fields harrington, Katherine McKittrick, Melvin Gibbs, Howard Mandel
HxH (Lester St. Louis and Chris Williams)

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The Kitchen at Westbeth
163B Bank Street, 4th Floor
Loft
The following text is the accumulation of loose notes and fragmentary thoughts. Spending time with The Kitchen’s archive, the documented history of Butch Morris that lives online, and the writing of Katherine McKittrick prompted me to ask: what does correspondence have to do with the legacy of Butch Morris documentary short about the art of Conduction®. Butch talks about the significance of “real-time development.” Taking the symbolism of notation and applying it to real-time activity is important to the conductor, musician, and audience.

He says that he “mines” music and sonic information. He mines it and then refines it. The mining of sonic information is a real-time activity that produces a new social logic of collective imagination in the collective intimacy, transmission, and correspondence and turn in many ways at any given time based on the find flexibility in notation. Butch wanted to modify write he posed a question to his teacher regarding the score. The teacher's response emphasized that the score, they would have explicitly written in it by Conduction®. For Butch “literary information, could orientation of the

I wanted to think Butch Morris’ method of Conduction® through a lens of reinvention. Which part of Butch’s history do I want/need to be in dialogue with? Initially, I found myself consumed by the invention of his signs and gestures. I wanted to understand why Butch decided to invent a vocabulary of signs and gestures. Not language because according to Butch, music was the language and Conduction® was the vocabulary. What was absent in notation and written compositions for Butch that led him to invent a new social logic or an extra dimension? I should note here that improvisation alone was not enough to produce the music that Morris wanted to develop and hear. Improvisation needed organization, guidance, and structure. Butch was committed to reconciling the gap between the traditions of improvisation and notation. I wanted to know how Butch’s Conduction® overlapped with Katherine McKittrick’s ideas around re-invention. McKittrick states in her book The Art of Conduction: A Conduction® Workbook (New York: Karma, 2019), 34-39.

Butch expresses the absence of a system that fits with his creative impulse. He says that he “mines” music and sonic information. He mines it and then refines it. The mining of sonic information is a real-time activity that produces a new social logic of collective imagination in the collective intimacy, transmission, and correspondence and turn in many ways at any given time based on the find flexibility in notation. Butch wanted to modify write. he posed a question to his teacher regarding the score. The teacher's response emphasized that the score, they would have explicitly written in it by Conduction®. For Butch “literary information, could orientation of the

Conduction® is a gestural lexicon that developed over time. Its meaning shifted weight through time and space marked by a language that was invented out of necessity. Is there an economy of this necessity? Is there an economy of Morris’ gestures and signs? Is the time-space of Morris’ lexicon of gestures in relation to, or a site of, politics? What does the repetition of Morris’ gestures look like without accumulation? How does Conduction® become an embodied dialogue? How does it become an embodied correspondence between conductor and musician? I’m not interested in understanding the efficiency and management of Morris’ gestures and signs with these questions. I’m also not thinking about the commerce or the financial conditions of his gestures and signs. I’m invested in trying to know how Morris’ gestures become inscriptive and have the volume to script, write, and transcribe sonic information. Perhaps, there is a concern with the intentional use and development of his gestures to convey meaning, communicate non-verbally, construct a ground for spontaneous collective intimacy, bring attention to acts of collaboration, and refuse feelings of impossibility.

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5. McKittrick, “I GOT LIFE / REBELLION INVENTION GROOVE.”