and diversity of delivery through reperformance. The audience contributed to the document through a historicising narrative set in the 'now', and this confined it to the past whilst it was still being made and presented to others.

Janine Antoni said of *Moor*,¹³ a sculptural installation of woven rope, that it she made it 'with the understanding that I can change the piece according to my creative

¹² McKenzie's website lists a range of work, but not that were featured within Retrospective 2027.

Jordanmckenzie.co.uk. (2017). *Jordan McKenzie (online)* Available at:

<http://www.jordanmckenzie.co.uk/> (Accessed 21 Aug. 2017).

¹³ Made by Antoni for Magasin 3 Stockholm Konsthall's *Free Port* exhibition (2001).

process' (Jones & Heathfield 2012, 522). McKenzie's approach echoes that of Antoni, embracing modifications in delivery through repetition. His delivery saw audience 'groups' experience a mutation, whereby each became a semi-unique iteration of the work's essence. Each translation affected a variance due to how McKenzie re-told his memories of the originals, and the "I think it was" moments, those infusions of uncertainty, demonstrate where this might occur. The introduction of uncertainty positions the work on unstable ground, allowing for adjustment, propagation and mutation of memory. This is significant for approach to retrospective and how it can be useful for ephemeral work, an alternative to the lens-based insufficiencies that negate experience. What we see in the retrospective by McKenzie is an attempt to keep the ephemeral *ephemeral*, a unique and provocative strategy for determining the artworks ongoing fluidity in representation. Like the process of Antoni's installation *Moor*, McKenzie's is an artwork that 'keeps growing but has the ability to change,' through repetition of action and gesture (Jones & Heathfield 2012, 522).

The shattering of the defining structures and parameters that dictate the traditional museum/gallery retrospective, that time-reliant ordering of cultural 'stuff,' informs an environment whereby top-down instruction (in terms of *how* to access) is supplanted by an opening up of mediation that is without bias. A freeing up of experience and understanding essentially allows mediation to be without restriction and set conditions, giving the visitor the capacity to understand and imagine through experience, and beyond a prescriptive and instructional framework. In essence, it allows the viewer to think independently and free of order and dictation, to re-imagine the artist's gestural embodiments of past works and to understand their placement and implication within academic discourse and debate. In this way, it gives ownership for knowledge to the viewer rather than making statement of factual address.

Figure 5 image ¼ page centre

Figure 5. *DIE*, Jordan McKenzie (2002). Photograph: Jordan McKenzie.

Figure 6 image ¼ page centre

Figure 6. *Interior DIE*, Jordan McKenzie (2003). Photograph: Peter Bowcott.

Figure 7 image ¼ page centre

Figure 7. *Drawing Breath*, Jordan McKenzie (2005). Photograph: Peter Bowcott.

Figure 8 image ¼ page centre

Figure 8. *SPENT*, Jordan McKenzie (2009). Photograph: Jordan McKenzie.

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