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ZUZANNA SOSNOWSKA

SOUND HEALING FROM HYPERCONNECTIVITY:

**HOW HYPERCONNECTIVITY
AFFECTS ATTENTION**



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SOUND HEALING FROM HYPERCONNECTIVITY:

HOW HYPERCONNECTIVITY
AFFECTS ATTENTION

ZUZANNA SOSNOWSKA
MA PERFORMANCE PRACTICES

A Thesis presented by Zuzanna Sosnowska to Master Performance Practices,
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2022

SYNOPSIS

The dissertation project SOUND HEALING FROM HYPERCONNECTIVITY: HOW HYPERCONNECTIVITY AFFECTS ATTENTION is a phenomenological artistic research project culminating in the immersive performance Connect to yourself (2022).

During my artistic process, I have been investigating the interconnection between the commodification of sound healing and guided meditation and the retreat from the negative effects of hyperconnectivity they offer. This research investigates how the commodification of sound healing has transformed the ritual originally experienced collectively by indigenous, non-capitalistic cultures into an individual activity that enhances the self-improvement of privileged groups. In the beginning of my artistic research, I noticed a lack of discourse connecting the effects of technology on human attention. My personal experience of hyperconnectivity has motivated me to find a solution in immersive experiences of sound healing to be able to enhance my attention. My research wants to fill in a gap of attention in which these services are accessible to a diversity of attention in the larger context of hyperconnectivity of lifestyles and overstimulation.

I aim to disseminate neo-healing as a solution to eliminating the disrupting effects of hyperconnectivity on attention.

Identifying the lack of specificity or measurability and ambiguity of the vocabulary used in the discourse of sound healing introduced before, I aim to widen the practice of guided meditation to respond to the needs of more inclusive receivers according to diversity of attention. I critically contextualize the dominant modality of normative attention by subverting the practice of guided meditation from within, proposing a missing element that I identified in dominant narrations of guided meditation practices. My contribution lies in proposing an alternative that is modern, adapted to hyperconnected conditions that affects our attention and responsive for missed in the spiritual discourse diversity of attention in the form of neurodivergent guided meditation.

Identifying the lack of alternative practices and narrations in guided meditations that allow distractions in and do not suggest a dominative concentration mode, I created my own customized experience of guided meditation, tailored for both attention and distraction. What distinguishes my neo-healing practice from conventional guided meditation is allowing both modalities to appear and therefore diversity.

I identify a lack of specific terms that describe the beneficial effect of sound on attention. For that reason, in my dissertation, I decided to focus on attention as a resource affected by hyperconnectivity.

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DECLARATION

I, Zuzanna Sosnowska, hereby certify that I had personally carried out the work depicted in the thesis entitled "SOUND HEALING FROM HYPERCONNECTIVITY: HOW HYPERCONNECTIVITY AFFECTS ATTENTION".

No part of the thesis has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma prior to this date.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Attention has been at the heart of both empirical research and the evolution of consumer capitalist economy in the last two centuries (Crary, 2001, p. 33). In this time, individuals' attention has undergone a constant evolution due to interaction with digital technologies (Crary, 2001). Crary describes how in the last decades the natural way of functioning of attention has shifted towards hyperconnectivity, the condition of individuals constantly connecting with others using digital devices and multiple digital communication channels (2001). Hyperconnectivity has been described by Crary in his work 24/7. Although the author does not use the word "hyperconnectivity" I will continuously refer to the relationship between digital technologies and its effect on human attention with the a term "hyperconnectivity".

Hyperconnectivity has consequences not only for how we protect our privacy but also for our attention. Concerns about hyperconnectivity affecting attention were expressed in the Onlife Manifesto (Onlife Manifesto, 2015), an initiative created by a collaboration of anthropology, cognitive science, computer science, engineering, law, neuroscience, philosophy, political science, psychology and sociology. The mode of dispersed attention between the virtual and physical space in one temporality has been diagnosed by



Figure 1: PR photography for Connect to yourself (2022)
author: Stelios Troullakis

interdisciplinary experts as the onlife attention (Wellner, 2019, 47). It is also of note that hyperconnectivity disproportionately affects neurodivergent people who are more vulnerable to its possible negative effects which has been urgency to start this research.

As a solution to the emerging issue of hyperconnectivity, I observed the consumption of commodified experiences: particularly the consumption of practices originating from the spiritual realm. Prominent examples of practices being employed in this way are sound healing and guided meditation. This is due to its specific modality of attention-concentration being used as a remedy for multitasking.

Jonathan Crary's work *Suspensions of Perception: Attention, Spectacle, and modern culture* (2001) is my theoretical base for hyperconnectivity, contextualizing the concept of attention regarding conditions such as an increased use of technology in daily life. *24/7* is another work of Crary that will provide my theoretical base for hyperconnectivity and impact of digital technologies on human attention. Jonathan Crary contextualizes how attention has been changing according to the changing modes of production over the history (2001, p. 33).

As an outcome of last year's one-year-long research focused on the working conditions and larger context of flexibility of labour, targeting artists as workers and spectrum of

other neo-liberal workers I realized that sound healing and guided meditation are implicit in the neo-liberal capitalistic context of consumption. Not only does consumption of sound healing and guided meditation provide temporary retreat for individuals whose working conditions are far from balance but also, I observed individuals' tendency towards a spiritual shift and an increasing demand for services offered by neo-liberal healers, who were promising well-being after participation in the session.

The outcome of earlier research focused on commodification of experience has brought me to the focus on the commodification of specific practices of sound healing and guided meditation. The concept of commodified experience is based on "The Experience Society: Consumer Capitalism Rebooted" by Steven Milles (2021).

Commodified experience led to me to designing my own practice of neo-healing using the gong as a tool, since this instrument is traditionally used in sound healing.

As an outcome of this research, neo-healing proposes critical reflection through immersive experience and subversion of sound healing and guided meditation through modification of the narration to distention. I will refer to the split of my attention between the action I am doing now, to which I

decided to pay selective attention, my surroundings and my inner thoughts, as distention¹, a modality of attention that includes distractions and by focusing on them through listening provokes to immerse in distractions through deep listening.

I propose an alternative to the antagonistic relation between concentration and distraction by the term distention, a term I constructed in the Electives Schizosomatics to synthesize attention with distraction, my subjective attention modality. This year through use of sound of the gong I investigated the benefits of meditation and harmonics on attention.

The reason why I created neo healing lies in the hyperconnectivity. Even though hyperconnectivity has not been officially assessed as a mental condition by WHO, my research aims to propagate the negative influence of hyperconnectivity on our attention and asks not to take it for granted through paying attention to hyperconnectivity.

Constant connection via virtual channels is creating a split of attention between physical space and virtual relations mediated through the digital devices that affects concentration and in consequence leads to distention.

¹ Distention- a term I constructed to synthesize attention with distraction; my subjective attention modality

The conscious act of paying attention to distractions does not exalt attention over distractions-it allows both modes to conflate each other and become a synthesis (Crary, 1992)

Sound healing is a practice based on the modality of perception engaged through listening to sound, excluding visual stimuli and allowing the inner experience to appear. I propose a method of deep listening combined with guided meditation, later explained in chapter 4 as neo-healing to tune into one's attention. For that reason, I chose sound healing to embody my research at its core by subverting sound healing. Identifying the lack of critical reflection in the field of guided meditation and imprecise vocabulary in the sound healing discourse, I decided to create my own neo-healing practice, assessing the tradition of sound healing, with the intention to provide the missing narration that includes distraction along with a concentration in the context of this practice.

Despite concerns such as those presented in the Onlife Manifesto there seems to be a lack of public discourse about how mobile digital technology, specifically hyperconnectivity, impacts our attention, which is my urgency to conduct my research.

My research aims to investigate individuals' experience of disruption of attention in the context of hyperconnectivity from a phenomenological perspective.

I propose listening as a mode of tuning into one's attention and a remedy for overstimulation, which I will explain deeper in chapter 3.

By acknowledging technology as an inseparable part of our lifestyle, I would like to highlight the complexity of its influence on human attention and how it promotes the consumption of commodified services of sound healing and guided meditation. My dissertation investigates the cost of this constant connectedness to the individual's attention.

Furthermore, I aim to provide a critical perspective to the larger discourse about the commodification of the practice of guided meditation and sound healing. My dissertation thus aims to contribute and form a critical, immersive artistic bridge between exclusive paradigms, connecting the niche of spiritual practices offering guided meditation with artistic immersive soundscapes-performances that offer a meditative, trance-like experience.

My last aim is to present my contribution to the field of immersive art eliciting hypnosis or trance-like states and spiritual, healing practices, including its commodification, in which I position my practice, as a critical assessment of the healing promise. I will do so by creating a new modality of neo-healing as an effect of my practice that uses modality of deep listening to alter attention through allowing the distraction

into concentration mode, which results in distention applied in the guided meditation.

The artistic context in which I settle my work is dominated by artists who make meditative soundscapes that elicit the alteration of states of consciousness. Two artists in particular, Raimundas Malasauskias and Joachim Koester, are creating hypnotic soundscapes that aim to elicit a trance in the audience. Both Malasauskias and Koester are using sound and guided meditation or hypnosis to guide the listeners to specific states of consciousness, with eyes closed. I identify a lack of critical narrations in these works towards this method and the vulnerability that hypnosis provokes, which I am contributing to with my practice.

The motivation for conducting the study comes out of my personal experience of hyperconnectivity as a consumer of experience. The realization that I felt the negative effects of hyperconnectivity led me to define my artistic research aim as proposing productive, immersive solutions to this social issue that I explicitly analyse below.

The reason why I propose to problematize the concept of attention from a phenomenological perspective is the vital role it plays withholding sensorial experience and overall importance of attention that it plays along with perception. The methodology that I use for conducting my research is

phenomenology by Merleau-Ponty, which gave me a theoretical base for conducting my research focused on attention relation to perception.

Attention, according to Crary, is like a filter to select the stimuli or sensorial information. If attention is not there, selective ability is not working and the subject will be dominated by the loudness of the outside (Crary, 1992).

Choosing the practice of sound healing and guided meditation was a method to subvert the narration that appears in the immersive practice and allow critical reflection on its ambiguity to appear through sensory experience. My study of the commodification of these practices has led me to design customized narrations that could serve a more inclusive, neurodivergent audience, whose needs could not be fulfilled by attending conventional meditation.

I identify that sound healing literature, as exemplified by Sound healing for beginners, uses ambiguous and unspecific terms such as "presence". What I am missing in the literature about sound healing is scientific evidence of the healing effect and concrete vocabulary about its positive effect on the well-being of individuals.

Neo-healing is my strategy to subvert the concept of guided meditation with special focus on concentration and create narration that responds to neurodivergence. I chose to subvert

existing practices by contextualizing the narration of guided meditation to the contemporary problem of attention and to move the stagnant areas of sound healing and guided meditation in the context of western European capitalism. For this purpose, I decided to investigate the motives for attending the sound healing sessions from within using the method fieldwork and commenced a study of how it can alter attention into different, subconscious states.

Phenomenology provides perspective and a bigger context as well as tools to produce experience to specify the processes that are happening during the experience. The phenomenological perspective offers the analysis of internal processes that speak about the experience. This methodology was very enriching and provided me with the analysis of inner processes that produce experience for the audience in my performance *Connect to yourself* (2022).

The methods I will employ to respond to these questions are a combination of subversion, literature review, fieldwork (participation in meditation and sound healing sessions that already exist in the market), introspection and studio practice. The result of all the above methods is *Connect to yourself* (2022), a performance that produces an immersive environment that directly engages audience with the notion of hyperconnectivity through the form of sound healing and guided meditation.

Sound healing is a practice based on a modality of perception engaged through deep listening, excluding visual stimuli and allowing the inner experience to appear through altered state of consciousness or trance. On the other hand, neo-healing is a way to subvert the narration that appears in the immersive practice and allow critical reflection on its ambiguity to appear through sensory experience.

Conducting my research with the method of case study, I decided to investigate neo-healing as a tool to provoke a shift in my attention by redefining the practice of guided meditation to conditions that reshape attention. The immersive experience produced by gong sound allows critical reflection to appear through the sensory experience. I chose sound transmitted through the gong to be my object of study because of its beneficial effect on attention. The combination of sound and guided meditation embodies the complexity of the relations appearing between hyperconnectivity and the way it affects human attention.

In chapter 2 I state the relationship between the field of sound healing in a bigger context of attention as a niche limited to the spiritual believers in the westernized context. I will also reflect on other issues related to the accessibility of the sound healing services proposing concentration only responding to the needs of limited groups of people. I will also talk about attention in context of hyperconnectivity and introduce distention.

In subchapter 2.2 I will state the artistic and spiritual field in which I position my practice as well as gaps in criticality of artistic, trance and hypnosis eliciting practices and the strictly belief based spiritual field of sound healing.

In chapter 3 I will explain how I conducted the research from phenomenological perspective and the methods I used, such as subversion, field work, introspection, case study, literature review and reflection.

Chapter 4 will explain how the experience of neo-healing, my proposal for overstimulation of virtual relations is caused by hyperconnectivity and a response for the problem of attention in contemporary conditions due to hyperconnectivity. I will also include an in-depth explanation of neo-healing, the practice that I established and the outcome of this research. This practice proposes critical reflection and addition to new modalities of attention through subversion of existing practices.

Chapter 5 will discuss my findings, potential directions in which I can bring my research further and what I have fulfilled so far. It will be followed by a brief conclusion and feed-forward.

2. CONTEXT

My dissertation aims to form a critical, immersive artistic bridge between exclusive paradigms, mostly proposing practices based on make-belief and concentration, through connecting the niche of spiritual practices offering guided meditation with artistic immersive soundscapes-performances offering meditative, trance-like experience.

What connects both niches is that they are experienced through listening.

My research fills the gap of attention in which guided meditation is accessible in a spiritual field to a diversity of attention through applying distention, using methods of introspection, case study, improvisation and subversion in the larger context of hyperconnectivity and overstimulation. I identify the field of sound healing as a niche limited to the receivers who are spiritual believers in the westernized context.

My urgency to start this artistic research project was to investigate hyperconnectivity's impact on attention. I realized that the way we consume commodified experience has become more sophisticated and has developed into ephemeral events. The constant change of the conditions



Figure 2: photo from the final performance Connect to yourself (2022)
author: Fenia Kotsopoulou

dictated by the system of neoliberal capitalism and hyperconnectivity has led to a switch of attention of people and thus, consumption of services offering a boost of well-being to individuals.

I observe demand to retreat from overuse of multitasking in commodified services of sound healing and guided meditation. By acknowledging mobile digital technology as an inseparable part of our lifestyle, I aim to prove the complexity of its influence on human attention and how it promotes the consumption of commodified services of sound healing and guided meditation.

Multitasking² and concentration³ are terms that connect to different modalities of attention in a concrete period. Concentration is no longer a dominant mode of attention, replaced by multitasking, which combines simultaneous actions at once (Wellner, 2019, 48). Concentration, however, is a historical mode of attention that requires focus on a single activity and assesses disruptions as unwanted crossings of that one activity.

² a mode of performing synchronous actions in the temporality, meant to increase the efficiency of the individual's ability to perform few actions at the time (Wellner, 2019, p. 48).
³ Concentration: a historical mode of attention modality requiring focus on the single activity at the time and assessing disruptions as unwanted crossing of the one activity -is no longer dominating and in many cases has been replaced by multitasking, implying plurality of simultaneous actions in one temporality" (Wellner, 2019, p. 48).

Digital mobile devices, mediating communication through digital platforms, have been negatively impacting individuals' attention (Crary, 2013). In a hyperconnected reality, multitasking has largely replaced concentration, since the concentration proposed in guided meditation no longer exists.

I see hyperconnectivity as an ongoing process, conflating attention with digital communication, that creates an illusion of being connected.

"Attention always contained within itself the conditions for its own disintegration, it was haunted by the possibility of its own excess- which we all know so well whenever we try to look at or listen to any one thing for too long."
 (Ribot in Crary, 2001, p. 47).

Working with the concept of attention in the larger context of hyperconnectivity brought me to develop my practice through combining and modifying pre-existing practices of sound healing and guided meditation, while having in mind that guided meditation is a practice entirely focused on inner experience—focusing all the thoughts inwards and attempting to produce a focus that does not invite distractions. Being present in the guided meditation—present in the moment and present with yourself—is a notion that is often used in commodified experiences, promising the consumer the best possible experience.

Highlighting that attention already has distractions implicit in its complexity, I would like to contextualize it with another massive and exterior distraction: technology.

Onlife manifesto vocalizes the complexity of the relation how the technology influences our attention: "We believe that societies must protect, cherish and nurture humans' attentional capabilities. This does not mean giving up searching for improvements" (Onlife Manifesto, 2015, p.12). Mobile, digital devices accompany us always, anywhere we go. Unless switched off, they provide an endless stream of notifications 24/7. The expanding integration of communication through mobile digital devices in most activities has created a shift in the mode of attention reshaped into distention. The process of parallel communications involves constant negotiation between the virtual and the physical interactions interweaving in one temporality.

"In the digital economy, attention is approached as a commodity to be exchanged on the marketplace"
(Onlife Manifesto, 2015, 12).

This is how through the increased use of digitalization and mobile devices dealing with exterior distractions became part of our everyday attention. The attention scarcity relates to the temporality that we live in.

"Attention is a contemporary problem rooted in the ever-growing amounts of information"
(Wellner, 2019, p. 49).

With the expanding access between users mediated through digital devices, which are always transmitting the connection, a disruption of boundaries occurs. As a remedy, many hyperconnected individuals seek time for themselves in a guided meditations that offer to bring us to a utopian non-disrupted presence. I see it as a trap. If our behaviour and mental patterns do not change, through establishing clear boundaries and limits of virtual relations and interactions we will stay in the same loop and the remedy, retreat, is only temporary.

On the other hand, we do want to stay connected beyond physical space, for multiple reasons from living far away from our close ones—feeling close to them, despite the physical distance—to communicating to sustain professional relations. The core to all this is sustaining the relations.

To study the negative effects of hyperconnectivity on attention I have been critically and practically elaborating on the concept of attention, hyperconnectivity and sound healing, investigated by the authors below.

Jonathan Crary in his work *Suspension of Attention: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture* provides an overview of the shift of attention from a historical perspective, citing a set of technological conditions that impacted it and a comparative overview of the transformation of attention in the context of the

larger condition of socio-economical changes. Suspension of Attention: Attention, Spectacle and Modern Culture provides a complex analysis of attention in the relation to art and the perception of art as well as larger context of industrial changes.

My approach to hyperconnectivity can be aligned with Crary's thoughts about modernity as a process of changing conditions rather than abrupt change.

Crary states the inevitability of changes and how it challenges our perception: "Modernization was not a one-time set of changes but an ongoing and perceptually modulating process that would never pause for individual subjectivity to accommodate and "catch up" with it "(2001) Attention holds perceptual data.

Another work through which I am engaging theoretically with the concept of hyperconnectivity is 24/7: Late capitalism and the Ends of Sleep by Jonathan Crary (2014).

24/7: Late capitalism and the Ends of Sleep is a complex analysis of how technology has been influencing our attention and in consequence led to hyperconnectivity. Crary does not use the term "hyperconnectivity", but in my research I use this term to describe how virtual non-stop communication is affecting our attention. Hyperconnectivity incorporated

by digital mobile technology in our daily life has a negative effect on individual attention. But even before technology disrupted our concentration and created more stimuli to deal with simultaneously, concentration was entangled with disruptions.

Similarly to what my term distention proposes, Claire Bishop concludes the complexity of modern attention highlighting presence of distractions along with the concentration: "Attention and distraction have always been intrinsically intertwined and rarely exist as pure entities" (Bishop, 2019, p.58)

My call in modifying guided meditation is to subvert its narration and imply distention inside of existing practices dominated by concentration and elicit its alteration through altering states of consciousness.

#DISTENTION

In my guided meditation practice disseminated in neo-healing I perceive distractions as a set of happenings that split and widen the spectrum of attention into multiple directions. The conscious act of paying attention to distractions does not exalt attention over distractions; it allows both modes to conflate and become a synthesis. I applied distention to neo-healing by synthesising concentration with stream of consciousness—thoughts connected to water, which was

topic of narration of guided meditation that I led. Distention is a tool to allow shifting attention as a process of conscious selection of what the subject pays attention to. It requires elimination. Distention does not welcome chaos. Distention is a conscious process of paying attention to the shifts that happen due to inner thoughts and outside affects and events enabling an affective register of the moments that define the actual conditions of what is immediately occurring (Gil, p.5, 2019). Crary exposes the historical transformation of attention over last two hundred years, with special regards to the disregard of people who didn't have capacity to hold attention and therefore were pushed to the margins of the society. It is important to realize that diversity of attention was not always accepted the way it is accepted now in society and has been disciplined by institutions in order to fulfil the normative standards of concentration awareness (Crary, 2001). The spectrum of attention is wide and my call is to embrace all of it, without trying to fit everyone into concentration.

Further I will explain relation between attention and state of trance: „It can be a limit at which attention imperceptibly mutates into a state of trance or even autohypnosis” (Crary, 2001, p. 47).

The artistic context in which I position my work is dominated by the meditative soundscapes eliciting the alteration of states of consciousness to be experienced through listening, with eyes closed.

One example is Joachim Koester, a sound artist who in collaboration with Stefan A. Pedersen of Department of Abandoned Futures created hypnotic, narrative audio works evoking altered states of consciousness in listeners. Guided meditation invites the audience to experience an inner journey through listening. Koester takes listeners on the journey to a loaded places that are associated with artistic experimentation or “aura”.

As opposed to Koester, my neo-healing practice offers meta-reflection during the proposed experience of sound healing that provokes altered states of consciousness, about which I will speak more deeply in chapter 3.

Neo-healing is my contribution to the immersive artistic field and spiritual field.

I identify a lack of critical narrations towards eliciting the state of trance itself and vulnerability it causes in people who allow for immersion during these artistic works.

Another artist curating immersive sound pieces to be experienced with eyes closed is Raimundas Malasauskas, a Lithuanian curator who in collaboration with hypnotist Marcos Lutyens in Hypnotic Show produced a series of immersive sound works that aim to bring audience into hypnosis. Malasauskas invited different artists to provide scenarios, scripts and concepts which served the narration

was produced for the hypnotist to guide the audience into their inner journey (Chateigne, 2019).

Hypnotic Show elicits stage hypnosis by adding meta-artistic content. Malasausiakas extends the notion of hypnosis and brings it to an artistic level, while the aim of the experience remains in adducting to the hypnosis.

Contrary to Malasauskas's meditative work that aims to hypnotise listeners, my performance offers a double experience: the audience can either immerse in the experience or reflect about the experience that appears applied through the immersive form.

My neo-healing, contrary to Malasauskas's work, proposes two modalities according to adduction: a first one evokes alteration of attention, in which critical reflection is not perceptible to audience who adducted to a state of altered consciousness and a second one—if the audience resists the immersion and abduct—the entrance to the larger meta-reflection upon experience that is happening in the moment. What Malasauskias's Hypnotic Show and Joachim Koester's Department of Abandoned Futures has in common is a mode of perception through listening, with eyes closed, that neo-healing also offers.

My contribution to the field of immersive soundscapes

using medium of guided meditation, subversive, critical performances and field of sound healing is through provoking meta-reflection through guided meditation during the immersive experience of the soundscape, additionally to provoking an alteration of states of consciousness.

Using the method of sound improvisation and introspection I provoke a transformation of attention with the large difference to Malasauskas's work, that the state itself is the entrance to the larger meta-reflection upon the notion of attention with externalized attention of the performer guiding the audience through it.

Yogi Anni, a solo performance by Annica Muller is an example of subversion of spiritualism, yoga, healing, new agism⁴ and self-realization with use of humour and bitter parody of the spiritual journey of the heroin towards becoming a yogi. The performer leads the audience through a personal journey of Yogi Anni, an American woman who became a yoga practitioner, solving her problems through practising yoga. The narration in Yogi Anni subverts the New Age perspective on spirituality and belief that yoga is a solution to all misery that the heroine experiences.

This performance artist uses the persona of a yoga practitioner,

⁴ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/New-Age-movement>

who is blindly assured that yoga brought her from the bottom of being an alcoholic addict to enlightenment. Yogi Anni gradually unravels her sarcasm after performing a score of yoga poses while wearing a yoga outfit—leggings and blouse—and obsessively sipping water. Yogi Anni reveals her criticality of commodification and appropriation of the spiritual practice of yoga in the context of self-development in neo-liberal capitalism. What connects me to Yogi Anni is the subversion of commodification of spiritualism with use of humour while embodying the actual practice. What distinguishes my final performance *Connect to yourself*⁵ from Yogi Anni is that the latter proposes spectatorship through watching and *Connect to yourself* proposes listening.

Considering the field consisting of three artists above led me to combine two strategies, an immersive and a subversive one, into one modality of participation combining reflection and immersion in my practice of neo-healing in the performance *Connect to yourself* (2022).

Similarly to Yogi Anni, my method was to subvert the practice of guided meditation and invite a reflection upon its commodification.

Commodified experience led to me to designing my own

⁵ Documentation of final performance available here: <https://youtu.be/cW34yBxtEmQ>

practice of neo-healing with sound improvisation with a gong, since this instrument is traditionally used in sound healing in practices in East and China.

The outcome of this research, neo-healing, explained in chapter 4, proposes critical reflection through an immersive experience and subversion of sound healing. This year I investigated the benefits of guided meditation and harmonics on attention through use of sound transmitted by the gong. Spiritual practices relying on concentration like sound healing and guided meditation are used as a remedy for multitasking. I would like to initiate a discussion in public discourse about the negative effects of hyperconnectivity on attention.

I observe that hyperconnectivity produces an urgency to temporarily escape from multitasking through concentration, offered by sound healing and meditation. The reason why I decided to subvert guided meditation through introspection and distention into guided meditation is the lack of narrations suitable to the diversity of attention and distractions.

Presence is a key term in guided meditation. The findings of my research will prove that it is no longer possible to “be present” the way guided meditation proposes due to hyperconnectivity.

I studied attention using a gong as a tool and improvised

guided meditation.

The principle of sound healing is deep listening, which alters our consciousness, by the application of specific waves.

Focusing on the sound provokes the experience of “an inner journey” and is used as a tool to alter attention, like Joachim Koester’s work proves (2018).

Theoretical study of spiritual discourse of sound healing and guided meditation led me to conclude a lack of scientific evidence relating to the efficacy of sound healing which to a large extent provides only spiritual, non-evidence-based data and belief-based assumptions.

The spiritual discourse of sound healing proposes intention as a crucial factor for healing to occur.

According to Jonathan Goldman, intent is the energy behind the sound or the consciousness we have when making the sound and received by the person listening to it (2008).

Following the tradition of sound healing, I applied the parallel notion to intention to subvert sound healing into a neo-healing practice with a specific aim: to elicit a change in attention.

From the perspective of physics, healing can occur when the

particles are coming back to a state of harmony (Pesek and Bratina, 2016).

In a more technical vocabulary, Tomatis, an otolaryngologist and doctor, points out the beneficial effect of harmonics on charging the cortex of the brain and speaks about charging ourselves (Goldman, 1992). “Charging ourselves” is not precise and relates to energy, which is a common point of reference in the context of sound healing.

Moreover, Goldman, a sound healing guru, refers to the Hindu tradition that meditation on sound can lead to alteration of consciousness (Goldman, 1992).

According to Pesek and Bratina, researchers who studied the beneficial effect of sound, the gong is a tool to elicit the change in attention through the sound by altering the consciousness:

*“Exposure to the gong sound enables psychoacoustic passage into different states of consciousness and the field of unconsciousness”
(Pesek & Bratina, p. 144).*

The gong produces a frequency rich in overtones which stimulate the perception of listener. Beneficial effects of listening to the sound produced by a gong can be proved from a physiological perspective named as “healing”

explained with measurable effects⁶.

*"An overtone is any harmonic with a frequency greater than the fundamental frequency of a sound. In other words, overtones are all pitches higher than the lowest pitch within an individual sound; the fundamental is the lowest pitch."*⁷

"Listening to harmonics is an excellent key to meditation [...] and allows us to open up for another level of consciousness"
(Goldman, 1992, p. 77).

The transition from attention to altered state of consciousness is described by Crary as belief in the positive effect of the practice. Intention and "being present" are preconditions in the spiritual realm of sound healing. The combination of sound and guided meditation embodies the complexity of the relations appearing between hyperconnectivity and the way it affects human attention.

The beneficial effects of listening to the sound produced by a gong can be proved from a physiological perspective and provides measurable effects to the ambiguous effects of notion of "healing".⁸

Therapeutical effects of gong sounds commonly known as gong baths, were researched by Pesek and Bratina in Slovakia, published in *Gong and Its Therapeutic Meaning*: "Exposure to the gong sound enables psychoacoustic

passage into different states of consciousness and the field of unconsciousness." (Pesek and Bratina, 2016, 144).

Sound healing for beginners is another comparative work that explains the principles of sound healing for non-specialist audiences. This work uses ambiguous, unspecific terms such as "presence" that only implicitly refers to an unspecified concept of "energy" in general. One of my crucial concerns regarding sound healing is the pressure "of being present" and its undefined, yet supposedly beneficial effect to the receiver of the practice.

Narrations of guided meditation usually exclude distractions for the sake of concentration, which we can observe in the work about sound healing: "If we silence all the inner voices, outer noises, and become aware of our personal filters, we can listen with an open mind to another person or happening. This is being fully conscious of the moment." (Goldman, J, 2015)

Another concept in sound healing for it to be successful is intention.

Not only must the participant carry intention but is constantly reminded of "being present", "concentrate on your inner thoughts" etc. I am critical of the overuse of ambiguous and highly abstract terms that are not measurable or

⁶ Goldman, 1992, p. 79

⁷ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Overtone>

⁸ Goldman, 1992, p. 79

carry imprecise meaning, such as “concentration” and “presence”, specifically because I see how problematic they are in the context of hyperconnectivity and non-normative, contemporary notions of attention.

“Sound therapy is the conscious therapeutic application of sound frequencies for the purposes of healing, and with the intention of bringing the individual back into the state of harmony of the mind, body and spirit. Studies have shown that sound therapy can affect brain waves, which causes relaxation and sets the frame for the healing processes”
(Pesek and Bratina, 2016, 139).

“Sound healing is the use of vibrational frequencies or sound forms combined with music or the elements of music (e.g., rhythm, melody, harmony) to promote healing. The use of sound alone, without music, is called Sound vibrational healing”
(Bruscia 2014a cited in Lindahl- Jacobsen, S., Nygaard Pedersen, I., Bonde Ole, L. 2002, p. 216).

Identifying the lack of specificity, measurability and ambiguity of the vocabulary used in the discourse of sound healing alternative practices and narrations proposed in guided meditations that allows distractions in and do not suggest a dominative concentration mode, I created my own customized experience of guided meditation, tailored for both attention and distraction, using method of distention.

In the next chapter I will explain what distinguishes neo-healing from conventional guided meditation by allowing both modalities to appear and therefore diversity.

3. METHODOLOGY

My research investigates how hyperconnectivity influences attention and in consequence leads to consumption of guided meditation and sound healing. It contributes to the gap in guided meditation through offering a diversity of attention.

Choosing the practice of sound healing and guided meditation was a way to subvert the narration that appears in the spiritual practice and allow critical reflection to appear through sensory experiences mediated by introspection, sound improvisation, distention and subversion. My study of the commodification of these practices led me to produce customized narrations that could serve a more inclusive, neurodivergent audience, whose needs could not be fulfilled by attending conventional meditation.

This research contributes to the field of sound healing through contextualizing attention with hyperconnectivity.

It aims to investigate effect of hyperconnectivity on attention. Positioning my practice within the context of commodification of sound healing, I recognize that the field exists in the wider context of neo-liberal capitalism and Western spirituality. My research contributes to these discourses with a critical

and reflective narration towards attention in meditation and sound healing.

I propose that neo-healing can help us reflect on the harmful consequences of hyperconnectivity such as disruption of individuals' attention. The performance *Connect to yourself* was a dissemination of my practice of neo-healing preceded by a Ted Talk-inspired lecture introducing the issue of hyperconnectivity in context of human attention to a wider audience.

My aim was to disseminate neo-healing as a solution to the disrupting effects of hyperconnectivity on attention. In this chapter I will explain the methods that I used.

The first method was subversion of sound healing through sound improvisation with a gong.

As my strategy, I subverted existing practices by contextualizing narrations of guided meditation to the contemporary problem of attention within commodification of sound healing and guided meditation in the context of neoliberal capitalism.

Similarly to sound healing, neo-healing uses the resonance of sound waves on the human body and the quality of vibrations to elicit a temporary change in attention. A combination of sound improvisation and specially designed

guidance for attentional deficit is my solution to the problem of hyperconnectivity. The gong is an instrument traditionally used in Eastern tradition in sound healing.

Another concept from sound healing that I subvert is intention.

I propose deep listening as a method to shift attention, which is the intention in my neo healing practice. Following the tradition of sound healing, I applied the parallel notion to intention to subvert sound healing into neo-healing practice, with a specific aim: to elicit a change in attention.

The beneficial effect of harmonics and guided meditation on the human body and mind has been thoroughly discussed in Jonathan Goldman's work: *Healing sounds: the power of harmonics with special focus of high frequency harmonics*:

"There are two kinds of sounds: sounds that tire and fatigue the listener and sounds which 'charge' the listener"
(Goldman, 1992, p.75).

I conducted my research with the methods of introspection, case study, sound improvisation, and subversion, which resulted in practice of neo-healing.

First, I applied introspection and sound improvisation to investigate the effect of frequencies and overtones on myself. I used the gong as a tool to provoke alteration of consciousness through the application of harmonious frequencies.

The neo-healing practice is an outcome of the method of subversion of a sound healing practice and sound improvisation.

My second aim is to subvert the dominant narration in guided meditation that proposes linear, normative ways of modelling the experienter's attention but lacks a diversity of narrations that respond to the multifaceted spectrum of attention.

Through field work I decided to investigate the motives for attending sound healing sessions from within and begin with a study of how it can alter attention into different, subconscious states.

Attention is a key concept in meditation. You need to give in, in order to experience immersion. This willingness is referred to phenomenological discourse as adduction (openness to experience to appear). (Merleau-Ponty, 1965) Subversion of sound healing fills a gap of attention in which these services are accessible to a diversity of attention through applying distention by using method of introspection and case study in the larger context of hyperconnectivity.

Subversively, I decided to set the intention in the neo-healing to shifting the attention of people participating in the experience. The findings have been collected using the method of case study through personal experience. I applied

it on myself to investigate the effect of sound first on my attention, before I produced the experience for audience.

The motivation to create a potentially therapeutical practice emerged out of personal experience of distention. Being present in the hyperconnected environment means negotiating attention between a multitude of relations to sustain all the time.

Distention is my method established during the process of research that, together with introspection and sound improvisation, produced neo-healing practice.

"We are always to a certain extent in a state of distraction, since the attention in concentrating the mind on small number of objects, blinds it to the greater number of others."
(Durkheim in Crary, 2001, p.47)

I have studied the distraction practically within the context of guided meditation, which led to a synthesis of attention and distraction creating modality of distention.

I created neo-healing as a tool to provoke temporal change in an individual's attention and propose temporal retreat to the negative effects of hyperconnectivity.

The reason to choose the gong as a tool was motivated by its resonance, frequencies and overtones, the harmonics it produces and how the latter affects the human body.

Sound improvisation with the gong provided the immersive experience of neo-healing that refers to the practice of sound healing through the application of instruments used for therapeutical reasons. In Connect to yourself, neo-healing is a crucial experience proposed to the audience. Using sound improvisation in an immersive experience for audience, together with modifying the narration of guided meditation, distinguishes my neo-healing from the rest of sound healing practices.

Another juxtaposition in Connect to yourself referring to multitasking is participation facilitated by the second performer, neo-Danielle, who facilitates the experience through the software ALIVE⁹ that uses biofeedback. The motivation to juxtapose these two exclusive types of spectatorship of sound and observation of biological functions and mood in the real time was to create a multitasking environment for audience and disrupt the immersive experience of neo-healing.

Contradictory neo-Danielle (Danielle Gallia- Kind) and ALIVE were meant to propose an actual experience of hyperconnectivity to the audience.

Identifying the lack of alternative practices and narrations proposed in guided meditations that allows distractions

⁹ Alive Clinical Version | somaticvision.com

in, I created my own customized experience of misguided meditation, tailored for both attention and distraction–distention.

The experience of neo-healing is my proposal for hyperconnectivity. I decided to produce an unconventional method of combining sound healing practice and guided meditation in the contemporary practice of neo-healing as a remedy for a busy, hyperconnected lifestyle that affects people's attention. Theoretical study led me to a conclusion about lack of scientific research on the efficacy of sound healing, to the large extent providing only spiritual, non-evidence-based data and belief-based assumptions. I decided to create a nexus between the spiritual and scientific realms by producing my method of neo-healing that uses the resonance of sound waves on the human body and the quality of vibrations to elicit a temporal change in attention. A combination of sound improvisation and specially designed guidance for the attentional deficit is my solution to the problem that has been proposed by excluding both scientific and spiritual discourses. My study proposes contribution to the lack of guided meditation narration offering a diversity of attention.

I will explain the reasons why I propose neo-healing as a solution to attention impacted by hyperconnectivity.

Neo-healing is a practice designed for diversity of attentions and subjectivity, instead of a single, dominant modality of concentration that I observe in the spiritual realm of guided meditation.

I decided to problematize the ambiguous notion of presence in the field of sound healing. Instead, I use the unique and subjective term attention, as a resource affected by modern conditions such as hyperconnectivity.

Personal experience of hyperconnectivity gathered through method of case study motivated me to analyse attention in the context of technology with specific focus on how our attention has transformed from concentration to multitasking due to constant change of conditions happening through daily use of smartphones.

CASE STUDY along with **INTROSPECTION** has enabled me to access my intuition and apply my experience onto the experience of the audience. Case study enabled me to gather the experiential data, from a phenomenological perspective.

SOUND IMPROVISATION has been a method I used to technically apply in the artistic sound form the knowledge I gathered through field work and embody introspection through externalizing attention to constructing guided meditation in neo-healing. Similarly in the field of sound healing, sound relaxations with a gong are based on

improvisation (Pesek & Bratina, p.144, 2016).

SUBVERSION enabled me to recreate and modify the practices of sound healing and guided meditation, contributing to the ambiguous vocabulary that I identified in guided meditation and specifying its aim to shifting attention.

INTROSPECTION was used as a direct method to design the guided meditation narration, based on speaking out loud my distraction during leading the neo-healing. What makes it different from conventional guided meditation is that I modified it accordingly to my attention, not to the normative and linear structure of narration. Furthermore, introspection was a crucial part of designing the neo-healing experience. It also allowed me to touch upon the effect of hyperconnectivity on my attention. A combination of reflection and the dissemination of introspection through guided meditation narration was one of my most fruitful methods to create the experience of performance that can be relatable to audience members.

STUDIO PRACTICE offered me to work with attention by applying introspection to immersive experiences.

FIELD WORK provided me with the observation and participation of other sound healers and the methods of work they use to lead sound healing

The reason for selecting these methods stems from practically getting to know the field and building knowledge about the forms that I am working with.

Neo-healing in Connect to yourself was a dissemination of introspection along with stream of consciousness in a form of guided meditation about water and distractions that appeared during it. I synthesize my distention with the designed narration about “becoming water” through the application of two modalities: concentration and distention.

Each time I practiced neo-healing was different, due to my attention changing every time I did it. There was a narration of “becoming water” that I designed, memorized and applied, which was the only part except the introduction of the performance Connect to yourself that wasn’t improvised. The participatory part with neo-Danielle was improvised as well with frame of software ALIVE and aim to conduct it.

Field work has enabled me access to the existing practices of sound healing and observe what is missing in it and how can I contribute with my artistic practice to what is already out in the market. I participated in a sound healing session in Szczecin, Poland. The session was 1 hour long and it consisted of the two healers playing on different instruments including gongs, sound bowls etc. The conditions that were produced for the participants were fire, to warm up the

space. The event took place in the evening, with cushions and mattresses to lie down on. The healer only shortly spoke to us in the beginning and end of the session with a brief body scan. As an exit of the experience, she said “Now come back to your body, take time to do it”. There was a disclaimer in the description of the session that people with epilepsy, heart machines or pregnant are discouraged to attend to the session. Participation in sound healing practices enabled me to identify ambiguity in the discourse of sound healing regarding diversity of attention.

I chose to approach my artistic research from the phenomenological perspective, proposed by French phenomenological philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty in his work “Phenomenology of Perception” (1965) because it provides me with the most accurate measurement of the experience that I create in my practice. Since I am working with immersive, inner experiences, phenomenology provides me with perspective and a bigger context as well as tools to produce experience to specify the processes that are happening during the experience of neo-healing.

Phenomenology enables me to analyse audience engagement in terms of adduction and abduction, terms that analyse willingness and agency of the subject to elicit the experience or to not to allow experience to appear (Merleau-Ponty, 1965). Through abduction and adduction I can contextualize

and measure „intention“, a term from sound healing field. Merleau-Ponty's phenomenological perspective provides measurability and contributes with concrete analysis to my artistic research on the inner experience of audience members individually as perceptive subjects.

Additionally to the wider internal experience produced during my performance, I focus on attention as a filter of perception. The ephemerality of the proposed experience relates to the re-creation and re-constitution of the world at every moment. (Merleau- Ponty, 1965, p. 207).

Phenomenology as self-consciousness provides measurements of the audience's experience during my final performance. Curating the experience of neo-healing by adding the narration of guided meditation combined with sound was paradoxical due to its multitasking nature. Since the aim of conventional guided meditation and sound healing is to increase concentration, multitasking as a method of producing it is an unusual way of guiding it.

The paradox of neo-healing and what distinguishes this practice from the others, lies in the critical reflection towards the practice of guided meditation. Critical reflection became pure sounds to the members of the audience who were adducted—whose perception drifted in the alternative- state of consciousness. Members of the audience who rejected the

experience, were probably still in the modality of perception that enabled their critical reflection.

Verification of each participant's state was impossible, the only external measurement being laughter. Therefore, two modes of perception were proposed implicitly, one sensational, perception, and the other, reflection.

The combination of critical narration toward the meta-meditation with immersive-perceptive sound offered a diversity of experiences to participants.

My principle in producing such a wide range of experiences was to offer a diversity of the possible modalities of perception and avoid dictating dominating mode.

Similarly, my intention in offering a diversity of experiences was facilitated through the participation offered through interaction with neo-Danielle through the Software ALIVE. Neo-healing offers two contradictory experiences: immersion through listening and direct contact with hyperconnectivity in the form of monitoring your mood through the projection.

Each method implies a different modality of experience. Guided meditation allows inner experience and ALIVE allows for spectating the experience. From a phenomenological perspective, the following modes of engagement can be

perceived as adduction and abduction. (Merleau-Ponty, 1965, 277). Neither adduction or abduction is explicit but implied in the experience of the audience and the mode of engagement each participant perceives.

Concluding, the experience may happen, when there is receptivity of the perceiver that invites it. Therefore, openness to the experience of neo-healing meditation was possible through the receptivity of participants and facilitated through a set of conditions such as darkness, sound quality (resonance), state of relaxation, closed eyes and adduction.



Figure 3: photo from the final performance Connect to yourself (2022)
author: Fenia Kotsopoulou

4. FINDINGS

The aim of my research was to investigate the negative effects of hyperconnectivity on attention. My second aim was to disseminate neo-healing as a solution to eliminating disruptive effects of hyperconnectivity on attention. As a solution to the negative effects of hyperconnectivity, I observed consumption of commodified experiences- particularly practices originating from the spiritual realm- sound healing and guided meditation due to its specific modality of attention- concentration - is being used as a remedy for multitasking

The feedback that I received from audience participating in "Connect to yourself" relates to what Goldman shares about his experience of listening to harmonics: "I either fell asleep or was listening to another realm of consciousness "(1992, 79). The relaxing effect of music can lead participants to deep sleep. One of the participants also told me that she thinks that what I do is needed and it was relaxing experience for her. The participant assured me about urgency for practices that I proposed for larger audience and asked me if I will continue and convinced me that I should keep doing it, due to the demand in her opinion for relaxing practices such as the one I proposed.

One of the most crucial findings of this research project happened during my final performance *Connect to yourself*, when I realized that I created an environment of multitasking through the application of neo-healing that engages the senses through listening and provokes immersive, inner, sensorial experience for participants. Aside from listening I provided visual stimulation through *ALIVE*, offering to observe one's mood in the real-time, simultaneously with the moment of neo-healing. Therefore, multitasking was not only in the combination of guided mediation and sound healing but also a juxtaposition of contradictory modalities of experience – immersive neo healing to be experienced with eyes closed and interaction with the software *ALIVE* facilitated by neo-Danielle that offered participants who volunteered to observe their current emotional state and biological function on the wall projection. The environment for the inner experience was created through a set of conditions provided by the quality of sound, darkness, mattresses etc. Another modality of spectatorship through observing participant's mood in the real time was mediated via technology.

The dramaturgy of performance consisted of three, gradual modes of spectatorship witnessing, participation and immersive, sensorial experience. Spectatorship dominated in the first part of the performance: a semi-scientific lecture inspired by the Ted Talk format that provided the context of my research, urgency and personal involvement with the

issue of hyperconnectivity and its effect on attention to the audience. Interestingly, the promise of a relaxing experience that the audience expected by being seated on mattresses was not yet fulfilled, since I had to invite the audience to sit down, as most of them were ready to lie down immediately.

After the semi-scientific analysis of the issue of hyperconnectivity that I introduced to the audience, there was a transition towards participation led by the second performer: neo-Danielle.

Another important aspect while constructing the persona of neo healer hyper Susan I considered was a split of personality of the persona. Hyper Susan was partly embodying the utopian figure of sound healer, partly was exposing my personal experience of hyperconnectivity to the audience. The sound healer was usually associated with a shaman, a person with unique personality or special, magic skills. It was believed that sound healer could have been a medium and most important, was able to access different, altered states of consciousness and trance through application of sound.

This moment was introducing the multitasking between the attention of the audience to the immersive, inner experience of neo-healing and spectating their modes of projection in the separate, individual participatory stations that neo-Danielle facilitated.

The important realization of implying distractions onto concentration through distention onto guided meditation happened during the process of working on the design of the final performance with use of studio practice and introspection and sound improvisation.

I acknowledged my contribution to the practice of guided mediation by adding my distention to guided meditation.

I already used the method of introspection and sound improvisation during the process of designing my first-year's final performance. This is when critical reflection became part of my guided meditation.

The method to construct guided meditation through my attention led me to the useful direction of modifying conventional guided meditation narration towards reshaping it to the needs of contemporary attention of hyperconnected people. My aim in reshaping the narration of guided meditation to a more inclusive form that includes distractions together with concentration, following the historical transition of attention that claims that attention and distraction are not two different nor exclusive nor antagonistic phenomena, but each attention capability includes a spectrum of distraction.

Having that in mind I decided to reshape the guided meditation for the split of narrations including conventional,

immersive guidance of "becoming water" that immersed the participants and allowed them to enter an altered state of attention. Additionally to the immersive, conventional narration of "becoming water", I applied introspection of my attention in real-time during the neo-healing. Because of the application of my reflection towards the attention, my attention span, hyperconnectivity and some other thoughts that appeared during leading the neo-healing became contemporary sound healing.

Creating a form of guided meditation while producing an immersive sound by playing the gong was a way of multitasking my attention. The meta-meditation that I produced was meant to allow a larger and more diverse group of people with different attentional capabilities to enjoy the guided meditation, as some of them cannot enjoy conventional meditation. As opposed to critical reflection, the quality of sound engaged sensorial experience to the members of the audience who gave in to the experience and opened to the sound to bring them the inner journey and lead to relaxation made it so that the content of what I was saying during the neo healing was not at stakes anymore, nor perceptible by paying attention to the meaning of the words due to the state in which the participants were and became the sounds without meaning.

The inability to verify in which state participants were was the

reason for another digression about the meta-experience of one participant, who laughed, as evidence of "not entering the theta state". ("Connect to yourself", 2022)

Reflection and criticality appeared to be inaccessible to a participant who were in a state of heightened perception through application of the sound of a gong.

Similarly to the principle of sound healing, that requires intention towards the healing to occur, in neo-healing abduction was necessary for the relaxing experience to happen in the perception of the participant.

My research proposes to specify the notion of "healing" as lifting the pressure to fit in a box of dominating mode of attention, proposing attention instead of "being present". I contribute to it by adding more alternatives that are responsive to the spectrum of attention, questioning the impact of hyperconnectivity on attention.

The relation between hyperconnectivity and human attention has diametrically changed the notion from "being present" into hyperpresence, which is crucial element in the guided meditation.

I problematize attention by making explicit that it is unique, personal and implicit to each person and that the perception of attention in general knowledge should be redefined not to

reproduce harmful and no longer actual demands of "paying attention in only one way". Different people pay attention differently.

Creating a practice that responds to the needs of larger audience than conventional guided meditation in its commodified form in Western Europe was a step that has enabled me to access the potentially therapeutical meaning of my artistic research.

Through my process of conducting research, I have realized that my approach to the issue helped me to understand my intention and urgency.

Consequently, I see the urgency to adapt the practice of guided meditation to the changing attention itself, as the phenomenon of hyperconnectivity will not disappear from the conditions of living. My research proposes a productive way of resisting hyperconnectivity through taking personal agency towards the way we decide to engage in virtual relations. Taking conscious control of the limits of engagement with hyperconnectivity is as important as participation in sound healing.

Taking care of our attention and observing what helps to sustain it and what harms it is a first step in the journey from hyperconnectivity to sound healing with which I aim to contribute to the field of spiritual guided meditation and sound healing.



5. CONCLUSION

To feed forward, with neo healing I would like to bring the communal aspect of experiencing sound healing according to its origin in communal setting to people who are neurodivergent and do not hold access to sound healing in its commodified version.

To imagine a potential direction and feed forward from the findings of my artistic research, potentially escaping from commodification, means to bring the practice of neo healing to communities that are usually not privileged to access sound healing services in the form in which they are currently offered on the market.

Since the target group for sound healing is usually creative, burned out, privileged individuals, I would like to provide access to the group of individuals who might not be sufficiently informed about the negative effects of hyperconnectivity.

In the discussion about my artistic research, I have managed to set a direction that I will continue in my research and was able to contribute artistically, therapeutically and critically through a subversive method to existing practices.

I see that my artistic practice holds potential as a semi-



Figure 4: photo from the final performance Connect to yourself (2022)
author: Fenia Kotsopoulou

therapeutic direction. I am considering taking to provide neo-healing as therapeutical experience, that can go beyond artistic context.

I had a suggestion in my VIVA to consider the figure of the utopian sound healer, which was already considered in the way I constructed my character of hyper Susan based on a split between the sound healer and hyperconnected individual based on my case study and so my identity.

I can conclude that my research is contributing to removing the binary between attention and distraction and thus proposes new modalities to engage with sound healing through other attention modes than concentration, such as distention, which I constructed during my research process.

Finally, I would like to propose through my artistic work that every experience matters, and diversity needs to be acknowledged in the practice of sound healing. Similarly, attention is a resource that must be maintained and is not the same for everyone, but unique and modified by various digital communication means, or rather an overdose of them.

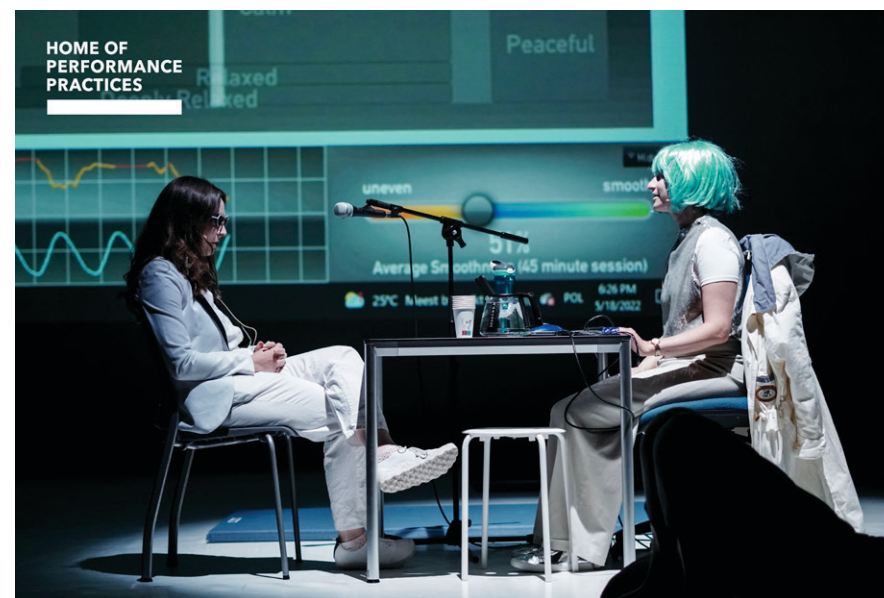


Figure 5: photo from the final performance Connect to yourself (2022)
author: Fenia Kotsopoulou

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