

scope

Contemporary Research Topics

art & design 13

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The series *Scope (Art & Design)* aims to engage discussion on contemporary research in the visual arts and design. It is concerned with views and critical debates surrounding issues of practice, theory, history and their relationships as manifested through the visual and related arts and activities, such as sound, performance, curation, tactile and immersive environments, digital scapes and methodological considerations. With New Zealand and its Pacific neighbours as a backdrop, but not its only stage, *Scope (Art & Design)* seeks to address the matters which concern contemporary artists and arts enquirers in their environments of practice.

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Editorial Team: Leoni Schmidt (Series Editor) and Pam McKinlay (Editorial Liaison), Dunedin School of Art, Otago Polytechnic / Te Kura Matatini ki Otago, Dunedin, Aotearoa/New Zealand.

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AN ART AND DESIGN SMORGASBORD

Leoni Schmidt

This issue of *Scope: Art & Design* includes a range of submissions evidencing the broad spectrum of interests amongst staff engaged with the creative fields at Otago Polytechnic and further afield amongst their networks. The retention of studio disciplines underpins Michele Beevors' focus on slow drawing; Michael Greaves' exploration of the ontology of painting in our time; Anita DeSoto's alignment of her painted tableaux with her teaching practice; Steev Peyroux's musings on his painting process; David Green's moving image in the expanded field; and Rachel Allan's interest in the materiality of the photograph. Their contributions speak of an enduring and in-depth engagement and of a deep involvement with the studio practices they so admirably present to the reader. The same is true of Jane Venis' artist pages about her sculpture, installation, and music, of which the reading leads to laughter and an enjoyment of the hilarious aspects of creative work.

Reading this issue takes one from the funny side of things to a sense of gravitas where Andrew Last explains the process of cultural consultation with Kai Tahu around the creation of a touchstone for the entrance of the new public hub of Otago Polytechnic. He takes us through the events as they unfolded and of the considerations so important to bicultural relationships in New Zealand, particularly here in the light of a Memorandum of Understanding with local rūnaka signed in responsiveness to obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi.

In stark contrast, Ruth Evans ensures that we are aware of the risks to our country's well-being posed by resource extraction and the greed of corporations. Through her *Go Mine* project, she brings a twist to the argument as in playing a game devised by Evans we all become complicit. And, from far away in Turkey, Dilek Alkan Ozdemir signals that such concerns are world-wide. As if in response, Pam McKinlay and Jesse-James Pickery report on their installation in response to pollution due to the use of fossil fuels. Siau-Juin Lim presents her large-scale paintings as tools for the fostering of human relationships with nature, asking us to consider what plants feel. It is deeply disturbing when reading her compassionate view and then to move on to Susan Nunn's account of the ubiquitous food waste resulting from our reliance on junk as underpinned by a divorce from the natural world and the species that inhabit it alongside us. Again from Turkey, Nilgun Salur signals how important sustainability is in different parts of the world.

Sustainability can also flourish within communities of practice. Marion Wassenaar explains how such communities can connect and protect artists. Alicia Hall presents her community-orientated work and show how she works with groups of people towards well-being and a sense of belonging. Simon Swale argues for the importance of blogging in the world of fashion for the creation of a more democratic discourse in which everybody can participate. Johanna Zellmer describes an example of a democratic way of achieving an exhibition and related events where she introduces the jewellery CLINK project and Lesley Brook reports on audience participation in this project.

On a more introspective and melancholic note, Megan Griffiths points out how her recent textile work is related to her experience of caring for a father with Alzheimer's Disease. And, Susan Videler considers how the wound is integral to the history of women's suffering at the hands of the patriarchy and how wounded skin is central to her making practice.

In response to moments in the presence – real or imagined – of other artists, Peter Belton offers a suite of poems.

And last, but not least, EM Davidson brings us all back to earth where she reflects on the employability of the artist in today's monetized and commoditized world.

I wish all the readers of *Scope: Art & Design* #13 new insights into the studio practices of a broad range of artists and to the pressing issues they lend their voices to.

Prof. Leoni Schmidt
Director: Research & Postgraduate Studies
Academic Leader: Postgraduate Studies (ART)
Otago Polytechnic
Dunedin
New Zealand

SLOW DRAWING, ANOTHER VIEWING

Michele Beevors

Your truth, my truth and what really happened.

Robert Evans: from the movie *The Kid Stays in the Picture*¹

A discussion of Quentin Tarantino's film *Reservoir Dogs* seems like an odd place to begin an essay on slow drawing, since the pace of the film is fast and the director is known for his love of action films of the seventies.² But there are many things in the film that one fails to notice at first sitting, being so caught up in the pace and moral dilemmas of the characters, and these things one fails to notice become haunting signifiers of real life:

- like the difference between implied violence and enacted violence
- the settings that give secondary meanings to the action
- the use of props (as in theatrical productions) to allude to the direction of the action
- the fact that none of the characters have names, only colours – Messrs White, Orange, Brown, Pink, and Mr Blonde. Mr Brown and Mr Blue are both played by Edward Bunker, a real criminal and crime writer.

In *Reservoir Dogs*, a simple jewel heist gone awry is the premise of the story. Mr White and Mr Orange arrive at the warehouse rendezvous to await the other Colours. Mr Orange has a belly wound and is bleeding profusely. Mr White attempts to comfort him. Mr Orange passes out. Mr Pink arrives and declares that there is a rat among them.

At the warehouse are a set of strange large boxes (my guess is coffins) covered in plastic and standing on their ends; a big brown one stands in front of the other two. When Mr Blonde arrives he sits on a hearse, also covered in plastic sheeting. These signifiers of death add to the anxiety of the audience – all of this is going to end badly. The film editing also adds to this feeling, since the audience has to think on their feet. The story is not linear or laid out for us. It turns out that these coffins and the hearse are real, and not Hollywood props – the warehouse where these scenes are filmed was at one time a mortuary. Tarantino lets the real world into the movie to highlight and enlarge the rupture between the real and the make-believe.

The most famous scene in the film is of course not seen at all. Mr Blonde is dancing around to “Clowns to the left of me, jokers to the right, *stuck in the middle with you*” by Stealers Wheel. The scene in question sees Mr Blonde cut the ear off a policeman after torturing him – 80 percent of the audience believe they have witnessed this scene. Instead, what they see is a blank green wall with the graffiti slogan, “watch your head” – another instance of real graffiti replacing and indicating the implied violence of the scene. This is a nod to the time-honoured tradition of cutting away from the depiction of violence to appease the censors.

The implied violence in this scene, the almost blank wall where we project our imagination to conjure up the worst torture, is crucial for understanding *Reservoir Dogs*. The characters in it are morally conflicted stereotypes: Mr White, Mr Pink, Mr Orange and Mr Green represent different aspects of this conflict. But Mr White or Mr Blonde aren't that far removed from Mr Whippy, Mr Softy, or the likes of John Wayne Gacy.

TOM FOX

Violence is also implied in the recent drawings of Tom Fox. Fox presents us with large-scale drawings set out in a grid. Fragments of faces, on first inspection some of these drawings seem quite loose in the way they are drawn. Perhaps you notice that they are fragments of men's faces, older men. Then it occurs to you that they in no way represent anyone's benign grandpa, that somehow they are glaring at you. They seem to be menacing, grotesque. You look from one to the other for some relief, but there is none to be found. The sheer quantity and scale of the drawings creates problems in the way that they (the fragments of faces) seem to stare back at you. Some of these drawings are only mouths and stubble. They scare me and at first I don't know why. They are ugly and confronting. They are compulsive. I go and see them again and again over the course of the exhibition. Some are better than others. I decide that the human face drawn to scale is difficult to understand, let alone render, and yet there is something extra-compelling here. The faces occupy a lot of space, yet they force you to move in close to the surface of the drawing.

Eventually, the faces dissolve into a series of marks. So distracted was I by the mesmerising effect of these scary men staring out at me that I failed to notice this trope in Fox's work. The drawings are made with the fingertips – fingerprints, to be exact – applied to charcoal, then pressed into the paper. Depth is built up, the surface rubbed raw, or rubbed out. Here erasure becomes important; what is implied but is never stated is violence. As I turn to leave the exhibition room, I notice on a pillar a small framed line drawing of a child's face – not much more than an outline. I realise the depth of what I am witnessing and am powerless to do anything about.

The large fragmented portraits are of predators, the kind that prey on small children. They are unnamed, but if one cared to one could easily find out their identities. But who would want to? Who really wants to know Mr Blue or Mr Blonde in real life? And it's just this that the drawings are really about – the fact that for so long society turned a blind eye to paedophilia. These drawings are important and, dare I say, brave. Not because they can't have been easy to draw, but because the subject matter isn't easily talked about or digested by the public, who just want to be entertained.

To return to the coffins as anchors in the plot of *Reservoir Dogs*. Blank and empty. They stand in for the missing bodies of Mr Brown and Mr Blue and the soon-to-be Mr Orange. ... They underline the moral dilemmas presented by Tarantino here. Honour among thieves. To keep quiet or to speak out – that is the question.

PHILIP MADILL

The drawings of Dunedin artist Philip Madill are also set in an imagined collision between future, past and present. The scene is urban, industrial and populated only by men. These men are doing things at a distance – obscure things, manly things, fixing things that are broken, peering into holes in antiquated and obsolescent machinery. They wear overalls, or boiler suits as they are sometimes called – cotton garments like the ones that hang in the hallway in *Reservoir Dogs*: white ones, like those butchers wear, or left over from the undertakers. Madill's overalls are grey, like everything else in this bleak world, seen through the lens of black-and-white fifties TV.

The cars that line the street are from the past, as are the men, who wear strange, clunky helmets that look like geometric houses or engine parts. The streets seem strangely familiar; but somehow cleaner than ours. I think that I might know the actual street – I might even be able to identify a building. But I'm not sure, because I have never really looked at those buildings as I am doing now, but recorded them out of the corner of my eye. Peripheral vision is the place where life lurks. In Madill's drawings, as in *Reservoir Dogs*, the space or setting alludes to life, while everything else alludes to a more fantastical world – in Tarantino's case, a more bloodthirsty one – where future and past collide in pastiche. *Reservoir Dogs* is fast, but also slow – not just because it references the past, but because it includes real-time and real-life moments.

There are two distinct kinds of sets that are used throughout *Reservoir Dogs*. First, the stage set is used to depict

a warehouse or an office. The second reflects the 'real world' – on their travels, the characters encounter sparsely populated suburbia, a classic diner, or glaring sunlight. Cutting back and forward between the two kinds of 'set' doesn't make for an easy transition from interior spaces to the real world, but rather emphasises the theatricality of the film, constantly referring to itself and other movies without ever breaking the fourth wall. We understand Tarantino's pastiche as being allegorical, yet containing some degree of truth: "A man's got to do what a man's got to do." The future as Madill depicts it is not addicted to speed, as FT Marinetti predicted in the Futurist manifesto of 1909, but to slowness – perhaps despite the speed of contemporary culture, perhaps as a consequence of it.³

KIMBERLEY McALEVEY

The drawings of Kimberley McAlevey present the viewer with another set of problems altogether and a further take on the idea of slowness. The general principle of her work is to present one's life alongside the impossibility of presenting one's life at all.

Her work takes its starting point from the definition of the word LIFE in the Collins English Dictionary. McAlevey's work expands out in all directions from this point. First, in a series of txt messages for her undergraduate degree; then in more convoluted strategies to extend and delay the reception of the work. The drawings are encrypted, inasmuch as they are printed neatly, as a child might write in a diary, but the printing is so small that it would only be legible using a magnifying glass of immense power, and the printing overlaps so that each mark is obscured by the next.

The first of these drawings was presented to the Theory and History of Art Department at the Dunedin School of Art as an essay, one that related McAlevey's work to her life. However, it was rejected as an essay and was deemed to be a drawing. While representing the world as a drawing McAlevey failed to contextualise the work, because apparently you can't do both these things at once. Consequently, McAlevey failed this part of the programme.

As in all of McAlevey's work, there is a massive backstory that happens to be her life. Her attempts to do justice to her subject, or to portray her life accurately or adequately, falls short at each turn, and with every attempt. Her art happens in the gap between the drawing (the representation) and the objects accumulated throughout one's life (the real world). There are failures at every level – whether seen poetically, descriptively, observationally, theoretically, historically, or philosophically – but nonetheless the attempt is doggedly and belligerently pursued, using a very particular set of aesthetic criteria.

Her drawings are always framed behind glass in a one-inch white frame. The quality of the paper varies because the drawings always end up being on the flipside of some 'important' document from McAlevey's life, and further embed the meaning of the work in the paper. Her drawings – along with all kinds of objects and documents from McAlevey's life, from a bus ticket to a teddy bear – are given away. But unlike the objects and documents, the drawings find their way as gifts to those people who have gone out of their way to support the artist. On the face of it, this is a nice gesture, but one can't help feeling an undercurrent of guilt associated with reciprocity.

Drawing on Cheap Paper, for example, was given to one of her supervisors for her Master's degree (the other supervisor got page 653 from the Collins English Dictionary). *Drawing on Cheap Paper* was drawn on the reverse of her undergraduate degree certificate. This work, which found its way into my personal collection, came to me via the local police station. It had been left in a Dunedin phone box, wrapped in brown paper, date-stamped, and bearing my telephone number and the name Olga Fiedo, an anagram of "a good life." This is the name that McAlevey uses to give her Life away. Represented by various documents and objects, it is given to people selected from the telephone directory.

None of this is evident on the surface of the works, since these 'stories' – for want of a better word – only describe fragments of her life and so are really only relevant to her. Where the work starts to gel is in the communication of the back story, the piecing together of a puzzle, one that the viewer could never fully understand or even

comprehend. Who would care to hear about the mundane, humdrum content of any of our lives? However, these narratives of McAlevey's life seem to function like Chinese whispers – they are enlarged or diminished depending on who is doing the storytelling and how much of the puzzle you already have.

What we are left with is a sense, not only of the impossible task of representing anything at all accurately or adequately, but a feeling that just maybe, out of the corner of my eye, I can see some indication that life will find a way.

Michele Beevors is the studio coordinator for Sculpture at the Dunedin School of Art and lectures in the undergraduate programme, specialising in the history of modernist sculpture. She also supervises postgraduate students in the theory and practice of art. Michele holds Masters degrees from the Canberra School of Art (Australian National University) and Columbia University (New York). Her research is driven by a concern for material culture, value and the commodity and by George Bataille's idea of the formless.

- 1 Nanette Burstein, dir., *The Kid Stays in the Picture* (USA Films, 2002).
- 2 Quentin Tarantino, dir., *Reservoir Dogs* (Miramax Films, 1992).
- 3 The Slow Movement advocates a cultural shift toward slowing down life's pace. It began with Carlo Petrini's protest against the opening of a McDonald's restaurant in Piazza di Spagna, Rome, in 1986 that sparked the creation of the Slow Food organisation and other slow movements across the globe, including Slow Art developed by Michael Kimmelman.

PRAXIS, MEMORY, THINGS AND THE NEARBY: PAINTING REPRESENTATION

Michael Greaves

Painting is like thinking: it ends only in an arbitrary, artificial sense, in the way that a thought reaches its fulfilment only to lead to another thought in formation. A completed verbal statement entails a subsequent one.

Richard Shiff¹

The distinction between objects and things, and between words and objects, is inherent to painting discourse, as is the method by which those objects and things are realised in the medium of paint. When a viewer of a painting is presented with something that is unknown, they quickly generate a plausible association or memory to accommodate the strangeness of the experience. In this process, the viewer draws the unknown into themselves, into their history of experiences, in order to legitimate it. In doing so, they re-order the hierarchy of sight to include resemblances or associations, that in some sense exist nearby to what it is that they are viewing. This 'nearby thing' might or might not be there at the same time. It might be a memory, a colour, an impression, but it is certain that in this process the viewer becomes an active agent in the imaginative process that is painting.

I have always found the kind of painting that presents a projected, realisable space full of the world to be wanting, slightly askew of what it is trying to present – and for the longest time I would find myself feeling quite let down, trying to understand the importance of such a picture. For me, this 'window to the world' idea of painting, a mode so similar to the ubiquitous photograph, does not accurately present the position that painting occupies, although it was the pathway and the projected road to a successful painting promoted during my early years, emphasising correctness to the representation of sight. Painting for me was always a kind of conversation between what is there and what is intended to be there.

Thomas Scheibitz (b. 1968) presents associations and resemblances, or the double, the second nature of things, in his paintings and sculpture. Scheibitz often uses both found materials and images not as a direct copy or facsimile, but as an informant or as a bridge to something else. He collates and investigates these elements, bringing them together or laying them side by side or on top of one another to inform the process of his painting. This approach represents a consideration of the relationships between objects and things and their transposition into paint or material; it unfolds the connections between word and thing and object and thing. Scheibitz defines his collected information and motivations as being "necessary to working;" he asserts that he can never use one thing one hundred percent, that he needs, "three, four, five things, images that are nearby (close to each other in more than physical ways), and then I have to translate the number five and six ... to be nearby an invention."² Scheibitz puts this another way in explaining that his "point of departure has always been that he can only make a painting by placing it in an artificial world."³

The term "artificial world," a second or parallel world to what we experience as "nature," is crucial to understanding painting. Artificial worlds seem somehow contained within the frame that is painting. The frame is an important element in painting, whether it is obviously employed or is just the edge of the support, as it marks the disjuncture

between the painting and the world outside of it. What this kind of process foregrounds is an exuberantly faked semiosis in which individual signs, rather than taking their place within an intelligible sign-system, seem 'orphaned' and unstable. Beate Söntgen⁴ describes this as a kind of opacity that negates the object of painting to become like a window on the world; it "denies its own mediatory achievement and makes itself transparent for the world which comes into view within its frame."⁵ It also identifies the material aspects of painting, so that these are not confused with a projected space. It also draws attention to the idea that in painting many memories and experiences are in play, in bricologic play, unravelling, asserting, forming, relating and describing things which are at once familiar and unreadable.

In Scheibitz's work *90 Elements* (2007),⁶ he proposes a question relating to the relationship between the thing and the object and the frame of the painting. The work presents a collection of disordered, box-like shapes placed one atop another. They number much less than the 90 alluded to in the title. The box-like shapes are rendered in a shallow pictorial space and, although there is an attempt at a perspectival registration, the objects seem to evade a literal reading.

This dysfunction, and a concomitant visual breakdown, are often used in Scheibitz's studio outputs. He wilfully orders objects in a way which is anti-hierarchal and discordant to draw attention to the fragmented elements of a work and its relations to how it is experienced. *90 Elements* references a collection of associated (but disassociated) elemental materials that make up the stuff that we have in the world, the building blocks of our physical reality. Essentially there are 118 such elements, the known periodic table. Such compartmentalisation, and the component nature of the construction of a painting and of the world, is key to my own research. The creating of a process of nearness is key to this uncertainty. Scheibitz collects and presents relatable elements of discrete objects in an exploded way, in which each object attends to its usual presentation, in part, but proposes a kind of close resemblance that also evades recognition.

In his work *Essay* (2008),⁷ the title also alludes to a format for finding a solution to a problem that is not particularised. Is this an essay on the ways in which planes coalesce to form an object that has the use of containing something, or is this a way of dictating separate elements in order to find a symbiosis of understanding in their connections to form a paragraph of sorts, a moment in how we order the world around us to make sense of it?

The painting of Mark Grotjahn (b. 1968) also oscillates between sculpture and paint, and he is another artist who regularly mines the tropes of visual representation to deploy shifts and rearticulations in how things are presented, drawing attention to the significances of relationship, context and value in pictorial means. Grotjahn identifies his position in the history of painting not as a way of referring to his authority or relevance, but to draw attention to a state of continuous movement, the things that have come before and process the present.⁸ In defining his historical position, he draws on the interplay and dialogue between the subject and the object, the viewer and the domain of pictorial representation. Grotjahn's output since the late 1990s and early 2000s forks into two distinct bodies of work. One group is the 'butterfly' paintings, that open up ideas around pictorial language and bi-optic perspective-like shifts. The second group is the 'face' paintings which propose relationships with the 'primitive' and the gestural.



Figure 1. Michael Greaves, 2017, *Target Space*, oil on linen, 37 x 31 cm.

In Grotjahn's butterfly paintings,⁹ a series of works that oscillate around a central theme of fan-like forms extending from a central reflective axis which is not symmetrical, the pictorial space that operates, along with the signal to the image in the title, suggests that one is observing something that has an object status in the world. The object is similar to a butterfly, wings outstretched and seen from above. After this initial realisation has passed, it becomes clear that there is an aberration in the way the wing shapes fit together in the context of pictorial space, and that there is a divergence in the single vanishing point which is multiplied into a second, one for each wing. The painting becomes both an investigation of the formal methodology of painting and an investigation of the bi-optic nature of vision. Via the symmetrical and decorative object that we know and have named 'butterfly,' Grotjahn calls into question a simple apprehension of this object via the unstable act of vision. The figurative dimension of the painting and its application act as a foil to the more pressing notion of both the recognisability and rightness of the pictorial presentation. We are forced to use memory to enact the presentation before us, and this leads to unexpected folds in the pictorial space.

Grotjahn often uses this strategy in his paintings, one of possessing a relation to something else in order to lay bare the object of looking. In his 'face' paintings, another series that repeats a certain motif, a representation of a face and facial features associated with non-Western representations of face,¹⁰ attention is drawn to the materiality of the construction. Referring to the layers of code in which the human is represented to the world outside, Grotjahn builds a cardboard relief structure, which is then completed with paint. This process embodies and presents the gesture and its representation in simultaneous contrast. Almond shapes reference the eye and the mouth, features which are relatable but in their superficial make-up become part mark and part object at the same time. This duality of the represented and the position of what it is both identifies a separation and calls for a unitary reading. In his book about TS Eliot, *Words Alone*, Denis Donoghue addresses the ambiguity of the "voice" or "point of view" of Eliot's early poems – the question of "who is speaking this poem?" – by referring to surrealist and symbolist painting, and what Marshall McLuhan called the "juxtaposition without copula:" the establishing on a single canvas of "two or more points of force."¹¹

A canvas is to be interpreted as "a field of force without official syntax, a closed system, a closed system resistant to translation."¹² The question of who is speaking within a painting, and then of who is being spoken to and in what language, has always interested me in terms of my approach to the pictorial subject of painting. The painting as the pictorial image references a number of things outside of the actuality of painting. This 'outside' has shifted and changed states, continents and languages over the years, decades and centuries after the Quattrocento.

In my most recent body of work, "Excessive Memory," I have investigated the relationships between the momentary, un-connected glimpse of objects, the things nearby,¹³ the component things that coalesce to form an object, be they ideas about perspective, colour, or impasses between structure and form. These are the voices inherent in painting, the voices which Schebitz and Grotjahn use, among others, to make sense of the ways in which they negotiate the visual world. I collapse these fragments, the nearby associations, onto the same surface with their more realised forms, the objects that form in this world. This



Figure 2. Michael Greaves, *Untitled*, 2017, oil on linen, 182 x 137 cm.

collapse presents both the referent and the nearby in a conversation, one which unsettles the predicted order of recognition and identifies the kind of bricolage play that is always in operation to make sense of the world.

In her novel *The Biographer's Tale*, AS Byatt negotiates this same impasse of the object and the thing, or the nearby. "Fed up with Lacan as with deconstructions of the Wolf-Man, a doctoral student looks up at a filthy window and epiphanically thinks, I must have things. He relinquishes theory to relish the world at hand: A real, very dirty window, shutting out the sun, a thing."¹⁴ Byatt suggests a simple idea, an opening to understand the oddness of the idea of the painting.

In his book *Things*, Bill Brown uses the same differential window metaphor to probe the state change status of this window, from object to thing, and proposes a position for thinking on painting. We normally do not identify the windowpane as a 'thing' in its own right; it is there to shield us from the wind and the rain, while allowing light through and, for all intents and purposes, it must have a large degree of transparency – although tinted windows are now more common than not for other reasons. The window fulfils its function by being largely unknown to the viewer; it is transparent, we only notice it as a 'thing,' in Brown's articulation, when it becomes dirty, or its function is disturbed. Dirt draws our attention to the concrete nature of the material and the space that it occupies in the natural world. In the window, both object and thing occupy the very same space, and identifying the glass in this way defines it as an object. But what use does it have, now that it cannot perform its intended function? The thing shadows the object.¹⁵ Both are made of the same material, yet only one operates according to our codes of representation. The same happens in painting when the painter presents a description of an object but in an unexpected format.



Figure 3. Michael Greaves, *Excessive Memory*, 2016, oil on linen, 93 x 80 cm.

We often overlook the 'thing' of painting, paint, when we are considering the image that the paint brings to our vision. When the painted image is disturbed, and we are forced to encounter the thing – paint, also – the way in which we comprehend the relations between the difference draws a fresh bow on the idea of painting. Cornelius Castoriadis explains that there is a need to abandon our image of representation as a "projection screen which, unfortunately, separates us the 'subject' and the 'thing,'"¹⁶ as this kind of representation implies a static observance of the world. During the late modernist period of the 1950s and the 1960s in America, the voice and the language of the painter lay in the residue of their action on the field of painting, the mark that left a trace. This trace was not, as Mark Prince relates, a direct "contingent, indexical link back to the catalyst of the hand,"¹⁷ but a dismissal of the usual narrative voice of painting in a pictorial form.

A CARAFE, THAT IS A BLIND GLASS

*A kind in glass and a cousin, a spectacle and nothing strange a single hurt color and an arrangement in a system to pointing. All this and not ordinary, not unordered in not resembling. The difference is spreading.*¹⁸

In Gertrude Stein's *Tender Buttons* we find many examples where a word puzzle brings the signifier and the signified into an uncommon union. The connective tissue is the experience of the subject. In the instance of painting, this relationship draws significant attention to the temporality of memory in the process of making. Michael Riffaterre describes this in terms of a "word kernel,"¹⁹ where a word is dry out of context, without referent – where the paint is not in the form of the object that it is trying to identify, but, as a part of the language of the medium, is nonetheless approached in this way. When the object's thingness is identified in itself, it moves into play and into the world as something else. In painting, when the modulation of colour reveals a form which becomes recognisable in itself, the mark comes into play on the same ontological level as the object.

In *Tender Buttons*, Stein is identifying the tenuous relationships between the object and the subject, the thing in the world and the ways in which we as the subject enact them. She is attempting to use the normal words used to describe something, but putting them in a different order to the one in which one might usually describe something to someone. She is problematising the order of the world via the importance of the parts. Rather than a comprehensible, complete presentation in the manner considered 'right,' Stein is taking the window, dirtying it and then trying to describe it as a piece of glass. She explains her intent in creating confusion, and her subsequent realisation of her failure to present her utterance as complete: "I made innumerable efforts to make words write without sense and found it impossible. Any human being putting down words had to make sense out of them."²⁰

She is, in effect, collapsing the way in which the words operate in their singularity and then how they combine together in various ways to suggest complex ideas and a narrative of the thing at hand in relation to other things. She is drawing the reader into applying a filter on the presentation of information. She is asking the reader to re-organise their interactions with the words, out of the frame. Just as the painter deals with the form, or the material, both form a complex union to create the artificial world of painting, open to association and narrative.

What Stein has encountered and described are the ways in which the human subject tries to make sense of the world – the world of fractural descriptions – forming it into a cohesive whole, which can then be responded to in some kind of rational way. This has an analogy in the practice of painting, as the individual marks begin to inform an idea and realise it as image. The individual marks or passages are in this instance similar to Stein's structureless sentence, rising and falling according to the conventional word order; until the reader applies a predetermined filter to produce a realisation of the code. Scheibitz, Grotjahn and others play out Stein's locus in painting. Their strategies set out to destabilise the viewer's expectation of a system of order. While the elements are coherent in themselves, once arranged they are both unfamiliar and familiar at the same time. When the presentation of something that is familiar is not recounted in expected ways, a schism occurs, a rupture which for a brief moment leaves one in a state of wanting.



Figure 4. Michael Greaves, *Measure*, 2017, acrylic and oil on linen, 71 x 61 cm.

Michael Greaves is a lecturer in painting at the Dunedin School of Art. His partially abstract paintings locate a frame of vision that multiplies, to be read as something that is attempting to locate a fluctuating position of assemblage as opposed to static vision. At play in his practice are the relationships that link the object, the translations of the object and thing, and the possible ways of representing these. Michael has completed a Master of Fine Arts degree (with Distinction), due to be awarded in December 2017.

- 1 Richard Shiff, *Markus Lüpertz: Highways and Byways: A Retrospective. Painting and Sculptures from 1963 until 2009*, exhibition catalogue (Köln: Snoeck, 2009), 214.
- 2 *Salon | Thomas Scheibitz and Martin Eder: Figuration and Abstraction, 2012*, <https://youtu.be/qp2fVeFF8cE> (accessed 15 Sept. 2015).
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Beate Söntgen, "Layering: On the Paintings of Thomas Scheibitz," in *Thomas Scheibitz: ONE – Time Pad*, exhibition catalogue (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2013), 249-52.
- 5 Ibid., 251.
- 6 See <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/scheibitz-90-elements-t12848>.
- 7 See http://www.thomasscheibitz.de/index.php?cat_id=3.
- 8 Caroline Käding, "The Trapeze Artist," in *Mark Grotjahn: Circus Circus*, exhibition catalogue (Berlin: Distanz Verlag, 2014), 17.
- 9 See <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/mark-grotjahn-untitled-brown-red-purple-blue-butterfly-45-dot-64>; see also <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/mark-grotjahn-untitled-crimson-red-and-canary-yellow-butterfly-798>.
- 10 See http://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/mark_grotjahn_face.htm; see also <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/mark-grotjahn-untitled-yellow-face-774>.
- 11 Mark Prince, "The Divided Self: Mark Grotjahn's 'Circus' Series," in *Mark Grotjahn: Circus Circus*, (Berlin: Distanz Verlag, 2014), 24.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 The term 'nearby' is used in this context to position an idea of a thing existing in relation to, but not quite a part of, something else, usually referring to a context of that thing/object. Scheibitz uses the term in explanation of the relations between the object and the image of the object in a photographic or similar format. His usage conjures up connotative relations between things and objects, which happen instantaneously and often shape the way that we read/see the world around us as a multitude of instances.
- 14 AS Byatt *The Biographer's Tale* (New York: Vintage 2001), 2.
- 15 Peter Schwenger, *The Tears of Things: Melancholy and Physical Objects* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 23.
- 16 Cornelius Castoriadis, cited in Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," in *Things*, ed. Bill Brown (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 6.
- 17 Prince, "The Divided Self," 24.
- 18 Gertrude Stein, *Tender Buttons: Objects, Food, Rooms* (Mineola, New York: Dover 1997), 3.
- 19 Michael Riffaterre, cited in Brown (ed.), *Things*, 3.
- 20 Gertrude Stein, "Transatlantic Interview, 1946, with Robert Bartlett Haas," in *A Primer for the Gradual Understanding of Gertrude Stein*, ed. Robert Bartlett Haas (Los Angeles: Black Sparrow, 1971), 11-35.

MATAAHO: TABLEAUX WINDOWS ON APPROPRIATION

Anita DeSoto



Figure 1. Theodore Géricault, *The Raft of the Medusa*, 1818-1819, oil on canvas, 4910 x 7160 mm.

This essay is a window on a project about windows looking into the past, the present and towards the future. The rafts we will see through these windows are metaphors for a current world adrift, and a vision for a new horizon, encouraging different perspectives. John Berger said: "Ours is the century of enforced travel ... of disappearances. The century of people helplessly seeing others, who were close to them, disappear over the horizon."¹ And again: "Globalization means many things. At one level, it talks of trade, which since the 16th century has exchanged goods and now, increasingly, ideas and information across the globe. But globalization is also a view of the world – it is an opinion about man and why men are in the world."²

'Tableau' is a French word meaning 'living picture.' It has been an historic framework in art-making for centuries, and a way of creating a narrative as if looking through a window on a moment in time. The tableau is the basis for my own art and directly informs my teaching practice. This method is currently taught as part of a collaborative team project to students at the Dunedin School of Art at Otago Polytechnic with the intention of inspiring dialogue and inquiry into Māori perspectives on art and social conscience.



Figure 2. Greg Semu, *The Raft of the Tagata Pasifika*, 2014-2016, digital C-Type print, edition of 5, 120 x 194 cm, image courtesy of Greg Semu and Alcaston Gallery, Melbourne.

In 2011, I first developed and delivered the Tableau Project, with a brief focusing on students developing a conceptual framework and visual skills in the discipline of observational and conceptual drawing. The brief was designed to give students a creative approach to looking at art history, the figure in context and the development of the concept of subversion (the attempt to transform the established social order and its structures of power, authority and hierarchy, values and morals). Also to be considered was the notion of the 'simulacrum' (a distorted copy of reality that becomes the truth in its own right) in contemporary art practice.

Students were given the time and space to gain the skills required to sustain an independent research program that actively informed their developing notion of a practice, including knowledge of contexts relevant to their personal studio practice. It was anticipated that students would engage at a more advanced level in critical dialogue and debate, as well as gain the skills and knowledge required to identify and, where appropriate, articulate connections between their own work and issues raised within the course in a generative and reflexive manner.

The assignment asked students to develop a "tableau" which, for all intents and purposes, meant that they could explore any idea they wished to pursue within the discipline of the historical framework they had chosen. For many students, this brief was timely, allowing them to pursue a personal topic or stylistic approach, whereas other students struggled with such broad parameters. Their initial hesitation was overcome by the usual methods of idea development through brainstorming, thumbnail sketches, preparatory drawings and researching other artists. This encouraged students to explore various approaches including landscape, portraiture, abstraction and the physical experience of theatre with models, costume and props.

The enquiry style of learning employed in this project was successful in helping students to feel inspired and appreciate the history of art and the foundational frameworks used by centuries of artists. It was also practical in advancing their drawing skills, at the same time as extending their ability to communicate ideas through their work in a way that was not literal, but intriguing. This project was so well received by the students that four years ago, my colleagues expanded its research and conceptual elements and it is now taught in a collaborative teaching team.

Among other things, this module has benefited the students in their understanding of a Māori perspective on art, and the relevance of Te Tiriti O Waitangi to any work they make. The Otago Polytechnic Māori Strategic Framework is applied in the classroom with the intention of acknowledging Māori values of wholeness, whanau, relationship, mana, sustainability and unity to build a creative community. According to educationalist Angus Macfarlane, "mapping the cultural terrain of education into the inaugural decade of this new millennium should explore a knowledge framework which continues to foster indigenous worldviews."³ The values and concepts, abilities and skills of Māori people, accumulated through many years of experience, learning and development, not only support Māori students and other ethnic groups but the entire class. The need to teach empathetically and compassionately to a diverse range of students, who are increasingly living on the social margins, is greater than ever. Not only are students located on the margins ethnically, but in terms of their sexual preferences, gender identity, mental health and learning difficulties.

Macfarlane's edu-cultural wheel model describes five cultural concepts and strategies that can be utilised to affirm Māori values relevant to teaching in practical ways:

1. Whanaungatanga: Building relationships, using cooperative learning, creating community, knowing your students' background, peer review, hospitality, teamwork and communication, sharing our personal art practice.
2. Manaakitanga: Practicing the ethics of caring, creating safe-haven classrooms, empathy and encouragement.
3. Rangatiratanga: Teacher effectiveness, assertiveness, 'with-it-ness', mana, presence, passion and enthusiasm, eye contact and open body language, using student-friendly vernacular, discipline, and acknowledging achievement.
4. Kotahitanga: Ethics of bonding, offering whole-class incentives, whole-class or team agreements, perseverance, ritual.
5. Pūmanawatanga: Morale, tone and a vital pulse rippling out over all of the above.

It is always an ongoing challenge to foster these values. It is also part of my personal philosophy to think of the learner as my teacher.

As the students look at early colonial art and how Māori are often portrayed as 'noble savages' and a dying race, they learn how the history of art can, and has, objectified people. This has become a key level of inquiry in the project, and often Māori students take the opportunity to voice their opinions in the discussions. Some go on to make work that is about being Māori. The project broadens students' knowledge of cutting-edge artists in performance and installation and other conceptual art, as a result of the research they do on artists using the tableau as a framework.

Students research historical works such as *The Raft of the Medusa*, painted in 1818-19 by Théodore Géricault, based on the true story of a French shipwreck where the captain and crew were saved by lifeboats, while 147 passengers were cast adrift in a raft they made themselves. There were only 15 survivors to tell this story. Géricault's subject was highly politically sensitive, as it challenged the corrupt monarchy of the time who had employed the unqualified captain of the *Medusa*. By comparison, students research works such as *The Arrival of the Maoris in New Zealand* by colonial artists C F Goldie and L J Steele circa 1889. In this work, Goldie and Steele directly appropriated the image of Géricault's raft. The painting was highly acclaimed at the time, but with no understanding of the excellent skills deployed by Māori navigating across the Pacific Ocean. It is one of many colonial paintings that misrepresent Māori. Now an icon of the Auckland Art Gallery, the work has polarised



Figure 3. C F Goldie and L J Steele, *The Arrival of the Maori in New Zealand*, 1898, oil on canvas, 1758 x 2825 mm.

public opinion; Māori people have censured its historically inaccurate depiction of Māori seafarers as emaciated victims desperately clinging to survival, rather than as skillful navigators on deliberate voyages of exploration.

Having researched this work, students are then asked to make their own contemporary response and are shown the work of contemporary artists in Aotearoa/New Zealand appropriating colonial work with the intention of challenging colonial perspectives.

Two artists in particular stand out in their attempts to transform the established social order and its structures of power; authority, hierarchy, values and morals.

Lisa Reihana is a Māori artist exhibiting in this year's Venice Biennale. According to Rhana Devenport of the Auckland Art Gallery, Reihana's 2015 work in *Pursuit of Venus [infected]*

registers the world premiere of one of the most ambitious screen-based projects from Aotearoa New Zealand, from one of the country's most admired artists. In 1804, Joseph Dufour created *Les Sauvages de la Mer Pacifique*, a sophisticated 20-panel scenic wallpaper whose exotic subject matter referenced popular illustrations of the times and mirrored a widespread fascination with Captain Cook and de la Perouse Pacific voyages. Two hundred years later Lisa Reihana reanimates this popular wallpaper as a panoramic video spanning a width of 26 metres.

While Dufour's work models Enlightenment beliefs of harmony amidst mankind, Reihana's version includes encounters between Polynesians and Europeans which acknowledge the nuances and complexities of cultural identities and colonization. Stereotypes about other cultures and representation that developed during those times and since are challenged, and the gaze of imperialism is returned with a speculative twist that disrupts notions of beauty, authenticity, history and myth.⁴

Like Reihana, Greg Semu uses the tableau on a panoramic scale. Both play with the relationship between photography and painting; if Reihana's work looks like film turned into painting, Semu's looks like painting turned into film.

Judith Ryan of the National Gallery of Victoria describes Semu thus:

Interdisciplinary artist Greg Semu was born and raised in Auckland, Aotearoa / New Zealand and is of Samoan heritage. Themes of people's movement between territories and cultural authority inform his practice, and the impact of colonial occupation and introduction of Christianity on indigenous cultures across the Pacific is a major subject of his work. By referencing and re-imagining epic European history paintings, Semu parodies their portrayal of First Nations people, which he interprets 'as crude concoctions of myth and romanticism'. His work challenges accepted history by substituting European narratives of settlement with those that survive in Pacific oral histories.

Semu's *The Raft of the Tagata Pasifika (People of the Pacific)*, 2014–16, focuses on the two celebrated nineteenth-



Figure 4. Lisa Reihana, *In Pursuit of Venus [infected]* (still), 2015.

century European history paintings: Louis John Steele and Charles F. Goldie's *The Arrival of the Māoris in New Zealand*, and Théodore Géricault's *The Raft of the Medusa*, both of which dramatize survival at sea. While growing up in Auckland, Semu was captivated by the beauty, pain and suffering of *The Arrival of the Māoris in New Zealand*.

The illumination of the light boxes in Semu's *The Raft of the Tagata Pasifika (People of the Pacific)* finds its roots in the classical European chiaroscuro painting technique used to create dramatic visual effects of light and shadow and to delineate forms emerging out of atmospheric darkness. A consideration of great European Old Master paintings in the Louvre gave Semu the idea to digitally recreate their radical perspective and heroic compositions so the viewer could become involved in the narrative – extending the action beyond the surface of the painting and into the viewer's space.⁵

Both artists have created interpolated narratives that turn the imperial gaze back onto itself and, using new digital technology, explore the two-centuries-old renderings of European colonialism and its ongoing stereotypes. Their work disrupts notions of beauty, authenticity and history and uncovers myth-making.

My own art practice focuses on the tableau aimed at the invocation of memory and pathos around the intergenerational history of women once marginalised but now re-valued. Connecting earlier paintings with contemporary works utilising the tableau unlocks the critical potential of this narrative device that enables “gestures that matter” in the socio-political context of contemporary art practice.

Since ancient times, artists have asked themselves how they might influence the politics of the world through peaceful protest in their work. This is the baton offered to the students, to carry the hope of changed perspectives. As teachers of this project and teachers anywhere, we have the opportunity to show compassion in our daily work with students and how that manifests one on one. Respecting difference and asking questions of one another go a long way in the classroom and outside on the world political stage. With this in mind, we can take hope that it was a minority group that abolished slavery, and that the suffragettes were a minority group who won the right to vote for women. A minority group changed US civil rights. With aroha, the tide can turn.



Figure 5. Anita DeSoto, *Untitled (Girl Juggling)*, 2016, oil on aluminum 1000 x 800 mm.

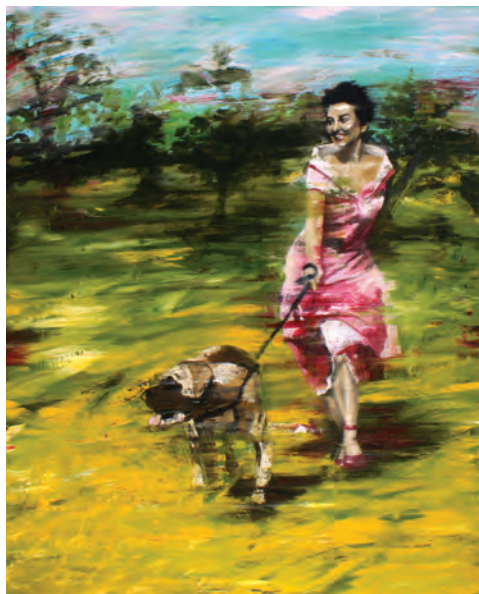


Figure 6. Anita DeSoto, *Untitled (Woman Running with Dog)*, 2017, oil on aluminum, 1000 x 800 mm.

New Zealand artist **Anita DeSoto** lives in Waitati, Dunedin, and has been exhibiting nationally and internationally for the last 13 years. She has a Master of Fine Arts and has been lecturing in drawing and painting at the Dunedin School of Art, Otago Polytechnic, since 2004. Her recent work focuses on the tableau as a narrative device deployed in figurative painting to portray historical events and the re-interpretation of such events, thus opening windows on appropriation as well as on nostalgia, memory and pathos.

- 1 John Berger; "Ev'ry Time we Say Goodbye," in *Selected Essays of John Berger* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014).
- 2 John Berger; "A Tragedy the Size of the Planet," *The Guardian*, 28 May 2001, <https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2001/may/28/artsfeatures.globalisation>.
- 3 Angus H Macfarlane, "Strategies for Teachers," in *Kia hiwa ra! Listen to Culture* (Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, 2004), 63.
- 4 <https://www.aucklandartgallery.com/whats-on/exhibition/in-pursuit-of-venus-infected>.
- 5 <http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/greg-semu-the-raft-of-the-tagata-pasifika-people-of-the-pacific-2014-16/>.

PROCESS, FREUD AND I

Steev Peyroux



Figure 1. Steev Peyroux, *Haze*, 2016, oil on canvas, 1370 x 760mm.

I sit in my studio with a coffee, take a deep breath and exhale slowly. I surrender to a sense of timelessness and consider the problems of the canvas before me. Taking up a brush, I smear, smudge and blur thick paint in subtle tonal shifts, building on chance effects that present themselves. I'm attempting to represent a particular atmospheric moment, a felt experience, which explores the indescribable relationship between visual perceptions and feelings.

An artist's process is a highly individual thing. In his 2010 book *Man with a Blue Scarf*, Martin Gayford examines the process of veteran artist Lucian Freud in great depth. As I read the book, then go to my studio and paint, I discover that I identify strongly with the figurative and material approaches of Freud's working methods. In order to articulate the ways in which this book helps me with my work, I have juxtaposed my own writing with quotes from the book, reflecting on the deep insights of an artist long considered by Gayford to be "the real thing: a truly great painter living among us."¹ Starting in November 2003, Gayford, a respected critic, writer, curator and long-time friend of Freud's, modelled for Freud, aged 81, for seven months, experiencing extended time in his studio as he worked:

"I always thought," says LF, "that an artist's was the hardest life of all." Its rigour – not always apparent to an outside observer – is that an artist has to navigate forward into the unknown guided only by an internal sense of direction, keep up a set of standards which are imposed entirely from within, meanwhile maintaining faith that the task he or she has set him or herself is worth struggling constantly to achieve. ...²

Back in my own studio, the bodies of water and vapour that I'm painting exert a primordial pull on the way I feel. I'm

interested in how these feelings change according to what I am looking at. I observe the same section of sea from the window of my home every day. It is in constant flux, changing utterly according to the sometimes epic play of light. These changes evoke subtle or strong responses in me, alter my mental state and, when I'm out at sea surfing, even shift my chemical balance. In fact, surfing is integral to the way I experience the subject I represent in my work. Surfing also acts as a mental cleansing, helping to maintain the quality of my consciousness in much the same way that meditation or yoga does, thus having a moderating effect in the studio on the mood swings that seem to be an unavoidable element in my process.

In Freud's studio, during a pause in work, Gayford asks Freud what the difficulties are, from his point of view, of painting a picture:

His answer is unexpected. "One thing I have never got used to, is not feeling the same from one day to the next, although I try to control it as much as possible by working absolutely all the time. I just feel so different every day that it is a wonder that any of my pictures ever work out at all."³

When I take in the scale of the ocean I often contemplate how amazing it is to be human; to feel my body and hear the sounds around me and to be conscious of the mystery of my own temporary existence, of all that can't be known. As a person who is immersed in the sea on a daily basis, I explore my own experience, how I interpret what my senses tell me. I observe particular optical phenomena closely, filtering my perceptions through my hand into painted marks on the canvas. I am able to see because my eyes have focusing lenses with transparent corneas, irises that regulate light and, at the back of my eyes, retinas to convert light to neural signals that can be processed in the brain. I feel attuned to light the way that sailors are to weather, or carvers to wood. Light is what I'm working with. In my part of the world, coastal Otago, the light is changeable, sunny for ten minutes then quickly changing, constantly fluctuating – rising, setting, obscured by overcast sky, often theatrical in scale and drama.

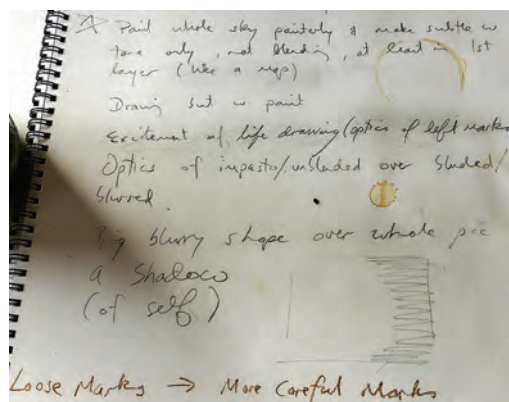
... the painter – or a painter such as LF who spends hours, months, even years observing his subject – quite naturally records vastly more information than a camera lens can see. It is thus a matter of accumulated experience: that is, memory. The reason why everybody sees differently is that each of us perceives a given sight from the vantage point of their own past thoughts and feelings.⁴

Like all humans, I live in two worlds – the physical world and the world of human thought. The world of human thought, both conscious and unconscious, is the lens through which I see and understand the physical world. My painting of the sea shows not the sea, but the sea being looked at by me. The sight of the sea – the image my brain reads from my retina – is registered almost immediately, whereas the representation of the sight of the sea – the act of painting it – takes hours or days and refers back to many previous experiences of looking. The finished work is the result of many glances which can be seen all at once.⁵

LF looks very closely at me, making a measuring gesture, then he turns to the canvas and puts in a mark – or, just as possibly, stops at the last moment, reconsiders and observes again. ... There is an interval, however short, between the observation and the act of painting. ... This process is repeated hundreds, indeed thousands, of times. Thus a painted image, certainly one by Freud, is different in nature from an instantaneous image such as a photograph. David Hockney puts it like this: the painting of him by Freud has over a hundred hours "layered into it," and with them innumerable visual sensations and thoughts.⁶

Because the faculty of sight is continuous, and colours and shapes remain relatively constant, it is easy to forget that the visual is always a result of a fleeting experience in time. A painting which represents that temporary experience presents a different view of time; it is a stationary moment in the relentless progression of life.⁷ By making an instant in time static, I get to closely examine the form of the sea's appearance, which in real life is fluid and quite formless. Cézanne once put it like this: "One minute in the life of the world is going by. Paint it as it is."⁸

At some point while I'm working, I realise that I'm failing to paint the moment as it is. So I rub back all the work I've just done. Anxiety threatens to overwhelm me. Yesterday I was feeling elated at the way certain passages of paint were going on, but today those passages don't look good anymore. The painting hasn't changed; it's obvious I'm



Figures 2 & 3. Page from workbook and work in progress.

feeling differently about it, but which feeling is right, yesterday's or today's? I wonder what Lucian Freud's grandfather, Sigmund Freud, that great explorer in the world of the unconscious, would have said about how dependent my mood is on how I perceive my painting to be going, swinging from elation to despair and back again, alone in my studio.

The way I see changes. Objectivity vanishes as I become more familiar with the work, and mental stamina is required to keep going after the first excitement, through periods of low productivity, where I forget the initial impulse which started me on a particular painting. I know that I will see my work with less self-criticism and more clarity a month or two after finishing it, when it is in the context of other work in an exhibition space, rather than looking at it in my studio after working solidly on it for months. Getting feedback from viewers who tell me they have an emotional response to the work also helps me to see with more perspective, but I'm never going to see my own picture with as much objectivity as I see another artist's work. It is part of the act of creation that my psyche becomes completely entwined with my creation, and a swathe of unconscious forces influences the way that I see.

In order to trick my brain into seeing my painting as an entity with its own inner laws, rather than fixating on those elements in the picture where I didn't quite achieve what I intended, and to short-circuit the investment my ego has in the work being 'good,' I look at my painting in the mirror; turn it upside down, or hang it inside the house for a while. The German artist, Gerhard Richter, trains his assistants not to make comments about his work which may influence the way he sees it, and hangs his paintings in his private gallery for three months before deciding if they are good enough to exhibit publicly.⁹

Freud talks about needing to find the courage to simply keep on trying. When Gayford asks him how, Freud replies

"Not painting in a stale or predictable way...if one didn't vary from day to day one could not be what one always wants to be – exceptionally daring."¹⁰

I'm still feeling despondent about my painting – but then I remember; being on the edge of control is often when I do my best work; when I am exploring a new technique or trying an idea out, not knowing whether it will work or not, and using particular methods to solve issues which get in the way of realising the idea. It feels like walking in the dark, often feeling clumsy, but then chancing upon something magic and new to me. This feeling of not knowing what I'm doing is counterbalanced against the things I do know. Super-controlled marks are contrasted against chance effects. An interplay is set up between my intuition and my logical mind, allowing space in between for my imagination.

The uncertainty of being on unfamiliar ground can create anxiety; however, it is this uncomfortable feeling that



Figure 4. Steev Peyroux, *Alchemy*, 2016, oil on canvas, 1200 x 1200mm.



Figure 5. Steev Peyroux, *Formation*, 2015, oil on canvas, 1200 x 1200mm.

opens the possibility of discovering something new. I don't always like feeling uncomfortable, but it seems to be a necessary part of my endeavours. My ideal state of mind when painting would be a Zen-like calm. I aim for that state and sometimes manage to achieve it for blissful periods. A Chinese mantra from the Dao Di Ching says, "By letting go it all gets done."¹¹ I start on the painting again, allowing things to emerge out of the faint tones on the canvas, looking for that first little sign of presence.

I tell LF that I met Damien Hirst the other day. ... Hirst is musing about paint just at the moment, and has told me his reflections on this perennial medium. "I decided that a layer of paint on the surface of a canvas is just the same as an object in the room. You know, the deliciousness of it, the thing that makes you love the painting, is a physical thing, the building up of layers. You want to eat it, as if it were ice cream or something."¹²

I decide to make my painting about the act of applying paint, to fashion it in ways that can only be accomplished with paint and loaded brush, to explore the material effects of particular processes, leaving evidence of the work's creation.

... the picture is – like any work of art, in words, paint, stone or any other medium – an entity that follows its own inner laws. ... "You are here," he says firmly, "to help it." The implication, surely correct, is that the portrait and its needs come first.

In 1954 LF wrote that "the picture in order to move us must never merely remind us of life, but must acquire a life of its own, precisely in order to reflect life."¹³

In my studio I have a startled moment where I realise that, in focusing on the material effects of the paint, what I've done feels right, and suddenly my painting feels effortless, easy. I have discovered that I can treat my subject as if it were abstract, thus setting up an interplay between the abstract elements and the representational content. From further away the work represents familiar images of sea and sky, whereas up close the marks lose their meaning and dissolve into the abstractness of colour and geometry and, like the sea, become formless; nature in its greatest state of potential. I examine the atmospheric moment with a musical attention to mood and movement, following my instincts to allow things to happen that I didn't consciously intend, or wouldn't normally leave, thus encouraging my unconscious to come through. I feel like I am painting space itself, painting almost nothing, so that the way I apply the paint becomes even more important.

Cautiously, at the end of the sitting, I edge towards the question of how LF feels the picture is going. ... LF explains that, for him, each painting is an exploration into unknown territory. ... "Personally, I can only regard any enquiry about how a picture is coming on as a particularly irritating sort of humorous remark."¹⁴

Throughout my life I have worked hard on my technical skills, particularly life drawing, printmaking and, more recently, on developing the ability to paint in many different ways. I feel more powerful when I have many methods at my disposal. Earlier in life, when I was a dancer, I liked having command of many different movement techniques: contemporary, classical, Indian and many other forms. I used to dare myself to risk losing balance on stage; this had the effect of freeing me up to try things out, sometimes spontaneously, and to take risks with my work. Freud too has a device in his working methods which he uses to challenge himself:

I ask about his habit of leaving the white patches of bare canvas, which could easily be filled in. "It makes it more difficult to get the tones, which somehow helps me. I like to think that everything in the picture is changeable, removable and provisional. Leaving the white patches helps me to feel that."¹⁵

The intensity of attention I pay to my subject is a result of my desire to make a picture that is in some way concerned with truth; that contains a certain quality of reality, whether the form it takes is semi-abstract or not. The painted marks I make are always functional, always recording information. I paint something loosely, then more carefully, striving to represent my subject with a forceful sense of believability, of 'truthiness,' thus placing the image into an equilibrial tension with the physical presence of the paint layers on the canvas's surface. I try to be aware of the individuality of everything; the most ubiquitous things, such as foam patterns on a sea's surface, have their own characteristics and do not need to be stylised, idealised or generalised. In this way I try never to invent anything – the subject, as it is, is the drama in my pictures.

Nearly half a century ago, in his 1954 Encounter article, LF wrote some words that suggest an exact likeness is not and cannot be the point of portraiture. "The artist who tries to serve nature is only an executive artist. And, since the model he so faithfully copies is not going to be hung up next to the picture, since the picture is going to be there on its own, it is of no interest whether it is an accurate copy of the model."¹⁶

I like to think of a gallery exhibition as a testing ground, not a final point. This focuses me on the act and the experience of painting, as opposed to a finished product. Occasionally a picture is finished abruptly, but more often I keep working the painting, pushing it further and further. Telling whether a painting is finished is a tricky business because there is no agreed standard of what counts as completed. The way I leave a painting is what the viewer sees, at once and always, and not the process that it went through. Gayford proposes that

finished means something like "complete as a work of art according to its own internal laws," and that is a difficult matter to judge. ... I ask if he is pleased or sorry when a picture is finished, since for him, too, it must constitute an era in his life. "I don't think I have either response. I'm more worried in case it isn't really finished."¹⁷

Alone, painting in my studio, there is just a faint shuffling in my ears, the rushing of my blood, as I work at peak intensity. What I'm doing on the canvas is the trace of my self; of how I experience the subject; of my visual sensations; of time. The picture feels like a reflection of my mind. It's a powerful drug, and suddenly I'm light-headed and deeply satisfied with my work. And then the process starts again.

The son of Canterbury artist Ann Wilson, **Steev Peyroux** was involved in art from an early age. After graduating from the Dunedin School of Art in 1987, he studied dance in Melbourne and toured worldwide with the Meryl Tankard Australian Dance Theatre. Peyroux then returned to Dunedin, and to visual art, taking up a technician position at the art school. He is drawn strongly to the powerful geography of Otago's coastline. He exhibits annually in Dunedin at The Artist's Room, and shows nationally and internationally in various art awards and exhibitions.

- 1 Martin Gayford, *Man with a Blue Scarf: On Sitting for a Portrait by Lucian Freud* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2010), 7.
- 2 Ibid., 130-131.
- 3 Ibid., 72.
- 4 Ibid., 116.
- 5 See John Berger, "Drawn to that Moment," in *John Berger: Selected Essays*, ed. Geoff Dyer (London: Bloomsbury, 2001), 419-23. Originally pub. in *New Society* magazine, 1976.
- 6 Gayford, *Man with a Blue Scarf*, 145.
- 7 Berger, "Drawn to that Moment."
- 8 Ibid., 41.
- 9 Joshua Namdev Hardisty, *How to Paint Like Gerhard Richter*, 2014, www.youtube.com/watch?v=3ZWis1o9yhc.
- 10 Gayford, *Man with a Blue Scarf*, 72-3.
- 11 Mantra from the Dao Di Ching, Donna D'Cruz, *New Year, New You – Letting Go*, guided meditation audio, 2014, https://soundcloud.com/rasa_music/letting-go-meditation-alpha.
- 12 Gayford, *Man with a Blue Scarf*, 95-6.
- 13 Ibid., 107-8.
- 14 Ibid., 64-5.
- 15 Ibid., 199.
- 16 Ibid., 48.
- 17 Ibid., 141-2.

EMERGENCE

David Green



Figure 1. David Green, *Emergence*, 2017, installation view. Photo by Mark Bolland.

Few words in the English language are as loaded as 'emergence.' It is an important signifier in the fields of psychology, philosophy, physics and even religious studies.

I first latched onto the word from its use in Gestalt theory: What initially appears as a field of random marks reassembles itself into figure and ground. The concept is often illustrated using a high-contrast image of a Dalmatian hound sniffing the ground near the base of a tree. Once the brain has vested those marks with meaning, the 'innocent' pattern cannot return for the viewer:

In my installation, images projected through a hanging glass at one end of the gallery extend this Gestalt principle into motion, as otherwise inchoate shapes seen on the screen and floor reconstitute themselves in the cortex of the viewer as bounding animals.

Although the images and visual treatments in this installation developed alongside my research interests in neuroscience and the phenomenology of perception, they entered my art practice intuitively through a kind of osmosis.

In my working process, I have found the need to segregate research and practice into weeks of focused attention. When I have experimented with fitting both pursuits into the same day, it would become impossible to stop myself from imposing a sort of reductive conceptual matrix onto my work in the studio; under these conditions the process of making feels vexed, the resulting work overcooked, formulaic and closed. By the time I came to the final exhibition of my Master of Fine Arts at the Dunedin School of Art, I had become used to dividing my calendar between reading and writing periods (primarily toward completing my dissertation) and periods of studio practice (toward three public exhibitions).

In my studio practice, I want to encourage a sort of unfolding that can occur through the process of “material dialogue” first described by Bruno Latour and Michel Callon in the early 1980s at École Nationale Supérieure des Mines de Paris.¹ This dialogue fosters a satisfying space of collaborative and intuitive response that I hope is carried through to the viewer’s experience with the finished work.

In the February 2017 exhibition, *Emergence*, I used slumped glass as an intermediate to split, transmit or bounce light projections through areas of the gallery. For this work the gallery itself become a canvas. Having submitted my dissertation three months prior to the exhibition, I was fortunate to have a ten-week stretch of focused studio work using the Dunedin School of Art’s white cube gallery space during the summer holiday period. This enabled me to continuously experiment with a variety of composited image treatments *in situ*, projected through a selection of large sheets of glass that I had prepared over prior months.

Where it arises in philosophy and elsewhere, the word ‘emergence’ may refer to a sort of synergy: An inexplicable property arising from a number of sub-properties that can be described as being ‘other than the sum of the parts.’ In physics, a prime example of ‘emergence’ is the magical combination of oxygen and hydrogen atoms that comprise water molecules. This life-affording combination has the emergent properties of becoming solid, liquid or gas, depending on specific conditions, and will perform under those particular conditions in ways that can only be discovered through experimentation or experience, but not by algorithm. Another example of the emergent properties of water is water-specific surface waveforms; in my work, these are employed as components of motion ‘grattage’ (to borrow a process term first used by Max Ernst).

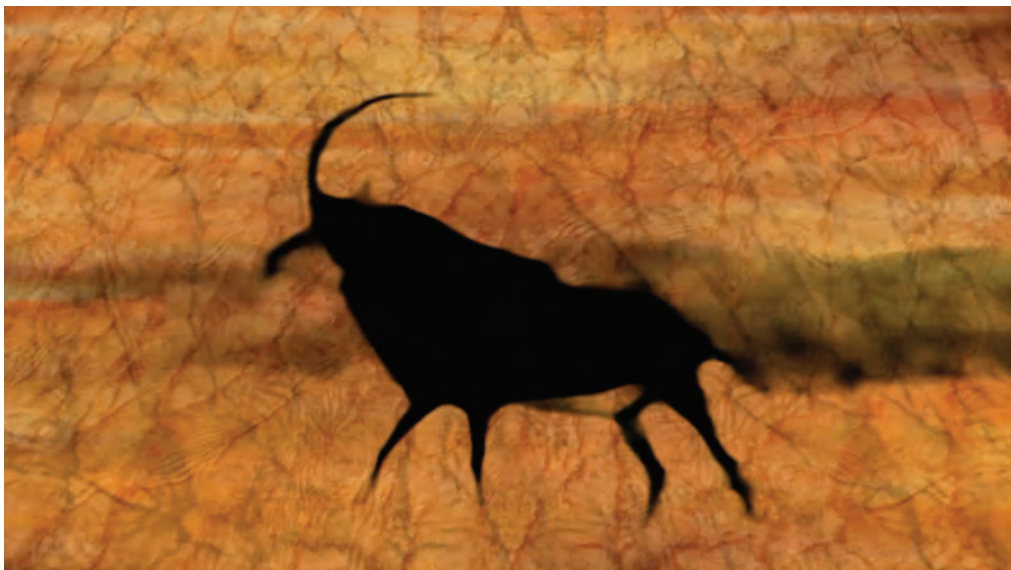


Figure 2. David Green, *Emergence*, 2017, video still detail. Image by David Green.

Human consciousness has been described as an 'emergent' property of the brain. There is some thought that this phenomenon may be a sort of exaptation (or secondary evolutionary development built on primary traits initially adapted for unrelated reasons) resulting from the many parallel distributed processes transpiring in the brain at any given time. Over the last 30 years, neuroscientists have been able to increasingly detail these processes as occurring simultaneously, though generally non-synchronously, throughout our neural networks.

The light caustics that feature in my work could be described as an emergent property of light and glass. When I first noticed them in early experiments, I thought of them as rhizome-like, dynamic neural networks that appeared to 'fire' in direct relationship with visual information projected on the glass screens. Here they manifest as a complex curvilinear ricocheting of photons that retain a subtle visual relationship with what appears as the more coherent image seen as a projection on the glass. Another neurological view (albeit 'poetic') of the caustics emerges if you imagine the reorganised visual signal as being convoluted and remapped onto the cortical folds of the brain in the relational manner that 'place cells' are situated in the hippocampus.

The primeval-looking imagery projected onto the hanging glass at one side of the gallery in *Emergence* intended to engage with our deep memory and love of the animal form, and our attraction to their particular nuances of motion at myth-cultivating distance. The manic reactions witnessed in the opposing triptych created the installation's main question; perhaps it is a jealous response to the animals' grandeur, or frustration with their haughty distance. I wonder if our hyperactive responses, that go quite beyond any need to hunt for food, are part and parcel an unrequitable, unquenchable love gone wrong that consistently ends in murder?

NATURAL HISTORY

In Jonathan Burt's book *Animals in Film*, he highlights the seminal importance of scientific photographers Marey, Anschütz and Muybridge to the birth of cinema; animals were a focal point for each in their early pursuits of motion analysis, which in turn directly informed the nascent motion-picture technology. Of course, there is no more salient way to identify what is called an 'animal' than through the autonomous, idiosyncratic and often high-speed behaviour that could only be precisely captured for the first time with the advent of motion pictures.



Figure 3. David Green, *Emergence*, 2017, installation view. Photo by Mark Bolland.

Screen images of animals in motion allow us to maintain our evolutionarily close, now ersatz, relationship with them – large and small – even when we have displaced and eradicated them from the expanding human habitat. Burt writes about the deep schism that exists between our intense attraction and the impossibility of intimacy, describing the exquisitely long, single-shot animal set-ups in Bill Viola's 1986 film, *I do not Know What it is I am Like*. In Viola's film, it is the fixed border of the wild animal exterior that can never be moved past – even when we move close enough to see ourselves reflected in their eye. We can see them, and we know they can see us, but we cannot know what it is like to be them, nor can we ever really know what they make of us. In this context, Burt also discusses John Huston's film *Moby Dick*: Despite the complex anthropomorphic projections of emotion and intent onto the whale, particularly by Ahab, the actual relationship remains limited to visual and physical interactions between surfaces.²

As humans, we seem to have few options in our engagement with animals. We can fetishise them, dress like them, act like them, dance with them. When that fails to satisfy, we can kill and eat them to absorb their component qualities, energy and aura. Seduced by their grace and beauty, we – like small children – *want* the animals, but all we can manage is to bring them to ground, gaze at them bound, cage them and kill them. Or, in our highly evolved and scientific way, study their component parts anatomically: through butchery, dissection, taxidermy, or behaviourally: through imprinting and other perverse forms of encroachment, subsuming their offspring and damning them to dead-end human margins.

We love them to death; it could be argued that this behaviour is hard-wired into our subspecies. We are amorous, conflicted, confused, impulsive and ultimately violent – like the character of Lenny in Steinbeck's classic novella *Of Mice and Men*. In our creaturely loneliness we may experience each other this way, too. In his posthumously discovered play, *Danton's Death*, Georg Büchner wrote in the early nineteenth century:

Julie: *Danton, do you believe in me?*

George Danton: *How should I know! We know little enough about one another. We're thick-skinned creatures who reach out our hands toward one another, but it means nothing – leather rubbing against leather – we're very lonely...*³

Perhaps the most dangerous implications of our frustrated human desire for intimacy can be witnessed when



Figure 4. David Green, *Emergence*, 2017, installation view. Photo by Mark Bolland.

intimate relationships between us fail. These dynamics, too, are a traditional subject of motion-picture narrative.

Since their inception, motion pictures have been used as a proxy for actual proximity. Capturing human sexuality was one of early cinema's seminal impulses. Pornography in its many forms intimates intimacy while performing its absence.

UNTAMED

Another iteration of the pornographic paradox, natural history films became an emergent form of cinematic entertainment from the early 1920s. Thieving from the worst kind of theft, the footage used in this installation was appropriated from a 1933 Warner Bros. colonial-era exploitation film called *Untamed Africa*.

Wynant Hubbard, who hailed from the US, is centrally featured in this film. After studying geology at Harvard, Hubbard organised a 'scientific' raid on the area of Africa that is now called Zimbabwe, trapping animals for worldwide distribution to zoological parks and generally looking for cool stuff to drag home. He was white, good looking and a college man, which meant that in the early 1930s he could be used to prop up the exploitation film's credibility by being misrepresented as an ethologist. He had certainly gathered enough information about animals to trap them one way and another. In 1929-30 he had the foresight to film his first exploitation junket. The footage was thrown into a blender and turned into early voice-over travelogues about Africa; this was a time when hack filmmakers could make ends meet by crashing in on far-flung cultural groups, or digging out exotic, ideally weird-looking animals, trafficking a few good yucks for cash from throw-away newsreels that played between the feature films in movie theatres. Wynant became a front man.

In that same year, MGM made an innovative exploitation film called *Trader Horn* which had the novelty of being partially lensed on location in Africa. The feeble narrative is essentially a platform for filming two white men drifting down a river in Africa, making wry comments while randomly shooting and killing real megafauna for the camera. (Apparently, they also get to save a lost young white woman from something potentially sexual, but I found the watching too arduous to find out.) The haphazard production cost the lives of innumerable animals and at least two people.

Importantly for its producers, above and beyond the death and mayhem on offer, the flimsy narrative gave licence to deliver their audiences a wide array of bare African bodies engaging in subaltern cultural curiosities inside a mainstream feature film. The paid acting is bad, the process shots are unintentionally surreal, and the dialogue can only be described as moronic. However, instead of the usual studio fare of primitive and cartoonish backlot backgrounds to go with the cartoonish acting, the jungle footage is clearly real; the 'natives,' clearly not cork-faced Hollywood locals – and naked to boot – virtually guaranteed big audiences in 1933. After the great success of this film (which included winning the highly coveted Academy Award® for best picture of 1931), naturally demand was enflamed for what film audiences love best: more of the same.

As a result of his concurrently running exploitation shorts, Hubbard was nicely placed to have his old footage recycled into the 1933 production *Untamed Africa*. His four-year-old footage more than covered the requisite brief as Wynant triple-dipped while multiply performing his day job of kidnapping and broadcasting live animals to a hungry worldwide audience.

Here is the Anthropocene revealed. Animals pursued, ambushed, are captured both "by the toe" and by the image; the world-wide biological web is eaten away by the uncontainable acid of commodity fetishism. As I write this, their corpses are now dust, but their pixellated tatters continue to haunt cyberspace. In the end we have, as a subspecies, been systematically seduced by things that look good, cost the earth and ignore the basic rights and needs of others.

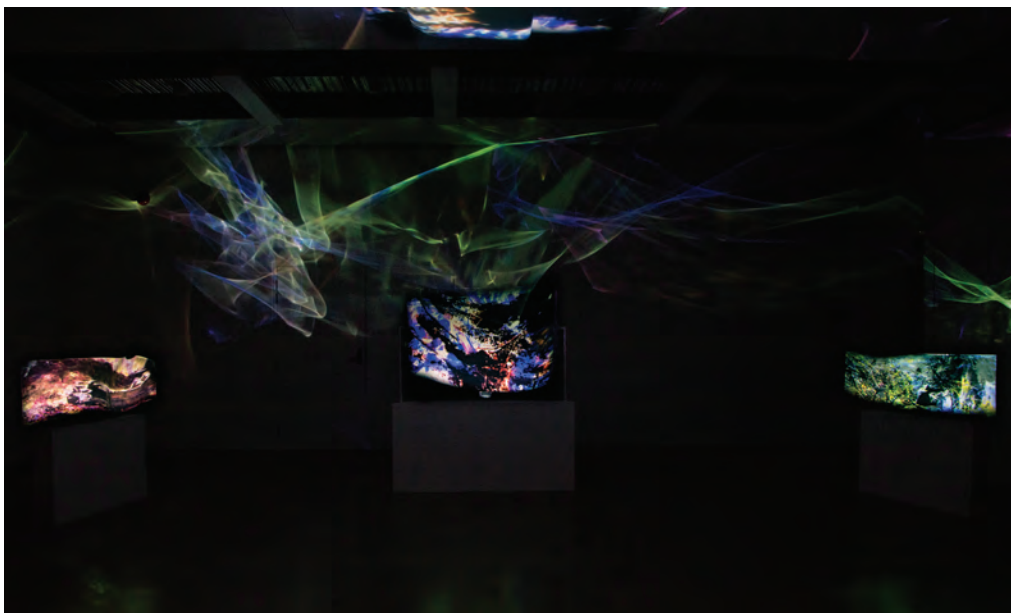


Figure 5. David Green, *Emergence*, 2017, installation view. Photo by Mark Bolland.

EMERGENCE

In my installation I explore the materiality of light and image, both central to the expanded cinema discourse; here light breaks its boundaries, spills, rebounds and ricochets through the gallery. There are two lighting areas. A single screen referencing parietal art floats on one side; on it are movements and images suggesting the passion, mystery and sense of wonder evoked by the majestic aura of wild animals in the distance. In the other area of the installation, a triptych distributes a larger palette of colours revealing the mischief we get up to in our excitement.

For each glass, a single projector is responsible for both the image and the reflective caustic, whose physical and visual relationship becomes apparent to the viewer – only after investigation. The projectors are mounted like camera apparatuses with associated gear, including matte boxes (beautifully fabricated by artist Andrew Last) and a tripod. The production process is reversed, the 'dailies' reassembled; here the projection/production apparatus vomit up the appropriated pornography. The process is broken open, light spilling everywhere, and the viewer is surrounded and enveloped by light. In the triptych a kind of soft looking is required as, even when focusing on a particular image, one is surrounded by relevant spillage in the periphery.

Claire Bishop's thesis regarding Installation Art⁴ is highly relevant here: Through this intervention, the intention is for the gallery to become a fully immersive environment. The viewer is activated as collaborator; not receiver, of the narrative by offering them a decentralised experience. Cinema is a medium traditionally employed as the disseminator of formal, linear, centralised, gendered, racist and conservative views; I feel that expanded cinema, particularly in the form of installation art, is more productively but less usefully applied. Here information relevant to a particular idea is distributed through the space. The viewer's body is necessarily activated, their normal moment-to-moment analytical processes awakened by the requirements of navigating a whole space. The brain cannot simply slurp passively from a pre-digested fixed perspective; it has to forage, move towards or away, chew, spit or swallow. Despite the political nature of my writing, I am not actually interested in the viewer forming fixed conclusions around the ideas and images I present; I would much rather share qualia: the soft space of embodied response.



Figure 6. David Green, *Emergence*, 2017, Opening Night. Photo by Pam McKinlay.

Unlike the traditional cinema, this is not a passive linear experience and necessarily not; in negotiating the video documentation of this installation, I could see clearly illustrated how quickly the overall proposition collapses when represented in a linear format: At one point I ran into composer Trevor Coleman at the exhibition and, from his iPhone, he played me a new composition that he felt was particularly fitting to the installation's imagery. He later offered me the composition to use as a base for cutting my documentation footage, and I immediately agreed. In the weeks that followed the installation, I cut a seven-minute video using his composition, *Polyspirals*. When I had finished, I felt that what I had produced served Trevor's composition well, but completely undermined the decentralised nature of my artwork by determining one specific path through it. In a sense, this was a disappointing outcome and yet a very important exercise; having started in motion-picture production, I could feel with clarity that the installation aspect of my art practice is essential to the ideas I want to explore, not merely an arbitrary framework.

The soundscape for the gallery installation consisted of a soft ambient composition based on EEG data sonification that was meant to gently refer the viewer back to the caustic 'neural networks,' rather than pointing to any particular formed image.

Despite the stridency of my writing in this article, in my installation I primarily wanted viewers to inhabit and make what they will of an immersive and experiential space. In the gallery context, I do not want to provoke an analytical, logic-led engagement, but rather a softer, broader, embodied response. The formed ideas that I express in this article represent the results of my own mental algebra, not my expectation or requirement of the viewer. The installation work *Emergence* is a redistribution of images formerly bound into a 1933 film and confined to a linear perspective that presented a world now gone as disposable. I reassembled the visual artifacts in order to better understand the original space by reconstituting the fragments in a decentralising proposition. In this way, I hope that it was also useful as a thinking tool for the viewers.

David Green's recent MFA exhibition, *Emergence*, at the Dunedin School of Art sparked two collaborations with musician Trevor Coleman, who recently completed his PhD at the Otago University School of Music. Coleman's research includes creating, developing and performing polyrhythmic compositions. Green's research considers the phenomenology of perception and the materiality of light, while his art practice operates in the field of expanded cinema. One resulting collaboration was a live performance by Coleman in the Dunedin School of Art gallery space at the closing of Green's exhibition, and the second was the video piece, *Spiral Requiem*, shot and edited by Green.

- 1 Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- 2 Jonathan Burt, *Animals in Film* (Trowbridge, Wilts: Cromwell Press, 2002).
- 3 Georg Büchner, *Complete Plays and Prose*, trans. Carl Richard Mueller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1963).
- 4 Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History* (London, Tate Publishing, 2005).

COKE & POPCORN: THE IMAGE AND THE SERIES

Rachel Hope Allan

If you see a red flagged screen, just click Details and click VISIT this site. Its ok don't worry. We have none of those nasty things they say we do. We're trying to fix whatever is causing this issue. Thanks for understanding.¹

coke and popcorn Facebook status update, 2015



Figure 1. *coke & popcorn*, 2015, giclée print, 500 × 500 mm.
Finalist in the Arts Gold Awards, 2015.

Confined to a concrete ocean, I am compelled to visit you, concerned that if I stop, you will cease to exist.

coke & popcorn is an ongoing body of work shot on an iPhone camera using an application that replicates specific vintage film stocks and technical settings. A selection of works from the series was first shown at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2 July–24 October 2016, in the group show '*Ridiculous Sublime*' curated by Lucy Hammond.

While shooting for *coke & popcorn*, I adhere to decisions that mimic the constraints presented by traditional wet photography, elevating which might be perceived as a 'low' form of image production through enforcing historical constraints. In an attempt to negotiate the critical discussion around 'high' and 'low' forms of image-making in the contemporary context, *coke & popcorn* is embedded within a contemporary dialogue that explores the ritualistic act of photography in itself.

Unfortunately, due to copyright infragment [sic] notice, we had to remove all the live streaming websites from this page. If you wish to view the sites that offers live tv streaming, you can visit the following list.²

The title *coke & popcorn* directly references the file-sharing platform that allows viewers to illegally source films and television series. Often these files are corrupted, glitchy even, but we watch, we download, accepting their defects.



Figure 2. Rachel Hope Allan, *swimmers*,
500 x 500mm, giclée print.



Figure 3. Rachel Hope Allan, *red fish*,
500 x 500mm, giclée print.

The title is also a comment on what is still deemed entertainment and the speed at which we approach certain annihilation in this age of the Anthropocene.

Zoos, crowded beaches and statues reference early French photography and point to the chemical process mimicked by the code used in smartphone photography apps. The images are enlarged just to the point of distortion and then printed on fine-art Hahnemühle photographic paper; thereby altering the surface and history of the image.

Trapped within the layers of pigment and code are my memories. There is an apocalyptic feel to the works – the “what might be.” When I look at the finished images, my senses are almost tricked into smelling the chemistry and believing in the coded flaws. I see them for what they are, but only when they are printed do they fully reveal their true legacy: their digital origins.



Figure 4. Rachel Hope Allan, *dead like me*,
500 x 500mm, giclée print.



Figure 5. Rachel Hope Allan, *watching*,
500 x 500mm, giclée print.



Figure 6. Rachel Hope Allan, *tokyo is yours*, 500 x 500mm, giclée print.



Figure 7. Rachel Hope Allan, *umbrellas and glass*, 500 x 500mm, giclée print.

This series of works has two distinct lives. According to Jamie Short, “When we post an image on the Internet, we are not making claims to the authenticity of any given image, but rather leaving an index of our own digital presence, coded in concealed zeros and ones.”³ Online, *coke & popcorn* exists as a neatly packaged set of images that reveal the haunting moments spent looking into the eyes of a lonely, hot polar bear living out its days in an artificial environment, or the glance from a broken statue at a passer-by. The discrete data, the precious pixels, are only revealed when enlarged – akin to film’s relationship to grain. I am drawn in by the fakeness of the application, the repetitive signs signaling the handmade, by the lie that is sold. It is true that I could upload the images as slightly pixelated versions of themselves. But I resist. Fred Ritchin writes in *After Photography* that, “Photography in the digital environment involves the reconfiguration of the image into a mosaic of millions of changeable pixels, not a continuous tone imprint of visible reality.”⁴



Figure 8. Rachel Hope Allan, *riding in trains with boys*, 500 x 500mm, giclée print.

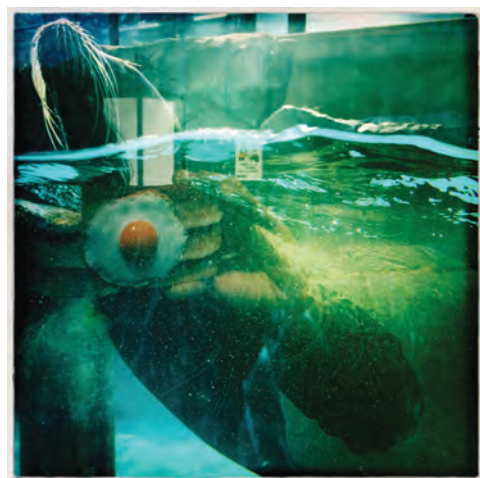


Figure 9. Rachel Hope Allan, *coke and popcorn*, 2016, 500 x 500mm, giclée print.

I am interested in the potential subterfuge, trickery and the alchemical magic of photography. *coke & popcorn* raises questions around the potential and expectations of image production in the twenty-first century, and the ability of an image to have two distinct lives.

When viewing *coke & popcorn*, either IRL or AFK,⁵ I experience a sweet spot reminiscent of the lens that the optician drops in front of your eye, then plucks away, or that perfect download stream.

By investigating the collision between the real and the simulated, this work explores the fetishisation of processes and objects by investigating the boundaries of memory and nostalgia.

You can never go home again, but I guess you can shop there.

Grosse Pointe Blank, 1997.

My Anne used to tell me stories about riding the horses that were going to be fed to the lions. She would use her cardigan as reins and whisper into their ears. I remember thinking about the logistics of it, thinking about how they would choose which horse to kill next, the finality of it all and the absurdity of hearing the lion roar as he sat astride his dinner.

Employing elements of subterfuge, trickery and the alchemical magic of photography, **Rachel Hope Allan's** photographic work raises questions about image production in the twenty-first century. Rachel holds a Masters of Fine Arts with distinction from the Dunedin School of Art, where she lectures in photography and electronic arts. Her research practice is wide-ranging and extends from traditional, darkroom-based processes through to digital and alternative liquid photography. She exhibits locally and internationally in public museums, art galleries, project galleries and artist-run spaces.

- 1 Coke and Popcorn Facebook post, 20 September 2015, https://www.facebook.com/CokePopcorn/?ref=page_internal (accessed 11 Jan. 2017).
- 2 Bilal Ahmad, *10 Free Websites to Watch Live TV Online on PC or Laptop*, 2017, <https://www.techmaish.com/10-free-websites-to-watch-live-tv-on-your-pc-or-laptop/> (accessed 11 Jan. 2017).
- 3 Jaime Schwartz, *Is a Photograph Still an Index if it's on the Internet? Indexicality and Art Photography Today*, <http://dismagazine.com/discussion/41736/a-discursive-mask/> (accessed 11 Jan. 2017).
- 4 "Photography in the digital environment involves the reconfiguration of the image into a mosaic of millions of changeable pixels, not a continuous tone imprint of visible reality." Fred Ritchin, *After Photography* (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2009), 18.
- 5 AFK is an acronym for 'Away From Keyboard.' Essentially it is the same thing as IRL ('In Real Life'), but without the inferred prejudice against online life. See <http://www.codefuel.com/glossary/irl/>.

THE LOST OBJECT ENSEMBLE: ABSURDITIES OF THE 'MULTI-FUNCTIONAL' OBJECT

Jane Venis

I am a multi-media artist and musician from Dunedin, New Zealand, working across sculpture, sound and performance. In this paper, I discuss my recent studio project *The Lost Object Ensemble*, an installation featuring absurd multi-functional musical instruments and an associated video work. This project toured to several venues in New Zealand in 2016. Subsequently, *The Brass Section*, a small selection of works from this show, has been included in "Anything Could Happen" (2017), a juried exhibition in Yu Gallery, Shanghai, of art and fashion from artists with links to Dunedin.

The Lost Object Ensemble lies in the tension between instrument design and contemporary art practice. In this paper, I discuss how this body of work critiques some of the absurdities prevalent in contemporary popular culture, in particular, the continuing obsession with reality TV cooking and talent quest programmes. Secondly, I focus on the ways in which my objects also reference the history of instrument-making, whereby instruments were once made from whatever materials were freely available. I have used this notion when making instruments from common kitchen utensils and 'retired' plumbing components associated with the kitchen. This article follows "Behind the Scenes with Dr Clawhammer," published in *Scope Art & Design* 11, where I invited the reader into my studio to look at some of my stringed instruments in progress.

My third key area of focus in this paper is the use of irony and satire in my work to point up the proliferation of 'must have' multifunctional products as advertised through daytime television infomercials and mail-order catalogues. I discuss how objects such as these can be critiqued through the lens of the Japanese art of *chindogu*, 'products' that according to their initiator Kenji Kawakami, "have been freed from the chains of usefulness."¹ As part of this section, I also look at the practices of some contemporary artists whose work I consider may be given a reading as *chindogu*.

In *The Lost Object Ensemble* I overturn the concept of using 'found materials' by creating musical instruments from objects that appear to have lost their way. For example, the ancient copper U bends I use as a starting point to create a pair of playable saxophones show that some beautiful materials may have an unpromising provenance. Their previous lives as part of drainage systems is something I would rather not dwell on, as I reconstruct and ultimately play them as wind instruments

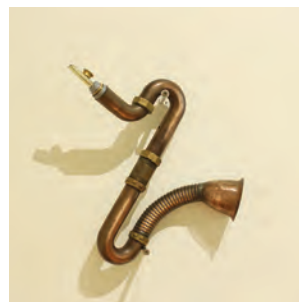


Figure 1. Jane Venis, *You Saxy Thang*, 2016, copper and brass plumbing components. Exhibited at Forrester Gallery, Oamaru.



Figure 2. Jane Venis, *Drainsax*, 2016, copper and brass plumbing components. Exhibited at Forrester Gallery, Oamaru.

Copper is a material that creates a visual link between the saxophones and stringed instruments such as the *Panjo*, a banjo constructed from a copper-bottomed frying pan. The instrument's former life as a frying pan is evoked in the satirical video *The Eggs Factor*, a pivotal work in *The Lost Object Ensemble*. In this video, I explore the current obsession with reality television cooking and talent quest programmes. The *Panjo* is an ironic work that functions as both a cooking utensil and a playable instrument. It is designed to critique the desire for the instant fame that reality TV programming engenders.

Michael Foley, in *The Age of Absurdity*, contends that the increase in attention-seeking behaviour in Western society is the new normal. He proposes that the need to be seen is linked to "an inner emptiness requiring identity conferred from without: I am seen therefore I am."¹² There appears to be a link between this behaviour and the increasing use of transparent building materials and open-plan design of public places to facilitate people-watching.³ The need to be seen has now reached absurd proportions, to the point that people are now paying to be stalked. According to Foley, "These services are increasingly popular because they give their customers a unique sense of significance. As the founder of one such service puts it, 'We've had clients who say they wear nicer underwear or start taking better care of themselves simply knowing they're being observed.'"¹⁴

The growing need for recognition and adoration in contemporary culture is reflected in the making of *The Panjo*, a shiny object of desire created for the ridiculous scenario of the 'wannabe' reality TV star who is so obsessed by fame that they need a designer object to facilitate simultaneous entry into multiple competitions such as *Masterchef* and *The X Factor*. In the *Eggs Factor* video, I start by playing the *Panjo* (which functions as a five-string banjo) and then deconstruct the instrument through a hybrid performance that echoes the presentation style of both cooking programmes and infomercials. Finally, after an elaborate preamble, the skin is removed and I use the instrument to fry eggs in the demonstration style of a television celebrity chef.



Figure 3. Jane Venis, *Panjo*, 2015, 'MagnaMail'-style catalogue.

The popularity of internationally syndicated programmes such as *Masterchef* and *My Kitchen Rules* comes at a time when less and less time is spent in the kitchen and convenience meals are on the rise – yet cooking programmes have a huge following. As food journalist Michael Pollen wryly commented in a *New York Times* article headed "Out of the Kitchen, onto the Couch," "How are we so eager to watch other people browning beef cubes on screen but so less eager to brown them ourselves?"¹⁵

In many homes, cooking has stopped being a family-orientated activity to become a spectator sport where teams of winners and losers compete against the clock. The kitchen is a site of nail-biting tension where we watch the burning of other people's meals and the sinking of others' soufflés while we slump into the couch waiting for the microwave to beep. The television kitchen is replacing our own. It also continues as a highly gendered site where all-male trios of presenters sit in judgement on both male and female contestants. Scenes of public humiliation, endemic to reality television programming, are all too common. The competition kitchen as a site of psychological stamina is what media theorist Tasha Oren playfully calls "culinary S&M."¹⁶

Reality TV shows us that some people will do almost anything for money: eat live bugs, form relationships with complete strangers, endure a televised ousting by public vote, and be filmed 24 hours a day. In reality TV cooking shows, we are privy to disputes and dramas happening both inside and outside the kitchen. This easy access to that which has been traditionally hidden is termed by French theorist Jean Baudrillard "the ecstasy of communication," an ecstasy which he describes as ultimately obscene. "In this state we are no longer obsessed with the obscenity of the hidden, the repressed, the obscure, but that of the visible, the all-too-visible, the more-visible-than-visible: it is the obscenity of that which no longer contains a secret and is entirely soluble in information and communication."⁷

Reality TV appears to be in a perpetual state of "ecstasy of communication," offering potential stardom at the price of constant surveillance. *The Eggs Factor* comments on this ubiquitous form of popular culture.

Secondly, it critiques the over-abundance of infomercials for pointless consumer goods, with a focus on multi-functional objects that "have so many uses around the home" yet don't appear to work well in any of their guises. The irony of creating objects that are so multifunctional that they become absurdly impractical references the Japanese art of chindogu.⁸ Chindogu, a collective noun for 'products' that have been purposefully designed to be particularly useless, was first conceived by Japanese creative Kenji Kawakami when he was the editor of a Japanese mail order catalogue in the 1980s.⁹

The notion of creating 'designer' objects that are truly pointless is a ploy that artists have engaged with over many decades. Many artworks, particularly from the Dada and Surrealist eras, could be readily examined through the lens of chindogu. Meret Oppenheim's 1936 fur teacup, *Breakfast in Fur*; Salvador Dalí's 1938 *Lobster Telephone*, in which the phone mouthpiece was overlaid with a lobster body; and Oscar Domínguez's absurd satin-lined *Wheelbarrow* of 1931 are a few key historical examples of artworks that employ recognisable objects to echo the notion of futility.

Some contemporary artists and designers are also engaging in practices which critique the futility of products, machines and systems. Unlike the modernist examples noted above, they address issues surrounding consumerism, in particular sustainability. This reflects my own practice, whereby I use chindogu as a starting point to address issues surrounding the design and proliferation of arguably pointless and wasteful consumer goods and systems.

Belgian conceptual artist Wim Delvoye created his absurd digestion machine named *Cloaca* in 2000. Since then, it has been exhibited internationally in numerous high-profile public galleries. The machine is 'fed' two restaurant meals per day and bares its digestive system, a succession of large clear tanks containing a series of stomach enzymes, to close public scrutiny. The idea that *Cloaca* mimics human digestion is evidenced by its very human complaint of 'indigestion,' that occasionally causes unpleasant odours to emanate throughout the gallery. This is a truly ludicrous machine that not only defecates, but neatly parcels up and presents the viewer with a numbered edition of its 'product.'¹⁰

Cloaca could be viewed as chindogu by virtue of its profound uselessness. In common with chindogu, it could be seen as a critical system that makes a comment on hunger, consumption and sustainability. However, unlike chindogu, *Cloaca*'s end product is a tradeable commodity. As Kawakami states in his *Ten Tenets of Chindogu*, "chindogu are not for sale ... they must not even be sold as a joke."¹¹ With *Cloaca* this is clearly not the case, as "the machine daily delivered turds that were signed and sold for \$1,000 each."¹² Although Delvoye has made little comment on any specific meaning surrounding the work, one can't help thinking that he must be 'laughing up his sleeve' at the gullible members of the public lining up to purchase excrement for a seemingly exorbitant amount; excrement that has the same chemical makeup as their own and is therefore essentially the real thing. This work is my benchmark for a project that severely tests the credulity of the audience.

A second contemporary artist who makes objects that can be discussed under the lens of chindogu is Mona Hatoum, a British-based Palestinian sculptor, performance and installation artist of international status. She has made a series of works using common kitchen utensils as a starting point. One of these is *Daybed* (2008), a faithful steel replica of a kitchen grater up-scaled to bed-sized proportions. This is one of many works in which Hatoum uses

scale to imbue simple domestic objects with the possibility of impending threat or danger. By creating domestic utensils of human-sized proportions, the implication is that these are objects that can potentially slice, dice and grate the human form in much more damaging ways than their more docile (and yet still dangerous) normal-sized selves. *Slicer* (1999), another huge utensil (in this case an egg slicer), brings to mind the slicing injuries caused by shrapnel. However, to be confronted by that possibility in an oversized kitchen utensil somehow makes the reality all the more unnerving.

A vegetable grater also appears in my work, *The Carrot Grating Ukulele*, one of the instruments that feature in *The Eggs Factor* video. Although I have not used scale to imply threat in this object, the placement of a vegetable grater over the sound hole is an invitation to shred the player's fingers once the safety of the vegetable 'pick' has been grated away. In both *Daybed* and *The Carrot Grating Ukulele*, the grater has the power to evoke unwelcome visual memories of kitchen accidents and the promise of even worse damage should these objects be used.

In Hatoum's installation *The Entire World as a Foreign Land* (2000) at the Tate London, a giant hand-operated vegetable shredder of the kind found in a 1950s kitchen had shed its discs onto the floor of the gallery. In *Mona Hatoum: The Eye*, a documentary filmed at the Tate London in 2000, Hatoum describes this work, in which a harmless kitchen utensil "becomes an infernal machine ... which has a feeling of threat but is also quite humorous."¹³ A recurring theme in Hatoum's oeuvre is the questioning of the ontological status of objects: "I like taking a harmless everyday object and turn it into something uncanny and give it a different status, which makes you question the status of all objects around you."¹⁴

To question the status of objects is one of the fundamental purposes of chindogu. This is a key commonality shared with the works of Hatoum, Kawakami and myself. However, both Kawakami and I question the status of objects to discuss the power of consumerism, whereas Hatoum uses her objects to evoke "a feeling of instability and restlessness."¹⁵

Chindogu objects lie in the tension between art and design as they fulfill the purpose of societal critique as art objects, yet they are created through an iterative design process to be purposefully useless. The absurd chindogu-influenced objects 'promoted' in *The Eggs Factor* are also 'advertised' in an accompanying 'MagnaMail'-style mail order catalogue (Figure 3). This is the type of badly designed, low-cost publication that Kawakami edited when he was inspired to create the nonsensical 'products' he launched as chindogu.

In *The Eggs Factor* video, I have taken the notion of multi-function to an absurd level. I achieve this by purposely choosing mismatched products or 'lost objects' to create the hybrid 'product.' Making instruments out of materials that are not meant for that particular purpose has its challenges, particularly as I wanted the final work to look and sound good, and (in the case of the *Panjo*) be stripped down quickly and revert to its former use as a frying pan, for use in *The Eggs Factor* performance. Initially, I struggled to make the frying pan body strong enough to take the strain once the strings were under tension. The *Panjo* passed through many iterations before this problem was solved by welding a robust strengthening plate onto the side of the pan to allow the neck to be attached without movement under stress. The experience of making the *Panjo* was hugely helpful when I was faced with the same issues in making a larger stringed instrument based on the fabrication style of the *Panjo*. I developed the *Cellok*, a cello-style instrument with a wok body as a 'kitchen-mate' for the *Panjo*. This instrument has very heavy strings and so the body is under even greater pressure when the strings are tightened.

My interest in the banjo led to some research into different playing techniques, and I was particularly drawn to the style of 'clawhammer' – "a rhythmic and percussive banjo-playing style that originated in Africa, as did the banjo itself."¹⁶ Early African banjos were made from gourds covered with stretched animal skin.¹⁷ Historically, this has always been an instrument poor country people made 'from scratch,' using whatever materials came to hand.¹⁸ I have referenced this concept in the development of my instruments – for example, the use of a common kitchen fork as a tail piece is a feature of the multi-purpose *Panjo*.



Figure 4. Jane Venis, *Cellok*, 2016.



Figure 5. Jane Venis, *Cellok*, 2016 (detail).



Figure 6. Jane Venis, *Panjo with fork tail piece*, 2016 (detail).

In the *Lost Object Ensemble* not all works are made from repurposed materials, nor are they all multi-functional. For example, the work *Heavy Metal*, a life-size hollow cast bronze ukulele, struggles to function on any level and is essentially a chindogu object. The instrument is powder-coated in hot pink to look like a cheap learner model and appears to be extremely light (Figure 7). It is only on picking up the work that one finds that it weighs 16 kilos. While many of the lost objects play really well as instruments, the weight of *Heavy Metal* makes it a struggle to play, despite its sweet yet quiet voice. As is true with all chindogu, in solving one problem – in this case, to create an extremely robust instrument – a new and more exasperating problem quickly follows in its wake.

Making the three ukulele works in *The Lost Object Ensemble* has been informed by the resurgence in popularity of the ukulele – hence *Heavy Metal* appearing in the guise of a bright pink learner instrument. Sadly, the reputation of the ukulele as a kitsch tourist souvenir or child's 'toy guitar' has been hard to shake off.¹⁹ This perception has now started to change, and there is a growing list of virtuoso ukulele performers.

The embracing of the ukulele by contemporary popular culture is a catalyst for the 'tongue in cheek' use of the ukulele in my exhibitions and performance works. *The Carrot Grating Ukulele*, discussed earlier in relation to Hatoum's *Daybed*, has been reprised as a giveaway in *The Eggs Factor* infomercial (Figure 8). This ridiculous work, designed for the 'niche market' of multi-tasking musicians who wish to play music while cooking, also has a darker side; as is implicit in its design, it doubles as an instrument for the masochists if no carrots are used. "The *Carrot Grating Ukulele* positions the ukulele against the prevailing popular image of the extra cute instrument that 'is just too damn happy.'"²⁰ Both ukulele works consider the resurgence of the ukulele and its place in contemporary culture.



Figure 7. Jane Venis, *Heavy Metal*, 2016.

In conclusion, I think that the role of the artist as a commentator on current trends, fads and themes is increasingly important. The absurdities prevalent in much of global popular culture, in particular, the intense focus on the possibility of 'stardom for all' in a media-hungry age is something I explore through the making of rather ridiculous multifunctional 'products.'

The absurd chindogu-inspired merchandise, exploited to aid the rise of potential stars, provides not only a critique of the hunger for fame, but also of the endless stream of unnecessary consumer goods advertised daily through infomercial-style television.



Figure 8. Jane Venis, *The Lost Object Ensemble*, 2016. Gallery view showing exhibits and video, *The Eggs Factor*, in situ.

Jane Venis is academic leader for Creative Studies at Otago Polytechnic and a postgraduate supervisor in the Dunedin School of Art and is also a performance, sound and installation artist. She holds a Master of Fine Arts from the Dunedin School of Art and a PhD in fine arts from Griffith University, Queensland, Australia. Making various gadgets and machines has been Jane's passion for more than ten years, and she describes her works as crafted assemblages; her instruments and objects give a new lease of life to materials that many people regard as rubbish.

- 1 Kenji Kawakami, *Chindogu: 101 Unuseless Japanese Inventions* (New York: WW Norton, 1995), 8.
- 2 Michael Foley, *The Age of Absurdity* (London: Simon and Schuster, 2010), 32.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Michael Pollen, "Out of the Kitchen, onto the Couch," *New York Times*, 2 August 2009, <http://michaelpollan.com/articles-archive/out-of-the-kitchen-onto-the-couch/>.
- 6 Tasha Oren, "On the Line, Format Cooking and Competition as Television Values," *Critical Studies in Television*, 8:2 (2013).
- 7 Jean Baudrillard, "The Ecstasy of Communication," in *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader*, eds S Redmond and S Holmes (London: Sage, 2007), 59.
- 8 Kawakami, *Chindogu*.
- 9 Jane Venis, "Chindogu: Not so Useless After All," *The International Journal of the Arts in Society* 5:5 (2011), 189-202.
- 10 Els Fiers, "A Human Masterpiece," *Artnet*, 2001, <http://www.artnet.com/magazine/reviews/fiers/fiers1-9-01.asp> (accessed 20 June 2009).
- 11 Kawakami, *Chindogu*, 9.
- 12 Fiers, "A Human Masterpiece."
- 13 From an interview with Mona Hatoum in *The Eye: Moma Hatoum* (London: Illuminations Media, 2011).
- 14 Ibid.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Jane Venis, "Behind the Scenes with Dr Clawhammer," *Scope: Art & Design* 11 (2015), 78.
- 17 Karen Linn, *That Half-barbaric Twang: The Banjo in American Popular Culture* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994).
- 18 Venis, "Behind the Scenes with Dr Clawhammer."
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Ibid, 77.

THE TOUCHSTONE PROJECT

Andrew Last

"Vaiaio," said Boua Huata Holmes as we loaded the taoka (treasure) stone, complete with its mantle of accumulated garden compost, into Brendon's tiny Smart car. Vaiaio (the source); this stone – inaka pounamu – comes from the headwaters of Te Awa Wakatipu/the Dart River, under the mantle of Makahi (Mt Aspiring). Inaka, a taoka of huge significance to Southern Māori, was prized for its distinctive colour, chatoyancy and a morphology that allowed it to be worked into implements.¹ Te Awa Wakatipu feeds Lake Wakatipu near Glenorchy. The Kawarau River exits Wakatipu and merges with the Mata-Au (Clutha River) near Cromwell in Central Otago. Mata-Au is the second-longest river in Aotearoa and defines the Otago region.

Professor Leoni Schmidt beckoned me to come into her office and talk to Professor Khyla Russell, Kaitohutohu (Māori adviser) of Otago Polytechnic. Khyla explained that a touchstone was needed for the new formal entrance building planned for the Polytech's Dunedin campus. Khyla asked me to organise the making of the touchstone, explaining that the kaimahi toi (art workers) ought to be part of the Polytech. For me, a long-term Aussie manuhiri (guest) to Aotearoa, this was quite a flattering burden of responsibility to be charged with.

As Brendon and I handled the heavy boulder, Huata paused in reminiscence of the time long ago when the stone was carried from the river, its shape dictating obvious handholds. Our initial discussions for working the stone considered emphasising these first handholds and visually encouraging future touch. Brendon modelled the idea with Photoshop manipulation. We trialled a sandblasting technique for etching into the stone, but found that much of the water-worn outer surface of the stone would have to be removed and felt the stone would lose the integrity of its form.

Pete Murphy (Kai Tahu, Dunedin School of Art graduate and nephew of Khyla) stayed close by Huata's side to awahi (assist) his walk down the rocky path to Makereatu (Blackhead) Beach. Huata was quite ill at the time, but wanted to accompany us on this trip gathering resources for the touchstone project. Blackhead is a popular Dunedin surf break and the site of a contentious quarry that has profoundly altered the shape of a prominent headland at the southern end of Otepoti/Dunedin's city boundary. Columnar basalt (onewa), the black stone typical of Dunedin's volcanic geology, tumbles down the cliffs into Te Moana Nui-a-Kiwa (the Pacific Ocean). We were looking for an onewa column that would raise the inaka and tautoko (support), the metaphoric association of material and place. Eventually we found a stone, thankfully within the quarry's yard, and struggled to load it into the car.



Figure 1. Touchstone. Photo: Brendon Monson.

The touchstone project paused for the summer break. We were all set to resume, but found that the onewa we had selected was no longer in the Art School's garden bed where we had left it. Clearly our care had been inadequate and the stone was found desirable to others as much as to us. After confessing our carelessness, Huata graciously allowed that the particular column was "not meant to be." Khyla put the word out, and two columns that had been selected for the project were delivered to us on a truck with a Hiab lifter:

In a studio set up to work stone on a jewellery scale, some serious improvisation was needed to manipulate hundreds of kilos of stone with minimal herniation.

The onewa was trimmed to allow it to stand well. It was obvious that this alteration would leave the height of the touchstone fine for children, but hard on those with less supple spines. We had resolved to include pakeho (limestone) from the southern side of the Waitaki River as a component of the touchstone project. Stone from this area defines the northern boundaries of Otago and plots a watercourse that traces back to Aoraki (Mt Cook), the most tapu (restricted) mauka tūpuna (ancestral mountain) for South Island iwi (tribes). The white stone is very soft and is easily worked with hand tools. We decided to make the base stone of this material and shape it to suggest a continuation of the contours of the basalt column. Pete had an appropriately sized stone in his garden collection and adeptly melded the white stone to the black.

We invited jewellery student and carver Jennifer Duff (Kai Tahu) to contribute to the touchstone mahi (work). Jen has been working with pounamu all her life. She sanded the surfaces of the inaka with diamond sponges, bringing to life the nodes of deep green and sloughing off the sharp, river-worn rind.



Figure 2. Working in the studio. Photo: Andrew Last.



Figure 3. Touchstone collaborators: Jen Duff, Brendon Monson and Pete Murphy.
Photo: Andrew Last.



Figure 4. Progress in the studio. Photo: Brendon Monson.

The touchstone sculpture sits on a stainless steel plate that allows the work to be securely bolted to the concrete floor. The plate was sourced from Rietveld's amazing recycling yard in Kaikorai Valley, Dunedin, and plasma-cut by Kevin O'Neill and Stu Hewson from the Polytech's engineering department.

The in-house goodwill economy was squared away with a batch of home-baked Anzac biscuits for the engineering smoko table.

We had intended to sandblast a pattern representing river eddies down the basalt and continuing onto the Oamaru stone. Brendon digitised Pete's chalk drawing and cut a sandblast stencil using a digital vinyl cutter. Brendon and I spent a weekend rigging up an outdoor sand blast facility and, after two hours of deeply unpleasant blasting, achieved almost zero result. The stone face was covered with a fine but tough white mineral layer. Our vinyl stencil lasted just about as long as it took to remove this layer. With a deadline looming, I decided to abandon the sandblasting.

The final construction stage was carving the top of the basalt to match the contours of the inaka boulder. This involved repeated lifting of the boulder; refining the shape of the basalt with an angle grinder and replacing it to test for fit. Eventually, all the components of the sculpture were joined with liberal quantities of epoxy glue and a steel spine embedded through the white stone into the basalt.

With a week to go before the opening of the new building, a truck was borrowed from the building job and the touchstone moved 200m to its permanent site.

The work was finally bolted down the day before the carpetlayers cut the carpet tiles around its base and three days before the building's official opening.



Figure 5. Transporting the stone. Photo: Andrew Last.



Figure 6. Installing the stone. Photo: Andrew Last.

The touchstone emerged unscathed from a frantic weekend in which a building site was transformed into a completed project. On Monday morning the touchstone played an integral part in the whakawātea (clearing of the way) ceremony for the inauguration of the new building. The ceremony was attended by representatives of ka Papatipu Rūnaka (the four Kai Tahu councils that have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Polytech), the Polytech leadership team, Polytech staff and workers involved in the building project.

Khyla was delighted with the ceremony, with Huata's koha (gift) to the Polytech being honoured by the collective and individual efforts of all participants.² I was profoundly relieved that I had managed my part

in the touchstone project in a way that had eventually turned out to be tika (correct). The touchstone embodies the whakatauki (proverb) that is part of the Memorandum of Understanding:

Kua tawhiti kē to harereka,
kia kore e haere tonu.
He tino nui rawa ōu mahi,
kia kore e mahi nui tonu.

We have come too far, not to go further.
We have done too much, not to do more.³

This mahi toi (artwork) has been completed by Tiriti (Treaty of Waitangi) and MoU partners in a way that acknowledges whakapapa (interconnectedness), kawa (protocol) and tikaka (the right way to do things). For me and the Dunedin School of Art, it represents a point of reciprocity for the knowledge and inclusion shared by the MoU partners. Since the signing of the MoU in 2004, mātauranga Māori has been progressively embedded into the DSA curriculum. Such knowledge has broadened and enriched the culture of the school and enables a much stronger sense of connection between people, place and learning.

Boua Huata's words bring together the kaupapa (purpose) of the touchstone:

As artists, we perceived our Dunedin Otago Polytechnic and inland complexes as being geologically, educationally and spiritually placed within the influence of the Ocean, Alps and encased between the mouths of our two great rivers. Our stone was chosen to represent all those elements and our presentation was a collective task, culminating in its present position, to be left unnamed; to beckon passers-by, to give or absorb energy latent within the stone.⁴

Born in Melbourne in 1963, **Andrew Last** has been living by the edge of Dunedin Harbour near Aramoana since 2001. After briefly studying engineering at Monash University, Andrew found his true vocation at RMIT's Gold and Silversmithing department, gaining his undergraduate qualification in 1987 and his Masters in 1994. Andrew's art practice is diverse, encompassing diamond rings, houses, musical instruments, bicycles, boats, silverware and sculpture. Studying te reo Māori at Te Wānanga o Aotearoa in 2007-08 has opened a pathway of engagement with Māori that continues to enrich Andrew's education and art practices.

1 See Russell Beck and Maika Mason, *Pounamu: The Jade of New Zealand* (Auckland: Penguin, 2010).

2 From an email correspondence between the author and Professor Khyla Russell, 2 November 2015.

3 For the text, see <https://www.op.ac.nz/assets/PDFs/Kai-Tahu-MoU.pdf> (accessed 8 March 2017).

4 From an email correspondence between the author and Boua Huata Holmes, 13 March 2017.

GO MINE!

Ruth Evans

Go Mine is a multifaceted project which critically explores New Zealand's mineral extraction industries, both historically and in terms of the contemporary context. The project consists of three components: a tabletop game, a collection of folk songs, and an anthology of zines. While these three elements work together to provide the audience with a broader understanding of the conceptual elements in the project, they can also stand alone in their own right. The zines are educational and informative. They appeal to the rational faculties of their audience. The music is emotive and universally accessible, with the ability to reach a wide audience through various formats, such as live shows and busking, and through recording dissemination on the internet and in the physical realm. The game conjures up a combination of both rational and emotive responses to the reality of climate change



Figure 1. Ruth Evans, *Go Mine* game box, 2016, mdf, 226 x 162 x 80 mm.

Go Mine: A Tabletop Game Based on New Zealand Mineral Extraction Industries is the studio manifestation of the project. The game represents the mining industry in contemporary society through the format of a subversive game.

Go Mine is cut throat and it brings out the worst in its players. No matter how environmentally aware you are of the consequences of industrial mineral extraction, the moment you agree to play the game, something takes over. I have witnessed friends who are staunchly pro-union refuse to pay medical aid for their invisible workers when attacked with a *Disease Outbreak* card, and an anarchist, who proudly wears an FTP tattoo, display excitement when they prevented a *Public Opposition* card from taking effect by playing a *Police Presence* card. To date, I have not come across one person who has not succumbed to the pursuit of power and/or show blatant disregard for the finite planet they are destroying when playing the game.



Figure 2. Cut-throat tycoon: first day of game launch, 2017. Photo: Pam McKinlay.

The players are invited to embrace the corporate tycoon within by mining the 'planet' deck of cards, winning one over their opponents, and gaining power through the bribing of political figures and those in position of authority. Through the application of a gaming mechanism called 'nomic,'¹ players are invited to participate in the game-making process by creating new rules and amendments to established rules during 'conference calls.' During their turn, players can approach the group with a suggested rule change within a fixed amount of time, dictated by the sand-timer. Should the rule change receive a majority vote, it becomes ratified on the next player's turn.

Go Mine provides players with the opportunity to experience what many of us cannot comprehend – why do these people do this? Why does the CEO of ExxonMobil, or the Prime Minister of New Zealand, demonstrate such little regard for our planet?

I feel the answer is this: Because of the power it provides, and because the lives most devastatingly affected are invisible to them, they play this system like a game, and they are winning. When the masses begin to see the game for what it is, they will be able to change the rules of play.

EXTRACTION

The project's second component, *Go Mine: An Anthology of Zines Based on New Zealand's Mineral Extraction Industries*, act as a bridge between my making practice and my theoretical concerns. Formatted in a way to inspire intrigue and interest in the broader framework of the project, there are 23 individual zines which, when compiled, act as the chapters of my dissertation. Through the zine format, the reader is invited to explore the complexities of my research in a non-linear fashion. Rather than publishing the chapters as a book, I chose zines because they encourage 'browsing,' allowing the reader to jump straight into an area of their own interest. The zines can be read individually or explored in depth as an anthology, providing the reader with research that relates to New Zealand's mineral extraction industries both in contemporary society and historically.



Figure 3. Go Mine zines in the Dunedin Gasworks Museum library, 2017. Photo: Anna Evans.

On the cover page of 20 of the zines within the anthology, a card face from *Go Mine* has been used, establishing a direct link between the zines and the game itself. The exceptions to this rule are the three zines *Go Mine: An Introduction* (which provides the reader with some background to my political art practice, and an abstract of the project and zine chapters), *Songs of Go Mine*, and the *Aluminium* zine.

While the minerals required to produce aluminium are not mined in New Zealand, the port town of Bluff is home to an aluminium smelter. This industry plays an important role in New Zealand's economy and is captured in the game *Go Mine* through the construction of dice and sand-timer stoppers made of aluminium. The *Aluminium* zine explains how the industry came to exist in New Zealand and the archaeological significance of the site on which the smelter is built.

Contained within the *Go Mine* planet card deck are seven different resource industries which the players can 'mine' and later 'export' for the purpose of gaining the points required to continue their corporate endeavours. These resources relate to the minerals currently extracted across the country. The *Go Mine* zines invite the audience to learn how these industries came to exist and the manner in which these resources have been mined in the past, present and into the future. The seven resources are non-metallic minerals, ironsand, coal, oil, gas, silver and gold. 'Non-metallic minerals' is an umbrella term for numerous resources (such as clay, aggregate, limestone) which are currently, or have been historically, mined or quarried in New Zealand. Seabed mining, quarry rehabilitation and the connection between diatomite and the devastating 2015 forest fires in South East Asia are investigated within the pages of the *Non-metallic Minerals* zine.

Along the west coasts of New Zealand's North and South Islands, ironsand deposits can be found. In the North Island there are currently two operating ironsand mines, both located in the Waikato. The zine *Ironsand* explores how this industry came to be, and the potential future of seabed mining for the mineral, should the corporations get their way.

When Europeans arrived in New Zealand during the colonial era, they brought with them a reverence for industry. Coal mining's history is investigated in the *Coal* zine. Mining methods and their hazards are discussed, as is the changing landscape and impact on communities. Rotowaro – once a township, now a strip mine – becomes a subject in which to place this history into context and to question what lies on the horizon.

In New Zealand, the pursuit of oil began in 1865 and continues to this day. The search for oil – and public opposition to it – is discussed in an historical context in the zine *Oil*.



Figure 4. Ruth Evans, *Go Mine*: 'resource' cards, 2017, card, 89 x 57 mm each.

Gas has always been the consolation prize in the search for oil in New Zealand. But a rewarding prize it has turned out to be. The *Gas* zine explains how natural gas and its by-products have come to dominate the petroleum industry in New Zealand, and the alarming realities of contemporary methods of extraction, including hydraulic fracturing (fracking).

Currently, silver extraction is a by-product of gold mining in New Zealand. In the operating gold mines across the country silver is also sourced, often in higher quantities than gold. The *Silver* zine explores how silver extraction became possible once hard-rock mining of gold began. Methods of ore extraction are discussed, with a focus on the metallurgical technique of cyanidation and the environmental damage this can cause.

Gold mining has undergone many changes in New Zealand since it began in the mid-1800s. The *Gold* zine records the fluctuating industry and mining methods from early planter mining in rivers and underground mining of hardrock, to contemporary opencast operations. The future of gold mining is contemplated with reference to the current explorations taking place in Puhipuhi, in the Far North. The public opposition to this operation is discussed, and opponents' slogan of "no toxic mining" is explained.



Figure 5. Ruth Evans, *Go Mine*: back of 'planet' deck, 2017, card, 89 x 57 mm each.

ACTION

The 'planet' card deck in *Go Mine* also contains action cards which players can use to attack opponents or defend against their attacks. A variety of these action cards have an accompanying zine, such as *Resource Request*, *Disease Outbreak*, *Public Relations*, *Industrial Action*, *Industrial Disaster*, *Public Opposition*, *Scientist* and *Taxation*.

The *Resource Request* zine explains how the project *Go Mine* came to exist, providing the reader with an understanding of games as an art medium and tool to educate, discussed in the context of my own project and the work of others.



Figure 6. Ruth Evans, *Go Mine*: a selection of 'action' cards, 2017, card, 89 x 57 mm each.

Silicosis and black lung are two diseases that can be caused by exposure to mineral dust when mining. These conditions are briefly explained in the *Disease Outbreak* zine, alongside imagery relating to human health hazards and mining.

Public relations firms play a major role in our society, working with corporations and political parties to develop strategies designed to win the public's support. Often, these strategies are dirty, manipulative, misleading and/or distracting. The *Public Relations* zine explores the way that PR firms, with help from mainstream media, have influenced politics and social justice movements in a negative way, effectively eroding democracy.

The *Industrial Action* zine explores the historical labour movement in New Zealand and the industrial action used to fight for better working conditions, with a focus on the actions taken by miners. The miners' strikes of 1984-85 in Britain are discussed in both an historical and art context.

The government's delay in cleaning up the top ten worst contaminated sites in New Zealand is discussed in the *Industrial Disaster* zine. Alongside this text is a time-line that sets out some of New Zealand's mining-related industrial and natural disasters since 1840.

The *Public Opposition* zine focuses on art-based activist group Liberate Tate and its long campaign to put an end to BP's sponsorship of art and cultural institutions. Between 2010 and 2016, Liberate Tate engaged in creative civil disobedience through performance and installation art in order to challenge the relationship between the Tate Institute and petroleum giant BP. Seven of these actions are discussed, alongside the history of the relationship between BP and Tate, which was formed through corporate and political influence.

In the later months of 2016, oil giant ExxonMobil was outed for its cover-up of scientific data relating to CO² emissions and climate change, dating back to the late 1970s. The *Scientist* zine explores this data, how it was produced, and the way that Exxon used its position in the scientific community, through PR and scientific manipulation, to promote doubt and uncertainty over the reality of climate change.²

Multinational corporations – such as ExxonMobil – use tax loopholes built into legislation to avoid paying their fair share of income tax, and the New Zealand taxpayer ends up subsidising these industrial players.³ In the *Taxation* zine, corruption, tax evasion and tax avoidance by multinational corporations, as well as the art world élite, are investigated.

CORRUPTION

The *Go Mine* tabletop game also contains a 'bribe' deck, from which players purchase cards to gain further power and defensive capacity against certain action cards. A number of these bribe cards have been contextualised in the *Go Mine* zine anthology, including the *Minister of Conservation*, *Minister of Trade*, *Minister of Energy and Resources*, *Prime Minister* and *Police* cards.

In New Zealand, mining companies must be granted permits through the Crown Mineral Act 1991 (CMA) before they can begin their operations. Once these permits have been granted, companies are required to get resource consent through the Resource Mineral Act 1991 (RMA). The role of the Department of Conservation (DoC), the CMA and the RMA, with respect to the mining of conservation land, is discussed in the *Minister of Conservation* zine.

The Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) is discussed in the pages of the *Minister of Trade* zine. Opponents' concern that corporations will be able to sue governments is explained using the example of OceanaGold's case against the government of El Salvador.⁴ The TPPA has been compared to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), a deal which for over two decades has had a major impact on the signing parties, particularly Mexico. The Zapatista resistance movement in Chiapas is presented as an example of an ongoing struggle to free communities from the restraints of deals like NAFTA and the TPPA.⁵

The *Minister of Energy and Resources* zine acts as an archive of the petroleum 'Block Offers' made on behalf of the New Zealand Government to interested industrial players.

In December 2015, Paris was host to COP21, a United Nations annual climate meeting known as the Conference of Parties (COP). The purpose of the conference was to draft the so-called Paris Agreement, a global treaty to reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2050. The conference has been criticised by many for not going far enough. The *Prime Minister* zine explains these concerns, and critically analyses the measures that New Zealand has committed itself to. The Kyoto Protocol is discussed as an example of historical COP treaties. The article "Art and Protest at COP21" provides the reader with a glimpse of the art-based protests that took place in Paris during the conference.



Figure 7. Ruth Evans, *Go Mine*: a selection of 'bribe' cards and back of 'bribe' deck, 2017, card, 89 x 57 mm each.

The *Police* zine is compiled solely of images displaying aggressive behaviour from police at political protests throughout New Zealand history.

DESTRUCTION

The role that music has come to play in my art practice is discussed in the *Songs of Go Mine* zine, alongside an analysis of the political power that music can exert, with a focus on the genre of folk. Accompanying this text is a song book containing lyrics and chords for the tracks on the album *Songs of Go Mine*. Like the zine anthology and the game, *Songs of Go Mine* can stand alone, incorporating another aspect of my art practice into the project, allowing music to act as a tool to raise awareness of the issues society faces when mining companies take command.

All three components of the project were displayed at the Dunedin Gasworks Museum in order to capture the work within an environment that had historical and contemporary relevance. The Dunedin Gasworks is listed as number ten on the Ministry for the Environment's list of contaminated land sites.⁶ Beneath the ground, there is a tar well which contains tar and related by-products. In 2005, asphalt was laid down in the hope of containing these contaminants, and public access was restricted. However, attempts at remediation failed, and subsequent testing has shown that there is a potential for the contaminants to leach into the local storm-water system and the surrounding soil.

The space occupied by the Dunedin Gasworks fitting shop (and the library attached) was chosen as the location for the "Go Mine Game Launch" exhibition. Two tables were set up to allow the public the opportunity to play the game. A wall was installed where the components of the game were displayed, allowing visitors the opportunity to engage with the work, even if they did not wish to play the game. The *Bribe* and *Planet* cards were fixed to the wall, while the dice, timers, pins, maker, rule book, box and insets rested on a shelf. The anthology of zines was placed within the space of the Gasworks library, inviting the public to engage with the written material of my dissertation. A listening station was established to allow visitors to listen to the tracks on the album *Songs of Go Mine*. During the closing party, live bands performed these songs, amongst others, while gaming continued.



Figure 9. Two tables of gaming; first day of game launch, 2017.
Photo: Pam McKinlay.



Figure 8. Live music at the *Go Mine* game launch: Red Roof, 2017. Photo: Bell Murphy.

Throughout the period of the "Go Mine Game Launch," games were being played consistently. Even with the amplification of live music and sounds from the audience during the closing party event, game play did not cease. This surely demonstrates the effectiveness of *Go Mines'* capacity to operate as a microcosm or mirror of industrial activity in Western society.

Figure 10. *Go Mine* wall display, 2017. Photo: Pam McKinlay.



HOW TO PLAY *GO MINE*

Go Mine is a tabletop game which can be played by between two and seven people. The game consists of two decks of cards (the 'planet' deck and the 'bribe' deck), five dice, seven scoring pins, one whiteboard marker, one sand timer, and one pencil. Players begin the game with a fixed number of points (determined by the roll of three dice) charted on their scoring pin, and three cards from the planet deck, held in hand. The 'Foundational Rule Set' prescribed in the *Go Mine Rule Book* provides players with an outline of how their turn can unfold.

Besides trading and the calling of conferences (which can occur at any time before exporting begins), players may enact any of the moves in the following order on their turn:

- 'bribing' an official at the cost of ten points per card.
- unconditionally 'mine' cards from the planet deck at the cost of one point per card.
- use or sell one action card. Should a player wish, they can sell their action cards at the cost displayed in the upper left corner of the card. When cards are used or sold, they enter the discard pile and are removed from circulation.
- 'exporting' resource shipments is the final move a player can make. Once exporting begins, the opportunity to establish a trade or conference call is closed. An 'export' consists of three of the same resource cards, known as a 'shipment.' These shipments are placed face up, and the dice are rolled to determine how much return the export brings to the player. Each resource carries its own value in dice displayed in the upper left corner of the card. The points gained are then charted on the player's scoring pin. There is no limit on how many exports can be played per move.
- The player's turn comes to an end when the marker is passed on.

If a player is required to pay more points than they have charted on their pin, then they must pay with cards (one card = one point). Should a player end their turn with zero points and no cards in hand, they are out of the game.

The first player to own five bribe cards at the end of their turn is the winner. However, should the planet deck be exhausted before this occurs, everyone loses. There can be no winners on a planet deprived of resources.

Ruth Evans believes that art has the capacity to act as a tool of resistance. Evans explores this approach within her multi-disciplinary practice, through the creation of contemporary jewellery, sculptural works and art-based games. Evans completed the Master of Fine Arts programme at the Dunedin School of Art in March 2017 and was awarded an MFA with distinction for her project *Go Mine*.

- 1 Peter Suber, *The Paradox of Self-Amendment* (New York: Peter Lang, 1992), <http://legacy.earlham.edu/~peters/writing/psa/index.htm> (accessed 8 February 2016).
- 2 "The Long Tale of Exxon and Climate Change," *InsideClimate News*, 15 September 2015, <https://insideclimatenews.org/content/long-tale-exxon-and-climate-change> (accessed 17 September 2016).
- 3 Matt Nippert, "Top Multinationals Pay Almost no Tax in New Zealand," *New Zealand Herald*, 18 March 2016, http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=11607707 (accessed 15 April 2016).
- 4 Ciara Nugent, "El Salvador vs Pacific Rim: The Price of Saying 'No' to a Gold Mine," *The Argentina Independent*, 28 September 2015, <http://www.argentinaindependent.com/currentaffairs/analysis/el-salvador-vs-pacific-rim-the-price-of-saying-no-to-a-gold-mine/> (accessed 3 September 2016).
- 5 Noam Chomsky, "The Zapatista Uprising," in *Profit over People: Neoliberalism and Global Order* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1999).
- 6 "Contaminated Sites Remediation Fund Priority List," *Ministry for the Environment*, <http://www.mfe.govt.nz/more/funding/contaminated-sites-remediation-fund/csr-f-priority-list> (accessed 10 July 2016).

ART AGAINST CONSUMPTION

Dilek Alkan Özdemir

SHOPPING BAGS



Figure 1. Dilek Alkan Özdemir; *Consumer*, 2014, glazed and fired ceramics, 70 x 14 x 35 cm.

Shopping bags are a means of visualising consumption rates. We use up to one trillion plastic shopping bags per year, according to the Environmental Protection and Packaging Waste Assessment Foundation. In the work shown below (Figure 1), I created a durable shopping bag on wheels (representing the rush of the shopper). Everywhere, life is being consumed in a rush. The need for speed is also epitomised in our caffeine-fueled, disposable sip-a-cup lifestyle. Thus in another work (Figure 12), I have shown how we are evolving into 'coffee people.'

Technology has become an integral part of life. As a society, we should be steering the fast-developing technology around us to protect the environment and the world we live in. Everyone can become a part of the solution to this problem within the framework of their workspace, which can lead to change which enhances people's lives.

The invention of the steam engine in England was one of the most important developments in human history, ushering in the Industrial Revolution. Production boomed, mechanical power was engineered on a massive scale and huge quantities of raw materials were needed. More and more manufacturers emerged, bigger companies with large numbers of employees were formed, and a consumer class emerged to buy the products they were making.



Figure 2. Dilek Alkan Özdemir; *Coffee Fast*, 2014.

In this frenzy of production, which has only increased over time, thousands of new products enter the market each day, ostensibly to offer consumer choice and quench demand. Control of markets by multinationals is making the world into an homogenised place where children play with the same toys, everybody eats the same hamburgers and pizzas, wears the same clothes and listens to the same music. Instead of enjoying a global world full of local diversity, the consumer has become part of an object-oriented system based on high profits driven by a must-own, high-turnover property industry. The living standards of the masses have been downgraded in order to enrich an élite minority.

ARTISTS QUESTIONING CONSUMERISM

We are besieged by objects. Glittering shop windows are full of prêt-à-porter clothing and exotic groceries from far-away places. Shopping malls, the centres of contemporary consumerism, are a kaleidoscope of colour and movement. As rampant consumption engulfs us, how does art question the consumer-driven cultural storm of the twenty-first century?

Some of the first movements to challenge over-consumption appeared in the late 1980s. In 1989, an anti-consumerist organisation called Ad Busters started a campaign in Canada known as Buy Nothing Day. It was epitomised in the posters of Canadian graphic artist Ted Dave. While working for an advertising firm, Dave started to question the aims of advertising as a form of persuasion and sowed the seeds for Buy Nothing Day.¹ His aim was to inspire people to stop and think about what we really need and the things that we are persuaded to buy. First held in Vancouver on 24 September 1992, Buy Nothing Day has morphed onto today's Black Friday – the last Friday of November after Thanksgiving Day in America. Ironically, in the new tradition of consumerism, Black Friday has become a day when people shop more frantically than ever.²

One of the most prolific artists working in this area is street artist Banksy. His 2005 stenciled work, *Jesus Christ with Shopping Bags*, depicts Jesus crucified, his outstretched arms holding shopping bags, as a critique of mass consumption at Christmastime, traditionally one of the holiest seasons of the Christian year. The artist reportedly said: "We cannot do anything to change the world until capitalism is destroyed. In the meantime, we buy for consolation."³ In *Destroy Capitalism*, Banksy depicts the hypocrisy of people enacting a form of T-shirt rebellion against capitalism. The painting shows a 'bunch of lefty-looking' people queuing to buy a mass-produced garment bearing the legend "Destroy Capitalism."

Banksy's works have inspired an international arts collective called Brandalism (a conjoining of the words vandalism and brand).⁴ Their first project featured 36 large-format billboards containing artworks by 28 artists from eight countries. The project was launched just before the 2012 London Olympics, using a large-scale advertising format to grab consumer attention in public spaces usually occupied by commercial messages. Brandalism was back on the streets in 2014 with its campaign "Round 2 // 2014 – The Six Sheet." This time, 40 street artists furnished English bus-stop advertisement spaces with anti-consumerist statements. The Brandalists moved their attention to Paris in 2015, during the United Nations climate talks (COP21); they called this campaign "Round 3 // 2015 – COP21 climate talks."

CONCLUSION

Many artists around the world are now joining anti-consumerism collectives and making creative statements as a way of lobbying governments to change direction in terms of the current consumer model, a major driver of the throwaway society. This economic model is having very damaging effects on the planet and its people – unless you happen to belong to the 0.001% of the world's population who are enriching themselves from the labour of others, and at a severe cost to the environment in terms of the depletion of material resources and growing pollution levels.

Born in Eskişehir, Turkey, in 1970, **Dilek Alkan Özdemir** has a Bachelor's degree in ceramics from Anadolu University's Faculty of Fine Arts, a Master of Arts degree (1998), and was awarded a PhD in art in 2006. In 2013 she became an associate professor at Anadolu University. She exhibits nationally and internationally and has won awards in the field of ceramics. Her latest work is concerned with issues related to over-consumption in society.

- 1 "Buy Nothing Day", *The Leap Manifesto*, 2016, <https://leapmanifesto.org/event/buy-nothing-day/>.
- 2 *Buy Nothing Day 2016*, 24 November 2016, <https://www.adbusters.org/?s=buy+nothing+day>.
- 3 *Exit Through The Gift Shop*, <https://documentary-movie.com/exit-through-the-gift-shop/>.
- 4 See <http://brandalism.ch/>.

STILL LIFE WITH EV

Pam McKinlay



Figure 1. Electric Vehicle as media player during exhibition installation.

Climate change is now more than ever a social issue – it is no longer the province of science (if it ever truly was). The emerging field of Earth jurisprudence seeks to change the discussion from commodification of Earth's resources – which has led to the current crisis in what is now termed the anthropocene – to a relationship where nature is granted the right to exist, persist and flourish.¹ “The ‘Great Work,’ as Thomas (Berry) called it, is then to carry out the transition from a period of human devastation of the Earth to a period when humans would be present to the planet in a mutually beneficent manner.”²

The recently formed movement ‘Claim the Sky’ seeks to introduce the concept of guardianship for future generations as the basis for negotiation, rather than competing national interests and backroom deals by the juggernauts of multinational capitalism.³ To paraphrase Berry – whatever preserves and enhances the air quality in the natural cycles of its transformation is good; whatever opposes or negates it is not good. It is a responsibility which each and every one of us needs to engage with, because we live in an open room⁴ and in this room without doors we all partake of the one atmosphere. In this context of climate-change watching, a glimmer of hope appeared during the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2016, where we collectively set the goal to reduce 1990 greenhouse emissions by 80 percent by 2050.

“Think global, act local” has become the new mantra as we scramble against the clock to achieve this. In this context, global attention turned on Beijing in 2014 following the *Huffington Post* headline, “Beijing Watches Fake Sunrise on Video Screen amid Smog Emergency.”⁵ China of course is not alone in this, and the headline could just as easily have been about Mexico City,⁶ Singapore⁷ or Delhi.⁸

Two years down the track and China is creating new headlines as it leads the world in solar power generation⁹ and other efforts to improve air quality and mitigate its greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, China has taken on an ambitious project to reverse centuries of deforestation.¹⁰ These changes have been rapidly enacted and, as well as directives from the government, China is looking to engage all its citizens to do their part and contribute to cumulative change through a multitude of individual positive actions. At the bottom of the 2014 *Huffington Post* story was another photo which featured a simple line of text in the background:

保护大气环境人人有责

(it translates as “protecting the atmospheric environment is everyone’s responsibility”).

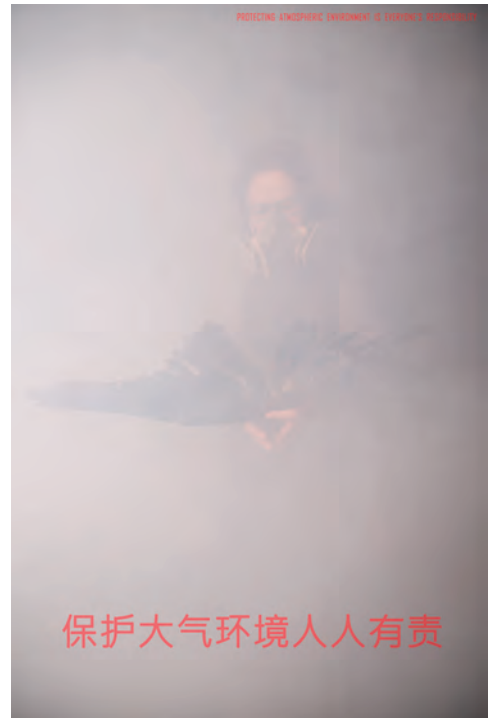


Figure 2. Pam McKinlay, *Bird in the Hand*, photograph on lustre paper, 120 x 80 cm.

We took this line of text as our guiding inspiration for the work *Sweeping up the Sparrows*, and it has echoes running through each of its four parts. This sentence is a call to action for ordinary people and ordinary lives, and it brings to mind a modern parable, often referred to simply as “The Starfish Story.”¹¹ In this tale, a child comes across a beach littered with dying starfish baking in the sun after they are stranded by the outgoing tide, and she begins to throw them back into the ocean one by one. An old man watching comments that her actions are futile, and that she will never save them all. The child replies that she can make a difference to those that are returned to the sea. The moral of the story is that we can all make a difference as ordinary people by the small, ordinary actions made necessary by the time we are born into. To quote Berry once more: “This is a work not chosen by us; indeed, it was chosen for us, by the fact of our being born into this time of crisis when the very structure of the Earth is threatened and the extinction of species continues unimpeded.”¹² Such actions are a necessary antidote to inertia, apathy and the banality of evil.

The installation *Sweeping up the Sparrows* is based on a poem with the same title, written during the week of the 2014 *Huffington Post* article and as a response to the stories which followed in the days after the reported air quality event. The artwork is an installation which features a large poster-photograph; a bare tree surrounded by over 200 smokey ceramic tiles; a sound recording of the dawn chorus; and a reproduction of the message originally screened in Tiananmen Square¹³, emblazoned on a large-screen TV in the gallery.

The tree is stripped bare, bound and braced at its trunk, with a ‘climate change barometer’ – its gauge needle permanently fixed on **CLIMATE** CHANGE – braced at the base of the branches. The tree has three porcelain tiles each hanging precariously by a fine thread, imprinted with the message from the screen. It is reminiscent of the prayers and wishes one writes on joss paper and leaves on the wishing trees in Chinese temple gardens. The

保护大气环境人人有责

Figure 3. From Pam McKinlay and Jesse-James Pickery, *Good Morning:*
保护大气环境人人有责

("protecting the atmospheric environment is everyone's responsibility"), 2016,
digital photograph, 60" flat screen, IPOD, Blue-tooth speaker.

message reminds us that our last-ditch hopes to hold the tide against catastrophic effects fuelled by changing climate (in the form of the fragile Paris Agreement) are hanging precariously by a thread. Beneath the tree are scattered a litter of smokey tiles, each bearing the same message. These are the remains and shards of broken promises of previous climate accords, trumped by the tyranny of greed which sidesteps environmental protection for short-term personal gain.

The poster image refers to the proverb "A bird in the hand" and reminds us that birds have long been used as biomonitors of air quality (think canary in the mine), as smog events impact directly on birds. They have a higher breathing rate than mammals, and are exposed to more airborne particles in the open air;¹⁴ hence bird prevalence is an indicator of a decent, healthy environment capable of supporting life forms including humans. Once the tiny house sparrows falls, the sparrowhawk falls. What befalls the bird befalls man.

In the empty bird's nest in the top of the tree, a recorded soundtrack of bird calls from the dawn chorus broadcasts-signifiers of the new dawn. In China, caged birds, often wild birds bought in the bird markets, are customarily kept



Figure 4-5. Pam McKinlay and Jesse-James Pickery with E M Davidson, *Foreseen, Forsaken*, 2016, stripped elm tree, rope, barometer, photograph on lustre paper with 200 ceramic tiles, stoneware, terracotta, porcelain and marbled clays (details) and sneaky electronics by E M Davidson. Tiles by Jesse-James Pickery (detail of raku tiles below).

for their melodic chirping, particularly at sunrise.¹⁵ “Where there was a dawn chorus in Beijing, it turned out to be a group of men gathered with their cagebirds which were hung up in the early morning sun. The gathering apparently stimulates the birds to sing and there is much competition as to who has the best songster.”¹⁶ The same soundtrack could be heard playing from an electric car (doubling as a media player) at the gallery entrance, which attracted (live) birds into the courtyard during the course of the exhibition.

Where once the Chinese government denied there was air pollution – they called it fog or haze (wu mai in Chinese) – now there is clear recognition from the government and citizens alike that the country’s rapid economic growth has come at a cost to the environment.¹⁷ One of the measures implemented during ‘red alert’ smog events¹⁸ is the taking of all conventional petrol-powered vehicles off the roads and the closure of factories, construction sites and schools in the areas most severely affected. In a city of 23 million inhabitants, this is a logistical nightmare.¹⁹ But for a certain market sector, business is booming. Automakers of completely electric vehicles are thriving, as these vehicles are permitted to operate in the capital at ANY time,²⁰ and as a consequence sales of EVs are booming,²¹ with China now the world leader in the latest EV sales statistics.

In China, we are witnessing pro-environmental action in a country which increasingly recognises that every kilometre travelled in a petrol-powered car is a cost to the environment which is not being paid. We all share this common air and we need to quit our addiction to oil. Time’s really up for this road trip.

Pam McKinlay has a Dip HSc (in clothing/fashion design and textile science) and a BA in Art History from the University of Otago. She is a weaver and maker of things in wood and textiles.

Jesse-James Pickery is in his final year BVA, studying ceramics at the Dunedin School of Art.



Figure 6. “Sweeping up the Sparrows” was installed for the Art + Future Exhibition which accompanied a symposium of Art + Future: Energy, Climate, Culture at the Dunedin School of Art in October, 2016.

- 1 Peter D Burdon, "Wild Law: The Philosophy of Earth Jurisprudence," *Alternative Law Journal*, 35:2 (2010), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1636564##.
- 2 Ibid., 4.
- 3 <http://claimthesky.org>.
- 4 See Mikekiev's beautiful artwork of the Earth cradled in a fragile swathe of clouds (often wrongly attributed as a photo taken from the Hubble telescope): https://www.shutterstock.com/image-illustration/clouds-earth-space-video-available-clip-102362062?utm_campaign=Idees%20Inc.&irgwc=1&tpl=77643-108110&utm_source=77643&utm_medium=Affiliate.
- 5 "Beijing Watches Fake Sunrise on Video Screen amid Smog Emergency (PHOTOS)," *Huffington Post*, 17 January 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/17/beijing-fake-sunrise_n_4618536.html.
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PAINTING AS A TOOL FOR SIMULATING HUMANS' RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE

Siau-Jiun Lim

Today, landscape painting is often identified as a subject with which to draw attention to current environmental issues. This contrasts with the approach of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century artists, where landscape painting was used as a form of religious, mythological and historical documentation.¹ In recent years, people at many levels of society have raised concerns about the environmental issues affecting us today. Campaigns like Earth Day,² which aim to increase awareness of climate change, and Earth Sharing,³ which encourage acting sustainably and reducing pollution, are two examples.



Figure 1. Siau-Jiun Lim, (be)longing - Hope is what I have left, 2016, acrylic on canvas.

Many artists have been contributing to these movements through ecologically themed art for decades. My work continues along this trajectory, with the intention of promoting awareness of environmental issues faced by the world. My focus is on art from a scientific perspective – taking a biological, social-geographical, botanical and psychological approach – aimed at encouraging a relationship between humans and plants. How do humans communicate with nature? Can plants respond to us? The aim is to promote our relationship with nature in an intimate way through my paintings.

Most of the time, we find the landscape in a forest, for example, to be chaotic and messy, while at other times we feel a sense of tranquility from the complexity around us. All its elements – trees, leaves, branches and canopy – are organised in a very complex yet repetitive pattern. Light also invades the spaces within the forest.

All these elements stimulate my mind, as if I've had an exciting conversation with nature. If we stop and are mindful enough, we can appreciate more than the complexity of the branches and leaves. There is a sense of peace, resilience, cooperation, friendship and aging; and, of course, there is also a sense of ruthlessness and competition to survive: a complete human society is reflected in an ordinary landscape.

We should strive to make the natural environment the focus of human social life. It not only benefits us through ecological processes and mitigation of climate change, but also in terms of economic growth. The Nature Institute (US) suggests a new way to see nature: "Only if we find ways of transforming our propensity to reduce the world to parts and mechanisms, will we be able to see, value, and protect the integrity of nature and the interconnectedness of all things."⁴

In the 1980s, the Japanese developed a technique for forming a social relationship with nature called *shinirin yoku*, which means "taking in the forest atmosphere" or "forest bathing." The process involves "being present" in the forest



Figure 2. Sia-Jiun Lim, (be)longing – Relationship, 2016, acrylic on canvas.

by walking and contemplating nature.⁵ *Shinirin yoku* is promoted as offering health benefits and creating a robust physique. I see this activity as not only beneficial to humans, but to nature, too. It is a social-geographical and spatial activity that takes place between humans and nature.

From personal observation, I can discern a relationship between one plant and another; and with the direction of light where they all lean towards the light source – the energy source for photosynthesis. Some choose to keep a distance between them and their neighbour; while others decide to wrap around each other for mutual support, in order to gain height and a better position in relation to the light. Plants move with their stem and root tips, seeking out sources of water

and light. In botany, this process is called tropism, the many types of which include those relying on gravity and plant hormones.⁶ Science has shown that plants change their behaviour in order to negotiate their conditioned environment for survival; some need to strengthen themselves, or rely on other plants to survive.

Biologists have discovered that plants behave not only according to basic survival instincts, but that they also seek to communicate, despite not having a brain or nervous system. In 1880, Charles Darwin published an article drawing on evolutionary theory, “The Power of Movement in Plants.” He conducted a series of experiments, marking reference points on glass and paper to track the plants’ movement. He investigated how plants discriminate and favour one plant over another in terms of the direction of their movement.⁷ In the 2016 National Geographic documentary *The Secret Language of Plants*,⁸ the filmmakers showed that plants have the ability to perceive the environment. According to ecologist Richard Karban, “The mind-bending implication was that brainless trees could send, receive and interpret messages.”⁹



Figure 3. Sia-Jiun Lim, (be)longing, 2016, 1.8 x 3m, acrylic on canvas.

Our human perception of the complexity of tree branches as chaotic and disorderly in reality disguises a plant communication map. And so I wonder; can humans communicate with plants at all – or are plants already communicating with us? Do we know how to listen?

Communication has many levels – sending and receiving information, sharing ideas and feelings, transporting or delivering goods. Communication does not necessarily involve verbal or physical actions, but may involve behavioural change: reactions or responses from both subjects, which are trying to connect to each other.



Figure 4. Sia-Jiun Lim, (be)longing, exhibition installation view.

Researchers have shown that plants exchange information with each other through the air, by releasing odorous chemical compounds called volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and also through their roots in the soil¹⁰ – in addition, some use ultrasonic sound to communicate with mammals.¹¹ Monica Gagliano has shown that plants respond to sound, and even make their own sounds.¹² The Smithsonian Channel film, *Do Plants Respond to Pain?*, shows how a plant emits an extreme electrical signal when it encounters heat from a fire.¹² Plants also grow better when listening to classical music than they do without any musical input.¹³ Dan Johnson, who uses an acoustic sensor to record sound from plants, claims that “plant hydraulics will tell us what our future forests will look like in 50 years.”¹⁴

We often feel a sense of *connection* when we are immersed in nature, and we might well feel that plants are talking to us. Jon Anderson has examined aspects of this phenomenon in an essay on “postnature.” When we interact with nature through activating a range of senses and responses – walk, smell, study, touch and feel – our mind, understood in both its imaginative and intellectual capacities, merges our body with the environment; Anderson refers to this process as “transient convergence”. Our ability to register such experiences emotionally is described by Anderson as “relational sensibility”. Relational sensibility takes the form of continuing memories and feelings registered through transient convergence, which in turn has the ability to produce higher levels of understanding of life and nature itself.¹⁵

Another study has shown how the experience of looking at a painting activates our brain as it interprets colour, shape, line, implied motion and boundaries through our eyes, and increases our mental capacity for appreciation, analysis, creativity, curiosity and investigation.¹⁶ Here I think of a number of artists whose work expresses energy: Jackson Pollock, Terry Winter, Franz Kline, Willem de Kooning, Joan Mitchell and Anselm Kiefer. Viewers often experience a feeling of being overwhelmed as they contemplate the scale and strength of individual elements in works by these artists.

I agree completely with Robert Marchessault’s assertion that “Landscape painting is about looking, looking really hard. Landscape painting is an invitation to look at the view with intrigue, to reflect upon the scene that has been framed by the artist and presented deliberately by the artist.”¹⁷ As a visual artist, I’m fascinated by the task of

capturing nature's complexities and representing them in visual form. How can I build responsive lines, movement, texture and colour into my painting? How can I capture these complex expressions? And, most importantly, how does a painting present its aesthetic emotions and connect with audiences? My painting seeks to explore the ontology of relational sensibility with respect to nature through landscape painting, and to simulate its effects on the human mind.

Originally from Malaysia, **Siau-Jiun Lim** has been living in New Zealand for 11 years. She currently works as a graphic designer at Otago Polytechnic and studies part-time at the Dunedin School of Art. In order to reflect nature in her painting, she works with materials found in nature – feathers, leaves, sticks, recycled objects – alongside traditional brushes.

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AFTER DINNER – A LOOK AT FAST FOOD WASTE AND FAST FOOD PACKAGING WASTE

Susan Nunn

INTRODUCTION

Food is a resource that needs to be protected and repurposed just like any other recyclable, with its waste managed responsibly. The promotion of ethical and sustainable practices will help minimise the high energy consumption, environmental and public health risks and human concerns that make food waste much more than a financial issue.

My work can be seen as a critical questioning of the status quo surrounding the wastage of edible food for no good reason.

We must see food as a seriously valued part of our lives – how we market it, use it and recycle it should all be considered before we waste it.

Food is essential to our very existence. There is an increased awareness of how food politics reflects power policies within global economies that include issues like genetic modification, overproduction and aesthetic selectivity, which can all lead to food waste.

We might find that the representation of food is given context in the history of art. It has been represented in ancient cave paintings, in Egyptian, Greek and Roman times, regaining popularity in the Renaissance, and the classical still life and pop art eras. Food is a major contributor to contemporary films, installations and performances, including those that have been created using real food as a parody of a serious subject. In this century, foodstuffs – including rice, meat, pollens, fresh fruit, vegetables and salt – have become ingredients in the creation of art, often as a political statement in Western countries, where food is accessible, available and affordable.

Food has been used in performance art from the time of the renowned French chef Antonin Carême¹ to the Futurists² of the early twentieth century and contemporary artists.

The problem with food as a subject is its domestic familiarity. We face food several times each day; recognising the social role, but also the utter commonness of food in every person's everyday life, makes it unexceptional and mundane.



Figure 1. *Unswept Floor*, Sotiris Pantazis, 2nd Century BCE, Vatican Museum, Rome.

FOOD: AN ART HISTORY

Some of the ongoing influences in my work include the archaeological discovery of a second-century mosaic pavement known as the *Unswept Floor*. This was made to stimulate the appetite and amuse guests. The disregard of table manners and the comfort and ease that enabled the dropping of half-eaten food suggest the arrogance and excess associated with empire and an indifference to conventional behaviour.

Renaissance painter Giuseppe Arcimboldo was, perhaps, the first artist to use painted food to create a composite image. His vegetable and fruit portraits are whimsical, with a surreal quality; he created them long before the advent of the Surrealist art movement. Given the Renaissance fascination with riddles, puzzles and the bizarre, Arcimboldo catered to the tastes of his time – his paintings were quirky, rather than the product of a deranged mind.

Later, with a focus on meditation, transience and mortality, the long-established still life genre increased in popularity – witness Caravaggio's famous *Basket of Fruit*,³ in which the teasing lusciousness of the fruit is tempered by signs of decay.

Dutch seventeenth-century paintings of less than perfect, half-eaten food, portrayed as an interrupted meal, projected an element of vanitas. The lavish settings depict animals destined for the table, silver and glassware, which all speak of wealth, pleasure and their inevitable demise. These specialist artists addressed the early capitalist taste for moral edification combined with conspicuous display.

The pop art of the 1960s gave the conception of an artwork more importance than the means of its production. Consumerism became a big part of the production of art. Claes Oldenburg's fascination with simple, everyday objects often led him to take food as a subject, as with the soft-sculptured *Floor Cake*.⁴ He developed his trademark art of parody and humour by enlarging the scale and changing the materiality and proportions of familiar objects. In such works, he was beginning to play with the idea of commodity and art. His oversized, soft textile sculptures have been the inspiration for my own previous work.



Figure 2. *Summer*, Giuseppe Arcimboldo, 1573, Louvre, Paris.

Some contemporary artists have used real food as a product in art, myself included. Carl Warner uses fruits, vegetables and meat to make up the layers of his landscapes.⁵ Other contemporary artists have used food to create works that are controversial, making the viewer uncomfortable. For example, in 1982, Linder Sterling created the first *Meat Dress*,⁶ which was recreated in 2010 for Lady Gaga. Raw meat tends to horrify, making the artwork abject, while using fruit and vegetables elicits laughter.

I am looking at table settings associated with forgotten or interrupted meals. Again, there is an element of vanitas here because of the abandoned food covering the detritus or remains of a meal. Works portraying this theme include Judy Chicago's *The Dinner Party*,⁷ Ken and Julia Yonetani's *The Last Supper*⁸ and Michelle Dixon's *Colony Collapse Disorder*.⁹ The artworks I found that resonated most for my current work are Ricky Swallow's *Killing Time*¹⁰ and Marije Vogelzang's *White Funeral Meal* and *Connection Dinner*.¹¹

Daniel Spoerri's *Lunch under the Grass*,¹² a 1980s performance art meal recently rediscovered after being buried



Figure 3. *Colony Collapse Disorder*, Michelle Dixon, 2010.
Collection of the artist, photograph: Pam McKinlay.



Figure 4. *White Funeral Meal*, Marije Vogelzang, 1999,
image courtesy of the artist.

for 30 years, includes a table setting, food and flowers (which have disintegrated) and china, plastic, metal and glass artefacts that are still intact – shades of our future landfill contents. Spoerri's work has become a record of everyday objects, a defining moment in time.

PREVIOUS WORK

Over the last two years I have worked on aspects of the use of food in art, understood both literally and figuratively.

My *How to Make an Expressionist Frittata* recipe book has become a visual archive of natural dyeing recipes.¹³ Including dye recipes, dyed fabrics and images of the ingredients, the work is a parody of a regular cookery book. My oversized recipe book also engages humour by having only one food recipe that uses the strained dye-pot ingredients.

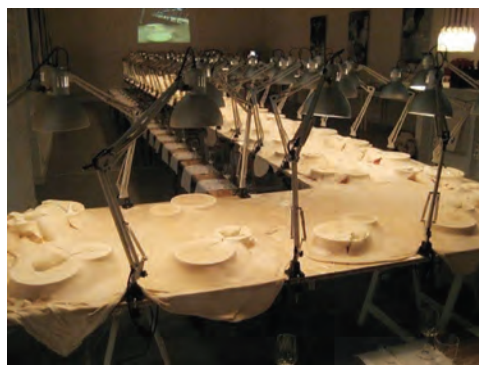


Figure 5. *Connection Dinner*, Marije Vogelzang, 2006,
image courtesy of the artist.

The dyed fabrics in the book are very reminiscent of Expressionist paintings – hence the choice of that art movement in my appropriation of Edvard Munch's *The Scream*¹⁴ for the front cover ... and I could hardly resist using his anglicised surname in a 'cook book' ... munch.

The book also contains a critique of the use of specialist language, or jargon, used in relation to the culinary, fibre and traditional arts, and in discussing the parallels between these arts. I felt an irresistible urge to use humour to satirise culinary jargon, usually found on the back cover of recipe books, along with the language used by art critics.

A 3D felted frittata was the only survivor from my early explorations in this area (2015). It evolved into a segmented cake, then into a felted 'pie chart' analysing avoidable household food waste. Thus pie charts, graphs and food waste became intersecting areas for further investigation.

My work *Pie* features a combination of fabric vegetables with printed and felted pie charts showing the quantities and groups of the most wasted foods in our culture.¹⁵ The title *Pie* refers to the various layers that make up the work— the concept of sharing, the interplay with art, pie charts, domestic cookery, fetishism and the vegetable ingredients. The purpose of this work is to draw attention to the amount of food that is wasted annually in New Zealand households and the space it (and food packaging) takes up in landfills.

Inspired by the oversized soft sculptures of Claes Oldenburg, I realised that the piling, squashing and compacting of my oversized, soft-sculptured fruits and vegetables into a confined space was an excellent way to make a point about food waste, using humour. Where possible, my forms are made with recycled fabrics. The patterns were drafted from real produce, so that I can say, with hand on heart — *all models were consumed in the making of this project*.

FOOD WASTE

I like to think that my artworks use the humour in food to encourage debate around food waste. My research into pie charts and food waste combined to bring both Jonathan Bloom and Vance Packard to my attention. In his book,¹⁶ Bloom argues that because of a range of issues from overharvesting to aesthetic selectivity, the industrialised food chain creates hunger and environmental damage. It is estimated that one third of all the food produced in the world is never consumed, giving rise to the greatest paradox of the twenty-first century — while around 12 percent of the world's population suffers from starvation, over two billion adults are obese. Food waste is very much tied up with this paradox; and the social, economic and environmental impact of food distribution will affect the future development of the entire planet.¹⁷

In his 1960s book *The Waste Makers*,¹⁹ Vance Packard argued that big business was systematically attempting to make us wasteful, debt-ridden, permanently discontented individuals. This was a pioneering exposé of how the rapid growth of disposable consumer goods was degrading the environmental, financial and spiritual character of American society.



Figure 6. *Pie*, 2015, Installation view. Collection of the artist, photograph: Pam McKinlay.



Figure 7. Love Food, Hate Waste Poster

Packard brought attention to the concept of planned obsolescence, whereby a 'death date' is built into products so that they wear out quickly and need replacing – in the case of food, this is a 'use by' date. By manipulating the public into mindless consumerism, Packard believed that businesses were making consumers "more wasteful, imprudent, and carefree in our consuming habits," practices which were using up the world's natural resources at an alarming rate. He also predicted the rise of American consumer culture. These were the main influences behind the concept of my felted pie chart.

My research has also explored the phenomenon of dumpster diving, an effective urban foraging technique aimed at reusing or repurposing resources destined for the landfill. The wastefulness of our consumer society and throw-away culture compels the rescue of edible items. Discarded food that might have slight imperfections, be near its expiry date, or that is simply being replaced is often tossed out despite being still edible. Many retailers are reluctant to sell this stock at reduced prices.

Fast food and its packaging waste is often seen abandoned in public areas such as food courts. As soon as our appetite is satisfied, we leave; we are not encouraged to linger or to take our leftovers away. The option to recycle food and packaging waste is often not available in food courts. Does this contribute to making people too lazy to recycle these items or even place them in a rubbish bin? Because contemporary society views fast food as an instant meal, it is acceptable to waste any uneaten items, reinforcing the acceptance of throwing away leftovers and their packaging.

Another problem facing us is that since the 1960s, portion and plate sizes have increased, further contributing to waste, overconsumption and obesity. The official health and safety guidelines for food businesses are also a contributing factor to waste. Asking for a 'doggy bag' for your uneaten food comes with a disclaimer about food poisoning at best, and sometimes an outright refusal.



Figure 8. Restaurant buffet, photograph: Susan Nunn.

Food prepared in bulk in restaurants, care facilities and hospitals is also subject to restrictive rules. Some food can be recycled by kitchen staff, but much cannot and staff are discouraged from taking prepared, uneaten food off the premises, meaning that its fate will be pig food or, more likely, landfill.

For all these reasons, the concept of food in art has combined with my interest in food waste to become the basis of my ongoing research.

PRESENT WORK

Historical events such as the Pompeii disaster; the mystery of the Mary Celeste and, more recently, the Christchurch earthquakes have all resulted in meals being interrupted and abandoned.

I have continued my focus on modern food waste, researching table settings and the interrupted, unfinished and wasted meal. My work *After Dinner* suggests the transformation that has taken place in our culture due to fast foods and food wastage: the death of the dinner table as an indicator of commensality – eating together slowly in community.

Colour has become an important element in this new work. We use colour to identify our food, to judge its freshness and, in the culinary arts, to create a colourful plate of food to enhance our eating pleasure. In *After Dinner*, the white dining suite, inclusive of crockery and cutlery, embedded under a white tablecloth, is enclosed in a white-walled area. A single bright white light illuminates the garishly coloured fast food and packaging waste on the tabletop, giving the illusion of a formal but intimate dining experience.

The white setting suggests a tableau of a moment frozen in time. The tablecloth becomes a shroud over the table for the demise of the meal. The coloured fast-food items scream out for attention; they have caused this culinary demise, while at the same time contributing to vast amounts of food waste and obesity in society. At a quick glance, the audience assumes that the table is covered with real fast foods before realising that everything is made from realistically well-crafted fabric.



Figure 9. Buffet leftovers to be thrown out, photograph: Susan Nunn.



Figure 10. Bakery in Merrivale, Christchurch, 2011, photograph: Susan Nunn

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I see the use of humour – including elements of parody, satire and appropriation – as an ongoing feature of my practice as I seek to communicate messages about our relationship with food through my artwork.

I finish with the immortal words of Pete Seeger: "If it can't be reduced, reused, repaired, rebuilt, refurbished, refinished, resold, recycled or composted, then it should be restricted, redesigned or removed from production."²⁰

It really is a question of survival.



Figure 11. *After Dinner*, 2016, installation view.
Collection of the artist, photograph: Susan Nunn.



Figure 12. *After Dinner* (detail).
Collection of the artist, photograph: E M Davidson.

Susan Nunn began her textile craft career as a young child learning knitting and sewing skills from her mother. She came to the Dunedin School of Art as a mature student to consolidate an artistic career with a consummate qualification, and completed a Bachelor of Visual Arts Degree with Honours. She has presented and shown her work at the Auckland Arts Festival's White Night event, and at the International Food Design Conference in Dunedin, 2016.

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RAISING AWARENESS IN THE SUSTAINABLE GRAPHIC DESIGN CLASS

Nilgun Salur

In today's world, rapid population growth and damage done to the planet by human agency have reached a level where action should be taken immediately. It has become clear that some developments aiming to improve the quality of life, or promoting a longer, healthier life, are contributing to water, air and soil pollution, destroying natural resources in urban areas and harming flora and fauna and animal health. It has become a necessity to raise ecological awareness and sensitivity in the minds of the general public, to produce less waste and processing by-products and promote reuse, rejecting technologies which produce harmful waste and embracing environment-friendly technologies.

Like other sectors, graphic design needs to be conscious of environmental sensitivities and should aim to leave a more livable environment to the generations that succeed us. An environmentally conscious designer will design images incorporating elements of 'eco design,' 'sustainable design' and 'environmentally sensible design.' Further, the designer may cooperate with the producer in the efficient and sustainable delivery of the product to the consumer. In addition, in collaboration with the manufacturer, the designer will have a significant role in ensuring that their design meets the needs of the target population, reaching the consumer in a manner consistent with the product's life cycle.

Today, there are many organisations that support this view. Graphic designers advocating for social responsibility in the arts are only too aware of the negative environmental consequences of the consumer society. In the *First Things First Manifesto 2000*, these issues have been moved to the forefront of the design discourse by 33 influential designers. The manifesto – an updated version of the *First Things First Manifesto* published by Kes Garland in 1964 – is still controversial.¹ This document seeks answers to questions like: What is the role of the graphic designer in today's consumer culture? What should it be? Do graphic designers, who play an important role in the creation of the current consumerist madness, have a responsibility to address the more important needs of the community that are still awaiting attention and redress?²

More recently, a further declaration has emerged as a result of the realisation that industrial product designers have to redefine themselves and their profession by recognising that sustainable development is a necessity rather than a choice. In the Kyoto Design Declaration signed by members of the International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design and Media (CUMULUS) (2008), design is described as a medium for creating social, cultural, industrial and economic values by combining the humanities, science, technology and the arts. The declaration confirms the principle that designers have a global responsibility to build sustainable, human-centered and creative societies.³ It recognises that the designer has a major role to play in creating environmentally conscious, sustainable and awareness-creating designs. At the same time, these various groups and declarations have helped promote the "rapid change and rise in environmental management systems and in environmental analysis, following environmental sensitivity in society."⁴

One definition of a graphic designer is someone who transmits a design-based service or product to the public in the most efficient way. Designers with a sense of social responsibility regarding the permanence of our planet should observe the principles of sustainability while they are conveying their message and at the same time raise public consciousness about care of the environment. Thus, the formal design education curriculum should be augmented with teaching materials on the global impact of environmental problems. In addition, sustainable design approaches, if included in design education, will lead to behavioural change in students and raise awareness of sustainability issues. Academics and designers who lecture in graphic design programs should consider adding the concept of environmental responsibility to their courses.

In this study, which focuses on the sustainable graphic design module in the second year graphic design program involving students from Class II, Department of Graphic Arts, in the School for the Handicapped at Anadolu University in Turkey, works designed from discarded materials were created by students in order to raise environmental consciousness as part of the creative process and to gain new perspectives. Some examples are shown here.

Graphic design is a much more effective, direct and rapid way of communicating than other methods of conveying information – in this context, with the aim of developing environmental awareness and motivating desirable behaviours. Thus, the meeting of graphic design with the concept of sustainability can potentially bear fruit in designs that raise environmental awareness and draw attention to environmental problems. In design education, the student should be taught that the designer should have certain responsibilities and competencies in this regard: the choice to use ecological materials, the use of environmentally friendly energy, and familiarity with concepts of recycling, repurposing and reusing.⁵

As a project, the Anadolu University students were asked to design figurines of extinct or endangered animals made of discarded materials, drawing on their knowledge, creativity and imagination.

In the first part of project, the students worked at defining the problem, collecting data, finding solutions



Figures 1-2. Angela Haseltine Pozzi, *Washed Ashore*, <http://washedashore.org/photos/>.



Figures 3. Collection of waste materials by students.



Figures 4-5. Students engaged in the design process.

and putting their creativity to work. In the second part, students designed figurines of already extinct or threatened animals, using waste materials. The project has had a significant effect on students who are being trained to be designers, both as individuals, in terms of consciousness-raising, and as designers in their thinking and research methods. All the waste materials to be used in the project were selected and used with a view to conserving energy during the design and production phase, and to enable the product obtained at the end of the design process to be recyclable. Thus, as well as raising their awareness, the project contributed to the students' creativity while preparing them to cope with changes in technology, the environment, culture and society. Students who are focused on sustainable design methods will be well placed to contribute to the conservation of our planet's natural resources.

In the third and final part of the project, the students held an exhibition of their designs of extinct or endangered animal figures formed from waste materials. The exhibition, which was fundamentally undertaken by the students in order to discover their own creativity, as well as raising their levels of social awareness and responsibility, was also intended to raise awareness in the community of sustainability issues.

In recent years, designers have begun to use design and technology to change negative viewpoints, create environmental awareness, solve current problems and help prevent new ones developing, and also to raise awareness and leave a livable world for future generations. To achieve these goals, designers are struggling to use all the potential of technology in order to build sustainable features into their designs, to recycle materials and to reduce consumption. As consumers have begun moving towards environmentally conscious, environmentally friendly products, many companies are placing non-polluting production methods, the use of renewable resources, recycling and other sustainability strategies on their agendas and taking serious steps in this direction. The role of design and designers is changing, and their sense of responsibility to help achieve a sustainable future has increased.

This move to create environmental awareness in graphic design should also reshape graphic design education. The Anadolu University project has shown us that if they are given a sufficiently powerful vision, the students who will be the expert designers of the future can play an important role in the graphic design sector by using designs which are created with sustainability and repurposing in mind.



Figure 6. The student project group.

Nilgün Salur was born in Polatlı, Turkey, in 1970. She graduated from the Graphic Arts Department, Fine Arts Faculty, Anadolu University in 1991 and completed a Masters degree in the Graphic Arts Department, Social Sciences Institute, Anadolu University in 1995. She completed a doctorate in the Fine Arts Department, Social Sciences Institute, at Kocaeli University in 2014. She is assistant professor in the Graphic Arts Department, School for the Handicapped, at Anadolu University.

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- 2 "First Things First: Tarihçe," *Grafikerler Meslek Kuruluşu/2002-Dedi ki* 02, <http://gmk.org.tr/uploads/news/file-14466674451023275305.pdf>.
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- 4 Pontus Cenn and Staffan Laestadius, "The Efficiency of Becoming Eco-efficient," *Management of Environmental Quality: An International Journal*, 14:2 (2003), 221-41.
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Figure 7. Dodo Kuşu, designed by Merve Mert. (above)
Figure 8. Poster design for student exhibition. (left).



Figure 9. Mamut, designed by Burhan Öztürk (above).
Figure 10. Poster design for exhibition (right).



PARTICIPATING IN COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE

Marion Wassenaar

INTRODUCTION

A community of practice (CoP) is a term used to inform research in art education programmes. The expression refers, in this context, to artists who share similar themes, methods or approaches to their students' independent art practice. The purpose of research in this area is for students to use their understanding of the methods and concepts of established practice to contextualise their own practical, theoretical and art historical investigations. Examples of the types of community of practice that a student may research include the pop art movement, which engaged in mass media and consumerism, or the feminist art movement that sought ways to express women's experiences and quest for gender equality. These movements can become important references for study and reflection for the art student whose practice incorporates themes of (for example) consumer culture or inequality respectively.



Figure 1. The News Network, "On Air" exhibition, Dunedin School of Art Gallery, 2015, installation view.

Although the term 'artist models' is sometimes inappropriately applied to this form of research, CoP is the more commonly accepted terminology. However, in terms of a social theory that involves the practice of engagement, educational theorist Etienne Wenger's communities of practice take a more active role in the learning process. 'The personal and professional partnership of Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner describe one form of CoP as "a band of artists seeking new forms of expression. They refer to people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour."²

This article investigates Etienne Wenger's definition of a CoP with a view to aligning his social theory with the approach taken by The News Network Project which, as a group of trans-Tasman artists, aims to engage in contemporary debate and artistic production around current events, politics and conflict through participation in a creative network. At the same time, I examine social theory as a means of seeking value through the implementation of a CoP for students in a work-based learning (WBL) context. I employ the example of a WBL project where students engage with alumni from the Dunedin School of Art's Print Studio to co-ordinate a group exhibition.

I seek to address the benefits of learning through active participation in a given social environment by firstly defining a CoP. I then summarise Wenger's book, *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning and Identity*, and reflect on CoPs in WBL. I conclude with strategies to apply a CoP to a WBL context in the visual arts.

DEFINING COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE AS SOCIAL THEORY

Although a long-established concept, 'community of practice' is a fairly recent term that describes a key approach to knowing and learning. By definition, "communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly."³ CoPs are everywhere and we all participate in several CoPs at any given time, such as a family situation or a local art group. Learning is supported through our individual relationships, our communities and the organisations with which we are involved.

The News Network Project is a group of artists from Melbourne and Canberra (Australia), Auckland and Dunedin (NZ), who first came together in a residency at the Dunedin School of Art and are linked through their making of artworks recontextualised from news media that engage in social comment through a print-based practice. Each artist has an established individual practice, and in engaging in The News Network Project hopes to encourage critical discussion of social issues and contemporary art while broadening their public engagement and sustaining an ongoing trans-Tasman creative network. Their participation in group exhibitions and residencies unites and strengthens the network as a CoP, while fostering the development of a growing and evolving community.

CoPs build on situated learning, a term that describes how individuals acquire skills and experience through a social process first proposed by Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger as a model of learning.⁴ The apprenticeship model of learning in a living community is based on this concept. It is in these social interactions that help shape the identities of those involved that a CoP is defined.

There is a distinction between a community, as in the local people in a neighbourhood, and a CoP, where three major characteristics determine the concept. The first characteristic is the domain, defined as a shared interest or commitment that establishes a common or collective identity. The second characteristic relates to community-building through the engagement and interaction that stems from the members in the domain. The third characteristic relates to practice and, as practitioners, the members build on their resources by sharing their knowledge, ideas and experiences. The combination of all three characteristics working in unison contributes to the success of the CoP.

Participating in a CoP offers individuals valuable resources and access to existing knowledge that means there is no need to 'reinvent the wheel,' but rather to build on the prior experience of others. A successful CoP requires more than mere collaboration – it allows for varying viewpoints to be discussed and mediated. This exchange of ideas and information helps to structure the practice of the communities and to mould the identities of the individuals involved.

ETIENNE WENGER'S *COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: LEARNING, MEANING, AND IDENTITY* (1998)

Wenger presents a theory of learning that starts with the assumption that engagement in social practice is the fundamental process by which we get to know what we know and by which we become who we are. As we are social beings, learning not only takes place in a classroom, but in the day-to-day activities of active participation in a social environment. Rather than seeing it as an independent process, Wenger suggests placing learning in the context of our lived experience of participation in the world.⁵ By participation, he refers to an inclusive process of being active agents in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to these communities.⁶ In this way, a meaningful personal experience within a community is integrated through shared perspectives, that in turn shape who we are and how we make sense of what we do. The learning undertaken in a CoP is not prescriptive, but is sustained through constant personal transformation and adaptation to suit the nature of the CoP and those involved.

In his book, Wenger's social theory of learning is presented in two parts, focusing on 'practice' and 'identity,' with an epilogue on design. He begins each part with a case study based on qualitative research he undertook in an organisation involving claims processing. I found his references to claims processors dry and far-removed from the visual arts communities I wished to explore, with the text oriented toward organisations rather than the educational sector. Throughout the book, he refers back to his experiences with the claims processors, which clearly helped him formulate his theory of learning in communities of practice in an organisational context. (It is only in the final chapter that Wenger discusses a framework for education for teachers and students working together; in an epilogue based on design for learning.) The two parts to the book focus respectively on practice, as in learning as doing, and identity, best defined as learning as becoming.

For Wenger, practice is a process whereby we can experience the world and our engagement with it as meaningful through all types of experiences. 'Meaning' is understood not in the sense of a dictionary definition, but as a negotiation involving participation and reification.⁷ Negotiated meaning is a reciprocal and unprecedented process that identifies the construction of shared historical and cultural resources and perspectives, requiring both interpretation and action. Reification, as described by Wenger, involves the process of making ideas concrete through the production and use of artefacts as a product of meaning.⁸ The meaningfulness of our engagement in the world develops through a continued mutual engagement in, and communication with, a community. Conversations that tap into others' experience, open discussions, peer observations and brainstorming are all approaches that contribute to learning in an effective CoP. Community engagement not only crystallises our understanding, but communicates knowledge to the novice not yet experienced or fully conversant with the community.

Each CoP develops what Wenger terms "boundary objects" and "locality." Boundary objects are the distinctive repertoire, idiosyncrasies and complex understandings that characterise each CoP and make it unique.⁹ Locality refers to the specific resources, relationships, problem-solving procedures and local jargon that characterise a given CoP.¹⁰

For Wenger, identity is an intrinsic aspect of a social theory of learning that includes issues regarding participation and inclusion, and recognises the social, cultural and historical character of each individual. There is an identity as a community, but the community also shapes the identities of its members. In a learning community, a tension is activated between ability and knowledge, with experience gained through participation and reification. Levels of participation are flexible. Participation is a defining characteristic of identity, and is managed by individuals through what we care about, what we attempt to know, those with whom we seek connections, how we engage our energies and how we attempt to steer our trajectories.¹¹

A personal example of identity shaped through participation in a community is my connection to the Print Studio at the Dunedin School of Art, also known as the P Lab (Print Laboratory), which operates as a shared space in the use of workshop facilities, undertakes collaborative projects with students and maintains connections through

their website. Through hosting an alumni exhibition, I anticipate that the alumni would be able to share stories with students and other alumni about their experiences at the art school. The alumni exhibition – a WBL project – will enable these conversations to take place and open doors for collaboration and the sharing of ideas, offering students opportunities to find their place in the art world and make them better prepared to realise their future aspirations.

To make sense of identity formation and learning in communities of practice, Wenger considers three modes of belonging in a community – engagement, imagination and alignment. The connections and activities pursued in participation and reification make mutual engagement a distinctive context for learning and identity and the acquisition of knowledge. The process of imagination requires separation to innovate, along with the freedom and energy to explore and question new ideas for the creation of knowledge. Alignment requires the combination of identification and a receptive negotiability to create a social ecology of identity that explores and defines the values of the CoP. Wenger states that negotiability is a strong factor in the success of a CoP, as it requires a balance of engagement for learning to take place.¹²

From my perspective, the aim of WBL in an arts project is to give students the opportunities to engage in professional practice in the visual arts industries and to expand their knowledge of the contemporary art scene in real-world scenarios. However, a student-centred approach requires a degree of autonomy in any decision-making affecting students in order that they may feel a part of the community. However, in saying that, by operating as part of a community, students need to be open to alternative and diverse viewpoints.

It is in the epilogue of his book that Wenger, as part of his framework of practice and identity, discusses the kind of “social design” that fosters learning for education and the formation of identities. Understanding the concept of a CoP will enable future-focused strategies for learning developed through a social perspective. For Wenger, learning changes who we are by changing our ability to participate, to belong, and to negotiate meaning.¹³ CoPs cannot be designed formulaically, as they tend to be organic, open-ended and flexible. The WBL project itself is a site for self-directed learning and, as such, learning outcomes cannot be predicted. An educator’s role would be to facilitate, support, encourage and nurture a CoP in its participation and decision-making and to recognise that each community is responsible for its own learning.

Four dualities are discussed by Wenger to capture the challenge of design for learning.¹⁴ One of these dual dimensions relates to power, and constitutes the tension between “Identification and Negotiability,” which must have a framework that is negotiable in practice and that contributes to the motivation for creative learning. As far as a framework of learning “architecture” in education is concerned, Wenger prioritises identities that, through education, open new dimensions for the negotiation of the self.¹⁵ This understanding of self applies to art students and impacts on their conceptual development, informing both their research interests and outcomes based on their own experiences in the real world. Wenger acknowledges that students need to be able to discover and feel motivated to invest in their own learning and reification of knowledge.¹⁶ By engaging in a community in which they can comfortably critique opinions, students gain confidence in their critical thinking skills and articulation of ideas.

Participants in a CoP contribute in a variety of independent ways that become material for building an identity.¹⁷ It is important that students are given equal opportunities to share their knowledge and expertise. For a CoP to be effective, adaptability, tolerance and empathy are solid qualities, but there must also be respect for multiple perspectives as we live in a time and place of multicultural diversity. Finally, Wenger makes a brief mention of the value of the “dual professional” as an authentic form of participation, as he sees this as an essential requirement of teaching.¹⁸ Members of The News Network are all practising artists, with the majority also involved in the tertiary arts education sector. As a group, they present a meaningful example of an active CoP.

REFLECTING ON CoPs IN A WBL CONTEXT

According to Charles Jennings, the majority of adult learning occurs not through formal learning but through experience, practice, conversations and reflection in the workplace.¹⁹ WBL offers a broad and informal learning structure while contributing value and relevance and encouraging lifelong learning through meaningful participation in the world. I would like to think that this aspect of learning over their lifetime will impact on our students through their participation in the exhibition project and contact with alumni in an ongoing and sustained community. In addressing the Otago Polytechnic (OP) Learning and Teaching Strategic Framework for capable, work-ready, future-focused, sustainable practitioners, engaging in CoPs will equip students with a wide range of graduate attributes. These include, in particular, the ability to take purposeful action on the basis of knowledge, experience, reflection and connectedness.²⁰ Externally, avenues for social networking via the internet provide fast, innovative and accessible strategies for broader communication. Technology has come a long way in the last two decades since Wenger discussed his social theory of learning; however, he continues his dedicated research and studies on the subject. A more recent publication proposes a research agenda that develops a theoretical foundation to help address the learning challenges of our globalising world.²¹

For me, the nature of a CoP implies a bottom-up, grassroots approach to learning. Wenger discusses the horizontality of learning as an emerging trend.²² I can't help but see a connection to the rhizome and its horizontality as a result of the intertwining and interconnecting relationships formed through participation in communities. CoPs are organic and constantly evolving. The way that I consider the concept of the rhizome translating into a CoP is not through outcomes or final products, but through valuing the sustaining participation and knowledge-generation of the learning communities in mutual partnership. There is autonomy in the choices made and accessibility offered. Also, learning is not a one-way street, so we need to be open and active practitioners in our rapidly changing cultural and digital climate.

There are a number of questions I would like to address regarding the application of Wenger's theory in a WBL context:

- What can the student learn from this experience?
- In what beneficial ways could the CoP shape students' identities?
- How does this fit within curriculum requirements, especially in relation to Professional Practice?
- How can the flexibility of a CoP be evaluated and assessed in a WBL context?
- Which strategies for the creation and functioning of a CoP are working and why? These observations can guide future actions.

These questions can be addressed following the implementation of the CoP and by monitoring and reflection on the levels of learning and community engagement achieved once it is established.

APPLYING A CoP TO A WBL CONTEXT IN THE VISUAL ARTS

The Community of Practice Design Guide provides a step-by-step guide to creating a community of practice based on the authors' experiences working with corporations, non-profits, associations, government organisations and educational institutions.²³ The guide offers strategies to develop mutual associations for collective learning and knowledge-sharing, and ways in which to grow and sustain CoPs. The guide supports Wenger's definition of a CoP, stressing the value of what the authors describe as a social architecture that energises the community and a technical architecture that supports the community. "The roles, processes, and approaches that engage people – whether face-to-face or online – are essential in relationship building, collaborative learning, knowledge sharing, and action."²⁴ The guide also stipulates that a CoP must have a purpose, and outlines five specific issues to be considered in establishing a CoP – inquire, design, prototype, launch and grow. I believe that this guide provides a useful model



Figure 2. The News Network, 'Broadcast' exhibition. RMIT Lightspaces, Melbourne, 2016.
Works by Marion Wassenaar (left) and Marian Crawford (right), installation view.

by which to steer the alumni exhibition project, and it also provides useful information that could support students in their engagement in a CoP.

The University of Tasmania provides a comprehensive resource for developing a CoP that includes a toolkit and checklist.²⁵ Along with the three dimensions that define the concept of a CoP – community, domain and practice – the toolkit also suggests motivation, mandate and structure as essential, yet hidden, elements of a CoP²⁶

Tasked with bringing together alumni and students to the Print Studio, I feel it is my role to nurture motivation, drive the mandate and maintain a balanced structure. I recognise that, having been a student and now an alumna, I am able to understand the position of each group so to be able to facilitate engagement. "Getting in on the Act" is a report that looks at how arts groups are creating opportunities for active participation.²⁷ The focus of the report is on the relationship between commercial arts agencies and how they interact with their audience, looking at ways to promote engagement in the arts to the general public. Given its emphasis, I feel that although the report is not directly relevant to this paper, it has highlighted the limited research that has been done on CoPs in the arts in relation to my own research interests. Through my engagement with both The News Network Project and the alumni exhibition, I consider that this is an area I can respond to in the future.

What I hope that the alumni exhibition project achieves is a sense of camaraderie, by actively connecting students with alumni through a WBL experience. The connections they make and the knowledge gained and shared will, I believe, give students more confidence to actively participate in the art world and hopefully generate long-term relationships. Writing this paper has given me a better understanding of CoPs as a theory of learning and equipped me with a store of information to enable me to further cultivate and reflect on a CoP in future.

Marion Wassenaar holds an MFA from the Dunedin School of Art and specialises in print practices; her research interests focus on the collision between humans and their environment. She lectures in the Print Studio at the Dunedin School of Art and is a member of The News Network Project, <http://www.thenewsnetworkproject.org/>.

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RIPPLES: DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ART

Alicia Hall

Nothing is a mistake. There is no win and no fail. There is only make.

John Cage

Because my work explores patterns of social relationships, my project has involved a collaboration between the Dunedin School of Art and the School of Social Services at Otago Polytechnic. Based on process, my work is about colour and printing multiples on textiles and large installations. The processes I engage with are adapted and extended when used in community workshops. I use fabric, because it has such a close relationship with humans, dating back thousands of years, and it still plays an important role in our daily lives.

In my first year at art school, I started exploring aspects of printing, layering and working with waste.

In my second year, I engaged with Martha Rosler's feminist parody video, *Semiotics of the Kitchen*.¹ Working in many media, Rosler analyses the myths and realities of patriarchal culture. In response to her video, I explored printing and dyeing, using kitchen utensils, kitchen chemicals and food. This resulted in two wall works made of food



Figure 1. Alicia Hall, *Material Deconstruction Print*, 2013, 3 x 1.8 m, white and black printed cotton. First-year BVA exhibition.



Figure 2. Alicia Hall, 2014, food colour; serviettes. Second-year BVA exhibition, Salisbury House, Dunedin.

colouring and serviettes. I was also interested in wool and its felting properties and made another wall work depicting the visualisation of cells.

In my third year of the BVA, I focused on ideas of connection, interdependence and the individual as part of the collective. I began to consider the underlying reasons for my interest in community and social relations, things which are still very much part of my work today.

In my installation *12 000+*, the first felt units I added were made entirely of wool. Subsequent units included unfeltable materials like cotton, acrylics, silk and even plastic, to see how much could be added and how it would compromise the structure of the resulting units. During the making, I was thinking about how we are influenced and shaped by what we see and experience daily, and how we influence and shape people by our behaviour.

In a sister work entitled *Same but Different*, I explored the colour-separation properties of black food colouring mixed with water, on serviettes. I found that the difference between the colours depended on the amount of water added and how it was applied. I reflected that the same principle could be applied to love, as it is how we show (apply) our love that makes the real difference.

In May 2014, I attended a five-day deconstructed screen printing workshop in Whanganui with American textile artist Kerr Grabowski. I decided to use this process in my work for my MVA, which started in January 2016. The requirements for the process are blank screens, thickened dyes and application of texture for imagery. The build up of dye in the textured areas acts as a resist, and large quantities of prints can be produced in a short space of time.

In life, I am attracted to the flawed and the outcast. This comes through in my work, where I use scraps and less-than-perfect materials to give them an opportunity to be meaningful and still be worth something. The texture of materials intrigues me and makes me want to explore their materiality through print. The structure of the material mainly determines the mark it leaves on the fabric. This aligns with how I feel about the mark or effect that we have on each other as we interact on a day-to-day basis.



Figure 3. Alicia Hall, *Cell Visualisation*, 2014, felted balls, wool, acrylic, silk, bamboo, cat fur. Second-year BVA exhibition.



Figure 4. Alicia Hall, *12 000+*, 2015, felted wool, cotton, plastic, cat fur, bamboo fibres. Third-year BVA exhibition, SITE 2015. Photo: Pam McKinlay.



Figure 5. Alicia Hall, *12 000+* (detail). Photo: Michael Schouten.



Figures 6 and 7. Alicia Hall, *Same but Different*, 2015, serviettes and food colouring. Third-year BVA exhibition, SITE 2015.

Working with waste or everyday materials in a deliberative way dates back at least to the modernist period and the Dada art movement of the early twentieth century. These in turn influenced artists in the group known as Fluxus that took shape in the 1960s and 70s. They encouraged everyone to make art all the time, and didn't believe that there should be any boundaries between art and life. German artist Joseph Beuys was part of this group. The impact he had as an individual artist, especially with his land artwork, *7000 Oaks*, in the city of Kassel, is a great example of how influential an artist can be in changing an environment. The group was influenced by John Cage's belief that the process of creating was more important than the finished product. Cage also believed that one could start an artwork without necessarily knowing the outcome beforehand.²

As a process-based artist whose work is predominantly about colour, I have researched painters who utilise a variety of physical application processes. I became interested in the work of colour field painter Helen Frankenthaler, who used a 'soak stain' technique, where she would pour diluted oil paints onto unprimed canvas, with the emphasis on spontaneity.³ The diluted paints then became part of the canvas, instead of just paint sitting on top of it.

There are no rules. That is how art is born, how breakthroughs happen. Go against the rules or ignore the rules. That is what invention is about.

Helen Frankenthaler

My community art projects bring together individuals who print fabric and make quilts for people in their community. The quilt references elements of security, warmth, love and care. Quilting and quilts have such a rich history. Quilting had, and still has, great social benefits for isolated women in many parts of the world, especially during colonial times. All fabric scraps were precious, and the quilts evolved without much thought about their design. The no-waste ethic of these old-style quilters aligns with my own values.



Figure 8. Alicia Hall, *Material Deconstruction*, 2016, strips used for screen-printing. First-year MVA exhibition.



Figure 9. Alicia Hall, *Town Dump Project*, May 2013.

The Gee's Bend Quilters of Alabama, an isolated and poor African-American community, have an interesting history, having made quilts since the 1920s. Their work has been compared to abstract painting due to the simplicity and improvisational nature of their designs. It is the exact opposite of the ordered regularity of mainstream Euro-American quilt design. Their quilts have now become coveted wall hangings.⁴

In the making of my "provisional quilts" I explored ideas about society and social structure. The best prints were used first, and the rejected prints formed the subsequent quilts until only a small, substandard group remained.



Figures 10. Alicia Hall, *Provisional Quilts* and detail.



Figures 11. Alicia Hall, *Provisional Quilts* detail.

For me, each print is a person and, by utilising this procedure, the quilts mimicked the kind of social process that I disagree with.

Textile artist Gunta Stölzl played a fundamental role in the development of the Bauhaus Weaving Workshop. Anni Albers, the first textile artist to have a solo exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, was also part of the weaving workshop. Colour made up a very important part of the preliminary course at the Bauhaus, which was designed by artist and art theorist Johannes Itten. He believed that the chief characteristic of colour is that it is always relative, and that a colour seen in isolation will never look the same when set alongside another colour or colours.

Josef Albers, also originally from the Bauhaus, taught his students to work with colour before he taught them colour theory. His book *Interaction of Color*, published in 1963, has changed ideas about the perception of colour. His *Homage to the Square* series consists of more than a thousand paintings.

I am drawn to working with bright, clear colours. As a South African, my childhood memories are filled with sunshine, heat, blue swimming pools and beautiful coloured flowers. My colour use is a response to living in Dunedin, where the greyness and the lack of sun is in stark contrast to the quality of the light in Africa and my childhood sensations, which still resonate in me.

Although I prefer working with pure colours, due to the printing process I utilise, where I use dyes from two different sources and use black dye, muddy prints are par for the course. As part of the bigger picture, these prints bring a welcome balance to my work and give the eye places to rest.

Making has transformative power. As a student at the Dunedin School of Art since April 2013, I have engaged with both physical and sensory processes and have been exposed to new ideas in art theory. This has led to a transformation in myself and has given me the impetus to train as a facilitator in community art, using the power of making to affect lives positively. Tiffany Singh, a New Zealand community artist who has influenced me, bases her ideas of art as a tool for healing and wellness on psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's research on creativity and happiness.⁵



Figure 12. Otago Girls' High School project.

As part of my training as a community artist, Social Services organised a placement for me at Otago Girls' High School. For this project prints were made, then cut into units and a quilt was designed as the final stage. As a process-based artist, I feel that predesigning an outcome is too contrived; being playful with the materials makes for a richer experience, with more scope as a result.

The leftover prints and fabric were cut smaller and repurposed for a craft workshop to be held at my church for the children's Christmas party. For this workshop, I had to design projects tailored to various levels of difficulty to accommodate different age groups. The leftover materials from this workshop have been used in a piece for my final exhibition for the MVA.

My exhibition for my MVA exam consisted of a number of wall works. One work consisted of 140 metres of strata-like strips. The Gestalt elements to be used in the installation are size, similarity, proximity and alignment, which provide unity as well as variety.



Figure 13. Alicia Hall, Otago Girls' High School project 2016.



Figure 14. Alicia Hall, *Strata*, 2017, 140 m, printed and dyed cotton.

Alicia Hall's work looks at social structures, and she leads creative workshops in the community to promote connection through making. She has a BVA from the Dunedin School of Art and is completing her MVA in 2017.

- 1 A critique of the commodified versions of traditional roles of women in modern society, *Semiotics of the Kitchen* is a feminist parody film and performance piece released in 1975. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vm5vZaE8Ysc>.
- 2 <http://www.theartstory.org/movement-fluxus.htm>.
- 3 For a brief biography of Helen Frankenthaler; see <http://www.frankenthalerfoundation.org/helen/biography>.
- 4 Neal Conan, *The Quilts of Gee's Bend: A Showcase of Distinctive Work by African-American Artists*, 2003, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=970364>.
- 5 John Hurrell, *Singh in Titirangi*, 2015, <http://eyecontactsite.com/2015/01/singh-in-titirangi>.

FASHION BLOGGING: AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION AND NEW FASHION DISCOURSES

Simon Swale

INTRODUCTION

The fashion blogger remains the marginalised voice of fashion reportage; 'professional' journalists of traditional print media continue to deny the credibility of their 'amateur' peers.¹ This may be due in part to a perceived lack of credentials, but may also be explained by the potential threat blogs present to print circulation. Their continued rise however, suggests that blogs must be considered as a fully functioning part of the fashion industry, and a valid platform for the authorship, dissemination and consumption of independent and multiple fashion narratives.

A comparison of blogs with fashion magazine media highlights the significant differences they offer as models of communication, in their mode of production and consumption, but also in the relationships between author, audience and text. It is arguable that blogs facilitate a more active audience relationship with the media than do traditional platforms such as magazines, due to their ability to foster participation and reciprocity. Through these features, blogs are able to reflect the lived experiences of their audiences better than traditional media, thereby validating blogs and their content as legitimate texts and sites in the formation of new fashion discourses. In the comments section of blogs, we encounter discussion, interpretation and critique of fashion-related topics; a multiplicity of discourses, relevant to a broad twenty-first-century fashion audience.

In contrast to much previous research on blogging which has focused on blogs as sites of individual identity construction, performance or for concerns relating to representation,² this paper is concerned with *context*: situating the content of fashion blogs as representative of a living culture that is shared between author and audience. This paper therefore focuses on the comments posted by bloggers and their audiences, rather than seeking to analyse representations of accompanying photographic images.

DEMOCRATISATION OF DISCOURSES

Blogs occupy a liminal space in the fashion landscape, with much debate as to the merits of bloggers' journalistic credibility and, in consequence, the role blogs have within wider fashion discourse. Regardless of the sheer proliferation of fashion blogs and their popular appeal, there remains a prejudice and an institutional bias discriminating against the opinions of fashion bloggers. Generally untrained in the fields required for a career in traditional fashion journalism, bloggers' credentials can be deemed inadequate, and their opinions thereby marginalised. Bloggers are generally perceived as amateurs, whether they are or not, and are thereby placed in direct opposition to the 'professionals' who work on fashion magazines. This is true even of bloggers who attend the leading fashion shows around the world, and who maintain substantial audiences and whose posts are followed globally.

It is these blogs which most likely dominate the public consciousness, and yet below this level of activity there exists a much larger realm of blogs, bloggers and audiences. Millions of people create, contribute to and follow blogs from all manner of locations around the world. Often far removed from the cities of *prêt-à-porter* and *haute couture*,

these people can be understood as no less committed, involved and knowledgeable about discourses of fashion, particularly as representative of their own lived experiences. Amateurisation should not be equated with a lowering of standards of quality or authority.

The contemporary world of digital media has significantly altered the field of media production, distribution and consumption, and the argument that bloggers' opinions are an illegitimate source of knowledge due to their amateur status is untenable. Print media has been the traditional source of fashion knowledge and critique for over one hundred years; fashion magazines such as *Vogue* have enjoyed a privileged position of authority in the popular imagination,³ controlling and defining the general understandings of taste, content and professional practice within fashion journalism. For Manuel Castells, power is located "primarily around the production and diffusion of cultural codes and information content;"⁴ and it is print media that has traditionally controlled these aspects.

Digital media has significantly disrupted this monopoly of power; however, as Mark Deuze suggests, working towards the "dismantling of carefully cultivated hierarchical relationships between the (mass) media consumers and producers."⁵ This is the effect which Clay Shirky refers to as mass amateurisation, whereby issues of production, reproduction and distribution are much less problematic than in the past.⁶ Through the internet, freedom of speech and opinion has the potential to cross all geographical and political borders; the production and distribution of the media no longer requires centralisation or the funding of large corporations. As technology has changed, so has the media and definitions of it and, commensurably, the attributes and roles of those involved within the media industry have also changed.

We must no longer think in terms of amateur–professional distinctions, but analyse more critically the content of the author's⁷ work within its particular mode of production and consumption, and attempt to better understand the relationship of this content with its audience and their cultural context. Amateurisation should not be seen as an impediment to understanding a text as valid, authoritative or valuable, but rather as an intrinsic aspect of new media in the twenty-first century which has democratised all aspects of the media generally, thereby allowing new discourses to emerge.

The ability of blogs to engage an audience in conversation is a fundamental aspect of this process, and constitutes a crucial component of Deuze's articulation of digital culture: participation.⁸ In blogs and blogging, audiences have become more actively engaged through the ability to comment on authors' content; to question, critique or otherwise respond through the comments section is a fundamental feature of blog media. Shirky describes this type of media as a many-to-many model and an historical first in its ability to foster both conversation and group formation; it stands in direct opposition to the one-to-many model represented by print media.⁹ Traditional print media offers a unidirectional flow of information; a single representation and point of view that exemplifies the media's traditional position of hegemony. Little dialogue exists between the 'professional' opinion of the author and their audience.

In contrast, blogs provide dialogue between author and multiple audience members through the comments sections, effectively allowing co-authorship of a digital text. There is therefore a multiplicity of representations possible, and the many-to-many media model has enabled greater flexibility in the decoding of media information. The democratisation of authorship that blogging offers undermines the importance of the 'professional' journalist, in the traditional sense of being a prerequisite for valid fashion dialogue. Authorship has become an organic and interactive process; through the act of participation it becomes a collective and collaborative endeavour. Group action and authorship reveal the relevance and importance of blog content; through 'mass amateurisation' we discover a plenitude of voices whose opinions and discussions contribute to the traditional stream of professional and traditional media discourses.

CULTURE CONSIDERED

The amateur status of bloggers creates specific problems for relationships with the fashion industry; traditional media maintain access to the fashion system in ways bloggers do not. Employees of traditional fashion media such as *Vogue* have access to the highest levels of the fashion industry: clothes, designers, stylists and models, photographers. These are aspects of the industry withheld from bloggers and other 'amateurs.' The élite, traditional media are positioned as the epitome of authority, the height of fashionable culture. Magazines thereby maintain a hierarchically advantageous position as the go-to source of style information and trend forecasting for the general public. Spotlighting the designs and designers of the leading fashion houses of the world, traditional media reaffirms its hegemony, overshadowing other sites and types of fashionable discourses.

As bloggers are effectively excluded from authoritative roles in the traditional fashion system, their problems may seem compounded by isolation from fashion culture more generally. Many bloggers operate in cities far from the world's traditional fashion capitals. While blogs themselves may transcend global borders, the relative geographical isolation of many bloggers could lead to criticism of their perceived lack of understanding of the relationship between fashion and metropolitan cultures and values. Blogs, however, are representative of much greater diversity than that promoted by the traditional media, which offer conventional viewpoints on fashion and the fashion system. While straight comparisons between media types are inevitable, we must seek to recontextualise blogs and bloggers within a new framework that considers their content on terms of its own, and as reflective of the values, beliefs and cultural realities of its particular authors and audiences.

Fashion magazines provide a glimpse into a rarefied and aspirational world, unlikely to be inhabited by the majority of their audience. Here 'fashion' is but a sign, familiar to audiences predominantly through its representations on the pages of magazines and other media formats which rely upon the image. According to Paul Sweetman, fashion "no longer refers to anything other than fashion itself,"¹⁰ and could today be understood as severed from the experiences and everyday lives of its audience. Fashion dialogue within blogs, however, is much more likely to reflect shared beliefs, values and experiences of both author and audience, imparted through combinations of image and text.

"Culture is Ordinary" is the title of an article by Raymond Williams (1958), in which he asserts the importance of culture as a lived and embodied practice.¹¹ Culture is situated in society as a whole and by everyone, not just an élite defined by an accumulation of certain forms of capital. Pierre Bourdieu has taught us to understand the constructed nature of taste, status, and aesthetic and cultural biases;¹² in this context, we should reconsider preconceptions of traditional media as a dominant site of fashion discourse, organs which are validated only by their specific enculturation.

The traditional magazine as bastion of good fashion taste may hold popular sway historically; however, it is precisely the removal of bloggers and their audiences from this cultural context that validates their position. The realm of blogs epitomises a different conception of culture, and one that is formulated in the daily practices of its subjects. For Williams, much cultural emphasis is placed on experience and "the making of new observations, comparisons and meanings."¹³ Blogs work in precisely this way to establish micro-narratives of the everyday. The embodied practices of author and audience elicit discussions of common fashion experiences: "what I wore today," "what I saw in my local store," "how I feel about certain issues related to fashion and the body." These are typical themes of blogs and bloggers, as are reflections on traditional media content. For authors and their audiences, blogs provide spaces to negotiate the terrain where fashion integrates with their particular social practices, lifestyles and values, with an immediacy that further authenticates these practices.

Furthermore, events, ideas and discussions, topics of interest are all played out in relative real-time in the blogosphere. Fashion by its very nature is concerned with change; in the twenty-first century change can happen daily. Blogging can be understood as the perfect media platform to originate, perform, enact, display and discuss fashionable discourses in this age of fluid identities and constant change.

Like Bourdieu, Williams views traditional and popular understandings of 'culture' as evolving from relationships with social institutions and centres of power;¹⁴ but at the same time emphasises a multiplicity of cultures – culture is everywhere. When Williams refers to family conversations, "talking ... about our own lives, about people, about feelings,"¹⁵ he could equally be describing the contents of a fashion-related blog. Cultural validity and positions of authority need not rest in traditional sites of power and production, but can be seen to reflect the lived experiences of their subjects. Blogs provide sites of new cultural representations particular to the beliefs, values and meanings of their authors' and readers' lives, negotiated through the interaction of their own participants. Blogs allow the author and audience to also be the subject of discussion, their lives becoming cultural activity, offering valid resources for understanding life in the twenty-first century.

Blogs represent the breadth of contemporary cultures and cosmopolitan lifestyles which have often been neglected by the traditional media. Issues such as perceived racism, as well as specific and discriminatory conceptions of beauty and the body, continue to undermine the relevance of traditional media for large sectors of society. Blogs can be seen to embody not just diversity in their topics, viewpoints and subject matter; but they also reflect a multiplicity of lifestyles, ethnicities, cultural practices, beliefs and value systems that in turn reflect the shared experiences of author and audience. These criteria are embodied in the everyday practices and representations of their subjects, relationships bound by the shared experiences which exist between bloggers and their audiences. Authority exists through authenticity. The importance given to everyday life, as Andre Jansson suggests, "recognises that 'the cultural,' or what is meaningful to people, can be found wherever there is communication and social interaction."¹⁶

BLOGS AND NETWORKS

Blogs represent a shift from a vertical, hierarchal media model to a horizontal, participatory model emblematic of the concept of 'networks' developed by Castells.¹⁷ "Distributed" rather than "centralised" is how Jill Walker Rettberg defines blog networks, in that many individual blogs may be interlinked throughout the Web.¹⁸ Authors of one blog are likely audiences of other blogs, possibly with others who are also audience members of their own blog. Therefore, while individual blogs maintain their own social networks of participants, blogs more generally form parts of much greater networks. With a potentially global outreach, blogs represent the technological transformations that are producing the complex social networks seen by Deuze as the dominant form of contemporary social organisation.¹⁹ The ability for meaningful participation and reciprocity produces powerful networks of individuals, whose views and opinions cannot be discounted.

Blogs are subject to their own discriminating set of normative values and expectations. Although unspecified, there is an understood and generally accepted blog etiquette that governs behaviours around authorship and dialogue. For example, authors of blogs who express critical views of others under the cloak of anonymity are likely to be rallied against. Comments are deemed controversial not necessarily by the nature of their opinion, but by the fact that the author is unwilling to reveal their identity. However, a general tendency towards positivity in both postings and comments is evident; authors frequently post images of themselves modelling clothing, and comments are likely to be mostly positive.

Frequently referred to as 'style' blogs, these kinds of postings may appear superficial, but it is these kinds of postings that contextualise fashion in the lives of those who wear it. When somebody posts an image of themselves, that image, that person, that outfit, transcends its geographical specificity, and is contextualised within the lived experiences of all who read and discuss it. While some readers offer no more than a 'thumbs up/ thumbs down' response, others record more meaningful contributions that express the aesthetic values informing their opinions and reveal a broader cultural context. Reciprocity is key; as Chittenden puts it, "commenting is the cornerstone of blogging."²⁰

As suggested, positivity dominates most blog content and relates closely to the focus on connectivity described by David Gauntlett when describing a range of making practices.²¹ Where Gauntlett writes of "cooperation, reciprocity,

goodwill and trust, orientated towards a society that's nice for everyone to live in,"²² I extend this theme towards the development of social capital for the individual. Reflecting the ideas of Robert Putman, who suggests that "social networks have value,"²³ blogs can be understood as prime examples of networks and communities with shared values which are extremely important. Not only do these networks provide the micro-narratives of the fashion industry, they provide the social connections which reflect the everyday lived experiences of their subjects. Indeed, these two aspects cannot be separated. Through social networks comes social capital, accumulated and facilitating increased solidarity and collective action. Mass amateurisation of new technology has enabled increased networking, fostering the accumulation of social capital that is helping to underpin new community formations, which may then reveal themselves in the expressions of new fashion discourses. Social capital both bridges diversity and strengthens the bonds within existing groups – loose ties that bind the minds and memories of their members towards the dissemination of future discourses.

Distinct from traditional media, blogging allows a fluid and constant renegotiation of cultural values and practices through online dialogue. Fostering the kinds of communities that Michel Maffesoli describes as "neo-tribal,"²⁴ blogs can be seen to operate as "projects," which Castells suggests aim to "change mainstream society to find a place in it."²⁵ Blogs provide an aesthetic form of sociality that is an expression of "shared feelings and experiences."²⁶ For Castells, culture is the new zone of social conflict,²⁷ and for Deuze there is a relocation of all culture to computer-mediated forms of production, distribution and communication.²⁸ It is evident that blogs should not be subject to flippancy, but should rather be understood as an emerging media form – and one that holds wide popular appeal that undermines the single-natured authority of traditional media.

CONCLUSION

Blogging has become a worldwide phenomenon. Fashion blogs number in the millions, with audiences that transcend geographical, cultural and ethnic borders. Yet as a relatively recent media platform, blogs are generally compared to traditional media such as the fashion magazines that are their precursors. Blogging's relevance and importance is thereby downplayed, as comparisons focus on professional–amateur oppositions that legitimise traditional media formats as sites of cultural authority. As a platform, however, blogging has democratised the ability of subjects to participate in meaningful dialogue on a global scale, and amateur status should not be read as lacking credibility. Blogs can be seen to break down previous structures of production, distribution and consumption of media content, and thereby the power of centralised institutions to dominate fashion discourse.

Unlike traditional media, blogs allow a high degree of audience participation. Comments sections allow for the reciprocity of ideas and opinions as communication channels flow across vast networks – avenues that did not exist previously. The types of discussions that occur within blogs between authors and their audiences reflect the cultural and aesthetic values they share. Unlike traditional media, which are more likely to represent aspirational scenarios of fashion, blogs are more likely to contextualise fashion within the lived experiences of their audiences. Fashion is an embodied practice whose many themes and issues are played out in the comments sections of blogs worldwide. The importance of these beliefs and values should not be belittled, or be marginalised by the shadow cast by traditional media. Instead, blogs operate as social networks, producing both valuable social capital between their participants that would otherwise not exist, and content that is representative of the hugely diverse lifestyles and daily fashion practices that occupy people across the world.

While traditional media continues to provide a homogenised representation of the fashion industry, blogs, bloggers and their audiences provide a multiplicity of perspectives that more closely reflect the way people connect fashion with the lifestyles they are living in the twenty-first century.

Simon Swale is senior lecturer in the School of Design, Otago Polytechnic. His areas of research interest include the intersection of fashion and popular culture, the sociology of dress and fashion design methodologies and pedagogies. Recent work has focused on fashion and visual culture, including issues of representation, spectatorship, space, power and technology.

- 1 Natalie McCreesh, "Vogue's Attack on Style Bloggers shows how much the Newcomers have the Fashion Magazines Rattled," *Independent*, 4 October 2016, <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/vogue-s-attack-on-style-bloggers-shows-how-much-newcomers-have-fashion-magazines-rattled-a7342381.html> (accessed 28 April 2017).
- 2 See Agnes Rocamora, "Personal Fashion Blogs: Screens and Mirrors in Digital Self-portraits," *Fashion Theory*, 15:4 (2011), 407-24; and Tara Chittenden, "Digital Dressing up: Modelling Female Teen Identity in the Discursive Spaces of the Fashion Blogosphere," *Journal of Youth Studies*, 13:4 (2010), 505-20.
- 3 By using the term "popular imagination," I am referring to an audience drawn from the general population, not one with specialist training or scholastic knowledge in the field of, for instance, cultural studies and the study of dress. References to *Vogue* as the fashion 'Bible' are frequent in popular culture and highlight the importance that the traditional magazine format has had in the construction and dissemination of fashion discourses historically.
- 4 Felix Stalder, *Manuel Castells: Theory of the Network Society* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2006), 99.
- 5 Mark Deuze, "Participation, Remediation, Bricolage: Considering Principal Components of a Digital Culture," *The Information Society*, 22:2 (2006), 65.
- 6 Clay Shirky, *Here Comes Everybody: The Power of Organising Without Organisations* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), 59.
- 7 In the context of this paper, the term "author" refers to the host and founder of a particular blog who is the initiator of individual blog posts. "Audiences" then denote other parties who refer to and/or comment on these postings.
- 8 Deuze, "Participation, Remediation, Bricolage."
- 9 Clay Shirky, *How Social Media Can Make History*, TED.com, June 2009, http://www.ted.com/talks/clay_shirky_how_cellphones_twitter_facebook_can_make_history.html (accessed 23 April 2017).
- 10 Paul Sweetman, "Shop-window Dummies? Fashion, the Body, and Emergent Socialities," in *Body Dressing*, eds Joanna Entwistle and Elizabeth Wilson (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2001), 63.
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- 17 *The Network Society: A Cross-cultural Perspective*, ed. Manuel Castells (Cheltenham and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2004).
- 18 Jill Walker Rettberg, *Blogging* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2008), 61-2.
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- 20 Chittenden, "Digital Dressing up," 515.
- 21 David Gauntlett, *Making is Connecting: The Social Meaning of Creativity, from D.I.Y and Knitting to YouTube and Web 2.0* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2011).
- 22 Ibid., 130.
- 23 Robert Putman, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (Simon and Schuster: New York, 2000), 19.
- 24 Sweetman, "Shop-window Dummies?" 70.
- 25 Stalder, *Manuel Castells*, 86.
- 26 Sweetman, "Shop-window Dummies?" 70.
- 27 Stalder, *Manuel Castells*, 87.
- 28 Deuze, "Participation, Remediation, Bricolage," 65.

CLINKPROJECT3: COLLABORISM

Johanna Zellmer

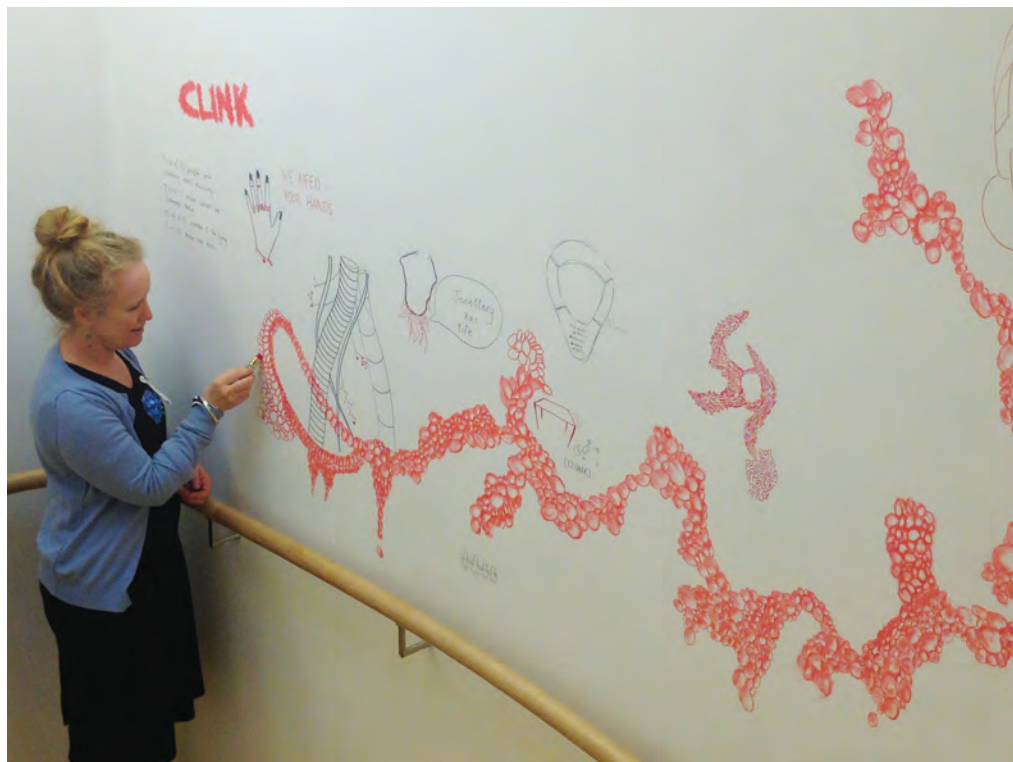


Figure 1. Susan Videler sets up the exhibit MAKE. The wall in Te Uru's stairwell leading down to the level 3 seating area becomes a dynamic drawing surface, highlighting the studio synergy of drawing and making.

CLINK Project is a collaborative jewellery initiative established in 2014 jointly by Hungry Creek Art and Craft School in Auckland and the Dunedin School of Art. It plays with the experience of disruption or intervention, often in the form of unannounced pop-up events in central Auckland, such as jewellery-making on the street or deploying clear plastic umbrellas as moving showcases. Each year, CLINK Project gathers for a frenzied week of brainstorming, planning, collaborative making and public interaction, in an endeavour to share contemporary jewellery with a diverse audience. In 2016, for its third showcase, CLINKProject3: Collaborism was working with the challenge of how to enact these driving forces within the context of the public gallery setting at Te Uru, and set out to intervene with expectations of authorship.



Figure 2. Pin-swap 1 and Pin-swap 2. Pin-swapping at Whau Studios – happy 'swappers' Andrew Last and Tayla Edmunds.

PIN-SWAPPING

On the first day of 2016's CLINK Project, the collective was invited to participate in a pin-swap at Whau Studios at 161 Point Chevalier Road in Auckland as active members of the New Zealand contemporary jewellery culture. An integral part of the jewellery community is the coming together to share knowledge between established and up-and-coming artists. This practice breaks down the elitism that often accompanies the arts. Jewellery objects make this possible through their intimacy, mobility and variability, a collection of traits that is unique to jewellery and its making culture. By making a pin with a brief, and a time limit, a pin-swap puts everyone on equal footing amongst other makers.

Prior to leaving Dunedin, the Dunedin participants had a mad frenzy in their shared workshop at Dunedin School of Art, each making a pin with a 'connections' theme, a three-hour time limit, and the added pressure of trying to make something presentable. Many of them found the synergy of working together in the studio to be energising. Pin-swaps are an opportunity to market skills, so it's important to put in your best work. Everybody was worried about how their work would be received, and how awkward it would be to talk to strangers, let alone jewellery celebrities.

The collective assembled at Whau Studios with plenty of time ahead of the pin-swap to settle in and have a debrief about the ensuing ten days of *CLINKProject3: Collaborism*. Subsequently everybody went their separate ways to bring some food back to share, resulting in an impressive spread of finger foods and wine. Slowly jewellers began to trickle in and mingle.

All the pins were wrapped and put into a basket in a corner of the room. Once everyone had arrived, people were invited to draw a pin out of the basket, one at a time. Upon unpacking the pins and putting them on, everybody was encouraged to find the maker and have a discussion with them, using the pin as a conversation starter. This led to learning about other artists' processes, motivations and practice.

The event was a success, with everyone feeling like a welcome part of a larger community. The up-and-coming jewellery artists found the networking opportunity to be incredibly beneficial, and the interactions that occurred set them up well for the rest of their CLINK collaborations.

CURATORIAL

The two previous CLINK projects set out to challenge conventions of presenting jewellery to an audience by using the street as an exhibition venue. Following those past projects, CLINKProject3 used the same methods of collaborative planning and short but intense workshop preparation. This year brought exhibition practice back to the gallery, but also looked for ways to emphasise participation, touch and engagement with jewellery-making to a gallery

audience. Te Uru gallery curator James Anderson responded enthusiastically to a loose proposal generated through CLINK pre-planning discussions. CLINK participants met in Auckland knowing that we had four unconventional exhibition locations within the gallery to work with, but no clear idea how we were going to meet our aims of working together and extending the boundaries of jewellery exhibition.



Figure 3. Curatorial 1 and Curatorial 2. The exhibit LOUNGE converted Te Uru's Curiosity Corner into a small slice of domestic chill-zone. Johanna Zellmer, Michelle Wilkinson and Ildi Juhasz setting up the interactive exhibit ADORN in the gallery's level 4 changing room.

FRIDAY (DAY TWO)

On site at Te Uru the collective spent a day of insane brain-soaring, thinking, looking, discussing and summarising. Groups were inventive, respectful, coming up with interconnected themes curating work yet unknown, as it was not yet made! A last-minute-before-brain-crash pulling together of common threads resulted in themes of Architecture, Touch, Chain and the Domestic. We wanted visitors to:

- engage with drawing and jewellery skills while descending to the Learning Centre;
- try on jewellery and take selfies in the bathroom;
- stitch, embroider and crochet in the domestic setting transforming the stairwell landing; and
- satisfy their curiosity peeking through the covered front window.

SUNDAY (DAY FOUR)

After having spent Friday in the gallery spaces brainstorming in small groups, we gathered at the Hungry Creek studio to combine our ideas into a plan of attack. Up until this point we had been in a limbo state, knowing an exhibition must happen, but not knowing what or how! This anxious unrest left the best of us feeling nauseous. But luckily, this final day of decision-making, sorting logistics and so forth helped to relieve most of the worries and enabled us to absorb the proposed plan and get stuck in. The general enthusiasm lifted and gained momentum, throwing us into a frenzy of making, deliberating and getting things done! What then transpired made all the stresses worthwhile, and we were rewarded by the satisfaction of a most successful achievement.

During the weekend jewellery pieces were created collaboratively by the 16 group members, each taking turns to extend and change the pieces that were circulating among them. The mode of making also changed in response to the different spaces occupied and the varying nature of public interaction, which was only revealed during the CLINKProject3: Collaborism brainstorming week. The objects generated were unpredictable and driven by each maker's inherently different methodology. Making unfolded over two days in the traditional jewellery workshop/studio setting at Hungry Creek Art and Craft School, and then moved into the public sphere at Te Uru from 24-25 August.

COLLABORATIVE MAKING

Making is often a solitary and quiet process, but by bringing it into a group situation, new kinds of interactions and elements are unlocked, with each person being challenged to add novel aspects to a piece created by someone else.

The works exhibited at Te Uru were the result of collaborative making. The 16 participants of CLINK 2016 were split into smaller groups of four with the purpose of creating jewellery that had been made by all members, built, layered, deconstructed and altered until a final communal piece emerged.

This dissolving of authorship and the passing of work from one set of hands to another resulted in spontaneous and intuitive making and a synergy that is not often found in works made in the traditional way. The short time frame that each piece had with each person meant that there was no time for second guessing, leading the maker to think using their hands.

Working with people only recently met, and from widely diverse backgrounds and making styles, lead to interesting conversations, both within the group and within the pieces made. The resulting jewellery was full of unexpected symbioses, discordant harmonies, and contradictory materials and forms that came together to create pleasantly cacophonous final works – pieces that talk not of each maker but of the group as a whole, influenced by the studio environment and materials available at the site of construction.

Te Uru's front 'Window Space,' the level 3 seating area, level 4 changing room and level 4 back stairwell landing became interconnected CLINK Project spaces from 24 August to 30 September, with free live events at Te Uru on 24 and 25 August 2016, including a presentation by Wellington-based jeweller Sarah Read in the seminar room of Lopdell House. The objects and interventions outlined below, generated by the diverse makers, were accessible to the public within the gallery until the end of September.

PEEP

The street-access window box offered tantalising glimpses of the jewellery objects made within the gallery walls. CLINK makers were building both the display installation and the jewellery works as the project unfolded.

MAKE

Jewellers were working live in the level 3 seating area. Gallery visitors were invited to sit in with the jewellers and engage actively with the jewellery-making. The staircase walls became a dynamic drawing surface, highlighting the studio synergy of drawing and making. Everyone was invited to grab a pen and draw on the wall.

ADORN

Jewellery's private/public dynamic was enacted with the works installed in the gallery's level 4 changing room. Visitors could touch and wear contemporary jewellery works in an intimate setting. A dress mirror allowed selfies to be added to the CLINK Instagram image collection.

LOUNGE

The Curiosity Corner got converted into a small slice of domestic chill-zone; reading, watching and soft-making with textile materials happened on the sofa. Both participants and visitors were invited to be part of a more relaxed making experience.

COLLECT

Postcards printed at the front-of-house counter added to the documentation of CLINK Project. These images and



Figure 4. Colab 1-5. Collaborative making full of unexpected symbioses at Hungry Creek Art and Craft School.

graphics were both a take-away and tangible record of CLINK's endeavours to broaden public engagement with contemporary jewellery practice.

The exhibition finished with the work being given away to members of the public.

SEMINAR

Sarah Read presented her seminar while we were working on the exhibition events at Te Uru Gallery. She spoke about her experience as a maker and was very honest about the struggles included in this. Her honesty in advocating 'letting ideas go' was of particular interest. She said: "Be clear about the message and dare to remove everything not to do with the message." It was valuable to hear her speak about her experience with making work – how making with her hands and her body brings her work into the field of jewellery. She also spoke about the generosity of spirit evident within the field of jewellery, the support given and willingness of people to help.

Sarah spoke eloquently of mentors Peter Deckers, Iris Eichenberg and Liesbeth den Besten, and her battle with an arthritic condition that has caused a rerouting of her jewellery practice. Two projects she spoke of resonated and aligned with seminars given by keynote speakers Pravu Mazumdar and Goliath Dyèvre the following weekend, during the National Symposium of Craft, Applied Art and Design. Her group project, Golden Section (Parking Day Wellington, 2016), was a statement about escalating real estate prices and their effect on communities.



Figure 5. Sarah Read seminar: Sarah Read, *Golden Section @ PARK(ing) DAY*, Wellington, 2016. An *OCCUPATION:Artist* project. Photo: Sarah Read.

She spoke of how the last thing she had wanted to do on the morning of her talk was kneel on the pavement adhering to gold leaf. However, she marvelled at how the reflections from the gold made her feel, how uplifted and fortified she felt working in the reflected gold radiance. What a joy the experience had been. Sarah imported a special lamp that radiated the same health-giving light frequencies as sunlight, and installed it in a gold-framed window space during the cold Wellington winter. Passers-by were invited to stand before the health-giving rays for 15 minutes to get maximum benefit. Bathed in light.

THE NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF CRAFT, APPLIED ART AND DESIGN AS FINALE

During the final weekend of *CLINKProject3: Collaborism*, the Auckland Museum hosted Objectspace's National Symposium of Craft, Applied Art and Design. The three keynote speakers were Misun Rheem, a Korean crafts and design art critic; Goliath Dyèvre, a French designer; and Pravu Mazumdar, an Indian philosopher residing in Germany.

Designer Goliath Dyèvre was the second keynote speaker at the Objectspace symposium. The signature seminar photograph was of his work *Tin Lamp and Gold Leaf*, a selection of architectural geometric shapes covered in gold leaf by a Japanese-French gild-maker that could be moved around, reflecting the light shining at their base.¹ Again we encountered reflected golden light, almost an amalgam of Sarah Read's two works emphasising the power of light to illuminate not only space, but also the body and mind.

Some of Goliath's work focused specifically on the relationship between man and nature, a theme which was particularly captivating. Dyèvre mentioned an important text that had inspired him to explore this subject in design – Victor Papanek's *The Green Imperative: Ecology and Ethics in Design and Architecture*. Ecology and ethics is an important theme in Dyèvre's project, "Animal Silence." Dyèvre explores how humans control animals, with a focus on "horrid nature," such as ants. After learning that houses in Greece are painted blue to keep insects out, Dyèvre used blue materials as a means of controlling ants inside the home. He created pathways that led the ants inside and to their own assigned "eating space" at the dining table, so that they could share a meal "in your company."

With a focus on apartment buildings, Dyèvre also created an indoor garden, making use of an unused stairwell space. Again, controlled pathways were used to lead the ants inside and to an assigned zone – this time the pot plants. Dyèvre also examines the difference between "caged and free." He designed a self-contained ant farm that doubles as a hot-water bottle, making use of the heat created through the energy produced by the ants' activity.

"Animal Silence" is a project that aims to integrate human spaces and activities with the natural world. With a particular emphasis on "horrid," creepy or unloved creatures, Dyèvre explores possible new "comfort zones" through controlled interaction, or interaction "on your terms." At the end of each talk, the audience was invited to ask questions, but it wasn't till later that mine was formulated. My question for Dyèvre is – does this controlled and constructed interaction with nature highlight man's separation from the natural world, or does it help to dissolve the perceived separation?

Perhaps it serves to do both.

In his session, Pravu Mazumdar asked, "What is value?" He discussed radiance and its associations with transcendence, how previously a glowing skin was seen as evidence of an inner, elevated vitality. Now, however, cosmetics can deliver the same appearance and "skin is no longer a window, but a mirror." He spoke of gold and its association with sunlight, offering the promise of power and durability, and how it predates currency and had a sacred function. The divinity inherent in its symbolism has been compromised, however: once coins were minted in the seventh century BC, gold became a commodity. Of necessity it had a limited value, whereas the value of the sacred is limitless.

So, three different speakers all attracted to the luminosity of gold, captivated by reflected light and our recognition of the value of gold beyond that of currency. There seems to be an enriching quality inherent in the metal itself that endures.

The textile-based artists in this year's *CLINKProject* collective found themselves contributing to the panel talk, "Practice/Practise Perspectives on Making Now." Artists Luisa Tora and Jasmine Te Hira, craftsman Areez Katki and architect Sarosh Mulla each brought a different aspect of making to the conversation.

Luisa Tora spoke about her work as an indigenous feminist practitioner. She spoke about her collaborative work and the importance of building your own archive of works and objects key to your practice. She emphasised the

importance of “finding yourself in the narrative” – if you can't find yourself in it, then strive to find a way to put yourself in it.

Areez Katki in particular grabbed this collaborator's attention. Areez is a textile-based artist working in New Zealand who learnt his craft from his grandmother, who he refers to as the Persian matriarch in their home. Areez's practice focuses on the handmade and the use of artisanal techniques – again handed down by his grandmother. He focuses on using raw materials carefully sourced and treated with integrity. Areez emphasised that he would rather make a work with his own two hands, and take longer doing it, than fall into the trap of delegation and the fast-fashion trend. This comment grabbed my attention in terms of the value of the handmade and making something yourself versus buying something off the rack. This is something we as creators all experience, whether it be a piece of clothing or an item of jewellery; it becomes of greater value to us if we know where it has come from in the first place.

Areez went on to discuss the importance of craftsmanship and the fact that people have now lost the knowledge of how to use the word 'craftsman' with respect – craft has become a negative term. Areez noted that although he is often referred to as a fashion designer, because he makes fashion items, he feels that he is more a creator or a craftsman, as his focus is not on what the finished article looks like, but what it is made of – substance before style. For him, there is no greater aesthetic sin than ignorance.

CONCLUSION



Figure 6. PEEP: Peeking through Te Uru's covered street access window box for a glimpse of the jewellery objects to be given away to members of the public.

This third iteration of the CLINK Project once again provided an intensive learning opportunity through experiencing contemporary craftwork at first hand. The project presented professional networking opportunities, as well as the awareness of belonging to a wider community of craftspeople who inherently embrace a philosophy of generous sharing. Last but not least, *CLINKproject3: Collaborism* compelled the participants to not only be artists and curators, but to also collaborate as writers; this project report bears the fruits of a final writing workshop gathering. On reflection, our own experience of interaction with other professional speakers and makers mirrored the engagement we provided for the wider public in Te Uru's gallery setting.

An additional text has been written by Otago Polytechnic's Research and Project Assistant Lesley Brook, who evaluated the project from an objective standpoint. She recorded the group's initial intentions, facilitated the public interaction at Te Uru and recorded her findings. In the visitor feedback report she produced for Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery, she quotes the following comment from a visitor (25 August): "Great, this type of interaction, lacking in a lot of exhibitions. Way of future, to learn by touch and interaction with people, who know what they are doing, artists. Always wanted to touch. Shouldn't be just for kids, permission to play."

CLINKProject3: Collaborism crossed craft discipline boundaries and, for the first time, also included textile artists. The 2016 collaborators and authors were Kanisha Aldred, Sarah Beaumont, Antonia Boyle, Emily Brain, Tayla Edmunds, Rob Fear, Ildi Juhasz, Brogan Nutall, Andrew Last, Eileen Leahy, Catherine Randall, Meg Van Hale, Susan Videler, Ali Wallace, Michelle Wilkinson and Johanna Zellmer. To find out more about this collaborative initiative between the Dunedin School of Art and Hungry Creek Art and Craft School, see <http://www.thescope.org/> (Art & Design issues 9 + 11).

Johanna Zellmer completed a Masters degree at the Australian National University, Canberra School of Art, and a formal apprenticeship as a goldsmith in Germany. As senior lecturer in jewellery and metalsmithing at the Dunedin School of Art, she also coordinates the artist-in-residence programme there. Her research interests focus on the construction of national identities and cross-cultural themes within contemporary jewellery and metalsmithing. She calls a small farm in Dunedin home.

1 See <http://objectspace.org.nz/Downloads/Assets/5484/Objectspace+National+Craft%2C+Applied+Art+and+Design+Symposium+Full+Programme+2016.pdf> (accessed 13 Mar 2017).

THE USE OF GALLERY SPACES: A CASE STUDY OF CLINKPROJECT3: COLLABORISM

Lesley Brook

"The site of exhibition can be seen therefore not as an auxiliary space for understanding certain aspects of an artwork, such as its social or practical implementation, but the central site for interactive art research – the necessary starting and finishing point for any study that aims to understand how meaning is produced by an interactive artwork."¹

This report explores the way in which the site of an exhibition affects its impact on visitors, using as a case study *CLINKProject3: Collaborism*, a collaborative jewellery-making project. Although not an interactive artwork, *CLINKProject3: Collaborism* provided visitors with opportunities for interaction.

In my capacity as evaluator of the public interaction associated with *CLINKProject3: Collaborism*, I attended Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery in Auckland (Te Uru) on 24 and 25 August 2016 with the project team. I observed the interactions by gallery visitors with *CLINKProject3: Collaborism*, and interviewed many of them about the value of those interactions for them. Quotes given here are from my notes, of conversations I either overheard or had myself with visitors. I was not able to interview all visitors. All photos were taken by me, with consent of all persons photographed. After the exhibition closed on 30 September, the gallery also contributed relevant anecdotal feedback from selected responses to a regulated survey with specific questions after the exhibition closed. Neither the gallery's survey nor my own interviews represent all visitor opinions, or a statistically balanced cross-section of visitor demographics.

SITE OF EXHIBITION

The first collaboration between Hungry Creek Art and Craft School and the Dunedin School of Art took place in 2014. The team called their project CLINK. They experimented not just with collaborative jewellery-making, but also with audience interaction, handing out small plastic bags of materials randomly to members of the public at Auckland's Britomart public transport depot, for people to make their own jewellery. In 2015 the second CLINK project team held a pop-up exhibition on the street, with their jewellery displayed. They found that the audience focus was on the performance rather than on the jewellery. Many of the *CLINKProject3: Collaborism* team had also been involved with the second CLINK project. Their experience in 2015 led to the decision by the *CLINKProject3: Collaborism* team to confine the audience interaction to the bounds of a gallery space, the Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery in Auckland.

The effect of this move was that the exhibition audience for *CLINKProject3: Collaborism*, with the exception of the gallery window space facing the street, was limited to those members of the public who chose to enter the art gallery. The gallery-attending public is not representative of the general public, but has been described as a community of "like-minded art lovers," generally middle class and well educated.² The project team considered that siting the exhibition in a gallery would be advantageous because the gallery-attending public would be seeking to value an art experience, and would therefore be more likely to stop and engage with the exhibition. From

observations and interviews with visitors on 24 and 25 August, it was apparent that while some visitors had chosen to visit because of *CLINKProject3: Collaborism*, other visitors knew nothing of it beforehand. The gallery-attending public is also likely to be accustomed to controlling their physical behaviour in accordance with the constraints normally to be found in a public gallery, and in particular to be familiar with the 'don't touch' ethos that currently prevails.³ Situating *CLINKProject3: Collaborism* in an art gallery may also have given the contemporary jewellery on show a greater chance of achieving the status of art objects.⁴

THE SPACES AT TE URU

Te Uru made a range of different spaces available which were used to site *CLINKProject3: Collaborism* in the gallery. Five spaces were occupied and were used in different ways:

- a window display seen from the footpath outside, used for PEEP
- a landing up three steps on the far side of the ground floor gallery, used for LOUNGE
- a bathroom lobby area past the lift on the ground floor, used for ADORN
- the wall around the stairs leading down to the lower level, and the space at the bottom of the stairs, used for MAKE and
- a plinth in the gallery shop, used for COLLECT.

This arrangement meant that visitors needed to walk between the various spaces to see more than one component of *CLINKProject3: Collaborism*, engaging the muscles (proprioception), the sense of movement (kinaesthesia) and the sense of balance (vestibular sense).⁵ The use of these spaces also meant that visitors might come across *CLINKProject3: Collaborism* naturally in the course of walking about the gallery. In this latter respect, the component parts of the exhibition provided people with something to look at and engage with while they walked about, much as early private galleries hung pictures to give people something to look at while they walked.⁶ The spaces used by the exhibition made a favourable impression on two visitors:

"Affects me emotionally, juxtaposed with Gurmon Sap." (visitor 3/10)

"And another thing that was good, it leads you into the galleries wonderfully." (visitor 4/13)

However, some of the visitors I spoke to who visited the gallery during the period 24 and 25 August did not see any part of *CLINKProject3: Collaborism*. Other visitors noticed only one part of the CLINK Project:

"Just came to see the Janet Lilo show. Saw the guys on the landing but not others." (visitor 2/1)

My observations and interviews indicated that the in-between spaces used for *CLINKProject3: Collaborism* were a barrier to public interaction, because some people did not notice the exhibition or did not recognise that it was an exhibition. The red lettering labelling each space was too discreet to attract visitors' attention. The physical elements of an installation need to have visible clues that attract people's curiosity.⁷ This issue of low visibility may have been compounded by the fact that the artists were working on site, so it did not look like an "exhibition." This was a problem for LOUNGE in particular (see below), but the following comment relate to MAKE:

"I thought they were still setting up" (visitor 1/1).

LOUNGE

From my position in the foyer area by the gallery reception area and the lift, it was apparent that most visitors to Te Uru entered the ground floor gallery first. Most came out the way they went in, but some exited on the other side of the gallery, passing through the LOUNGE space.

At LOUNGE artists were making artworks. Here visitors could engage with the artists and some took the opportunity to do so.

"Interesting to find out what they were doing."
(visitor 2/4)

"Chatted for a while with ones on stairs. Always interesting to see what other people are doing and talking to them." (visitor 2/9)

Overheard: "What are you doing?" "What are you going to do with it?" (at LOUNGE) and later; "That's what they said, make part and pass it on." (visitor 3/12)

"cool hangout space" (feedback recorded by gallery)

However, other visitors did not identify that this was an opportunity for public interaction, or were confused about what they saw:

"More interested in looking at the art. So they're just sitting there, is that an exhibit? Did joke with them about being 'art in action'." (visitor 1/12)

"Just said hello and smiled, didn't really notice." (visitor 1/15)

"Thought they were just people sitting there, so didn't want to go and interrupt them." (visitor 3/3)

On the morning of 25 August there were more artists gathered at LOUNGE because the jewellery-making space on the lower level could not be used. Because this was a small space, some artists were standing with their backs to the gallery and partially blocking the exit from the gallery, which potentially deterred visitors from accessing the LOUNGE. I invited the artists to consider how they might encourage visitors to exit the ground floor gallery via LOUNGE.

The need to pack down the CLINK Project during the open hours of the gallery also imposed limits on use of the spaces provided, and hence on opportunities for public interaction; LOUNGE was dismantled by 3.30pm on 25 August, an hour before the gallery closed.

ADORN

In the ADORN space, pieces of jewellery were pegged to lines and a mirror provided. This space was conceived by the project team as a dressing room due to its proximity to the bathrooms. This exploration of an 'awkward' space and how it can be used to engage the public to experience artworks resembles the approach taken by sculptor Phillida Barlow,⁸ although our art jewellery pieces were on a small and intimate scale.

Like the touchable exhibits in "Touch Me" at the Victoria and Albert Museum,⁹ the jewellery here was out of reach of children. Although children also had permission to touch, they could only select an item of jewellery to wear



by pointing or telling an adult, who could then get it down for the child.

Those who did try on the pieces appreciated the experience, while others enjoyed just looking:

“Enjoyed looking at it, what it was constructed out of – don’t see much contemporary jewellery around. Didn’t feel need to try it on.” (visitor 3/10)

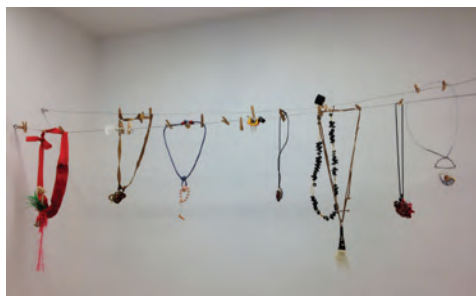
“That’s a cool area to put jewellery.” (visitor 5/15)

Some visitors did not know they could touch the pieces, let alone try them on:

“Thought it was interesting they’d left it there, anyone could touch it.” (visitor 5/1)

“Admired, but didn’t know could try on.” (visitor 5/5)

As a result of the feedback I received from visitors, I encouraged one or two artists to work at the seating opposite the lift and immediately outside the ADORN space. I observed that as a direct result of engagement with the artists or with me, and with encouragement to do so, some visitors participated in ADORN who were otherwise unlikely to have done so. While the design of an exhibition can communicate that visitors have permission to touch,¹⁰ that aim was not achieved in this case and permission needed to be given explicitly, either by myself or the artists, or subsequently by gallery staff. The touching and trying on of jewellery continued to be available to visitors beyond 24 and 25 August until the exhibition closed on 30 September.



MAKE DRAWINGS

From the ground floor foyer to the lower level, the team had permission from the gallery to draw on the outside wall of the stairwell as part of *CLINKProject3: Collaborism*. This was probably the most popular opportunity for public interaction.

For much of the second day especially, artists and members of the public were working at or below the stairwell landing, which meant that visitors in the foyer could not see that anything was happening there. I also gave feedback to the artists about this, again for them to consider how to encourage visitors to enter the MAKE space and take the opportunities for public interaction there.

While some visitors needed to be expressly invited to draw on the wall, for others it was enough to see others writing on the wall for them to infer that they also had permission to draw. For example, when a large number of visitors arrived at the same time for a Minecraft meeting in one of the galleries at 3.30pm on 25 August, five boys and one of their three accompanying adults saw people writing on the wall and seized the brief opportunity before their meeting to make their own contribution. The gallery reported that some later visitors who saw the drawings on the wall assumed, wrongly, that they also could draw on the wall, unfortunately using pens that were not readily erasable. This contributed to the drawings being removed promptly, so that until 30 September the exhibition was limited to the display of jewellery in the MAKE space downstairs and the ADORN component of *CLINKProject3: Collaborism*.

MAKE JEWELLERY

On the lower level, the space under and beside the stairs was set up with three workbenches for jewellery-making. Here members of the public had the opportunity to make jewellery themselves alongside the artists. While the stairs put some visitors off (1/1-2), one person commented:

"It was worth it, going downstairs and up again."
(visitor 2/13)

The use of the spaces within a gallery cannot be considered in isolation, because adjoining spaces can have an effect. A school group had booked to use the lower level of the gallery on the morning of 25 August, which unfortunately meant that jewellery-making could not be offered until 1.45pm that day. The team did not merely avoid the space temporarily, but packed up materials and tools and covered workbenches to avoid the possibility of any person engaging in making at a time when there was not permission to do so. One young visitor that morning (3/9) came specifically for the jewellery-making, but fortunately was able to return in the afternoon to participate (7/6). In the meantime, she had enjoyed drawing on the wall (MAKE) and trying on jewellery (ADORN).

The team had to leave the gallery at the same time that it closed to the public, at 4.30pm, so the removal of materials and tools also limited the availability of jewellery-making for visitors on 25 August, since visitors could not continue with this activity right up until closing time. The jewellery produced was left displayed on the wall above the making space on the lower level of the gallery. One visitor gave feedback to the gallery that this jewellery display, with the drawings running up the stairwell, "looked like the most interesting part of the gallery, and that it really activated that space." During the final week of the exhibition, when items were being given away, jewellery was progressively taken from here to replenish the ADORN display.



COLLECT

On 24 August 2016 a photographer recorded images of *CLINKProject3: Collaborism*. The gallery selected four of these images and printed them on light card in two colours. These were available for visitors to take from a plinth in the gallery shop. A total of 240 postcards were produced, and 200 were taken by visitors during the period from 25 August until the end of the exhibition on 30 September. The gallery observed that people were unsure if the postcards were free to take. This may be because visitors are unaccustomed to getting something for free, but could also relate to the location of the plinth within the gallery shop.

PEEP

The PEEP window installation was finished late on 25 August 2016, and therefore did not provide any opportunity for public interaction until my observations and interviews had been concluded. One passerby on the street commented that she liked the bottle of window cleaner; which was the only thing to be seen in PEEP for the first few hours of 24 August.



Selected pieces of jewellery were suspended in the window display case, but could be seen only through peepholes. The opportunity for public interaction which PEEP provided made it necessary for observers to physically move their bodies to look into each of the six peepholes in order to see what hung behind. The gallery reported that children on their way home from school enjoyed the PEEP window display, with some children being lifted up so they could see into the higher peepholes. This component of *CLINKProject3: Collaborism* successfully used surprise and proprioception to engage visitors and enhance the viewing experience.¹¹

CONCLUSION

This project provides my observations of the use of the gallery spaces for *CLINKProject3: Collaborism* and the ways in which those spaces both helped and hindered the public to take the opportunities for interaction and draw meaning from the exhibition.

The use of in-between spaces at the gallery provided the CLINK Project team with a variety of spaces they could use in different ways. However, these spaces were not highly visible, which meant that some visitors did not notice them. As a result, I suggest that in such circumstances it is particularly important to consider how to attract visitors to the spaces. The team members identified that in this respect I played an unanticipated role as facilitator, as well as evaluator, by drawing visitors' attention to the spaces and opportunities for interaction that the visitors had not noticed. The team members also played a role in engaging with visitors – not simply the designed opportunities for public interaction, but also to overcome the barrier to public interaction due to the low profile of the spaces.

A related problem is that visitors did not readily appreciate that there were opportunities to interact unless and until they were told about those opportunities; examples of this included looking at the ADORN jewellery without trying it on; walking past LOUNGE without speaking to the artists; walking past MAKE without identifying that they too were permitted to draw; and assuming there must be a cost for the COLLECT postcards. The visitors to the gallery generally seemed to be aware that the interaction opportunities provided by *CLINKProject3: Collaborism* to talk with artists, to try on jewellery, to draw on the wall, and to make their own jewellery, did not accord with the usual expectations of behaviour in the gallery. This suggests that it is also important to consider how to communicate to visitors exactly what is permitted. It was observed that once visitors were aware that they had opportunities to interact, they readily did so, and the interviews indicated that these opportunities were valued by most of the visitors who participated in them.

Lesley Brook works within the Research Directorate Team at Otago Polytechnic and has been on staff since October 2014. Her area of expertise is the impact of research on public communities, and research institutions.

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ALZHEIMER'S IN ART

Megan Griffiths

MEMORY

My early research focused on memory and how Alzheimer's disease affects memory, both physically, in the changes to brain structure, and at a personal level, in terms of how those physical changes in the brain manifest themselves in the behaviour of memories in people with Alzheimer's. The starting point of my research was on how memory works.

For many years, the concept of memory function was considered to be like that of a filing cabinet. New ideas were indexed and filed then recalled when necessary and, eventually, when the cabinet was full, removed (forgotten) to make room for new ones.

The ability to look inside the body with new types of scans, such as CAT (computed tomography), MRI (magnetic resonance imaging) and PET (positron emission tomography), has enabled doctors and researchers to view the brain while a patient is actually doing or thinking something specific – which in turn has led to a whole new way of looking at memory and the brain.

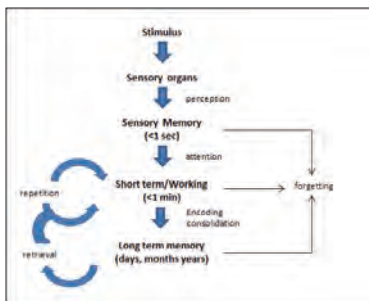


Figure 1. Diagram of how memory works,
Megan Griffiths.

How do we remember? Remembering is a very complex procedure, which will only be touched on in this article.¹ A psychological account of the basic formation of memories is outlined in figure 1.

Sensory memory is the memory we pick up from our perceptions, and usually lasts less than a second. There are two sub-memory types – iconic for sight and echoic for sound.²

Short-term memory lasts about one minute and lets you keep a piece of information to retrieve in this time. This kind of memory lets us remember a phone number long enough for us to make a phone call, or put an item on a shopping list.³

Working memory is a newer concept, and is used to do tasks where the memories of individual actions may be stored in different parts of the brain. An example of this is driving a car.⁴ Long-term memory is made up of several different types of memory. The newer a memory, the more flimsy it is. To produce a long-term memory, each memory must go through three processes. The first is encoding, which assigns indexes to a word (for example, a needle might be sharp, metal, sewing equipment). These indexes help us to retrieve a word, even if at first glance we don't remember the word 'needle'.⁵ The second process is storage, which can be regarded as the active process of consolidation that makes memories less vulnerable to being forgotten. It is this consolidation that differentiates memories of recent facts from memories of older ones. Finally, retrieval of memories involves the active mechanisms that make use of encoding indexes. The more a memory is used, the easier it is to recall it. Forgetting can be caused by disruption to any of the three processes that a new memory needs to go through.⁶

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

When a person starts showing signs of having Alzheimer's disease, the first outward signs are often problems with memory or thinking that are serious enough to interfere with the person's lifestyle.⁷

According to David Snowden, author of *Aging with Grace: What the Nun Study Teaches us about Leading Longer, Healthier, and More Meaningful Lives*, autopsies done on brains of people as young as 20 by German researchers Heiko and Eva Braak sometimes showed physical changes to the brain that suggest that they already had the beginnings of Alzheimer's.⁸ Alzheimer's disease typically affects the brain by causing plaques and fibrous tangles to build up, causing disruption to the neurons carrying signals around the brain.⁹ These tangles start in the entorhinal cortex, a part of the brain that is important for memory, and then move into the hippocampus, which is also important for learning and memory functions, and finally to the neocortex. This part of the brain gives us our ability to sense time, control impulse and use language. The Braaks believe that it could be up to 50 years between the appearance of the first neurofibrillary tangles and the final stage of the disease.¹⁰

Snowden's research, with the School Sisters of Notre Dame, has also made some interesting discoveries, contrasting the ability of subjects to use language descriptively at an early age and how badly Alzheimer's affects them later on. For example, two nuns of the same age and education and growing up in the same environment, may show different signs of the disease – one with minor and the other with major disability. However, brain autopsy after death may show that both had the same amount of physical damage in the brain. The nun who was shown to have used language more descriptively early in life is described as having greater resilience – a stronger brain that was more efficient and more flexible, and therefore able to make compensations as cells died.¹¹

Translated into plain English – as Alzheimer's disease progresses, the brain shrinks and fibrous tangles move through the brain, breaking off connections and killing cells. While there is no magic medication to either stop this process or relink cells, some people seem to have more immunity than others in terms of how long it takes the disease to affect them.

MY BEGINNINGS

The start of my degree at the Dunedin School of Art coincided with my return to Dunedin after 12 years' absence to look after my father who had just been diagnosed with Alzheimer's and dementia. I enrolled in the BVA course as something to do while caring for him long-term, but after only 18 months he died. It left me pondering on his life with Alzheimer's. This was at the start of my second semester, in year two, leaving me not only to complete my practical work for the end-of-year assessment, but also to sort, tidy and sell the family home.



Figure 2. Megan Griffiths, *Obsession*, 2014, cotton fabric, thread, photograph: Megan Griffiths.



Figure 3. Close up of *Obsession*.

Obsession (2014), my final second-year work, was based on the concept of a collection. Not the usual items people collect, such as stamps or china, but the *Cordyline australis* leaves that my father collected from the family cabbage tree over a period of a couple of years when he had dementia. These he meticulously collected, bundled together, dated and noted on his computer, along with such information as how many leaves were collected and what the weather was like. The work is made up of 322 leaves, each one individually made of cotton fabric, and then sewn with a variety of threads to create markings, chemically burned to create holes and then stiffened. The leaves were then bundled up and tagged before being hung.

I hoped the viewer would gain some understanding of people with Alzheimer's disease – the value placed on something as inconsequential as cabbage tree leaves, and the absolute obsession with collecting and cataloguing them that shows a near madness of purpose.

The following year I continued looking at other aspects of Alzheimer's disease. This time my project explored the inexorable decline of memory and other abilities in people facing Alzheimer's disease. Although the works *Who am I?* and *Where am I?*, which make up this project are personal, they each reach out to a wider audience, many of whom will know someone with this condition.

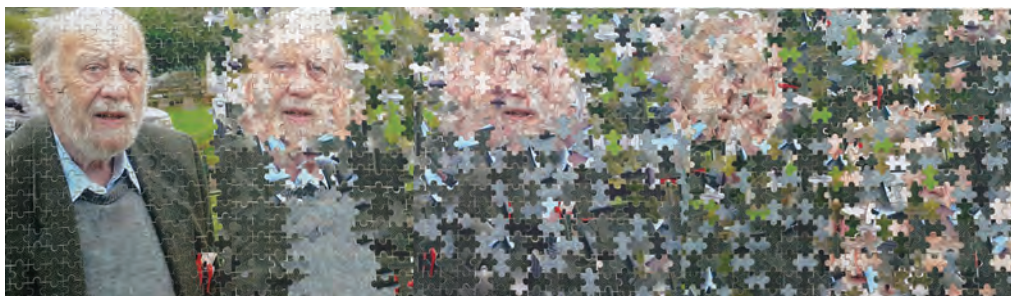


Figure 4. Megan Griffiths, *Who am I?* (2015), synthetic fabric, acrylic, photograph: Megan Griffiths.

In *Who am I?*, a jigsaw has been used as an analogy for declining recognition and decreasing abilities – the reality of physically being unable to put a jigsaw together as the disease progresses. The jigsaw idea was 'happenstance.' A



Figure 5. Megan Griffiths, *Where am I?* 2015, London, synthetic fabric, polyester batting, photograph: Megan Griffiths.

friend showed me a quilt made up of fabric jigsaw pieces, and I suddenly saw how this could be used as a metaphor for Alzheimer's disease. This piece is made from images printed onto synthetic fabric, glued onto acrylic and laser cut into identically shaped jigsaw pieces. The jigsaw is made up of five identical puzzles, with only one retaining the original image. The other four become increasingly distorted until the picture is no longer recognisable. The work consists of 1235 individual pieces.

Where am I? is made up of three separate pieces. Each is an A0-sized whole-cloth quilt, using the image from the previous piece on the front and a map image on the reverse. The map images depict three cities – Invercargill, Dunedin and London. The maps were enlarged and printed onto synthetic fabric. Once quilted, the area between the streets has been cut away, leaving a sparse network of lines and glimpses of the original image. This piece addresses the decline of the sufferer – not in terms of, say, "which building am I in right now?" but rather "which city am I living in?" It has deliberately been hung in such a way that declining memory has been shown in terms of increasingly large holes, but also each piece in the sequence is less stable than the one before it.

ARTISTS AND MEMORY

After looking at memory, the brain and how it is affected by Alzheimer's disease, I researched a variety of artists. I looked at artists working in the field of memory, memory loss and Alzheimer's disease, as well as works that used an interesting technique or idea worth experimenting with such as photo transfers onto sheer fabric, or incorporating maps in such a way as to reference memories or the body.

My work is situated amongst that of conceptual artists, where the idea or concept is the real art, and art is designed to engage the mind of the viewer rather than the vision or emotions.¹² Greg Minissale comments that there are two kinds of concepts. Using 'cat' as an example, a concrete concept might express itself as cat, lion, tiger, etc., while an abstract concept might be soft, predator or king of the animals. Some artworks will require both concrete and abstract concepts to be understood.¹³

SCIENCE/ART COLLABORATION

Anne Griffiths, an English textile artist, has designed a set of pieces for Diamond Light Source, the UK's national synchrotron science facility. Funded by the Wellcome Trust, and called *Designs for Life*, the works were made by the Oxfordshire Woman's Institute in 2006. These works portray how diseases look at a microscopic level. Amongst other elements, Griffiths has taken a copy of a brain scan and a close-up of neurofibrillary tangles and designed them to be reproduced as textile art. Her work for this commission was only made possible using technology that did not become available until the 1970s when CT scanners started to be used and modern electron microscope came into use. In her artist statement, Griffiths says: "I specialize in working with transparent materials, embellished with machine stitch and paint, sometimes combined with heavier materials, such as acrylic or metal to create durable pieces. My starting points are often a word or quotation that demands visual representation."¹⁴

Over the last several years, the Dunedin School of Art has embarked on successful collaborations between scientists at the University of Otago and a variety of artists. In 2013 this collaboration was arranged with neuroscientists from the Brain Health Research Centre at the University of Otago. The resulting exhibition featured 15 works from collaborations between 15 artists and 17 scientists.¹⁵ Of these, three works directly related to Alzheimer's disease – although not necessarily the aspect of memory – and two others dealt with memory specifically, although not in relation to Alzheimer's disease. I looked at the work of three of these artists.

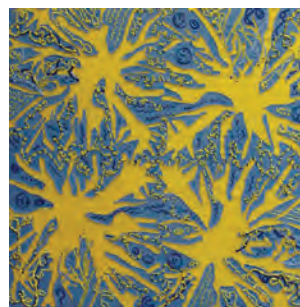


Figure 6. Anne Griffiths, *Tangles*, 2006, fabric, thread, 50cm X 50cm, Diamond Light Source, image courtesy of the artist.

Neuroscientist Valerie Tan's project aims to prevent the onset of Alzheimer's disease by using a virus injection to transport proteins to the brain.¹⁶ In response, artist Richard Mountain used a blown-up image of a virus (similar to those used by Anne Griffiths) to create an oversized ceramic virus.

Neuroscientist Margaret Ryan's research is focused on how memory loss occurs in Alzheimer's disease, particularly in the hippocampus region of the brain. Artist Becky Cameron started her project with a discussion about memory and loss, and about how the loss of memory affects how we see the world. This started her thinking about gene mapping and how our personal environments are mapped.¹⁷ Her final piece for the project was a lantern which referenced early 'magic lanterns.' The use of movement, light and cut-out forms provide visual paths and suggest transient memories.

The final artwork I want to look at from this exhibition is the result of a collaboration between neuroscientist Lucia Schoderböck and artist Sue Novell. Schoderböck, who specialises in learning and memory at the molecular

and cellular levels, studies the development of new neurons in adult brains to discover their role in memory function and retrieval. Novell's work merges a significant scene from her life with a pixellated photograph of memory cells.¹⁸ Looking at this work gives the viewer a distinct feeling of seeing a picture that is 'not quite all there' or is out of focus. Of all the artworks in the 2013 exhibition, this is the one that resonates most with me in considering memory and memory loss.

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

The next two artists I want to consider have made works that are very personal representations of their reaction to losing a parent to Alzheimer's disease, and dealing with the aftermath.

Fibre artist Lisa Kokin lost her mother to dementia. The next day she started sewing. The result was an 18-piece exhibition called "Raveling."¹⁹ Some pieces are based on the words her mother said in the last days before she died – "Take me home, now." In her interview with Vicki Larson, Kokin said: "I hope it functions both on an aesthetic level, that people are intrigued by the material and the use of color; but also my work always includes content."²⁰ All 18 pieces were created using thread on stabiliser. All are based on memories or pictures, and conversations with her mother. The words "Take me home now" have been sewn into a round LP shape as if they were the grooves in a record.²¹

Photographer Lief Anson Wallace made a series of eight black-and-white photographs called *Alzheimer's Fragments of Memory*. "This project was born out of my need to understand and cope with my mother's Alzheimer's. ... I feel that our lives are our memories; what we did yesterday, what we are doing today and what we may do tomorrow. My mother, Helen's, life was encompassed only in the immediate. The subjects in the photographs represent her life in the immediate, the darkness represents her memory and is also left for the viewer to complete with their own memories."²²

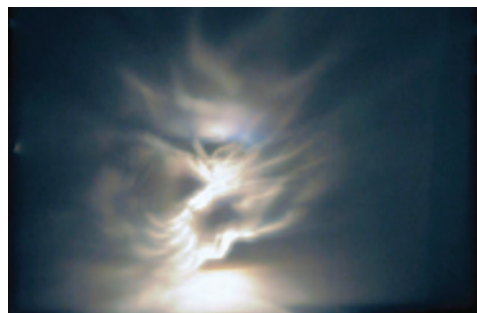


Figure 7. Becky Cameron, *Locus Lucidus* 2013, fire retardant paper; aluminium from drink cans, light bulb, found stand, wire and tracing paper. Dimensions of lamp: 540mm x 200mm. image courtesy of the artist.

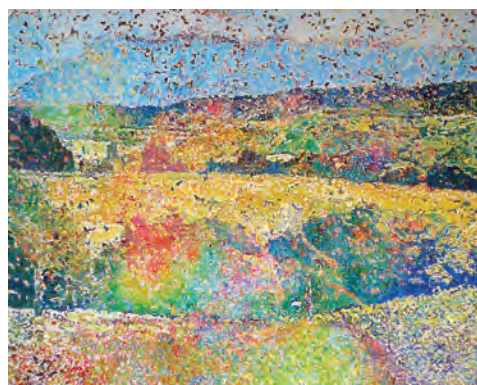


Figure 8. Sue Novell, *This Painting is about Memories*, 2013, image courtesy of the artist.



Figure 9. Lisa Kokin, *Record (Is It Tomorrow?)*, 2012, thread, 22.5" x 22", photograph: Lia Roozendaal Photography, lisakokin.com

MEMORY AS A SUBJECT

The last three artists I want to look at have all used memory or memories in some way in their art.

In Nina Katchadourian's work, I see a way to use maps as an analogy for the brain – using a map as a design for the inner connections of neurons in the brain, but also using the idea of cut-up or disrupted maps to show how the connections can be damaged. Katchadourian has used maps in many of her works. Some have been cut up and repasted to give the world a new look, but several of them consist of road maps, cut out so only roads remain. Her fascination with the links between the geographical and the anatomical shows up in several of her works. In her 1997 work, *Austria*, a cut-up map has been shaped into a heart to suggest the way that Austria has traditionally described itself as 'the heart of Europe.'²³

Film, video and installation artist Kerry Tribe has created several film and video works that deal with memory and forgetting. One of her works deals with the true story of "HM," a patient who had experimental surgery in 1953 and, as a result, while remembering things before the operation, had no new memories lasting more than 20 seconds.²⁴ This work consists of a single 16mm film playing through two adjacent synchronised projectors, with a 20-second delay between them. This gives viewers a sensation of mnemonic dissonance as they view two different parts of the same reel of film at the same time.²⁵ While the work contains an acted interview (i.e. the interviewee is not the real HM), it is so well constructed that until we are told the circumstances, most viewers would not realise that it was not a genuine interview.

Christian Boltanski's 1994 work *Menschlich* ("Human") refers to the Holocaust. He used 1200 photographs from portrait installations created between 1970 and 1994 and hung them in the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg. In 2013, almost 20 years later, he took 200 of those photographs and transferred them onto large, 2m pieces of sheer fabric to make a new installation in the Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg called *Spirit(s)*, one of three new works he created for the museum. His photographs are usually "found" images, with Boltanski having no idea of the identities of the people in them. In an interview with Markus Bruderlin, he commented that if the fabric pictures wear out, then new ones can be created using any pictures. For him it is the *concept* that is important, not the actual pictures used.²⁶ His copying and digital recopying of the photographs he uses gives them an old, grainy appearance, even if they are relatively modern images. The ability to enlarge photographs and print them on fabric to such a large size has also only been made possible in this digital age. This work produces a sensation of fading or forgetting – almost a ghostly effect as the images move softly in the draughts wafting through the gallery.



Figure 10. Leif Anson Wallace, *Alzheimer's Fragments of memory#1*, black & white photograph, image courtesy of the artist.

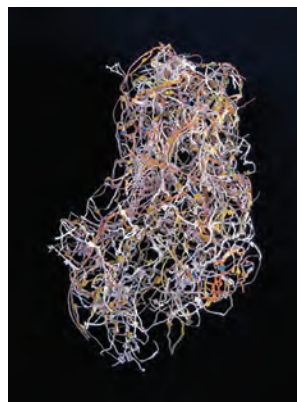


Figure 11. Nina Katchadourian, *Austria*, 1997, dissected paper map, 6" X 9", image courtesy of the artist.

CONCLUSION

My latest works have drawn elements from the artists discussed above that to me best describe the way in which my father's disease progressed. Two of these works are based on specific events: *Obsession* reflects my bewilderment at his insistence that cabbage tree leaves were valuable for use in floral art, not just as fire starters, while *Where am I?* was based on a conversation I had with him, when he asked if I could take him to visit his childhood home in Invercargill. When I agreed to his request, but said that it was a bit late in the day to make the six-hour round trip, he just looked at me and said, "Aren't we in Invercargill?" The last of these three pieces, *Who am I?*, embodies my perception of him 'losing himself' over a period of 18 months or so, going from the father I knew and loved to a virtual stranger who had the ability to both infuriate and scare me.

While images representing Alzheimer's disease and dementia in art are still relatively rare, the increasing prevalence of both these conditions in the world's aging population will undoubtedly mean that, over time, more artists will be seeking ways of representing these two devastating diseases in art.

In 2016, **Megan Griffiths** graduated from the Dunedin School of Art with an Honours degree in visual arts (textiles). This was the culmination of more than 30 years of working in textiles, starting with embroidery, then patchwork and moving into fibre art. Megan continues to work with these techniques and uses her art school knowledge to create unique pieces of fibre art.

- 1 Bruno Dubuc, "The Brain from Top to Bottom, Institute of Neurosciences, Mental Health and Addiction", January 2002, <http://thebrain.mcgill.ca/>. (= *Le Cerveau à Tous Les Niveaux*, trans. Al Daigen) (accessed 27 April 2015).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Alzheimer's Association of America, "Inside the Brain: An Interactive Tour," http://www.alz.org/alzheimers_disease_4719.asp, slide 15.
- 8 David Snowdon, *Aging with Grace: What the Nun Study Teaches us about Leading Longer, Healthier, and More Meaningful Lives* (New York: Bantam, 2001), 91.
- 9 "Inside the Brain: An Interactive Tour," slides 9 and 13.
- 10 Snowdon, *Aging with Grace*, 91-2.
- 11 Ibid., 45.
- 12 Amy Dempsey, *Styles, Schools and Movements: The Essential Encyclopaedic Guide to Modern Art* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 240.
- 13 Gregory Minissale, *The Psychology of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 6.
- 14 <http://www.pocketmouse.co.uk/biography.php>.
- 15 Sunkita Howard and Jenny Rock, "Seeing Science 'Through New Eyes' in an Art and Neuroscience Collaboration," *Scope: Art & Design* 9 (November 2014), 104-7.
- 16 Valerie Tan and Richard Mountain, "Virus #72," *Scope: Art & Design* 9 (November 2014), 118-119.
- 17 Margaret Ryan and Rebecca Cameron, "Locus Lucidus," *Scope: Art & Design* 9 (November 2014), 124-5.
- 18 Lucia Schoderböck and Sue Novell, "This Painting is about Memories," *Scope: Art & Design* 9 (November 2014), 120-121.
- 19 Lisa Kokin, pers. comm., 3 May 2017.
- 20 Vicki Larsen, "Artist Kokin's Mill Valley Exhibit Explores Memory, Loss and Connection," Lifestyle Section, *Marin Independent Journal*, 10 April 2012, <http://www.marinij.com/lifestyle/20121004/artist-kokin-mill-valley-exhibit-explores-memory-loss-and-connection> (accessed 29 April 2015).
- 21 Maria Porges, *Lisa Kokin: Raveling*, exhibition organized by Seager Gray Gallery, Mill Valley, CA, 2-31 October 2012, <http://www.lisakokin.com/pdfs/raveling-catalog.pdf> (accessed 30 April 2015).
- 22 Lief A Wallace, pers. comm., 8 May 2015. See also Lluvia Rudea and Lief Wallace, "Lief Anson Wallace: Fine Art Photography, CV/Bio," http://www.liefwallace.com/mbr_bio.php (accessed 29 April 2015).
- 23 Katharine A Harmon, *You Are Here: Personal Geographies and Other Maps of the Imagination* (New York: Princeton Architectural, 2004), 78-9.
- 24 Cary Levine, "Kerry Tribe, Bio," <http://www.kerrytribe.com/bio> (accessed 29 April 2015). See also Michael E Hasselmo, *How We Remember: Brain Mechanisms of Episodic Memory* (Cambridge: MIT, 2012), 9-10.
- 25 Kerry Tribe, *HM*, 2009, two-channel 16mm film, 19:10min, <https://vimeo.com/61766094> (accessed 29 April 2015).
- 26 "Christian Boltanski – Moved," *HUMA3 Archive*, <http://www.huma3.com/huma3-eng-reviews-id-867.html> (accessed 30 April 2015). See also *Christian Boltanski – Moved*, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rblxk96HsTY> (accessed 29 April 2015). Interview with Markus Bruderlin, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg.

WOUND AND TALISMAN

Susan Videler

Embarking on a master's degree is like going on an extended fishing trip. You bait your hook with an idea and drop it into the rivers of your imagination and the still deeper pools of your subconscious. Images and impressions tug the line and the haul can be slow and seemingly irrelevant, but each catch becomes a flickering, wriggling thought on the line of possibilities. The making, I have found, is a way to think aloud, to identify in three-dimensional form those flickering concepts. There is nothing more satisfying than playing with, testing and bringing an idea to life.

I am a jeweller, painter and drawer; and inevitably all three disciplines intermingle. After studying the skin as mask and surface in my Bachelor of Fine Arts paintings, as a jeweller I became curious about the skin and what lies beneath. This led me to examine the wound. For centuries we have fashioned talismans to prevent wounding, to ward off the evil eye and various malevolent dangers, both physical and psychic.

The talisman as a piece of jewellery has been deeply imbedded in all cultures for centuries. More than just decoration, a talisman embodies a protective belief by the maker and wearer. One of the more iconic objects of this type would have to be the crucifix, an uncanny blending of Christian protection and perpetuated wounding. This icon integrates my understanding of a protective talisman (the cross which predates Christian use) and the effect of the wound on body and psyche.

My initial forays into making included a skin-like substance, rawhide and pieces of glass, referencing not only the eye, but lenses in general used to magnify and observe. Effectively, I made cuts and wounds in the damp skin, stretched it and inserted a lens that became imbedded in the openings as they dried and hardened.

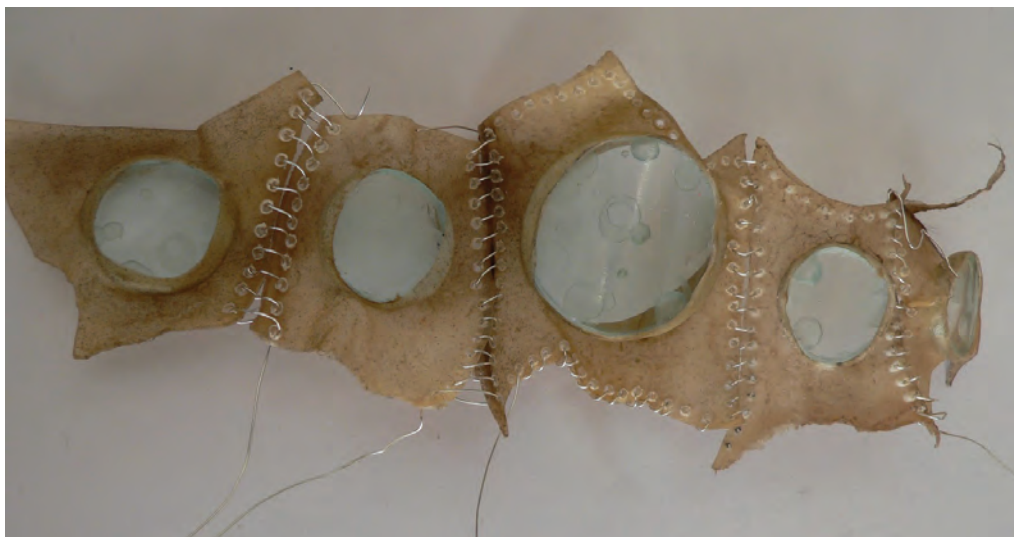


Figure 1. Susan Videler, test piece, 2015, rawhide, glass, sterling silver.



Figure 2. Susan Videler; test pieces, 2015, sterling silver; fine silver; sandblasted glass, rawhide, seaweed, cotton, 45 x 45 mm.

These early works exuded an uncanny quality that was described during an early critique as 'talismanic'. The rawhide polarised reaction to my pieces, and I realised then that how we react to skin is highly individual and often primal. I suspect the inferred wounding heightened the response to my work.

In my early research, I discovered the hierarchy of the senses; a belief that a particular sense has superiority over the others, more often than not sight – and, more often than not, touch lingers near the bottom rung of this particular hierarchical ladder. Ironically, my first pieces were a blend of skin and lens, so I was already involved in this debate from a tactile perspective. An advocate of touch in all spheres of my life, I found the notion of a hierarchy disconcerting and in both my making and dissertation I have highlighted touch as a major player, questioning the supremacy of sight. Take away any of the other four senses, and life, although difficult, is possible. When touch goes, however, we lose the feedback loop from our skin to the brain; we lose ourselves in space, unable to sense gravity, or any pressure at all. We effectively float, disoriented and unable to control our own limbs; unable to walk, eat, communicate or protect ourselves.

Touch, then, is pivotal in my making. I intend my pieces to be tactile and evocative, making use of rawhide, bone, glass, sterling silver and gold. I have made several pieces using antler, echoing the lord of the Celtic forest and centuries of fertility and magic associated with the stag. Imbedded in my work is the understanding that protection and wounding are two sides of the same coin. I think that antlers speak eloquently of this duality.



Figure 3. Susan Videler; *Chain and Horn*, 2016, antler; gold leaf, 18ct gold, 1007 x 25 mm (left). *Horn*, 2016, antler; brass, gold leaf, 10 x 60 mm (right). Both from the *Paesidium* collection, 2016.

Chain and Horn and *Horn* harness the protective iconography of the antler, infused also with a reference to the golden horn of plenty. The elements in *Chain and Horn* are sliced in sequence from a single antler; a simple reconfiguration transforming the antler into a wearable item. I enjoyed working with an animal byproduct that is shed naturally and has been used for centuries. Eight polished and cut eagle talons found in Croatia, and thought to be 130,000 years old, are considered the oldest evidence of jewellery. Were they talismanic or decorative?

I am drawn to earlier times, particularly the medieval period. It is gratifying to know that many of the tools and habits of the jeweller's workshop have remained the same since these times.

However, one of the unfortunate aspects of the medieval period was the preponderance of wounding in its various forms: justice meted out by secular authorities (slicing off a nose or an ear); flagellation and scarification; torture of various kinds inflicted by purpose-built mechanisms; burning and drowning, associated with the Inquisition and the witch hunts. Thousands of women were imprisoned, tortured, sexually abused and publicly burned on the evidence of hearsay, envy, mistrust and ignorance. The flames of these fears were fanned by the church, the state and the universities, who wanted women removed from their positions in communities as midwives, healers, makers of talismans, matchmakers, abortionists and confidantes. Essentially, women had control of the health and growth of the population, and this did not sit well with the patriarchal institutions.

These times were fraught with many dangers; even in sleep there was no real peace, as night was the time when the devil might claim the unwary. Thus, numerous protective talismans were tied or bound to the body secretly with silk or cotton; others were worn overtly as neckpieces, rings or bracelets. Pieces of writing from Christian Scripture or an amalgam of magic and Scripture, various metals, animal parts, stones, plants, bones, skin and entrails all contributed to the array of protective measures employed.

While we live longer than those medieval ancestors, we are still plagued with the same fundamental fears: poverty, disease, hunger, wounding and death. The advertising tide in which we swim has teased out various threads of these basic fears and magnified them, ensuring a continually insecure populace spending money to delay the inevitable and ensure maximum comfort and attractiveness along the way.

We may find it amusing that the evil eye for so many cultures was (and still is) a reality, requiring protective amulets and signs to prevent a curse or illness being inflicted. We have our own evil eye, however. Constantly keeping us under surveillance, the ubiquitous screen gathers information about us; we are observed and our decision-making is then able to be influenced and predicted.



Figure 4. Susan Videler, *Panoptes Wand*, 2016, sterling silver; stag antler; 300 x 40 mm.

Panoptes Wand with its one hundred eyes references Panoptes, the many-eyed Greek giant whose unsleeping gaze was ever watchful – a protective reminder of the evil eye in contemporary society.

We still maintain ceremonies around the wearing of talismans – wedding vows accompany the exchange of rings, designed to bear witness to the sanctity of marriage and provide tactile proof of the union. The crucifix is worn and mimicked in ceremony. We see gemstones advertised for their protective and healing properties. Saint Christopher is still the patron saint of travellers and many cultures sell amulets to ward off the evil eye. The protection afforded by jewellery is not necessarily overt; it can be highly personal, the mere sensation against the skin offering tactile comfort. Talismans are symbols, after all, and through sight, touch and sound they can trigger powerful subconscious reactions.

By slicing and threading, I have dismantled and remade the phallic antler into two neckpieces indicative of protection using circular female forms. The asymmetric *Breastplate for the Heart* speaks of those unseen wounds perpetually inflicted on our hearts and often kept quietly therein. The fine silver connecting threads allude to a possible solution for the broken heart. Although the *Chainmail Choker* feels light and can be adjusted to fit comfortably, it speaks of restriction as well as alluding to medieval protective suits. There is a gentle noise created by the links, both when the piece is being placed around the throat and while it is worn on the moving body, that has inspired me to investigate sound as a talisman. I am currently working on large neckpieces incorporating silver bells, with a view to adding sound to the two other senses of touch and sight.

My extended fishing trip has brought up unexpected catches and I have seen into my own psyche as well as the collective mind, particularly when examining the extended and unnecessary wounding of women. Through this history runs a reliance on symbols and materials as a means of protection, worn as points of reference to channel a belief or to divert the evil eye. The function of jewellery has often been talismanic: it acts as a warning, a diversion, a touchstone, a signal of belonging or a conviction. Jewellery is more than just decorative; it provides tangible coded signals, not just to the wearer and viewer but to the historian.



Figure 5. Susan Videler, *Breastplate for the Heart*, 2016, antler, sterling silver, 410 × 340 × 4 mm (left). *Chainmail Choker*, 2016, antler, sterling silver, gold foil, 620 × 11 × 4 mm (right).

While I anticipate that a series of large protective neckpieces will signal the end of my master's work, several months away, there is still time for new ideas to be pulled up from the depths.

Susan Videler completed her Bachelor of Fine Arts in painting in 2011 at the Dunedin School of Art. Since that time, she has had a studio where she has painted and taught life drawing. However, she has always been drawn to the three-dimensional world of jewellery. After working part-time with a local goldsmith for a couple of years and not painting at all, she decided to return to the Dunedin School of Art, take advantage of the jewellery workshop facilities and stretch her mind and skill base with a master's degree.

POEMS ABOUT PAINTERS (AND ONE POET)

Peter Belton

BENEATH LORCA'S MOON

(2016)

She has seen horses again.
Green and quick, they have come to her
for dark blood money has fingered her guitar:
And, the silver music fails.

Dreaming green tresses float
about her waist, above her fingernail moon.
Swords and rushes, spines to bruise the
flash of thighs and wetness.

On green earth beneath
she once told me she had no other lover;
her green tresses floating in the silver moonlight
slipping around her nakedness.

Strangers bang at the door:
Green; Oh how the green water presents the moon.
A body floats beneath the fountain's tresses;
fingered through with shivered light.

The song rubs across
where hands cannot go. It is the song of the blackbird
who comes and goes singing of longing; of regret; of hope
cut at the wrist.

And I would dream again of green.
And, a silvered ship upon slipping seas.

REMBRANDT'S MIRROR

(2013)

All said and done, they left the bankrupt with only a mirror which shattered anyway, through distraction, collapsing the hours spent in half-light before a window of white canvas into a stare. So much time to think.

Thick with the dusty stuff of pigment let him paint an inch thick, for we must come to this. Saskia with blood in her mouth. Geertje's exhausted eyes, puzzled with weeping and Hendrickje lifting her shift; lowering her eyes.

NO TITLE AND NO THING

(2013)

So everything signifies and Kurt Schwitters lugs his valise laden to the next trainstop. Ambleside from Hanover: Handover hands thick with worrying paste and patches; tickets from Neverwas to Maybe and Stumbledown, revealed in the small nervousness of torchlight.

FLAT OUT (AN AFTERNOON OUT WITH MAX)

(2000)

Today I saw fish
Wandering the sky's edges
Puffing the blue with pink tails,
- heard the trees scratchy chatter
through the tiny mouths of birds
while the wind tickled hair
on my belly.

He will wear his painting as a garment,
a sedimentary cloud where pigment becomes
atmosphere; the flux of gloaming light.

No thing urgent here. Shorelines
finger the liminal and there is breathing beneath
the measured tread of the wanderer.

His questions are about thresholds;
about delivered epiphanies for the returning man
and nascence within the mystery of stillness.

ALAN PEARSON, THE PAINTER, IS WORKING AN OPERATIC MOMENT (2017)

What is it that signifies *with* this tension between the thinness
and thickening of pigment, seen now as its own transported light;
stretched and imploded like chicken guts pushed and pulled ?

Colour and shadow battling it out in the tight theatre of Hades.
We read the painted song, defiant, operatic in its wide sweep of largeness,
projecting gestures which would swallow the span of hands.

A baroque imperative; pulsation and rhyme tighten the frown
of his Gordian knot to pronounce this painted moment.
Blood and song in this canvas of heavy breathing.

ON THE WEIGHT OF AN EGG: (AND PIERO DELLA FRANCESCA'S MONTEFELTRO MADONNA AND CHILD)

(2014)

As Piero noted: Egg signifies the pregnant Virgin, drawing our gaze into a sanctified place.

There is weight in an Egg; all that promise of nascence to be nurtured.

Gravitas.

Unblemished by imperfect features; this face of the Virgin shines with mystery.

Inscrutable.

Piero then saw and Leonardo noted, however; with translucent lightness an Orb floats.

Weightless.

Being weightless, there is no tension nor transcendence. No effort to be. Symmetry is

Stasis.

And, should we seek reflection in a perfect Orb, we might succumb to delusions of our own weightlessness.

The bloodless Orb, the perfect sphere, has no time for the chaos of being.

Now, the Egg; that is a different story.

THE TRICKS

(2014)

The trick of poetry lies in parenthesis

Which is to say, between breaths.

The trick of painting lies in palimpsest.

Which is to say, it's rubbing over.

As Picasso said to Marius de Zayas

over another bottle: 'to find is the thing'.

Sat in that chair where you are sitting now,
she said. A younger girl then. Now standing in the
dappled light of the tea shop. She regards my company
and keeps her silence as tactile as this solid
envelope of settling light.
As it was with Frances Hodgkins.

That is how juxtaposition works on us.
It puts the dance into recollected things, like
memory, in which realization becomes; is,
the self portrait to be found.
We both knew, Miss Hodgkins and I,
she said.

Peter Belton is a graduate from the University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts and has a Master of Fine Arts from RMIT University, Melbourne. He is currently teaching at the Southern Institute of Technology. Prior to that he was a Senior Lecturer at the Dunedin and University of Otago Colleges of Education. Has also worked as Art Curator at the Southland Museum & Art Gallery.

- I Footnote: In July 1978 I went to the picaresque village of Corfe in Dorset, where Frances lived out the final years of her life. My enquiry at the local teashop elicited a surprising response. The woman who owned the shop had been working as an assistant in the same shop through her teenage years in the 1940s. Frances was a regular visitor but was so poor that she would only ever buy a pot of tea and a scone. Then she would request the girl to sit at her table, in order that no one else would intrude into her world. Together, they sat in almost complete silence. Frances had few, if any words; probably explained by her thoughts remaining 'in the studio'. Nonetheless the girl regarded this as a companionable, even privileged relationship. She told me where to find Frances' studio: it had become a craft shop. She also told me that it was found that Frances slept with piles of newspaper over her bed in an attempt to keep warm.

RECKONING, WRIGHTING AND REASONING: ON THE RELATABILITY OF AN EDUCATION IN THE ARTS

E M Davidson

Training employment outcomes are usually quantified by considering the number of graduates from a particular stream of training who successfully secure a position within that field within a suitable time period. This is a good method for measuring these outcomes in some fields of training. It's perfectly logical to do this when students are training towards a trade – after all, it is only logical that most people who train in a trade will, for however long, secure employment in that trade.

This reflects the fact that they have trained in a field with directly applicable skills, as opposed to transferable skills, which another graduate might receive in a different field of training.

Transferable skills such as those used in statistical analysis could easily be carried over from a science background, such as marine biology or quantitative genetics, and cross-applied to a purpose such as writing policy for the government, or even analysing the success of training outcomes. While there are several rather noticeable differences between people and fish, the basic mathematical models for looking at population statistics and migration are transferable.

Thus, the underlying mathematical and statistical skills involved are directly transferable and can be used with little or no modification between one statistical field and another. While the training in question is pointedly focussed on studying a particular field (e.g., marine biology), and while there is a great deal of specialist knowledge which does not transfer; the underlying analysis skills which this specialist knowledge relies upon are transferable to a greater or lesser degree.

A graduate of a more 'ephemeral' subject such as philosophy or fine arts, on the other hand, typically does not have a large field of directly applicable employment opportunities; there are often few opportunities for formal employment outside of their respective academic fields. Moreover, outside the academic fields in question, there is little in the way of formal apprenticeship. In fact, these fields tend to be rather competitive, solitary and lean, a situation which does little to foster mentoring in an employment sense.

The arts in particular have a rather poor reputation for creating employment opportunities for graduates. This is not so much a reflection of the employability of the graduates in question as it is a reflection on the paradigm by which these things are measured. In fact, the arts have very similar long-term employment outcomes as other fields of study; it's just harder to predict a career path in a linear fashion beforehand. It can be hard, even, to chart a course retroactively in some cases.

Thus, direct skills-based employability is really a poor reflection of the prospects of art graduates, as there is little in the way of a direct and sponsored career pathway for these graduates. Similarly, it is hard to argue for directly transferable skills in many of these ephemeral fields because while individuals will have a wide range of transferable skills, there is less of the consistency in methodology that one would find in the sciences, and thus transferable skills typically need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Indeed, if one looks at the graduates of strictly academic, philosophical and artistic fields using either the models of direct application of training or of uniformly transferable skills, then their employment prospects would seem to be disastrous.

The fact remains, however, that graduates of these fields of study tend to have high long-term employment rates – a situation less due to the practical or transferable skills which their training has implicitly given them, and more from their developing an ability to ask and reframe questions.

It is not so much that these graduates are taught a set of skills with which to approach problems – rather, they have been taught a way of looking at, and interrogating, problems to which there is no obvious empirical solution. That said, this still raises the issue of relatability or relevance. This *left-field* way of looking at problems can be extremely counterintuitive to many people.

The relatability of the skills and methods with which people work has a major impact on how people view the practicality of the practitioners and, in turn, this influences people's perceptions of the training that people undergo.

To elevate or depreciate any of the skills or fields I have covered thus far is short-sighted. We will, for instance, *always* need people with practical skills; the people who can fix things which are broken, who can build houses, and who can ensure that machinery behaves as expected. These are essential skills, and most sensible people can respect them for what they are – that is to say that the relatability of practical skills is extremely high. We would abandon these skill sets at our peril and, thankfully, most sensible people know this.

The relatability of mathematics, statistics, modelling, quantifying, budgeting and accounting is less evident to many people, and thus fewer people understand the value of these things. However, it is possible to break down and explain the necessity of these methods of approaching problems. They are, after all, 'rules-based.' Thus, even if these skills are less relatable, they are quantifiable and predictable, and their outcomes follow suit.

The purely theoretical (including the theoretical sciences), the ephemeral, and the intellectual pursuits, on the other hand, often score very poorly in terms of relatability at a community level; they often rely heavily on jargon, and on certain pre-supposed injunctions which are typically topic- and field-specific. Even worse, they often rely heavily on metaphor and analogy to be understood at all. In short, they lack relatability at a community level, and often the participants in these fields have no especial desire to make their research relatable, nor do they desire to educate people outside of their own field. The knowledge they deal with is too specific for it to be disseminated broadly without diluting it.

It is little wonder, then, that the general public show strong support for people with practical skills, and a grudging admiration for those people who have trained in the hard sciences, accounting, law, and other quantifiable, rule-based fields.

It is equally little wonder that many people are simply mystified as to what is the point of the theoretical sciences, the humanities, and the arts. After all, much of what people dabble in in these fields is speculative, arcane and often seemingly purely a matter of opinion. Further, because these fields cleave strongly to their own methodologies, they often have little in the way of any sort of formalised structure. In short, at advanced levels at least, students often create their own briefs for study rather than relying on canons that already exist. This can seem as though they are just making it up as they go – however, this kind of freedom is actually the value of these subjects.

There are basically three areas of study which we use to make people work-ready. I like to call these *reckoning*, *wrighting* and *reasoning*, and each of these areas is greatly diminished in the absence of the others.

Reckoning refers to the deductive, rule-based methodologies; it is exemplified by the field of statistics. There is a methodology that overarches any project in statistics. What I mean by this is that the actual things being averaged,

counted, quantified or mapped are not treated differently from any other item which is being counted, etc. In these processes, the methodology is the thing that is foregrounded. That is to say that these skills and methods can be used to do a range of things, and the supposed 'subject' of the study becomes abstract. The specialisation here is in the handling of the *data* rather than the *material* to which the data alludes.

Wrighting on the other hand is often not abstract at all. It's making ... It is the hands-on, day-to-day process of making things, and making them work. This is not to say that there are no abstract or intellectual elements in these 'making' processes; engineering, electronics and computer programming, for instance, entail symbolic processes, and calculations that can be very complex indeed, but they ultimately work towards the creation of *a thing*.

Reasoning makes up the third leg of this admittedly unequal tripod. It is arguably the least necessary on a day-to-day basis, but in the long term it is critical and it is where much of our long-term progress is made. When a new, improved, or just terribly clever idea comes to light, it is almost always either an incremental improvement on previous work or a recombination involving more than one existing field. Without research, and documentation, and even creative leaps, much of this possibility is lost.

Of course, these things are never simple; many of the practical *wrighting* fields require a specialist knowledge and skills which are obscure or even arcane to people from outside the indicated field. Conversely, theoretical research is utterly dependent on accurate and repeatable research methodologies such as database manipulation. Reckoning is also dependent on intuition. You ultimately need a place to start from when quantifying the answer to a statistical problem – the answer may be affected by influences which are at first counterintuitive.

This crossover is something that is not really allowed for in the statistical modelling of employment outcomes that I referred to earlier. In this era where people are working for a larger number of employers, and in a greater range of fields than the previous generation (who in turn had more jobs than their parents) – and in anticipation that this trend will increase rather than decrease over time as more work becomes mechanised and part-time – it is fair to say that students graduating today, no matter what their field, are far more likely than their parent's generation to retrain over the coming decades.

This tendency towards multiple employers and increasing cross-training is not adequately reflected in the simple models of employability in relation to training. After all, people typically want simple answers to questions such as "Will I get a job if I train in xyz?" An answer with a series of *ifs* and *maybes* isn't exactly what people want to hear in these circumstances, but that is where we are heading in terms of employment, if not currently in education.

So, essentially, the concept of training for one job is gradually becoming outmoded by the reality of a volatile employment market. In one way, the ideal is a more balanced education system where people are encouraged to work in a more interdisciplinary manner; picking up skills in quantitative, qualitative and cognitive areas, along with ongoing education throughout their lives. However, in the absence of this model, a more collaborative approach to education may be a simpler option.

The contemporary practice in most fields of education is having a group of people all complete a discrete task simultaneously, in competition, and without assistance. This way, we are able to judge each individual's skill at each aspect of the task and to tell them where they meet an expected outcome or where they need to improve. This is a poor reflection of how people are expected to behave when in employment.

I am not calling for the abandonment of the skills and methods that are taught in different fields. Most fields of education have existed for a long time and have long since become adept at training students to meet the practical rigours of their fields. People who make things need to learn how to do these things, and people who create and apply rules also need to be trained – each field has its own methodologies for a reason.

It is very rare for a workplace to specialise in one of these things; most employers create teams of people who work on discrete tasks in order to participate in completing meta-tasks. After all, obscure physics makes more powerful hammers and arcane chemistry makes stickier glue. In the twenty-first century, neither of these examples are things typically discovered by an individual; results such as these tend to be the work of teams of people who display skills ranging from practical manufacturing skills through to marketing and sales.

When a business runs with a collaborative team-based model, it can boost productivity as well as improving the skill base of its employees whilst still respecting the individual skills of its workers. In this manner, a culture of collaborating and working out problems as a group can be fostered, rather than creating a more traditional hierarchical, top-down structure.

It is perhaps not terribly contemporary in this age of extreme individualism to be calling for an educational standard which promotes practical teamwork – by which I mean a type of teamwork where a project is broken down into discrete tasks (which is a task in itself) and these tasks are allocated to individuals according to talent and skills. However, this approach, when handled mindfully, can lead to an improvement in everybody's skills, and thus their employability, without diminishing the individual talents of the members of the group.

EM Davidson graduated with an MFA from Massey University in 2012. Since then, she has divided her time between writing, photographing and working as a technician. In her spare time she can be found (or not found) wandering about New Zealand and Australia gathering photographs and stories.

IN THE STRAWBERRY PATCH: A FAMILY PORTRAIT

Suzanne Emslie

ALL IN A DREAM

In the Strawberry Patch is a project founded on an experience from my childhood. The idea began with a recurring childhood nightmare. As children, we were told to sit on the floor, even if there were seats free. We were to be quiet and only talk when we were spoken to, especially in the company of adults. The dream that haunted me was a picture of my mother and her siblings telling us what to do and when to speak. Their physical appearance, amplified by my child's perspective to almost balloon-like proportions, became more and more distorted and their voices grew louder and louder as their bodies loomed closer and closer.

Sigmund Freud believed that dreams were the reflections of a person's hidden feelings and that the unconscious could communicate through imagery and symbolism. In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), he explained how dreams could show a pathway to understanding the unconscious. He explained how symbols and imagery in dreams could not only reveal the dreamer's hidden feelings, but lead the way to helping them attain what they truly desired. Psychoanalysis offers an understanding of subjectivity in art via the interaction of the conscious and the unconscious elements in the mind, an approach which has resulted in growing connections and crossovers between psychoanalysis and contemporary art.

The art work becomes the object of mere subjective experience and consequently art is considered to be an expression of human life.

Sigmund Freud¹

In making the work, I was interested in expressing the things that were unsaid which made up the total experience. Growing up around a large family, there were countless big family gatherings: weddings, births, christenings and birthdays – any excuse for a party was taken up. Family values were paramount at any gathering, evident in family traditions and practices passed down through generations. Despite the difference of opinions, everyone took care of and looked out for one another. My most memorable experience of family life was that I often felt invisible. On the surface, it was all about fun – but, as a child, I felt overlooked and very alone with this very large extended, traditional family.

For almost 40 years and two generations, the Thompson family ran extensive strawberry gardens and a farm on Fernhill, Queenstown, until the 121-hectare block was sold in the late 1960s for a housing and hotel subdivision. The Thompson era began in 1928, when they planted hundreds of strawberry plants and established their tourist business in ideal surroundings. Holidaymakers would walk the 3km from Queenstown to the strawberry gardens for generous helpings of freshly picked fruit with farm-produced clotted cream. The strawberry patch was situated behind the house, where a hive of bees ensured good pollination, but visitors were served at the front of the house, either in the garden or in a small teahouse. By 1950, and the second generation of Thompsons, the strawberry plants had grown in number to almost 40,000, with the addition of 2000 raspberry canes. My mother's generation grew up in the 1940s and '50s; family life was centred on the family business. In the busy season, they would pick from

Sam till ten at night; more than 40 pickers and family members chipped in. There was always mischief between the Thompson siblings, but the other workers turned a blind eye to their shenanigans in the strawberry patch.

RECOLLECTIONS

In The Strawberry Patch is a portrayal of many stories told over generations of the strawberry gardens on Fernhill. The works I have created are reminiscent of a long day's end, with a "strawberry standoff:" lobbed strawberries, the squishier the better; the more bird-pecked and rotten being best, spilling strawberry juice over clothing, bodies and faces. A family portrait of my mum and her siblings centres on the rivalry and competitive behaviour within the large family group. A fun narrative of voluptuous, joyous figures, where if you didn't make enough noise or get up to mischief and run with the pack, you were either cornered and tickled till your laughter turned to tears, or you were ignored completely.

The plum tree

Our big plum tree was in the yard and when the plums were ripe, it was our job to pick them for mum to make into jam and preserves. We would get up the tree, shaking the tree for the plums to fall. It was then a race between us and the hens to see who got the most.

Pat

Drunk hens

Have you ever seen drunk hens? Mum preserved a large amount of fruit each year. Apricots, nectarines, plums, pears, apples and peaches. She spent hours preparing and bottling them for winter. Sometimes, some of the seals didn't work well and the fruit fermented. One year we cleared out all the not-well-sealed fruits and threw it all to the hens. They loved it and they got drunk on it. The funniest thing to see was hens walking around and falling over themselves and one another.

Judy

Grapes

Each year when the grapes had ripened, dad would climb onto the porch roof to pick them. One year when I was quite young, it was the best harvest we had had. All us kids that were still at home were waiting around the bottom and dad would throw us each a bunch.

Mary

Blackberries

Down in the cow yard, lots of wild blackberries grew. There were tremendously fruitful bushes. We used to pick loads of them so mum would make pies, jam and jelly. We of course ate many when we were picking them. One afternoon with nothing better to do, we had a blackberry fight. It was great fun. It went on for most of the afternoon. What wasn't fun was when mum saw us – we were in the bathroom for hours trying to get the stains off us and out of our clothes.

Thelma

POSITIONS PLEASE



with oversized limbs and exaggerated facial expressions. Walls at least one inch thick were consistently scraped, blended and pressed onto the surface to render smooth skin and a textured finish for clothing.

A total of 11 siblings were created – two brothers and nine sisters – and their notable differences in personalities were, I hope, captured in the performance of the narrative depicted. One of the men was to be shown exercising his very strong will, hand on hip and shaking a finger. The second male, known to be a bit of a prankster, would hold a slingshot at the ready. Both are standing tall, legs spread for balance, both a little exaggerated in height as they had nine sisters to contend with – strength in numbers rather than in size.

With the women, I began with four seated figures. The oldest and youngest sisters are taking a bite from a strawberry; the youngest sits with her mouth full, trying to look innocent. The third sister was to be aiming strawberries at another as the fourth guarded her face. Three more sisters were kneeling – one was intended to be pulling a face,



while the other two were on the attack. One was to be larger than them all – she was known as the headstrong sister and a bit of a bully. The last sister was to be shown standing, swaying to one side and shielding herself from a slingshot attack.

In the grouping, I wished to capture the feel of the 1950s in the textured surface of the clay, suggesting cotton, denim, seersucker and suede fabric surfaces. Ceramic strawberries were also strewn about in reference to the strawberry fights which sometimes happened at the end of a working day.

A LARGER-THAN-LIFE FAMILY

The sheer scale of the build, the size and number of the sculptures, and the amount of time the figures needed to sit to dry through completely meant that the project was a huge learning curve. I had many mishaps, and some figures had not been created full-size as the project reveal date loomed. The size of the kiln also played an important part in the design of the figures, meaning that the majority of sitting and kneeling figures had to be made so their hands/ arms and heads could be attached once fired in the kiln. It was a mathematical puzzle for me to piece them together, and it also added a bit of lunacy and humour to the narrative to see the separate pieces in the studio.

In The Strawberry Patch is a projection of what I saw in my mother's family, as well as my own recollections of growing up. There was much posturing and many cracks revealed in the relationships within the family unit, but ultimately this family portrait is best seen as a light-hearted romp between siblings.



Suzanne Emslie has spent seven and a half years completing a Diploma in Ceramics and a Masters of Visual Arts in ceramic sculpture. She has been a practising artist for the last 14 years, working in both ceramic and limestone materials, and sculpting and carving figurative works.

- 1 Sigmund Freud, quoted in Hal Foster et al., *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004).
- 2 Paper clay is considered the strongest clay mix for creating sculpture. It can be joined and rejoined, working from wet clay to dry, or vice versa, as a result of the paper fibres immersed in the clay. A mix of 25% paper with 75% clay creates a very elastic and forgiving mix, most suitable for building large sculptural works.