CITIES IN A CHANGING WORLD: QUESTIONS OF CULTURE, CLIMATE AND DESIGN

- Paper / Proposal Title:
  Running in Rome: A ‘Bio/Digi-Rhythmic’ Soundscape

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- Abstract (300 words):
  This performative paper ‘Running in Rome: A Bio/Digi-Rhythmic Soundscape’ will present an empirical case study and sound ‘data-stream’ which has been developed as part of a 4-year doctoral research project titled, ‘Bio-rhythms/ Digi-rhythms: Synthesizing the Digitally Mediated Body Through Performative Methodologies’ (Hughes 2020). The rise in contemporary digital, wearable biometric ‘data-tracking’ devices to facilitate our subjective health and fitness-related pursuits in recent years, has indisputably proliferated a ‘culture of measurement’ in regards to how we consider our physically moving bodies, in interrelation context to the unfolding spatio-temporalities of our urban environments. In a ‘post-digital’ globalized culture, as we increasingly integrate contemporary digital wearable devices into the functionality of our everyday lives as ‘technologies of the self’ (Foucault 1982), the quantifiable biometric data-language that ‘self-tracking’ devices translate our physiological bodies into arguably reduces the multiplicity of our sensorial embodied experiences into abstracted numeric data-products, with ‘big-data’ implications. In ‘Running in Rome: A Bio/Digi-Rhythmic Soundscape’ the researcher’s
digitally-mediated running body is re-materialized as a data-process in flux, through the empirical and sensorial materiality of a sound ‘data-stream’. As her running body moves in affective inter-relation to the rhythmic spatio-temporalities unfolding in and around the Villa Borghese Gardens public park, in the urban city centre of Rome. Applying philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre’s *Rhythmanalysis* (2004) as a methodology for re-imagining a rhythmic synthesis of embodied experience as it is mediated in real-time through the digital device, the soundscape proposes a phenomenological ‘acoustic ecology’ of the bio/digi-mediated running body; converging the body’s ‘bio-rhythms’ and ‘digi-rhythms’ with the affective entanglements of the urban, environmental, socio-cultural and biopolitical rhythms of contemporary city life.

**Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

**Kathryn Lawson Hughes** is an independent researcher, academic and lecturer who has recently concluded a 4-year doctoral research project titled ‘Bio-rhythms/ Digi-rhythms: Synthesizing the Digitally Mediated Body Through Performative Methodologies’ at the University of Wales Trinity Saint David (Swansea College of Art), where she lectures on the interdisciplinary MA & MRes Contemporary Dialogues programmes in Art & Design. Her doctoral research project was sponsored by a Knowledge Economy Skills Scholarship (KESS 2), fully funded by the European Social Fund through a Welsh Government research initiative, towards contributing a cultural/theoretical discourse around contemporary subjective digital health practices. Kathryn’s research, which converges her interdisciplinary background across the fields of cultural theory, fine art, sound, performance praxis, and health & wellbeing intervention, to situate embodied subjectivity and lived empirical experience as central to a cultural/theoretical discourse of the ‘healthy body’, has been disseminated internationally at conferences and symposia; including *Metric Culture: The Quantified Self and Beyond* (Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, Denmark, 2017), *Found Performance: An Un-disciplinary Symposium Exploring Aesthetic Methodologies in Health Care & Medicine* (The Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London, 2018) and *What Has Love Got To Do With It? Performance, Intimacy, Affectivity* (Culturgest, Lisbon, 2019). Kathryn lives and works from Wales, UK.