



Scenes of entanglement: Towards a posthuman understanding of the transglobal noise music scene

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Abstract

Drawing on the growing interest in affective and relational approaches to scene studies, we use this paper to explore a reimagining of DIY music scenes, and the transglobal noise music scene in particular, through a posthuman lens. This retheorization situates music scenes as becoming entanglements that incorporate space and time rather than historicized communities bounded by these notions. To ground this work, we present an arts-based duoethnographic exploration of the researchers lived experience within one manifestation of the transglobal noise scene at various times and geographic locations. By embodying a posthuman conceptualization of noise music scenes through our analysis, we construct new ways of theorizing, experiencing, and hearing noise music by critically reimagining the musical, spatial, and socio-political boundaries that traditionally define DIY music scenes. In doing so, we present a model for future scene studies that embrace the intra-active nature of these socio-musical contexts.

Keywords

Music scenes, DIY music, noise music, posthumanism, arts-based research methods

Introduction

Through his research into the global goth/industrial music scene, Whitehead (2009) argues that the traditional methodological tools available to researchers cannot capture the more-than-human bodies and forces that define this socio-musical context. In doing so, Whitehead challenges scholars to not only find new ways of exploring music scenes but reimagine how we define music scenes altogether. While data collection methods such as interviews and observations provide valuable and necessary insight into the cultural and musical practices that Straw (1991) defined as the corner stone of music scenes, more recent scholarship has shown that forms of affect and relational practices shared between artists, audiences, technologies,

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physical spaces, and more prove just as foundational (Bennett, 2013; Fitzgerald and Simmons, 2021; Giaever, 2023; Green, 2021; Woods, 2021b, 2023). Calling out a reliance on qualitative interviews explicitly, Schiermer et al. (2021) argue that these kinds of methods overemphasize the role of the individual within musical contexts at the expense of the collectivities that define the cultural object of music scenes. Developing new methodologies and redrawing the analytic borders around music scenes can therefore prove mutually constitutive: new methodological frames can help scholars explore the affective and relational core of music scenes while reimagining what defines a music scene can help inspire new methodological practices.

In response to this provocation, we use this article to think through the process of defining music scenes beyond the human and explore possibilities for research into DIY cultural spaces that emerge through this retheorization. To do so, we draw on posthumanist research to reimagine music scenes through what Barad (2007) might describe as entanglements of intra-action. Intra-action in this sense refers to the co-constitutive process of ongoing emergence that occurs as materials and forces relate to each other. Rather than defining music scenes through understandings of musical activity and participation shared between participants, an intra-active approach would reimagine a music scene as a constantly becoming entanglement of scene members, technologies, materials, spaces, and other bodies. This relational definition of music scenes thus aligns with Bennet's (2013) notion of "affective scenes" by incorporating the affective relationships between more-than human actors, socio-spatial contexts, and temporal elements as agentic forces within that definition. This reframing allows for the importance of individual participation, geographic space, and time that have routinely defined DIY music scenes within extant scholarship (Bennet and Rogers, 2016; Bennett, 2004; Schiermer et al., 2021) to remain without forcing a static or anthropocentric reading of these contexts.

To ground this work, we present an arts-based duoethnographic study of our own experiences in one manifestation of the transglobal noise music scene. Emerging in the 1980's from artists primarily located in Japan (Merzbow, Masonna, The Gergogerigegege, etc.) and England (Whitehouse, CON-DOM, Ramleh, etc.), noise music refers to the amorphous and often caustic DIY offshoot of experimental music that purposefully refutes the tenets of the Western canon (rhythm, melody, repetitive structure, etc.) and instead uses swaths of dissonant, overwhelming, and disregarded sound to create largely abstract musical works (Graham, 2023). The scenes that emerge from noise music provide a particularly valuable site for research because of its embedded reliance on DIY modes of cultural production (Barrière, 2019; Benhaïm, 2018; P. J. Woods, 2018, 2023), its transglobal reach (Charrieras and Mouillot, 2021; Chattopadhyay, 2022; Faille, 2015), and its intersection with posthumanist theory (Snaza, 2016; Thompson, 2011; Woods, 2021b). Since analyzing the entirety of the transglobal is far beyond the scope of any individual paper, we instead focus on our own experiences in Bogotá, Milwaukee, Chicago, Toronto, Belfast, and Nottingham. Admittedly, this analysis focuses on Western countries that do not necessarily speak to noise scenes from all parts of the globe, such as those in East Asia (Charrieras & Mouillot, 2021). Still, by reframing our conceptions of noise music through a posthuman lens in this analysis we expand the borders of our own experiences within one iteration of the transglobal noise scene, reimagining both the constituent parts and the boundaries of this socio-musical space. To this end, we illustrate the value of retheorizing DIY cultures through a posthuman lens, a process that can provide further insight into the emergence, maintenance, and knowledge construction praxes of these communities.

Posthuman reimaginings of DIY music

While scholars have defined posthumanism in divergent ways, this theoretical lens boils down to a simple premise: interpret the world without assuming that humans sit at the centre of reality (Wolfe, 2010). Drawing directly from Indigenous ways of knowing, posthumanism presents a challenge to the humanist

legacy of the enlightenment by exploring different ways of representing, understanding, and being that emerge when theorists consider more-than-human animals, plants, ecosystems, materials, and technologies as equal to humans in these processes (Ravenscroft, 2018; Tanaka, 2016). This reframing shifts our engagement away from “being in” and towards “being with” the surrounding social and ecological fabric. Bang and Marin (2015) describe this change as they articulate the difference between the Western construction of the nature-culture divide and the Indigenous notion of nature-culture relations. Rather than considering humans as distinct from nature, and thus able to act on the natural world at their own discretion, nature-culture relations highlight the reality of humans being an ever-present part of natural ecosystems that act with their own sense of agency. Extending this theory to incorporate the technological, Pettman (2011) argues that posthumanism challenges not only the centrality of the human but the borders of the human itself. Haraway’s (1985) figure of the cyborg, for instance, emerges through the blurring of boundaries between humans and technology to create a new entity. The human, as both a distinct entity and an intellectual locus, thus begins to fray at the edges.

For Braidotti (2019), this literature calls on us to take the “post” in posthumanism seriously by striving to understand what comes after humanism. What does the world look like when the agency, desires, and values of humans do not represent the core pursuit of social life? For Barad (2007), conceptualizing posthumanism involves replacing the human as the analytic subject with entanglements of materials, bodies, and forces. This process shifts our attention away from singular actors (human, more-than-human, technological, or otherwise) to instead place new and emergent relational entities at the center of the social and physical world. These relational entities form through intra-action, as the relationships between materials co-construct emergent bodies. Theorizations of agency no longer represent an inherent capacity but instead exist as an opening up of capabilities through becoming relationships. In engaging with these entanglements, the viewer performs an “agential cut” by defining which relationships, materials, and bodies construct a specific entity (Barad, 2003). The human, then, represents an agential cut, with the boundaries around specific materials and relationships being drawn to construct this specific entity as legible despite those boundaries being inherently porous. But posthumanism challenges us to think beyond the human, to consider the human as one kind of assemblage that can further contribute to the construction of new posthuman subjectivities (Braidotti, 2019).

If taken seriously, posthumanism can build on extant work within affective scene studies (Bennett, 2013; Krogh, 2023) and research into youth collectivities (Schiermer et al., 2021) that challenges foundational assumptions within DIY music scholarship. The articulation of space provides one illustrative example. Beginning with Straw’s (1991) formative conceptualization of scenes, scholars have routinely defined these socio-musical contexts through the collective practices of humans in a defined cultural space, one that participants articulate within a specific geographic context that remains in conversation with other globally dispersed locales. Peterson and Bennett (2004) expand on this initial spatialization by developing the framework of local, translocal, and virtual scenes, proposing an expansive geographic context through which the actions and meaning making practices of scene members travel. In both cases, the authors propose a humanistic framing of music scenes: geographic space (or, in the case of virtual scenes, the absence of such) provides a medium for scenic activities to occur as opposed to being an agentic actor in itself. Stahl’s (2004) work moves away from the humanist core within the field by positioning the institutions that define cities as actors, exploring how government policies and material space define the production and maintenance of local music scenes. Yet this research remains anthropocentric by considering how cities act on the people that define music scenes instead of considering how the entanglements between individuals and material space produce the scene itself. Space thus remains a medium for human activity within these studies, overlooking the posthuman as a crucial figure within music scenes (Whitehead, 2009).

Stated differently, these humanist renderings of DIY music scenes define themselves through the actions of specific humans: DIY music scenes exist as cultural spaces where people make, listen to, or promote

specific kinds of music in specific kinds of ways. It is not the music itself that makes this scene but instead the people who produce and interact with that music. Posthumanism challenges us to not only take seriously the contributions of other bodies when defining analytic subjects (DIY music scenes among them) but also consider affective, embodied, and relational subjectivities beyond the human, to consider how we exist in relation to the ecological and technological elements of the world (Braidotti, 2016). Schiermer (2021) provides a model for exploring the posthuman within DIY music contexts when he defines live music experiences as an entanglement of human bodies, ambience, physical space, tools, and mediators. Reimagining DIY music scenes through posthumanism can extend this analysis, highlighting the entangled bodies and forces that define these socio-musical contexts outside of an anthropocentric default.

Foregrounding DIY music's relational entanglements

At a broad level, constructing a posthuman interpretation of DIY music scenes involves two practices: redefining who counts as a member of a scene and reimagining the boundaries of the community. In terms of reimagining the members of the scene, posthumanism calls on us to take seriously the social contributions of technologies and more-than-human animals, plants, and other ecological materials (Lindgren and Öhman, 2019; Pettman, 2011). But rather than considering more-than-human contributors as distinct entities, Braidotti (2019) positions the posthuman subject as a relational and embodied one that emerges as a becoming entanglement formed through the intra-actions between bodies, materials, and forces. In describing the difference between “becoming an artist” and “becoming a work of art,” Rousell and Fell (2018) provide a mechanism for reframing DIY music scene members as posthuman subjects. Rather than individuals contributing to the cultural production of a music scene, entanglements of bodies and materials (musicians, instruments, venues, audience members, and more) actively participate. Noise music, as a genre that is constructed through DIY music practices, provides a highly valuable space to explore this understanding of posthuman subjectivities within music scenes because of the genre's embodiment of both ecological (Snaza, 2016) and technological (Woods, 2021b) formations of posthumanism. Rather than understanding noise music as solely the product of human creative processes, fans and musicians alike recognize meaning that forms through the agentic contributions of more-than-human ecologies and technologies (Barrett, 2023). The meaning making and posthuman knowledge of noise music thus emerges from the intra-action between these materials and bodies. Entanglements of musicians, listeners, instruments and more (as “becoming works of art”) populate the scene in ways that human members alone cannot account for.

More than just considering entangled subjectivities within DIY music scenes, posthumanism also invites us to consider the scene as an entanglement itself, one that we can broaden and reimagine through alternate agential cuts. As Taylor (2023) notes, the methodological process of defining a music scene often values continuity over innovation, ignoring new ways of being in musical community for the sake of painting a coherent picture. But musicians within these scenes rarely embrace this continuity, instead relying on becoming and relational entanglements that transcend traditional boundaries. A hint of this theorizing exists within extant literature. As Crossley (2023) argues, a particular set of resources (both tangible and intangible), conventions, and networks define DIY music as a distinct and identifiable artistic context. Stahl (2024) draws a similar conclusion, arguing that music scenes emerge at the intersection of hard infrastructure (e.g., the built environment, social institutions, cultural centers) and soft infrastructure (or the social networks and communal webs that define and constrain our interpersonal and communal interactions). Music scenes then transform as these infrastructures change over time, providing a further mediating effect for scene member activity. Taking these factors into account when considering the agential cut that defines a DIY music scene creates an opportunity for posthuman reinterpretation by drawing on new bounding entities to define cultural entanglements: the more-than-human resources that both contribute to and

mediate the scene, the conventions that reach into the present from the past and across cultural contexts, and the networks of musicians and more-than-human entanglements that continually cross spatial boundaries provide the foundational materials for the construction of DIY music scenes within a posthuman framing instead of acting as mediators or products of human participation that sit at the center of most formations of music scenes in the literature.

Graham's (2023) framing of noise music as a becoming genre reveals how this community embodies this emergent understanding of scenes. Rather than attempting to define a specific sound or practice as being within either the transglobal or local enactment of the noise scene, musicians constantly allow for the intra-actions between (human and more-than-human) participants and both musical and what Crossley (2023) would describe as unconventional or non-musical resources to define communal participation. This allows for the emergence of new conventions that both draw on and define past ideas. And both practices are supported by the intertwined network of transglobal participants as they share materials both in person and through distanced communication. Together, these considerations propose a relational definition that relies on the contributions of more-than-human participants.

Similarly, research that draws on Bennet's (2013) notion of affective scenes provides a valuable alignment with posthuman framings of DIY music scenes. As Krogh (2023) argues, the production of identity (both for individuals within the scene and for the communal identity of the scene itself) represents an ongoing and becoming process that emerges from the relationships participants have to each other, their context, the music, and other more-than-human actors. This theorization creates the opportunity to position scenes as affective assemblages "through which matters and forms emerge from a repetitive application of forces" via what Fitzgerald and Simmons (2021: 200) describe as "the refrain" of DIY music scenes. Through the affective resonances shared between human and more-than-human participants within the scene, new entangled bodies emerge that define the broader entanglement of musical contexts, events, and scenes (Schiermer, 2021). Yet this turn towards the posthuman does not necessarily abject the human from these contexts but instead produces "a reconfiguration in which the human subject emerges episodically" (Whitehead, 2009: 23). For instance, Driver & Bennett (2015) argue that embodiment plays a crucial role within the production and maintenance of music scenes. Rather than positioning bodies as passive recipients of DIY music scenes' cultural praxes, these authors argue that the embodiment of the scene shapes and maintains that socio-musical context through this constantly becoming relationship. Beyond considering the circulation of emotions through participants, notions of affect reimagine music scenes as relational constructions wherein the intra-actions between human and more-than-human bodies define the scene beyond a mere consideration of the musical practices of these communities.

While posthuman reimaginings of DIY music scenes draw on any number of more-than-human bodies and forces, we explicitly want to retheorize the temporal and spatial dimensions of these socio-musical contexts because of the importance both play within extant definitions of music scenes (Bennett 2004). Rather than position time and space as boundaries to define all levels of Peterson and Bennet's (2004) local/trans-local/virtual framework of scenes, we draw on them as intra-active and relational materials within the scene-as-entanglement. Affective approaches to scene studies research take on a similar framing by exploring how music scenes emerge from the relationships formed between the music, the social context, the built and natural environment, and the musicians and audience members that inhabit these spaces (Giaeever, 2023; Glass, 2012). Within local scenes, M. Woods (2022), for instance, illustrates how geographic space intra-acts with the entanglements that comprise the scene by exploring how the D.C. hardcore scene emerged from Minor Threat and Bad Brain's entanglement with the gentrifying city. At the translocal/trans-global level, Conter and Macedo's (2023) analysis of timbral diversity in Brazilian indie music shows how the entanglement of Brazil as a social and physical space, the Global North, the musicians, and the technologies they use to make music represents the fullness of the Brazilian indie music scene, as opposed to an agentic cut that only centres human participation.

Along with the geospatial becoming entangled within DIY music scenes, the temporal nature of these contexts also become an intra-active component. For del Amo Castro et al. (2024), shifting conceptions of DIY praxis within Basque's music scene illustrates a temporal entanglement with the sociocultural context of the region: early manifestations of the scene emerged in relation to the last years of the Spanish Dictatorship and embodied a countercultural mode of musical resistance while contemporary participants "utilise commercial digital platforms to allow for a DIY in which the 'yourself'–'not together'–element is key" (del Amo Castro et al., 2024: 6). Yet both defining characteristics of these DIY processes remain present within the Basque DIY scene, showing that time itself remains intertwined within this space. Golpushnezhad (2023) draws a similar conclusion about the Iranian hip hop scene, with musical practices and participation changing over time. In both cases, sociopolitical contexts of the past contributed to the reproduction of the DIY scene in the present, revealing the intra-action of both space and time within the relational and entangled definition of DIY music scenes we articulate here.

Again, we do not draw on posthumanism to replace extant conceptions of DIY music scenes. Rather, we present an alternative way of conceiving of DIY music scenes to access what Braidotti (2019) would describe as posthuman knowledges related to these contexts, representing new and creative conceptions of these communities that amplify the relational, affective, embodied, creative, and emergent forms of meaning that come from the posthuman.

The transglobal noise scene as becoming entanglement

To begin theorizing the kinds of posthuman knowledge that emerge from DIY music scenes, we now turn towards an arts-based exploration of own experiences as participants in one manifestation of the transglobal noise scene. We structured this process around what we define as a "sound braiding" methodology. This research praxis explicitly draws influence from duoethnography, an approach to scholarship where scholars compare their life histories to produce detailed and multifaceted understandings of social phenomena (Norris and Sawyer, 2012). We expand on this reflexive methodology through an arts-based lens to counteract duoethnography's reliance on human experience and subsequent replication of humanist worldviews. Arts-based research, as a broad methodological category, entails the creative and collaborative practice of art making to both document and generate new knowledges about the social world (Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund, 2017). And because arts-based research represents a generative process of collaborative knowledge construction between participants, researchers, materials, environments, and other more-than-human contributors, scholars have argued for the role that arts-based research can and should play within posthumanist inquiry (Cutter-Mackenzie-Knowles et al., 2020; Rousell, 2019). Music holds a particularly valuable place within posthumanist arts-based research because sound, as a relational material, creates openings to explore posthuman entanglements within postqualitative research (Flint, 2021; Woods & Jones, 2023). A music-based approach to exploring our own experiences within the transglobal noise scene therefore allows for the construction of the kinds of embodied, affective, collaborative, and rhizomatic posthuman knowledges described by Braidotti (2019).

To engage our sound braiding methodology, we began by independently writing narratives of our experience within the transglobal noise scene. We then expanded beyond the text-based tradition of duoethnography through a 3-step artistic process, during which we wrote detailed analytic memos to document our emergent knowledge and reactions to this process. First, we independently created 7-min noise music pieces that translated our narratives into sonic representations. This artistic intervention created space to emphasize elements of our narratives and incorporate affective resonances within our experiences that we could not describe in writing. Second, we sent each other our completed recordings along with the different sound sources we used to compose the finished musical piece. From these recordings, we created two brand-new compositions through editing, remixing, and manipulating each other's sonic materials. This part

of the process emphasizes duoethnography's capacity for dialogic knowledge construction and the incorporation of viewpoints beyond those of the researchers (Wong & Ortega, 2023), allowing for newly shared understandings of the transglobal noise scene and the influence of sound, music technology, community, and ecological space to emerge. Third, we created one final, collaborative musical piece by independently recording multiple shorter tracks (2–4 min in length) and then braiding those recordings into one singular composition. This sound braiding process involved layering and organizing recordings in an audio recording program to create one singular but dynamic soundscape. The QR code in Figure 1 links to an online playlist featuring all five compositions in order.

To analyse the recordings, narratives, and analytic memos, we employed a combination of descriptive and pattern coding techniques (Saldaña, 2015). This open and iterative process involved an initial round of coding where we categorized the data into emergent and grounded codes, paying particular attention to portions of this data that engaged with more-than-human elements and theorizations of DIY music scenes. We then compared across these codes to create broader patterns between the codes and shared conceptions of the transglobal noise scene as a becoming entanglement. We report the results of this analysis throughout the rest of this section.

In drawing influence from duoethnography, we intentionally build on the assertion that “differences between the writers’ points of view [represent] a strength and an opportunity to explore different meanings to a shared phenomenon” (Rose and Montakantiwong, 2018: 91). To this end, we draw on our distinct backgrounds and experiences within the transglobal noise scene to reimagine definitions of DIY music scenes beyond the geographic and temporal bounds that have traditionally defined these spaces. Woods’ involvement in noise music primarily occurred in the Midwest of the United States, as he lived in Milwaukee for 19 years and both attended shows and performed regularly there and in nearby cities such as Chicago, before moving to Nottingham, England. Alternately, Ortega began his involvement in Bogotá, Colombia before



Figure 1. QR code to access the album created by the authors.

living in Chicago (where he and Woods regularly attended shows together), Toronto, and finally Belfast, Ireland. With this positioning in mind, we acknowledge the fact that our largely Western experience does not necessarily represent the entirety of the transglobal noise scene. For example, our inclusion of South America only represents one manifestation of the Global South among many Global Souths. In response, we propose that our analysis represents one becoming and, as Peterson and Bennett (2004) may describe it, translocal entanglement that speaks to rather than for the transglobal noise scene. Our findings therefore sit alongside past and future analyses of different manifestations of transglobal DIY scenes, ones that emerge from alternate agentic cuts through different Global Norths and Souths.

While we could independently analyse our experiences in each geographically defined scene, we instead allowed our open approach to data generation and analysis to guide how we theorized and discussed these scenic formations. Through the rest of this section, we present findings from our analysis to explore our construction of the transglobal noise scene as a posthuman entanglement and the kinds of knowledge that emerge from that positioning.

Entanglements of participation: Becoming works of art

As represented in the musical compositions and narratives created for this study, noise music acted as a catalyst for entanglement in both authors' processes of "becoming works of art" (Roussell & Fell, 2018). Part of this entanglement involves drawing on genres outside of noise music to create new, becoming, and affective bodies of work. "North," the initial musical composition by Woods, embodies this entanglement by incorporating recordings of a bass guitar that musically nod towards the doom metal genre. The piece speaks to an entanglement between Woods, this other genre (which he listened to and performed alongside finding noise music), and the technologies used to make this music. The author describes this gesture in his analytic memo: "My training and musical life from before I started making noise has always remained present in my work... we bring those other musical ideas with us to a place like noise that is so diverse." "South," the initial piece by Ortega, represents a similar entanglement. The track emerges out of the intra-actions between Ortega, an ocarina he acquired in Chile, and other technologies more commonly associated with noise music. The creation of noise music not only draws traditional instruments into a non-traditional musical form, but also draws out elements of traditional Western music from technologies designed for other purposes. Ortega acknowledges this in his analytic memo:

I was exploring what kind of sounds the [HNW Analogy synth] produces and I [found] the white noise and crackles, something I have not heard before because of the many pedals I had in the line... I started to think more musically: patterns, beats, and beeps that could catch my attention.

It is through these becoming entanglements that participation in the noise scene occurs, both as listeners bringing their musical histories with them and as becoming works of art entangled with technologies and musical forms.

As time goes on, both participants frame their participation within the transglobal noise scene as an expanding techno-human entanglement. Woods recognizes this awareness as a component of "North":

Loops of a crowded cafeteria can be heard just barely through the rest of the din... The sounds change slowly over time, in recognition of how that community waxes and wanes with people entering and leaving. The sound suddenly ends, not because of an end to my involvement in a community but because of an end to my time in Milwaukee.

This quote from the analytic memo clarifies that Woods' involvement with community continues despite leaving Milwaukee, pointing to a broadening conception of the DIY scene in practice. Sonically, the

becoming entanglement of interhuman relations also resonates within the recordings of “North by South” and “South by North,” the remixed/reworked tracks by the authors. Stylistically, both tracks sound much more similar and project a sonic density that does not exist in the original tracks, gesturing towards the notion that participation in the scene represents a process of entanglement as lines of flight draw human and more-than-human elements together within becoming works of art.

The growing entanglement that represents participation with the DIY noise scene also involves a becoming entanglement with the technologies that facilitate the making and sharing of music. In Ortega’s narrative, this becomes apparent as he describes the evolution of his record label:

The record label [Ruido Latino] was created to produce physical copies of albums (CDRs and cassette tapes), distributed in person or by trading through mail... It was rewarding as I had the chance to know many people doing amazing work... at the fringes of society, especially when the experimental music market is loaded by the academic world of sound art, thus displacing those who are doing grassroots work.

In starting this label, Ruido Latino emerged as an entanglement between Ortega, physical media, and musical participants in the Global South and North that mirror Conter and Macedo’s (2023) study of Brazilian indie music. The label blurs the lines between geographical spaces and challenges Westernized understandings of “sound art.”

Ortega also foregrounds techno-human entanglements in making music when creating “North”:

I added the Metal Zone pedal and noticed that the volume and thickness of the sound compared to the raw sound of the synth was lower... This session sounded more like harsh noise wall and white noise with less crackle than before... At this time, I was less intentional and was going through the flow.

In line with Woods’ (2021b) findings, Ortega frames the creation of noise music as a collaborative process that rests on the intra-active agency that emerges from human-techno relations. Woods builds on this idea in the recording of “South by North”:

I first took each one of the individual layers that Ortega used to create his original piece and dubbed them to tape. I intentionally recorded the tracks at too high of a volume, overdriving the input of the tape player and allowing this machine to create noise on its own. I then recorded these tapes through various effects while also randomly fast forwarding and rewinding through the tapes, allowing the tape player to essentially control where the tape started and stopped.

In both cases, the authors frame their artistic process as one that amplifies the role of intra-action, positioning DIY music scene participation as a more-than-human activity via the becoming entanglement of artistic production.

Expanding geospatial boundaries of scene

More than just rethinking what defines a community member within DIY music scenes, our posthuman analysis produced multiple ways of retheorizing the agential cuts we took to define the scenes within which we participated. This happened as our migratory paths brought us to new geographic locales and we developed an embodied understanding of noise music as a transglobal community à la Driver and Bennett (2015). In our original sound pieces, both of us engaged with this expansion in different ways. In “North,” Woods incorporates ambient sounds from the UK. He describes this artistic choice in the analytic memo as follows:

The primary gesture is a manipulation of a field recordings of birds I made in Polperro, UK. By including this recording, I wanted to represent the transglobal nature of my development by incorporating this throughout the entire portion of the track that stands in for my involvement in the noise scene.

This compositional choice represents how Woods positions the scene as a growing entanglement, with his new context now representing another segment of the transglobal noise scene that has entangled the author. Ortega also sounds the entanglement between himself and space on “South” by incorporating the recording of the Chilean ocarina:

I decided to purposely create some [sound] related to me, my identity and my Latinx heritage. I recorded a sample of an Ocarina I bought when I went to Chile and my own voice using the Hardwire DL-8 Delay Looper to add a bit of... who I am.

The social context of South America, a place where Ortega began his journey into this entangled space, then extends into Belfast (where Ortega recorded the album) as these spaces intra-act with and through Ortega. Ortega amplifies this assertion in his narrative: “I have been able to play in many international contexts, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, the USA, Canada and the Czech Republic, connecting with many other underground projects, treasuring friendships and relationships that have lasted.” The community that Ortega surrounds himself with thus expands beyond a singular locale and instead grows through a becoming entanglement between himself, others, and spaces.

In line with this expansion of DIY music scenes via the entanglement of place, people, and technologies, the authors of this study also recognize the entanglement of local and global political forces into the scene that mirrors numerous writings within DIY music scholarship (Conter and Macedo, 2023; del Amo Castro et al., 2024; Golpushnezhad, 2023; P. J. Woods, 2021a, 2022). On a local, internal level, Woods used a specific gesture on “North” to draw out the need for a critical realignment of noise music’s politics that incorporates the zoe/geo/techno perspectives that Braidotti (2019) positions as essential for posthuman subjectivities:

the clatter of metal speaks to the underlying material of this community, with sheet metal representing an extractive resource that speaks to critical issues within noise (whiteness, colonialism, etc.). My experience in the US and UK also creates an affective connection to this extractive metaphor, both being major figures in contemporary and historical colonial forces... The clatter ends and the noise and bird layers remain. This speaks to my own presence within this context that has never truly been gone, just maybe not clarified.

At the macro level, Ortega amplifies the entanglement of noise music with the realities of current global politics by incorporating his own vocalizations on “South” and “South/North Sound Braiding”:

Because of recent global issues in Palestine, I felt I needed to scream something [while recording “South/North Sound Braiding”] and it can faintly be heard on track 2, as I wanted the noise to overcome the voice as it suggests and resembles how the Palestinian voices are being oppressed as those who are vocal about it are being censored by the media.

Mirroring del Amo Castro et al.’s (2024) enunciation of the role of politics in the ethos (and intra-actions) of DIY scenes, the authors conceptualize how sociopolitical forces entangle themselves within noise music contexts to create a space for critique. The noise scene and those within it thus continue to advocate for the critical and affective power of noise in part because of its relational positioning beyond this discursive context.

Emphasizing the becoming nature of DIY scenes, the shift towards understanding these communities as entanglements with space and politics through our arts-based research process opened a specific line of critique that challenged the overt whiteness of these scenes. As both authors have shown, the force of whiteness routinely influences the formation of professional/creative identities (Ortega, 2021) and noise music as both a genre and sociocultural space (Woods, 2018, 2019). Additionally, racialization often plays a role within the assemblage of posthuman subjectivities, entangling itself and affecting the intra-active potential of new relational figures (Albright, 2023; Rosiek, 2019; Varga, 2024). The authors embodied this understanding by recognizing (and challenging) the whiteness of their immediate communities. Woods acknowledges as much in his narrative: “I shift my focus in terms of booking: no more dude only shows. The shows become more diverse in terms of gender [and] in terms of sound (admittedly, the shows are still white AF).” While we can see that Woods has focused primarily on addressing gender imbalances, he finishes this quote with a recognition of the need to challenge the whiteness of the scene moving forward. Ortega, in contrast, starts from this recognition:

I started noticing the lack of Latinx people in the scene... It got me thinking that if there are not many of us out there, it was my role to create something to amplify the work of Latin American underground emerging artists and provide a platform for all of us who either live in their countries or the diaspora.

In turn, both artists acknowledge the role of race within their entangled scenes but also recognize that the becoming nature of these DIY music contexts provides an opportunity to shape this space through intra-action.

As both artists begin to expand their understanding of the scene by making an agential cut around the transglobal noise scene, this need to engage the political elements of noise music takes on a more relational practice, one that draws on the affective nature of racialization and foregrounds the need to engage in anti-racist struggle within these becoming entanglements. The collaborative sound braiding recording, “South/North Sound Braiding,” illustrates this process. As mentioned above, Ortega used his voice to scream a solidarity with the Palestinian struggle into being. Similarly, Woods’ contributions represent a relational act of support for Ortega. Recognizing his place of privilege as a white academic/artist from the Global North, Woods approached this final piece through the lens of uplifting Ortega’s vision and allowing his contributions to dictate the collaborative process of entanglement:

I returned to the original recording that Ortega sent me and found those beautiful recordings of his breath, both by itself and through the wind instrument... I spliced two samples together per track, creating a sound file that slowly faded from one tempo, timbre, and pitch to another... I then mixed this into the background of the recording, allowing Ortega’s new contributions to shine... It becomes a statement about where I want to be as a member of this community... the real work is continuing to find ways to support and amplify others.

While whiteness often represents an influential element within the transglobal noise scene, the creative practice embodied by both artists reveals a means towards shaping the becoming entanglement towards a liberatory future.

Conclusion

As numerous scholars have articulated, DIY music scenes do not represent static entities but instead exist as constantly becoming socio-musical contexts (Glass, 2012; Graham, 2023). While extant literature has considered this process in relation to the musical and cultural practices of participants, this theoretical approach overemphasizes the activity and agency of individuals at the expense of collectivities and more-than-human

contributors (Schiermer et al., 2021). Posthumanism, as a theoretical frame, provides a tool for scene studies and DIY scholars to foreground a relational approach that positions both scene members and scenes they as entanglements of humans, technologies, spaces, and sociocultural forces. The consideration of affect within the past decade of scene studies research indicates a shift in this direction, as scholars regularly highlight the importance of affective resonances that travel between participants in the production of DIY music scenes (Bennett, 2013; Green, 2021; Krogh, 2023). Yet this body of work still takes a humanistic stance at the expense of other kinds of intra-active agency. As Giaever (2023) shows, the Palestinian electronic music scene represents an assemblage of “music practices, affects, class relations and mobilities that produce a particular dance floor entangled in different power structures” (25), one that must be understood beyond a humanist lens that considers spaces, times, technologies, and contexts as merely boundaries for participants to exist in or materials that influence human behaviour. The same can and should be said of all other local, translocal, and virtual scenes.

Through our employment of a sound braiding methodology, we propose posthumanism as a generative frame in enacting a new agentic cut and reimagining DIY scenes as becoming entanglements. This opens new avenues to explore transglobal communities (including the particular and intertwined enactments of translocal noise scenes explored by the authors) and leads to further engagement with the sociopolitical forces that both shape and are shaped by music scenes. Beyond Stahl’s (2004) foundational depiction of the influence enacted by hard and soft infrastructure, our duoethnographic analysis reveals how our participation in the transglobal noise scene emerged as an entanglement with both forms of infrastructure and also technologies, musical forms, sociopolitical contexts and forces, and more. Our induction into and navigation of the scene thus emerges through a process of becoming a work of art (Rousell and Fell, 2018), materializing as an affective body in line with Green’s (2021) analysis of scenic participation. Furthermore, our construction of the noise scene goes beyond the musical practices described by Straw (1991) and even the interhuman affect proposed by Bennett (2013). Our analysis illustrates how DIY music scenes represent becoming entanglements of humans and more-than-human participants, materials, and forces, a view that creates new opportunities to expand on extant scene studies work by reimagining the types of entangled bodies that emerge from these scenes and how those assemblages embody the scene in return (Driver and Bennett, 2015; Fitzgerald and Simmons, 2021). Reinterpreting DIY music scenes as relational and post-human thus provides opportunities for the construction of new, posthuman knowledges, both about these spaces and within scenes themselves. Because if the future is posthuman, as Braidotti (2019) claims, then DIY scenes should be too.


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