



School: School of Art

Researcher: Keith Harrison

Project Title: Public Acts

UOA: 32

300 Word Statement

Public Acts comprises 2 public performative projects: **Conductor | 8 Movements** co-commissioned by *In Certain Places* and *Harris Museum & Art Gallery* in 2019, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Brutalist Preston Bus Station, and **Tombstone (let's get over this)**, commissioned by the Crafts Council as part of the touring *Acts of Making Festival* in 2015. Exploring ways to alter perceptions of our daily interactions in urban spaces, and initiate a celebratory engagement with skills either unacknowledged or at the periphery of society, Harrison asks the following 2 questions:

1. Might our functional and recreational interactions in public spaces be reconsidered as poetic and performative acts through choreographed intervention?
2. How could an expanded definition of live performance bring about a re-engagement with urban spaces and sub-cultures

Conductor was a live 60 minute choreographed intervention in the life of Preston Bus Station. With staff and passengers integral to the performance, 32 buses and their skilled drivers conducted slow movements across the forecourt, accompanied by a commissioned electronic soundtrack, created in response to Harrison's schematic drawings. **Conductor** was exhibited as a multi screen video in *Brutal and Beautiful* at the Harris Museum and Art Gallery 2019.

Forging the uncelebrated skills of monumental masonry with those of the skateboarder, whose craft is often prohibited in municipal urban spaces, **Tombstone** offered the opportunity for skateboarders to become makers, in the grinding of stone benches, specially made by local gravestone masons, as a form of social sculpture. This is ongoing as the benches remain *in situ*. **Tombstone** is cited in *Plymouth Principles* 2016 on Public Art as a model for new kinds of cultural experiences in the public realm

By reframing the functional and recreational as both poetic and performative, **Public Acts** opens up the possibilities of transformative experiences and community re engagement and renewal.