

**Show the w(hole): experience and evidence**

I am going to talk about experience and about evidence. I will situate my remarks in relation to two distinct examples, propose a visual representation of the way that they usually interrelate and then break it, and, after an inappropriately placed coda, consider how this reflects upon, or reverberates with, the assignment of value in final year practical work at Warwick, before coming to some concluding remarks.

This is a tale of a small bang with a smaller footnote and a big bang with a massive footprint. And then it is about coming to terms with a system that embraces such seemingly heterogeneous elements, experience and evidence, of whom, for whom, and bringing the inevitable in confrontation with the imperative.

It won't take up too much time to reacquaint ourselves with the scant evidence provided by the artist . First, the video record:





Stills taken from video posted on Youtube.<sup>1</sup>

And now the artist's description:

*At 7:45 p.m. I was shot in the left arm by a friend. The bullet was a copper jacket 22 long rifle. My friend was standing about fifteen feet from me.*<sup>2</sup>

The three sentences constitute Chris Burden's description of his notorious work *Shoot*. The event, witnessed by less than a dozen people in a gallery in Santa Ana, California, in 1971 has a coda eight years later at a performance festival in Florence, Italy<sup>3</sup> described by a much less taciturn artist that we will stretch toward later but for now, the second example:

The most vacuous place on Earth is to be found on the border between Switzerland and France, not Geneva, but some 100m underground where the 27km ring of the European Centre for Nuclear Research CERN's Large Hadron Collider fires one particle beam into another at speeds approaching that of light in order to recreate conditions that pertained

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=26R9KFdt5aY>. [Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> June 2010]. As Burden notes in this, most of the video consists of a black screen with an accompanying audio commentary; the actual footage amounts to about eight seconds of the 1' 52" clip.

<sup>2</sup> Sharp, Willoughby and Liza Bear "Chris Burden: The Church of Human Energy, An Interview by Willoughby Sharp and Liza Bear" *Avalanche* No.8 Summer/Fall 1973 p57

<sup>3</sup> Chris Burden *Show the Hole* (Performance, Florence, Italy, March 4, 1980)

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just after the Big Bang. Quite what happens at the moment of impact is of a magnitude that it cannot be stored or analysed at CERN but instead is distributed to 130 sites in 34 countries so that the colossal amount of data generated can be comprehended.<sup>4</sup>

In both the case of *Shoot* and the Large Hadron Collider, a brief moment of intensity, of impact, has to reverberate beyond the moment of its occurrence to sustain a more lasting impact. Burden's revisiting of his work (in the piece that we will get to) is a small reclamation of what we would now term the viral spread of his practice, beyond his control and lending his subsequent interventions the subtext "the artist who shot himself". By contrast, to know anything of the output from CERN I would need first to constitute myself as a research institute or nation state and then sign a fifty-seven page Memorandum of Understanding.

The firing of the gun, of the particles, constitute an *event*, as Lyotard has it, "something happens that is not tautological with what has happened"<sup>5</sup>. Both instances are required to enter their respective symbolic systems before they can signify, "achieving", Robert Crease notes, "the presence of a phenomenon under one of its profiles."<sup>6</sup>: they cannot be represented if they are not first acknowledged, present to us. *Shoot* is given up to representation, experience coagulating in the passage from verb to noun (while in the vacuum, energy becomes data). What happens is coincident with what the perceiving instruments detects happens (on the basis that you can't miss what you never had) though, as Peggy Phelan notes representation follows two laws: it always conveys more than it

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<sup>4</sup> Information on the Worldwide Large Hadron Collider Computing Grid (WLCG) can be found on their website <http://lcg.web.cern.ch/lcg/public/> [Accessed 16<sup>th</sup> June 2010]. For an overview of the LHC see [CERN faq - LHC: the guide](http://cdsmedia.cern.ch/img/CERN-Brochure-2008-001-Eng.pdf), CERN-Brochure-2008-001-Eng available at <http://cdsmedia.cern.ch/img/CERN-Brochure-2008-001-Eng.pdf> [Accessed 16th June 2010]

<sup>5</sup> Lyotard, Jean-François *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* trans. G. Van den Abbeele Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1979 p79

<sup>6</sup> Crease, Robert P. *The Play of Nature: Experimentation as Performance* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993 p103

intends and it is never totalizing.<sup>7</sup> What I'm interested in addressing here is how something that becomes evident transmutes into evidence.

An etymological digression is in order. Evident is formed from the latin *videre* (to see) and with a prefix designating out, thus to see out. The adjective means “distinctly visible” and also “clear to the understanding or the judgment” thereby not only privileging the optical over other senses but conflating it with comprehension. To see out evokes a position of splendid isolation from the world and also suggests that much is invested in that seeing – a prisoner seeing out of his cell, an archer seeing out of his balistraria, a retinal escape from confinement through an opening. In terms of understanding and judgement the “out” suggests that certainty extends to, expands to, encompass the object; to be evident is to extend certainty from the self to another, binding one's certainty to an external referent. But this bind is something to be given up if what is evident is to be conveyed intact – the declarative, **It is evident** renounces the subject, a performative utterance that severs the bind, in the locution nominating that which was known first to the understanding. The **self-evident** moves the subject into the object, becoming axiomatic while **evidently** most often transforms the bind into a loose affiliation, a parenthetical ‘apparently’, ‘supposedly’. By what means then can something of which we are assured and reciprocally assures us of our self escape the orbit of solipsism? Evidence – fashioning another object, related to the one apprehended but distinct in that we cannot know how to represent the bind, at what point our understanding projected out to the object ends and the object itself begins. Where what is evident brooks no contestation (as it is internally verified), evidence is a challenge or an assurance that signals the preparedness to give up or to make known the evident.

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<sup>7</sup> Phelan, Peggy Unmarked: The Politics of Performance New York: Routledge, 1993 p2

The imprecise object fashioned as evidence undergoes a further alteration as it is given over, morphing into something that we believe will bind us in a satisfactory way to the recipient, fulfilling our obligations to them - legal, financial, social. Evidence is a fulfillment but stands apart from being good or bad, true or false (else the recipient, as the person who might weigh up the evidence, would be redundant and the need to fashion evidence unnecessary).

Fulfillment in the instance of *Shoot* first comes in the hospital to which Burden was taken after the event. The doctors were required by law to report gunshot wounds and Burden gave evidence "about going hunting and the gun being on the table and a bottle of vinegar falling on it"<sup>8</sup> (thereby saving the marksman from prosecution). Once this testimony had become evident to the medical staff they too could then fashion their own evidence in fulfillment of clerical obligations. Rather than follow this trail however we will shortly return to the scene of the non-crime and consider the circumstances of evidence production that precede the later work, *Show the Hole*.

But before that, a walk on the edge of the forest, with a saw. A very old saw, the one that goes "If a tree falls in a forest and no one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?" To which one response, following on from the totality of phenomena, some of which contributes to that which becomes evident, might be 'yes', because our understanding of the world includes the notion that trees do not fall silently; the more nagging question would ask "if we do not know if a tree falls in a forest and no-one is around to hear it, does it make a sound?" though we are straying off into the quantum world of cats in boxes. But the purpose of this stroll is to acknowledge that the visible has all but obscured consideration of any other sense data, becomes so bound up with that which is perceived (as if when Blake writes "If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is,

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<sup>8</sup> Ward, Frazer "Gray Zone: Watching "Shoot"" *October* Vol.95 (Winter 2001) p124

infinite”<sup>9</sup> he is pushing some revolutionary eye wash) - becomes so bound up with that which is perceived that the difficulty of revisiting our dilemma from a visual perspective is clear: choose either of the following two options: a) “If a tree falls in the forest and no-one is around to see it, can it still be seen?” or b) “If a tree falls in the forest and no-one is around to see it, does it fall?”.

From the woodland we can take two things – a warning to take heed of phenomena beyond the visible (my characterisation of the two examples as a small bang and a big bang should demand this) and the way in which language is complicit in making that which occurs one and the same with seeing the occurrence.

Back in the Santa Ana gallery a handful of people have experienced Burden being shot by a friend. The performance is concluded and that which was evident is now evidence in embryonic form – like the as yet unseen video footage and the as yet given up testimony of those present. For the spectators it may well be enough that the event has concluded and that they can now constitute for themselves the recollection of a performance by Chris Burden; indeed, they are bound to it, it is a constituent element of who they now are. But what for them may mark an immeasurable shift in how they constitute themselves, for the artist the performance is indexical, pointing to “Chris Burden”, to “artist”, to “Shoot” (to “the artist who shot himself”<sup>10</sup>) as something distinct from what happened in that space. Yet two readings of the provocations made by Burden suggest that the evidence, far from being embryonic, is bound up in, synchronous with, the performance of the work.

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<sup>9</sup> Blake, William The Marriage of Heaven and Hell 1790-93 Dover Publications Facsimile of 1794 edition (A Memorable Fancy, plate 14)

<sup>10</sup> Ward, p114. Frazer Ward opens his account with an unsourced quotation from Burden in 1996 that suggests a degree of weariness with his notoriety: “I wasn't the artist who shot himself; and I am not the artist that pushes museums down”.

When interviewing Burden about the work, Willoughby Sharp finds a more prolix way of asking him 'why?':

*Willoughby Sharp: So it doesn't much matter to you whether it's a nick or it goes through your arm?*

*Chris Burden: No. It's the idea of being shot at to be hit.*

*WS: Mmmmm. Why is that interesting?*

*CB: Well, it's something to experience. How do you know what it feels like to be shot if you don't experience it? It seems interesting enough to be worth doing.<sup>11</sup>*

This invites considering the work within the realm of conceptual art though Ward is attuned to the use of the word interesting, making connection with the simplicity of Minimal Objects "that deflected viewers' attention onto their own experience of art and its contexts."<sup>12</sup> Ward is mindful to not suggest an absolute correspondence – Robert Morris' primary structures may be many things but even Michael Fried would hesitate to call them spectacular or dangerous<sup>13</sup> – but writes that as well as these characteristics *Shoot* "allowed for self-reflection on the part of viewers, at least potentially, along the lines of whether or not they should have participated."<sup>14</sup> Brian O'Doherty goes further within his quartet of essays on the white cube of the gallery space.<sup>15</sup> I'm taking the liberty of placing together two observations from O'Doherty as the pretext for my argument, the first, in summary that the spectator, confronted with Minimal Art, becomes a data gatherer, the body the locomotive

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<sup>11</sup> Sharp and Bear, p54

<sup>12</sup> Ward, p118

<sup>13</sup> Fried's disavowal of primary structures can be found in Fried, Michael "Art and Objecthood" Artforum Vol.5 No.10 June 1967 pp.12-23

<sup>14</sup> Ward p118

<sup>15</sup> Originally published in Artforum in 1976, the essays have since been augmented and collected in the following: O'Doherty, Brian Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space Expanded Edition, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999

power that moves the eye around the object to ascertain the logic of the work<sup>16</sup>, a bifurcation to meet the challenge of another bifurcation, that of the evident, as the spectator sees out but cannot 'understand out'. Elsewhere O'Doherty addresses Burden's work directly:

*If Conceptualism eliminates the Eye by once again making it the servant of the mind, body art, such as Chris Burden's, identifies the spectator with the artist and the artist with art - a sacramental trinity. The punishment of the spectator is a theme of advanced art. Eliminating the spectator by identifying him with the artist's body and enacting on that body the vicissitudes of art and process is an extraordinary conceit. We perceive again that double movement. Experience is made possible, but only at the price of alienating it.*<sup>17</sup>

In concert, we have Gray's audience member, interrogating the event as something that may make them complicit through participation, subject to some moral or legal challenge, and we have the interrogative eye (the data gatherer that shares kinship with those in the collider) and we have the audience's experience, alienated, if not external to them, then no longer wholly their own. Burden's actual testimony to the medics as to the cause of the wound is one rehearsed by the audience in the process of gathering data – by looking am I culpable, by holding back am I aiding and abetting? Experience is abnegated, evidence accumulated.

Underground, the data is no sooner accumulated than streamed out away from the moment of impact. This though is no giving up of experience, just data that cannot be experience until it is ordered (and not evidence until it is given, responding to an enquiry rather than

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<sup>16</sup> O'Doherty, Brian "Inside the White Cube Part II: The Eye and the Spectator" [Artforum](#) April 1976 p33

<sup>17</sup> O'Doherty, Brian [Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space](#) p64



mutely awaiting one.) Paradoxically the data that speaks of the beginning of all things is enacted through a system that consolidates the suppression of the radically singular, a matrix of power, knowledge and wealth. And, as with *Shoot*, it is worth calling attention once more to the disparity between the duration of the occurrence and the magnitude of its aftermath, be it measured in data and the consolidation of authority around it or in the case of *Burden*, to take liberties with a forgettable film title, The bullet that came out of a rifle but entered the canon.

In the preceding remarks I have given no attention to anything prior to performance and concentrated on the occurrence and what follows afterwards but hanging around the stage door waiting for the first reviews is an incomplete understanding of theatre – revelation means nothing without genesis.

Last year Elaine Aston spoke at Warwick on ‘Close Encounters of the Practice Kind’,<sup>18</sup> considering the relationship between theorists and practitioners, informed at times, she noted, by a “narcissism of minor differences”. She provided an example of a workshop by Lois Weaver in which the artist first got the participants to give something up discursively, then to render it sculpturally, a further state that my handwriting stubbornly refuses to reveal, then as a narrative and then as performance. These ‘stations of the cross-disciplinary artist’ build to an implied crescendo and then cease. Aston and now myself cannot extend the work (to continue my analogy we might have disinterred it but it would seem presumptuous if indeed it were possible to claim to resurrect the work of another) but why not add discussion, criticism and dissemination to the end of this progression? But if we might embrace (with a small c) the catholic sequence of performance proposed by Schechner - training, workshop, rehearsal, warmup, performance, cooldown, and

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<sup>18</sup> 28 October 2009, Millburn House, School of theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy Studies

aftermath<sup>19</sup> – in which the valorized performance occupies a point on a continuum rather than a destination, can we not activate this line such that it pivots on performance, becomes not a procession of occurrences to be worked through from left to right but a dynamic model with performance necessarily at its centre. Schechner’s model is largely given over to the performer – the audience are bussed in for the performance and are everywhere in the aftermath (as the performance enters the world of criticism, comment and reproduction) whereas the tripartite model I offer, though lacking the granularity of Schechner’s, acknowledges the interdependence of audience and performer at each stage. I label the three points expectation, performance and evidence and will briefly expand on each in turn and how they interact one with another.

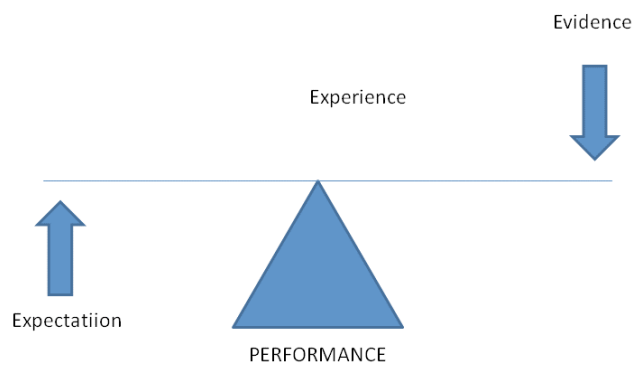


Fig.1

Owing nothing to Newton, this see-saw (Fig.1) achieves its effect by having gravitational and anti-gravitational forces, with performance unaffected by either and T.S.Elliot’s words seem apt:

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<sup>19</sup> Schechner, Richard Performance Studies: An Introduction Second Edition New York and London: Routledge, 2006 pp221-62

*At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;*

*Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,<sup>20</sup>*

I characterise expectation as an upward force, embracing the honing of the performer's role, the accumulation of physical and financial resources and of equal worth, the engendering of anticipation in a potential audience. This is germane to evidence because expectation equates to audiences, high expectations of posterity motivate high levels of documentation. Documentation is not posterior to performance but anterior, initiated with the acquisition of a ticket or the turning on of the video camera - we may exercise the option never to offer up testimony or tape as evidence of the performance but the possibility is born before the performance comes into existence. The philosophical conundrum in the woods is not mute but moot if we've set-up a Tree Falling Monday facebook group.

So, the rising expectation on one side contributes to the weight of evidence accumulating on the other. Applying this to the two instances discussed, the Large Hadron Collider goes off the scale - the grid housing the data will accumulate 15 petabytes or 15 million gigabytes<sup>21</sup> but equally the level of expectation was immense, total obliteration of the planet being one of the more reliable means of capturing the public's attention (or as the barely less breathless Times of India referred to it yesterday "Search for the God Particle"<sup>22</sup>), but beyond the dramatic headlines the expectation also funded and built the vast construction and its data storage.

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<sup>20</sup> Eliot, T.S. *Four Quartets* Burnt Norton Part II, 1943

<sup>21</sup> <http://lcg.web.cern.ch/lcg/public/> [Accessed 16 June 2010]

<sup>22</sup> In the transfer to the online edition the headline has become empirical - "Next: Collisions @ 99.99% speed of light" *The Times of India* (online edition) March 31, 2010 <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/world/europe/Next-Collisions9999-speed-of-light/articleshow/5744968.cms> [Accessed 16 June 2010]

With Burden's work, the question as to what constitutes evidence needs to be raised. I've cited two critics who have responded to Burden's performance though there are many more, before one even considers those who use the work in passing. Beyond the academy, the notoriety of *Shoot* was fuelled by the press (Burden recalls a phone conversation shortly after featuring in Esquire magazine)

Hi! This is Don Steel on WKEP in Texas, are you Chris Burden?"

"Yeah."

"Are you the artist?"

"Yeah."

"What are you going to do next?"<sup>23</sup>

The press, the academic interest – both find a place in Schechner's aftermath but the volume of commentators set against the number of people who attended the performance inflects a different irony on the oft-quoted phrase about the sixties – "if you can remember it you weren't there". The commentaries of various hues all attest (less than definitively) to the shooting having taken place or at least that it had some significance. They are documents, to be sure, but what are they evidencing? What obligation do they fulfil?

But let's be generous, let's include this weight of commentary to the bundle we term evidence. Such generosity breaks the model on its second outing – the limited expectation that preceded *Shoot* is not matched by the level of 'evidence' that accrues after the performance. Why is that? Well, I would argue it is because the model is a self-correcting one predicated on repeat performances; a performance with little expectation is met with considerable interest – positive reviews, commentary etc that in turn raises the level of anticipation for the subsequent performance such that it corresponds with the movement on the other side. The model tells us nothing about the performance and may attract the

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<sup>23</sup> Sharp and Bear, p58

charge that it models market forces as much as anything else – perhaps, for it is easier to plot Return on Investment in terms of measuring the cost of the expectation period against the fiscal rewards – the evidence to be borne proudly back to the funders - than it is other aspects but it nonetheless charts interest and investment of cultural capital and can illustrate the interdependence of these various commodities even in unusual circumstances as long as they occur more than once: Uma Thurman’s latest film, *Motherhood*, opened without any fanfare two weeks ago and took a total of £88 at the box office over its opening weekend and with just one person attending the premiere<sup>24</sup>. So spectacular was the failure that it attracted the attention of newspapers and media outlets worldwide and the imbalance between ‘evidence’ of its existence at least will now raise the expectation and an audience, perhaps driven by morbid curiosity, to correct the imbalance.

But let’s return to the one-time-only performance and salvage what we can from the remnants of the seesaw. The weight of ‘evidence’ (the word still supporting quotation marks to indicate scepticism towards its claim to be such) cannot flame or dampen enthusiasm for a performance that will not re-occur; instead it not only transfers this expectation from work to artist (“So what are you going to do next?”) but, in causing the work to grow beyond any preceding expectation that can be met, starts to erode the difference between work and evidence in a manner quite distinct from that outlined above in relation to the abnegation of experience. This is still to consider the work indifferently, not caring whether it concerns a shooting or a bar mitzvah, but to have the work encroach upon and perhaps even become synonymous with evidence of the work. Breaking the frame of formal conventions by which the work is defined is a project that threatens to exhaust the finite supply of ever-newly fashioned frames but to implicate or celebrate the commodification of the work, to

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<sup>24</sup> Hill, Amelia “The Uma Thurman film so bad it made £88 on opening weekend” The Guardian (online edition) 26 March 2010 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/film/2010/mar/26/uma-thurman-motherhood-flop> [Accessed 16 June 2010]

nominate it within the work itself threatens the independence of evidence to be responsible to anyone because the evidence cannot escape the orbit of the work. And this instability is not simply in one direction – as the subject of the evidence threatens to encroach upon that evidence, as the expectation for Shoot elides the distinction between **the performance** and **the video of that performance** so too does the evidence encroach upon the object; Derrida's Archive Fever has the example of Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi unearthing a hitherto unknown inscription in a bible given to Freud which can now be offered up as evidence, though Yerushalmi goes further, using this to stage a confrontation with the long-dead psychoanalyst.<sup>25</sup>

Resurrection seems a good point to finally consider the work Burden created that looks back to Shoot. His days of extreme performance behind him, Burden's account of the work is noticeably more verbose than that accompanying the earlier work:

*Using black velvet curtains, I constructed a small private room in the entranceway of the theatre that was being used to present the American performances. I sat in this small room with my name above me in white letters on the wall. One at a time, I received each person from the audience waiting outside. As each person entered, I addressed them in Italian and asked them in a cordial manner to "Please sit down." Then, looking at them, I said "In 1971 I did a performance in which I was shot in the arm." Finally, I would roll up my sleeve and as I pointed with my finger at the scar in my arm, I would say "The bullet went in here and came out there." Each spectator was alone with me and physically close to me. I received approximately 300 people,*

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<sup>25</sup> Derrida, Jacques Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression trans. Eric Prenowitz Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996

*but because each person took about one-half minute, some people had to wait in line up to 3 hours.*<sup>26</sup>

The artist offers himself as a contemporary take on the stigmatic, though his canonization is granted by the art world rather than the papal see. He offers up a work but he also gives up evidence, written through the body. The three hundred members of the audience are 'received' and the process is contrived along the lines of a confessional. But for all its symbolism the encounter also has a tawdry feel, Burden condemned to forever repeat the litany of his experience. It could be argued that he is reclaiming the work, wresting its commercial and cultural value from the market that so rapaciously seized upon it. And obviously many performers' evidence can take the form not only of oral testimony but also the somatic – we need only look at the feet of a classical dancer to learn something of a performance not given up by Tchaikovsky's score or Petipa's choreography. Here though we do not simply look (we have after all looked at the photos, watched the video), but listen in an intimate environment – evidence being performed and thus generating more material that might become evidence. The failure of this re-presentation of a representation is signified by the hole that Burden shows; firstly it is patently no longer a hole (just as the experiencing of the shooting coagulates into an experience of the shooting, so the internal repair mechanisms of the body close the wound) and secondly we can never see a hole without matter – here the body of Chris Burden - that circumscribes it. Finally, the work is so loud in terms of its own retelling of *Shoot* – sanctifying the work – that it seems to exorcise the status of evidence, using it as a tool to mock the elevation of the work (not once but three hundred times, as if a devotional for a particularly heinous crime) as if to say 'here is the wound, go forth and we talk no more about it'). This hasn't worked obviously as I'm still talking about it but before moving on, I want to quickly consider the charge I've laid at

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<sup>26</sup> Burden, Chris "Original Texts 1971-1995" in Perrin, Frank Chris Burden Paris: Blocnotes, 1995 np

Burden's feet – that of tampering with the evidence, because it raises a number of pertinent questions:

1. Is evidence of a performance inviolate?
2. If not, then does the artist, as originator of the work and one of the primary sources of evidence have the right to violate it?
3. What constitutes a violation and what a reappraisal?

Which brings us to Theatre Studies at Warwick. The connection is somewhat tenuous as our violations are decreasing in number and shooting people is now discouraged across the undergraduate programme though the particular circumstance I want to address is the process by which the practical work of our final year students is assessed. It is not an argument to overhaul this model but to explore within it some of the tensions observed above and question whether what we do for pragmatic reasons has any bearing on the relationship between experience and evidence beyond the pedagogical.

Over the course of two terms students are required to produce a work that is given its final presentation toward the end of the second term. This showing is preceded by one in the first term designated a 'work in progress' and followed by a critical review, submitted several weeks after the final showing. Students are supervised for the duration of the module, with the supervisor designated the first marker of the two components of the work, the practical element (assigned 60% of the mark) and the critical review (40%).

The initiation of the project is subject to the approval of a body that includes both supervisor and second marker. Preparatory work is seen by both supervisor and second marker. The final showing is seen by both supervisor and second marker. Once the critical review has been submitted the supervisor and second marker produce marks for both the critical



review and the practical element. The marks are returned. Alongside this, documentation of the practical work (which the students are required to produce) is sent to the external examiner.

As the person closest to the work beyond the students, the supervisor is akin to a producer, with the second marker as assistant. The external examiner approximates to being a member of the audience (where possible they attend some of the showings but this is often thwarted by scheduling issues) though they experience at least some of the work as evidence - the documentation produced by the students. Thus, the work is considered by firstly those closer to the work than is possible in the commercial theatre (whilst The Wooster Group, for example, may present various iterations of a production, those attending are not also party to the discussions and decisions that arise from these showings) and secondly someone further from the work than an audience member in having to rely on a DVD of the production to form a judgment. If a 'typical' audience member is thus excluded from the evaluation of the work so to are the performers required to occupy positions that straddle the work itself – expecting how to document the performance prior to its occurrence and then reflecting back on the nature of the performance in the critical review.

The students both have some control over the documentary evidence that supports the work as well as the opportunity (considered alongside the work) to comment on it. We would like to think that the fact that they can 'tamper' with the evidence is balanced by the fact that we have exceptional access to the experience, not by claiming that we have found some means to open the doors of perception but because we accompany the performers along the path toward realization and can set it in the context of both what comes before and what follows. We sit alongside the inception and development of the work, see it flourish and then are privy to what amounts to a debrief. In its own way it is much closer to

the example of the Large Hadron Collider than it is to *Shoot* because though we cannot know the outcome of the work we come to it before the occurrence by which it is deemed to have taken place, have put in place systems to ensure its posterity and are able to reflect on the value of what will have been done. Returning to the iterations that characterized Lois Weaver's workshop, we did participate in the formative stages but, critically, and also **critically**, we were able to extend that engagement, to participate in the question 'what is it that has happened here?' We actually operate in some space between the experience and the evidence, weighing up the claims of both.

To conclude, having posited a fragile model as the basis by which experience (that sits just after performance rather than coincident with it) gets the evidence it deserves, predicated on the expectation it provokes in all those present, I have provided an example that does damage to the model but indicated that it is more useful as a faulty device than one that functions regardless of circumstance. Both the Large Hadron Collider and Burden have good reason to become embroiled in issues of evidence and the 'burden' of this seems to motivate the creation of *Show the Hole* as a counter to such demands. Whether shooting people, particles or assisting students, the principle that the evidence proceeds before the performance has been made. There is much more to say about the evidence altering the experience and though I have touched upon it here only in regard to Burden and the undergraduate work a number of examples from performance and the scientific world could be cited to illustrate this issue. At every turn I have tried to say as little as possible about the status of the performance itself, placing it, immobile, at the centre of the model that breaks and letting the forces outside performance act upon it as they will. But it is an acquisitive beast – give it an inch and not only will it redefine the system of measurement but take a whole kilometer. This, to my mind, is what happens with *Shoot* and the interest that follows this one-time only event. So, retreating to the groves of academe I suggest that at Warwick

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this license-taking is not only present but institutionalized, because experience and evidence comes down to those who were there and those who weren't. And though such a model is not driven by the same imperatives that obtain in any commercial or even partially-subsidized environment, the notion that participation may constitute something more substantive than purchasing a ticket for one showing of an event, that it might be framed around the development, encouragement, experiencing and reflecting upon that event moves toward the point that may leave us less frenetically trying to salvage evidence from a transient work and more assured in our ongoing relationship with the experience of which we are a part.