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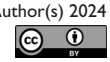

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Performance approaches to whole society resilience

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Abstract

In this article, we reflect on the ways in which arts practices can contribute productively to national resilience strategies. We focus particularly on the UK Government Resilience Framework (2023, UKGRF) which calls for a 'whole of society' approach to resilience, echoing established initiatives addressing 'whole community' (USA) and 'total defence' (Sweden, Switzerland). In this context, we ask what performance research methods offer to understandings of whole society resilience, and how existing artistic practices 'perform' resilience in ways that are currently not accounted for. The arts, we argue, are a nuanced means of attending to complex geo-political contexts that allow space for legacies of racism, sexism, poverty, colonialism, and terrorism to be revealed as having (had) important and differing influences in shaping the resilience of varied communities within society. The UKGRF offers a compelling opportunity to think about what whole of society resilience might involve, who might already be engaged in this work, and how we might develop and maintain a robust 'whole of society' approach to contemporary resilience challenges. We discuss *Through my Window*, a community outreach project run by the Citizens Theatre, Glasgow (UK), mural painting in New Orleans (USA) that offers positive, joyful images of individuals in a city that is too often read through narratives of tourism and crisis, and *Remembering a Future* (London (UK), 2018), a live performance in which Aman Mojadidi addressed issues of race, identity, home and terrorism. In so doing, we argue that artists, arts organisations and arts communities need to be considered vital, strategically important resilience practitioners, and that the arts should be being taken seriously as an engine of societal resilience more broadly.

Keywords

artist, Glasgow, interdisciplinary arts practice, London, murals, New Orleans, performance, place, politics, public art, public engagement, resilience, theatre, whole society resilience

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Introduction: perspectives on whole society resilience

In recognising and calling for 'whole of society' approaches to resilience, the UK Government Resilience Framework (2023, UKGRF) implicitly suggests both that the idea of whole society resilience is new, and that it is not already being enacted. For the then Government, whole of society resilience meant 'involving a wide range of actors who together form our resilience community' so that 'we have a shared understanding of risk across partners'.[1] It is curious that in calling for the whole of society to be part of the resilience 'project', artists, arts organisations and arts leaders are not once mentioned in the Framework, especially as the Department of Culture, Media and Sport is identified as a key partner in this work.

In part this exclusion is practical: artists make art, not resilience plans or policy. While many artists and arts organisations identify their work in terms of addressing local challenges, this is rarely framed as addressing resilience challenges. Nor is arts practice often articulated in terms that neatly speak to local resilience management operations. It is rarer still for artists, or arts researchers, to theorise arts practice in terms of resilience. If arts and culture have been ignored, this potentially raises questions about what other areas may have been excluded. For instance, Wendy Sims-Schouten and Patricia Gilbert have powerfully argued for the need to diversify the theoretical and disciplinary voices at play in conceptualising 'resilience', especially in terms of the 'link between the concept of resilience and neoliberal individualism' and damaging applications of the concept 'to Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities'.[2] While it is not the work of this article to interrogate all such gaps and lapses in conceptualising whole society resilience, we collectively need to be cautious of the idea of *whole* of society resilience being selective if we are properly to understand the potential positive benefits of modelling resilience in this way.

Our argument in this article is that if 'whole society' resilience is to be possible, perhaps even succeed as a project, we need means to account for and value the diverse ways people experience resilience in their particular embodied contexts: the lives they live, the cities and regions they inhibit, and the histories of experience and encounter that sit behind these contexts. The arts, we argue, are a means of attending to these complex situations, allowing space for legacies of racism, sexism, poverty, colonialism, terrorism to be revealed as having (had) important and differing influences in shaping the resilience of varied communities within society, and how those resiliencies are performed everyday. As we will explore, arts communities are often engaged in practising resilience in myriad forms and this work needs to be acknowledged as such.

At the same time, as our argument will show, any project to initiate 'whole society' resilience risks framing society as a singular 'whole'. As our case studies make evident, societal resilience practices are far more complex, multiple and nuanced. The forms of performance analysis we undertake, and the performance of art-making our case studies reveal, offer means of accounting for this complexity and nuance by calling attention to and performatively celebrating the messiness of lived experiences of crises and resilience challenges in different geo-political and social contexts. In this way, we argue, artists, arts organisations and arts communities need to be considered vital, strategically important resilience practitioners.

Such thinking does not emerge in a vacuum, of course; indeed, recent scholarship demonstrates resilience has become a familiar but challenging term. For instance, Ben Anderson has argued that a single 'ideal' understanding of resilience 'never actually exists in practice'.[3] Focusing particularly on whole society resilence, Andrew G McClelland et al. recognise, 'the evolving narrative of "whole-of-society" is igniting change across the resilience sector'.[4] To better understand this change, they identify critical questions, particularly, of 'the network of actors involved in whole-of-society local resilience capabilities' and of 'the systemic enablers [that] are required to operationalise these capabilities'.[5] Meanwhile, for geographers Weichselgartner and Kelman a nuanced,

potentially cautious approach to understanding and applying the idea of resilience is vital. In part, this is because 'the ability to be resilient is never distributed homogenously within and through social groups'. Moreover, crucially for our concerns here, this is because resilience policy and strategy are often hierarchical in construction, where 'the minority of a society often holds control over the decision-making for the majority'.[6] So while a whole of society approach to resilience is a welcome ambition, one broadly supported across the emergency planning profession, there are lessons to be learned from sectors of society who already operate to leverage whole community understandings of place that can be valuable in understanding and tackling the resilience challenges of the future.[7]

In this article, we are asking what performance research methods offer to understandings of whole society resilience, and how existing artistic performance practices 'perform' resilience in ways that are currently not accounted for. In so doing, we seek to illuminate ways that we can productively understand existing resilience practices as forms of performance, and ways that analysis of existing arts practices might enhance understandings of those 'resilience performances'.

Resilience performances

In referring to resilience performances we are calling attention to the performative nature of resilience processes and policy, and highlighting the enacted, embodied nature of resilience interventions in society (such as in the deployment of engineering solutions, or sandbags in a flood). We are not simply looking to the ways in which artistic performance can help us rethink resilience policy and practice, but the ways that performance analysis can offer new critical perspectives on resilience as it operates across a society. To evidence this approach, we analyse three case study projects in Glasgow, New Orleans and London that help to rethink whole society resilience. Rather than focusing on a single type of practice, we argue for the importance of recognising the contribution of varying forms of aesthetic cultural practice as we seek to understand novel means of enacting and understanding whole of society resilience internationally.

This speaks to multifaceted understandings of the value of performance, particularly understandings that exist at the intersection between arts scholarship, and cultural and human geography. Indeed, Amanda Rogers has highlighted the connection between geography and theatre/performance studies, albeit noting that 'geographical engagements with research in theatre and performance studies have not kept pace with the broader field of performance and performativity'.[8] Nevertheless, political and cultural geographers have made productive use of 'performance' as a means of exploring the enactment of governance strategies, like resilience and emergency planning protocols. For example, in their deployment of performance scholar Tracey C. Davis' research on Cold War civil defence practices, Nathaniel O'Grady argues that the cathected used of 'material objects' in emergency planning exercises helps to 'render the future emergency imaginary concrete'. Building out from Karen Barad's theory of non-human performativity, O'Grady argues that the affective experience of the material environments of an exercise offers a means to feel the future in the present, driving ideas of 'resilience' towards planning for and adapting to uncertain futures rather than responding to unfolding events. The argument that emergency planning exercises (simulations) deploy 'aesthetic forces' to 'make present future emergencies' is compelling, and chimes with long established performance studies research on the power of performativity, and the use of theatricality and theatre techniques in simulation based training. Indeed, there is much exciting and valuable extant work that takes notions of performance, presence and affective embodied relations seriously in the enactment of resilience governance. For example, Ben Anderson and Peter Adey explore the ways that emergency exercises can make present an affective experience of emergency for the purposes of its rehearsal. Yet, while 'performance' has offered useful scaffolding for understanding simulation, emergency exercises and

the affective experience of the enactment of governing strategies like resilience on those governed, these analyses do not generally focus on the use or power of aesthetic forms of cultural production per se (outside the simulation event itself). Nor does performance studies scholarship often function as foundational in the research. Thus, our work here builds on these perspectives by explicitly foregrounding performance studies research as fundamental to understandings of the embodied, affective and political nature of performed events (like emergency exercises) and by centring aesthetic practices of cultural production (such as theatre performances and public art interventions) as at least as valuable to understandings of resilience as civic performances of resilience. This is important because while there is good research on the resilience of the arts, especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, there is very little meaningful evidence of the arts being taken seriously as an engine of (or even means of understanding) societal resilience more broadly.

As such, our work is in conversation with geographer Angharad Closs Stephens' reflection that performance offers opportunities to 'embody and act out other ways of understanding what it means to be in common with others, formed through shared vulnerabilities'.[9] This seems particularly useful in the context of investigating resilience where performance might generate new understandings about how people can 'gather and explore new forms of being together' in the face of crises.[10] Performance, then, 'presents politics as the work of establishing connections'.[11] Such political connecting is the work of all our case studies, each offering different modes of attending to collective political reflection through shared performance (and performative) experiences of different kinds: playful, embodied performance interactions in domestic or community spaces; large-scale, city-wide public art encounters; intimate, quietly participatory performances of home, migration and reflections on the impact of terrorism (including state terrorism).

It is not simply that whole of society resilience needs to include arts and culture to meaningfully strive for shared resilience understandings, responsibilities and, ultimately, actions. Not to account or allow for arts and cultural practice as part of resilience planning risks missing the work these sectors are already doing in this space. At the most straightforward level, arts organizations are regularly, deeply engaged in community-based practices. As Lulu Jiang and Farideh Alizadeh reflect, community theatre practice has enormous potential to contribute to 'social connectedness' where 'collaboration between citizens, stakeholders and theatre practitioners' can lead to 'personal development and social transformation'.[12]

Such work is vital but perhaps also self-evidently related to resilience building. Indeed, there is a risk of reading arts practice that is socially engaged or applied as the only creative work engaged with resilience. While applied practices are invaluable, such a reading ignores the potential of professional arts practices outside the applied realm to be understood as actively engaged in whole society resilience building. In that context, we turn here to ask: how are arts organizations already contributing to whole of society resilience, and what can we learn from that?

A critical assumption in the UKGRF seems to be that whole society approaches are new or novel, but we know from the US context that 'whole community' approaches to resilience have been common in policy and strategy for more than a decade, even if perhaps not fully realised.[13] In the UK context, if we are genuinely to achieve a whole of society approach then we need both to recognise that arts practices and approaches can be useful to attaining this, and that arts and culture are already engaged in cognate work. There is a risk here that we might suggest resilience and emergency planning (REP) professionals 'use' the arts, instrumentalising arts work. This is not our argument. Rather, we want to argue for a careful consideration of the strategic place and function of practices already in the public domain.

Artists and arts and culture organisations are already engaged in local decision-making and in iterative conversations about the planning of place in ways that address local concerns and challenges across different and diverse communities. Sometimes this is achieved in a single

work of art, more regularly this is the structural and strategic work of an organisation over time. The latter case is powerful. Arts organisations have the skills and expertise to reach diverse, often 'hard-to-reach' communities at speed and with impact during a crisis. In part, this is because such organisations and their representatives are trusted members of these communities; in part, it is because they deploy creative and novel approaches to communication and engagement. Crucially, it is also because such organizations are embedded in and actively part of places and their communities in visible and ongoing ways. This is harder to achieve for REP organisations.

Rather than 'bringing in' artists to 'fix' problems, resilience work should focus on brokering connections between artists, culture workers and city officials, bringing these strategic placemakers together to reveal how they are addressing the challenges and the practices of a place. Understood in this way, cultural production (and cultural practitioners) can make material and consequential interventions in places and for communities, changing physical, emotional and cultural understandings of (real and/or possible) events, geographies and challenges. These are both performed (enacted, embodied, physical) and performative (constitutive, communicative, knowledge-generating) and have the potential to be understood as *resilience performances.*

Case studies: connection, encounter, reflection

Each of our case study performances was situated in a specific city. We identify the importance of each project for people in that city, as they address critical resilience challenges there. In 2020, the Citizens Theatre in Glasgow developed *Through my Window*, a series of very local, creative interventions to engage women in the city who were experiencing homelessness, isolation and loneliness. While the COVID-19 pandemic had restricted Citizens' familiar workshop practices, staff were concerned to continue to connect with local women across Glasgow. They focused on ways in which it was possible to work creatively with community members, despite the pandemic: in community spaces, at doors and at windows. We discuss the practice of working in local spaces across a city, of situating local, familiar and domestic places as creative, in the context of restricted practices of daily life.

In New Orleans, murals have become a distinctive feature of the built environment, with artists depicting people and places of the city on the walls of buildings across it. Many of these images include and celebrate people of colour; this operates as a critical act in a city with a long history of racial and economic inequity. We identify the significance of specific murals in bringing positive, joyful images of individuals in a city that is too often read through narratives of tourism and crisis. In this context, we discuss the strategy of commissioning murals across the city, particularly in areas not included within conventional guides to the city, as a means of recognising and valuing life and lived experience across New Orleans.

Finally, we turn to *Remembering a Future* (2018), a live performance by Aman Mojadidi at the Imperial War Museum (London). In this work, Mojadidi invited spectators to reflect on 'home' in the context of national and international narratives of immigration and terrorism. We identify the ways in which the work addressed challenging issues of race and identity, and so engaged in debate on issues that are critical to whole society resilience.

In each case study, we find that performance analysis reveals the significance of lived practices in a society, and of the ways in which artists can draw attention to these practices and engage in creative enquiry into the importance of these practices in and for a place. As we seek to demonstrate, artists are already enacting whole society resilience but there is too little recognition of the importance of these projects or the ways they might productively be connected together to understand, address and secure national resilience.

The exclusion of arts in the UKGRF suggests that at least at government level, and potentially in academic circles, quite what whole of society resilience looks like is a selective thing. Our intervention here is to say that the arts can be powerfully productive. The arts can perform resilience without having to be instrumentally subsumed as needing to do so. That is: understood and revealed as such, the work artists *already do* can very often yield material resilience dividends (to coin Judith Rodin's phrase).[14]

Through My Window

Responding to the particularities of the COVID-19 pandemic, Citizen's Theatre in Glasgow launched the *Through My Window* project. Using applied performance methods, theatre improvisation techniques and instructions for creative practices, the project took performance to women experiencing isolation and loneliness during lockdown, engaging them in creative forms of connection. Born of necessity, *Through My Window* went out into community settings to interact with women through their windows or doorways, offering opportunities to dance, talk, play, reflect. A physically distanced performance of social connection that 'reimagined' the organisation's regular practice of community theatre making for pandemic times.

Building on their embedded position within the community, this work 'forced [Citizen's Theatre] to go out to bring creativity and theatre to people in a way [they had] never done before'.[15] In doing this, the work revealed that 'creative connectivity' played an 'essential role' in helping people across the community to 'feel less invisible and overlooked' in the unfolding crisis. This chimes with psychologist Nisha Gupta's argument that while physical distancing was useful in stopping the spread of the virus, there were damaging knock-on implications of the approach, especially in terms of isolation and loneliness. For Gupta, creative forms of connection offer a 'bonding power' capable of offsetting isolation by preserving 'our sense of intimate community bonding' while in lockdown.[16]

At first glance, *Through My Window* may seem straightforwardly to be a small instance of community engagement practice. However, echoing Jiang and Alizadeh, in going out to sections of society and activating them to reflect on their personal situation and the wider social context of COVID-19, the project offers a model of activated engagement practice that uses performance processes to address resilience challenges. The work is both performed and performative: embodied, accessible processes of costuming, movement, writing, speaking and staging were creatively deployed to enact changes to domestic spaces, facilitating connections between these dwellings in different parts of the locale. Each instance of the project constituted performances of place that connected individuals and small parts of communities, reflecting on current challenges and alleviating isolation and loneliness in the process.

Not only does *Through my Window* go to people in their personal contexts, but it deploys modes of engagement and reflection that are active, creative and joyous, while necessarily addressing the challenge at hand. That the project deliberately tried to bring or activate joy (and succeeded, as evidenced in documentary video and oral testimony) is important in a resilience context because, as psychologist Janelle R. Goodwill argues, 'joy is an important facet of well-being'[17] and as such has the capacity to become a tool of resilience development. This work strategically uses performance forms to encourage interaction, connection and resilience.

The complexity and nuance of the project was furthered when it evolved as lockdown restrictions eased in the UK. Moving from performance encounter to collaborative reflection through songwriting, Citizen's Theatre engaged the musician Carol Laula to work with the participants of *Through My Window*, and other women across Glasgow, to co-create a 'lockdown anthem' entitled 'Just Imagine'. This extension of the project 'brought the women

together' in a collaborative experience of using music to 'express their emotions' and reflect on their COVID-19 experiences to create 'a shared message of optimism'.[18] Offering opportunities for collective reflection and creative anticipation of what participants would do next, and what their hopes for the future were, 'Just Imagine' extended the reach and legacy of the originating project, while documenting the experiences of the women involved in *Through My Window* as a musical oral history performance.

COVID-19 made clear that it is difficult for local authorities to engage some 'hard to reach' communities.[19] If that is the case in a global pandemic, then there is a great risk this will be doubly complex when the resilience challenge is perhaps less explicitly apparent (such as with the climate emergency). In this context, there is learning from the arts that can be valuable in developing new and nuanced public engagement strategies for whole of society resilience. *Through My Window* and 'Just Imagine' suggest not only that performance can be a powerful model of engaging communication, but also that it can activate individual citizens and local communities in creative, collective problem solving. Within that frame, and recalling Sims-Schouten and Gilbert's call to diverse voices in resilience thinking, the work valued and valorised the voices, knowledge and lived experiences of vulnerable members of society. Moreover, in being site specific, so to speak, the model presented by this work reveals the usefulness of using familiar, domestic spaces in unfamiliar ways to explore the relationship between local places and the resilience challenges being faced.

New Orleans' murals

Where *Through My Window* sought to engage with individuals and their lived experiences of a particular challenge in Glasgow, mural practice in New Orleans begins with a live intervention, but the resulting mural then becomes a material part of streets, neighbourhoods and the city itself. While some murals may be created without permission, others are invited or commissioned, at times as part of creative 'placemaking' strategies. As Matthews and Gadaloff note, internationally public art (including murals) is a 'place-making device to drive urban regeneration and boost social capital, though it elicits a broad range of responses from urban communities'.[20]

Murals have become a familiar feature of New Orleans, and many speak to dominant readings of the city, and particularly address the absence of Black culture in dominant tourist framings of the city. As we identify below, murals in New Orleans can provide critical opportunities for people in the city to reflect on their understanding of the city. This finding in New Orleans builds on existing understandings of murals by scholars in this journal. Notably, writing on Oslo, Laima Nomeikaite identifies that street art, including both commissioned murals and informal graffitti, 'is part of the urban atmosphere' and part of 'improvisational everyday life in the streets'.[21] We do not suggest murals should be read in isolation as a means of gauging whole society perspectives on critical issues, indeed we caution against efforts to read any complex, live environment through a single lens. Echoing this caution, Jill Sweeney et al. demonstrate the value of reading a city as an assemblage of elements, and the contribution of these elements to a 'whole' city.[22] Read as part of a multi-form study of a city, murals can offer compelling means of enquiry into, and articulation of, issues affecting a specific place.

For example, on one wall of the Justice Centre in the Central Business District (CBD), the artist Brandon 'BMike' Odums and the Young Artist Movement in the city created *Survive*, a mural depicting a Black man who stands chest-deep in water and who appears to be holding up his son – both father and son are smiling (Figure 1). The image is arresting, offering a joyful depiction of Blackness, childhood, fatherhood and a playful encounter with water. From across the street, the scale of the work, the light and the playfulness, appear extraordinary, as if drawn from an alternate

Figure 1. *Survive*, New Orleans; photo by Stuart Andrews, 2022.

reality that is temporarily juxtaposed with our own for a time. In amongst the everyday actions of the street, the mural claims that a joyful world is possible. *Survive* was one of five murals in the wider *Unframed* exhibition (which was 'presented by the Helis Foundation, a project of Arts New Orleans').[23] The exhibition provided a strategic engagement with mural-making in the city. Arts New Orleans (ANO) notes, *Unframed* has 'economic benefit for artists, stimulates pedestrian traffic in the area, and reinforces New Orleans' position as a national and international destination for contemporary art'.[24]

Unframed demonstrates that while murals may exist in isolation, they can also be and become part of broader strategic endeavours. For Arts New Orleans (ANO), '[p]ublic art adds enormous value to the cultural and economic vitality of a community'.[25] Critically, as ANO recognises, the process of developing public art projects must attend to the place to which each new artwork will contribute: 'in a culturally diverse city like New Orleans, public art must reflect a plurality of influences and interests and be fully integrated into our shared environments'.[26] Indeed, ANO has recently developed a series of mural projects in New Orleans East, identifying and celebrating the importance of this area as a place in itself and as a core part of New Orleans. This is important because as the geographer Richard Campanella has observed 'Eastern New Orleans often gets clipped from maps' thus 'depriving it of cartographic attention' leading him to observe '[t]hat which literally lies on the margins often gets figuratively marginalized'.[27]

By commissioning murals in New Orleans East, ANO situates it clearly within the city, introducing multiple artworks to the area and, thereby, inviting locals and visitors to generate new routes between these works. This strategic project resists widely discussed tendencies for New Orleans to be understood primarily in terms of the French Quarter, which dominates touristic framings of the city, and calls for new approaches to city neighbourhoods. As this project and BMike's work in *Survive* demonstrate, to engage in whole society resilience is a critical opportunity to recognise, value and attend to places – in this case cities – as a whole.

Relatedly, StudioBE reflects that its work 'serves to promote the advancement of artists and engage in society's most urgent questions'.[28] To this end, StudioBE runs a leadership programme for young artists of colour to create 'a more just and equitable world'.[29] By attending to established, locally-focused mural projects, we can read existing local understandings of resilience challenges, and the ways in which local mural practices and strategies are actively engaged in addressing pressing issues and challenges.

From across the street, it's easy to see *Survive* in the context of everyday activities, the roads and the surrounding buildings. Closer up, standing in the parking lot, it is more possible to see details of the work itself, and the wall on which it has been painted. The wall is uneven, and there is a clear line that marks out what may once have been a building that stood where now there is a parking lot. There are other indentations, alterations and signs of repair to the surface of the wall. Part way along, there appears to be a fireplace that leads up to a chimney, although there is no chimney pot above, and on the right, the mural extends to cover a section of wall that protrudes slightly. The mural fills this wall, untroubled by the form of the building and shape of the site, allowing for the whole, with its undulating surface, indentations and repairs.

The words 'sink or swim' and 'STILL HERE' appear as tattoos on the man's arms. In the upper right corner, floating above and away from the main picture, and easy to miss but vitally important, are the words 'this water tells my story'. Within the depiction of water, there is a collage of images: faces, a bird, a mermaid, a man reaching for help, a treble clef that speaks to the music of this city. The painted, numbered parking bays predate the mural, and yet are now juxtaposed against it. Cars are now parked below the water-line. Perhaps this is an accident, yet the work was always going to be in close proximity to cars. As such, it appears a nod to the impact of petrochemicals on the planet and, more locally, to the impact of dredging by oil and gas companies on land loss in coastal Louisiana. This interplay between image and cars is a small feature of the work, but a compelling instance of the ways in which murals inevitably contribute to the juxtapositions of place, and in so doing disrupt dominant paradigms of a place.

For Lynnell L. Thomas, New Orleans has been framed in very specific ways for tourists, outsiders who will spend only a few days and nights in the city. Critically, she demonstrates that touristic framing of New Orleans has problematically represented and appropriated Black identity. For Thomas, New Orleans has been represented in terms of 'desire and disaster' through an 'historically paradoxical construction of blackness that acknowledges and celebrates black cultural contributions while simultaneously insisting on black social and cultural inferiority'.[30] Thomas argues that tourism has focused on the French Quarter, rather than the city as a whole, at the exclusion of Black culture beyond commodified forms. In this context, in the CBD, this celebratory image of Black bodies who are 'STILL HERE' resists any social and cultural inferiority. The image does not fit within familiar commodified forms of Black culture in the city.

The title of the work, 'Survive' sits oddly with the two main figures, who appear to be doing far more than surviving, but it makes more sense in terms of the details of the work: in 'sink or swim', the man reaching for help, and the cars that park here each day. In part, *Survive* critiques touristic framings, it also reimagines water in New Orleans, resisting the framing of the city and Black lives in the city in terms of Hurricane Katrina and a persistent risk of flooding.

Survive is, then, critical as an artwork in itself, and also in the ways in which it contributes to projects by ANO and StudioBE to rethink the city of New Orleans. These murals, and others in the city, extend the conventional touristic framings of what constitutes 'New Orleans'. Crucially, in representing often marginalised or deprioritised people and perspectives in the city, they afford opportunities for placemaking that contest and push back on the 'desire and disaster' politics that Thomas so forcefully problematises. Strategies such as those led by ANO and StudioBE enable

murals and mural-making to enact change in the city, and offer locally-situated means of speaking back to misrepresentations of the city and the people who live within it.

Murals are not messages. Their work is more subtle, contributing to an existing place, to the practices of that place and which will, in small or large part, change that place. *Survive*, and many murals across New Orleans, especially but not only those by BMike, are complex artworks that ask critical questions about the representation of race in the city. They actively rework troubling and persistent readings of the city and its relation to water, as well as disrupting racist tropes about Black people and communities. Indeed, connecting to Goodwill's argument concerning the potency of joy to resilience from the previous case study, these murals might be read as public, vivid articulations of 'Black joy' insofar as they can be experienced in what Nathaniel Télémaque calls, in positive terms, the 'mundane' and everyday of activities such as 'humble walks'. As such, they operate 'beyond the remit of words alone' as they express or render visible 'Black experiences' that can be 'experienced viscerally'.[31]

By engaging in the complexities of representing the city and offering alternate, nuanced and layered conceptions of New Orleans, *Survive* and *Unframed* are both acts of whole society resilience, and act as calls for closer attention to be paid to the whole society in New Orleans. In seeking to develop whole society resilience, it would be productive to attend to murals, mural strategy, and, more broadly, public art that engages with resilience challenges in a local context. Such work would more fully take account of means by which artists are already engaging with situated experiences of these challenges.

Remembering a Future

A man stands in a corner of a room. Behind him, where the two walls meet, a timeline has been drawn in chalk, from 2001 to 2018, the year of the performance. The man is bearded, dressed in jeans and a short-sleeved t-shirt over a long-sleeved top, wearing glasses, sand-coloured boots and a beany hat. This is *Remembering a Future* (2018), a lecture-performance, installation and video documentation by Afghani-American artist Aman Mojadidi. Framing the performance as an exploration of 'home', Mojadidi took the live audience through a series of seven quietly provocative episodes, attempting to draw them into conversation about the impossibilities of being at home in the context of terror and immigration. He spoke quietly. This was an unassuming performance that seemingly comprised autobiographical material, audience participation and invitations to participants to enter into dialogue with him and one another, to present a performance that opens up complex political questions about race, racism, immigration, education, class and power; all critical issues facing the whole of society.

Mojadidi smiles and quietly acknowledges each of those present. 'Before we begin', he says, handing each participant a blank postcard-sized piece of card, a pencil and an envelope, 'I'd like you to write down on this card what "home" means to you. Then place the card in the envelope and seal it. Keep hold of it. For later'.[32] This action implicates participants in the performance, invites them to engage with the work in terms of a profoundly personal reflection and at a point where the performance has barely begun.

As the participants finish writing, Mojadidi turns to the wall behind him, identifying the starting point of the chalk timeline as being the events of September 11th 2001. Alongside the dates of the timeline, annotations have been added that identify multiple events that took place in each of the years that are included here. Mojadidi shares some of these events with participants. When the first plane struck the North Tower, Mojadidi recalls he was on a bus in Los Angeles. As he talks through subsequent years, Mojadidi reflects on acts of and in response to terror, and events in his life. He

speaks of spending '36 hours in a holding cell at London Heathrow' (2006) and of his daughter being born (2016).[33] Mojadidi invites his audience to add their own events to this timeline. New comments add juxtapositions and complexity to how we might read the timeline, and how the timeline grows in complexity with each performance. While Mojadidi invites personal reflection, the performance's dramaturgy situates these reflections in relation to international events and, specifically, events associated with the Museum's focus on 'the age of terror' in a connected exhibition.[34]

Mojadidi speaks apparently openly, candidly, reflecting on his own understanding of 'the age of terror', enquiring into the context of the exhibition from within. In so doing, *Remembering a Future* might be seen to intervene in what performance theorist Rustom Bharucha has identified as a discourse led by the United States and focused on the 'war on terror'. In attending to 'personal' experiences and constructions of terror, Mojadidi answers Bharucha's call for performance (social and aesthetic) to bring attention to 'other manifestations of terror'.[35] The work structurally and in content consistently makes complex the easy 'us versus them' logic of the 'war on terror' at the core of the dominant discourses in the West. While being Afghan American, Mojadidi's work positions him outside the dominant national reading of terror. This notion of being outside a dominant national discourse and position proves troubling in the context of whole society resilience. The work suggests that, to enact whole society resilience necessarily requires a rethinking of such unsettling and exclusionary discourses.

This is not a project premised upon whole of society resilience, nor are the participants necessarily part of any specific society. The performance was publicly available, and the Museum did not obviously discriminate over who was permitted, or not permitted, to attend. Yet, this is a work that is engaged in addressing individuals in a society and, specifically, society in the context of terror, and the many ways terror may be enacted and understood by individuals in a society.

Through these early activities, the personal (artist's and audience's) is woven into the fabric of the performance. We were asked, repeatedly and in different ways to insert ourselves into the work and to reveal ourselves to each other and the artist in various ways. The effect is uncanny in so far as Mojadidi created a welcoming, if slightly awkward space where the audience knows a performance is happening and that they 'should be there' but then proceeds to create a sense of our encountering (even briefly) some things that should have remained hidden. The performance demonstrates that Mojadidi is not interested in 'presenting' material and ideas 'to' an audience. Rather he wishes to draw spectators (literally) into conversation with those ideas because, as Mojadidi put it, 'someone with an opposing viewpoint is a person who disagrees with me and not a bad person . . . the debate component [of the performance] was crucial'.[36]

Remembering a Future, then, reveals how performance can offer a productive model for addressing the breadth and complications of individual experiences of a society, and hold both personal details and activities that threaten a society in view simultaneously. Mojadidi opens up opportunities for multiple, individual readings of terror that allow for the possibilities of misreadings, disconnections and critique of national models of security. In this way, the performance creates a space for members of society to performatively engage with disruptions to what Bharucha terms the 'emphatically unilateral and monochromatic discursive thrust' of the 'the global war on terror' as a societal logic for the infliction of violence on others.[37]

Towards the end of the performance, Mojadidi returns to the written reflections on home that participants wrote before this work had really begun. He kneels at a bucket of fresh mortar, turning it over and over with a trowel. He asks participants to add their pieces of paper to the bucket, stirring them in to the sandy-coloured mix. He proceeds to build a wall using the mortar, spreading it firmly between the bricks that stood piled to one side. Without being read, Mojadidi builds these words into a whole; a structure that will solidify over time as the mortar and words set. As he builds

this wall, he describes the ways in which he and, he suggests, we can carry our ideas of home with us, rebuilding them where we find ourselves.

In the context of Mojadidi's reflection on moving between places, of losing a sense of home as a secure place, the act of rebuilding and of making one's idea of home a reality is compelling. Yet, the ease with which the participants' ideas of home are stirred into the mix – without being read or attended to – is unsettling. The building of a structure, a whole, incorporates but also obscures the personal feelings of home. Further, the work is done by Mojadidi, and it appears to perform a rebuilding of his own version of home, yet this solo act of building, of managing the stories of those gathered to watch poses questions of who has the right to build our homes for us (especially a particular, personal reading of home that is held within us). Necessarily this structure will not and cannot be a home for all of the people in the performance. Further, we sense that, at the end of this show, the bricks and mortar were likely cast aside, the 'home' that was rebuilt in the moment of performance is newly lost after the performance has concluded. At the same time, it is never entirely clear how autobiographical this work was at all. It is possible that much of this work was fabricated, that Mojadidi was never on a bus in Los Angeles or held at Heathrow. Within the work, the idea of storytelling one's life is unsettled, as is any notion that life can be documented in a series of notes and reflections.

Remembering a Future asks challenging questions of the ways we might approach the notion of a whole of society. The work makes explicit in both form and content Weichselgartner and Kelman's sense of the uneven distribution of resilience capabilities depending on multiple social, political and geographic contexts. In doing so, the performance asks that we recognise and value individuals and individual complexities within society. It asks that we take account of the actions done to people and society, and the actions by those who represent a society. In *Remembering a Future*, there is no neat means of making ourselves at home together, without losing something of the individuals who comprise that togetherness. The work is complex, sophisticated, a careful thinking through of ideas and memories of home. And within the act of remembering, it also poses a challenge to practices of engaging people in a society. Here, after all, was a show that sought to make sense of individual understandings of home in the context of terror, an urgent and ongoing resilience challenge. Yet, what was done with those understandings, with the intimacy, with the apparent security of the work?

Remembering a Future reveals the challenges of engaging with those in a society, the value of allowing perspectives but the risks of how those perspectives are read and incorporated into actions that extend beyond individuals. It is, then, essential that we identify means for equitable reflection and engagement, for collective construction, and for practices of managing the ways in which emerging strategies of preparedness remain owned by those who those strategies are framed as protecting.

Conclusion: towards a collective resilience strategy

Each of the three case study projects we consider here engaged with a place in ways that were, to some degree, unfamiliar. In Glasgow, *Through My Window* reimagined doorways, windows and communal spaces as sites for performance, defamiliarising practices of place in the already unusual context of the pandemic. In New Orleans, large scale murals reimagine public spaces across the city as places for arts practice, exhibition and for rethinking the city. In doing this, they often represent and prioritise minoritised perspectives. Read in combination, the murals have become a form of critical arts practice 'of' the city. By now so familiar, murals have become a performative intervention in space that offers something of an artistic vernacular of place that provides a means of mapping the city and representing it to locals and visitors alike in ways that resist trite or simplistic, touristic narratives of New Orleans. In London, Mojadidi's work reframed the museum as a site for performance, and engaged in a dialogue with the framing of terror in the wider exhibition. This work

was highly critical of the concept of a 'war on terror' in a museum associated with conflict; the performance explored ways in which the construct of a 'war on terror' imposed conflict onto everyday life across international borders (irrespective of which 'side' one might find themself on).

The projects here demonstrate that one of the challenges of developing 'whole society' resilience is that it risks framing society as a singular 'whole'. The reality is that existing and established ideas, strategies, and practices of society and societal resilience are far more complex, multiple and nuanced. As sociologist John Law has reflected, the world *is* messy, and it can be unproductive to suggest otherwise.[38] Each artwork focused on individuals in the context of very real challenges: against exclusion and loneliness in Glasgow; racism, representation and living on a frontline of climate change in New Orleans; and the lived experience of terror and terrorism in *Remembering a Future*. If whole society resilience is implemented by central government policy, and then devolved for enactment to local government, then there are risks that, structurally, it will lack means of attending to whole of society perspectives, that it will miss the importance of the messy real world in which we all live. However, the resilience performances analysed in this article focus on the messiness of lived experiences of crises and resilience challenges in different contexts. In this way, then, they speak to Angharad Closs Stephens' sense that as societies globally seek to understand and work through complex histories, legacies and challenging futures (politically, environmentally and culturally), so we must find knowledge and possible solutions in more than just logic and reason. For Closs Stephens, this can be found in 'alternative social and political initiatives' and activities between individuals, communities and civic actors that are 'already present– in the unlikely alliances and gentle gatherings around us'.[39] Taken together, our case studies operate as performative gentle gatherings that reveal the ways in which artists make sense of challenges in those cities and for communities more widely. In allowing for messy perspectives, and by engaging with resilience challenges that compound this messiness, artists can be understood as investigators of the world around us as it relates to whole of society resilience. As such, artists comprise essential practitioners of resilience insofar as they articulate and imagine new means of living in a world of challenges and identifying the critical issues that require urgent attention.

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Data availability statement

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Notes

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