



**School:** Bath School of Art

**Researcher:** Roger Clarke

**Project Title:** The Record Player Orchestra

**UOA:** 32

## 300-Word Statement

Seeking to reposition his own sculptural practice from controlled material production and exhibition to one more socially interactive, in 2014 Carke developed the **Record Player Orchestra**: a performative and participatory installation exploring the possibilities of collaborative and symbiotic manipulation of sound through physical engagement with an iconic object. The project was proposed in response to a 2013 Open Call from the Old Vinyl Factory, formerly EMI, prior to its redevelopment. There have been 14 **RPO** performances since the first event in May 2014, 4 of which are documented in this collection.

**RPO** asks 4 questions:

1. Can a record player function as an instrument ? 2. How might multiple participants and their record players interact as a form of orchestra and create and perform collaborative compositions? 3. How can the interactive repurposing of an object reframe the relationship between artist, artwork and audience? 5. How can the mute materiality of an object become audible and operate as a form of hybrid sculpture.

The **RPO** consists of up to 16 record players and participants, each with a copy of the same vinyl record featuring 18 single tones on side A, and 7 tracks of silence and record player sounds on side B. **RPO**'s starting point was one of non expertise, all ideas explored with no prescribed outcome, but to experiment and create something new. Through a non hierarchical process of improvisation, listening and response, with all record players in use simultaneously, collaborative compositions were created and then recorded.

From Clarke's sculptural perspective, key to the **RPO** is the participant's physical engagement with the object; the shaping of its own sounds rather than its mute materiality, activating new narratives of the object, toward a type of hybrid sculpture, so what changes is our encounter, in the present, with the object, not its form.