>>> edited by Mick Douglas >

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Editor > Mick Douglas Publication Coordinator > Kate Riggs Communication Design > Neal Haslem Website > Robert Eales Copy Editor > Din Heagney

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> > PERFORMING MOBILITIES was the Australian regional cluster contribution to PSi #21 > Fluid States: Performances of Unknowing > a networked, year-long program initiated by Performance Studies international (PSi).

Throughout 2015, fifteen regional performance gatherings were staged in diverse global locations in order to rethink performance ideas and practices in terms of shifting geopolitical and sociopolitical realities.

> PERFORMING MOBILITIES explored how contemporary life in Australia, the world's largest island continent, is framed by borders whilst constantly being reconstructed through dynamic processes of mobility.

The program sought to creatively and critically explore forms, forces, dynamics, meanings and consequences of performing mobility. It proceeded through journey-based projects that manifested TRACES in gallery expositions, via PASSAGES of mobile performance, and through an ASSEMBLY symposium.

Proposals were invited from artists, makers, writers and researchers for interdisciplinary creative projects and performances, temporary interventions, performative presentations and academic papers. The ASSEMBLY fostered transdisciplinary encounters with artistic research and critical reflection to investigate intersections of performance and mobility that are of Australasian regional relevance and global resonance.

> A rich media archive of the project is available online at performingmobilities.net

CURATOR > Mick Douglas

COMPANION CURATORS > David Cross > Paul Gazzola > Bianca Hester > James Oliver > Paul Rae > Laurene Vaughan > Meredith Rogers > Fiona Wilkie >

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### >>> WORLDS IN MOTION > curatorial statement > Mick Douglas

Worlds are in motion, as always. Re-enter this dynamic flux anew – here and now – by drawing your attention to five currents of momentum at play in Performing Mobilities.

Firstly, you might notice the increasingly hybrid and layered ways in which individual human creativity operates. Curator, artist, writer, academic, agent, performer, activist, organiser, self-realiser all of these roles are inhabited by many of us in the same moment. The bricolage of an individual's multiple practices is enmeshed in the inter-dependencies that make up a bundle of social ecologies. These characteristically conversational modes of operating eschew fixed positions to foster exchange, dialogue and inter-action. And so this program is generated by the weave of relationships between a core group of individuals, each of whom oscillates between many of these roles.

Next, we might sense a rising creative attraction toward direct, demonstrative ways of working and living. Performative modes of practice value the doing of action, often with embodied intelligence, over the representation of thought and interest. With sensory awareness, we note that it is not only the human that is performing. Other species, materials and forces are also in dynamic interplay, doing what they are doing, feeding back into the systems of which they are part, and affording the more and less possible shape of things to come.

Thirdly, we encounter the near and the far in fluid interchange, as systems of movement are simultaneously entangling placements and displacements. Specific localised events dynamically aggregate as patterning forces at global scales, such as when a viral media image of a tragic event 'there' prompts a change of response or policy 'here'.

Performing Mobilities was embedded in the networked conversations of a globally distributed series of fifteen regional events as part of the Performance Studies international (PSi) 2015 project 'Fluid States: Performances of UnKnowing'. As the Australian regional contribution, this program specifically explored regional relevance in relation to the global resonance of mobilities.

As we move toward real and imaginary horizons, the fourth current at play is an experience of unfolding emergence. Giving over to multiple forces gives rise to events beyond the human dimensions of predetermined intent. When we speak of 'the journey' or 'process', we allude to how the unconscious, along with all that is other-than-human, comes into play, to elicit the real, live, serendipitous and happenstance, despite ourselves.

Performing Mobilities was as unknown as it might be known, with most participating projects newly generated, unfolding and emerging into relations with one another.

TRACES of movement projects were installed in two galleries to explore and reimagine systems of movement, place and event. The projects indicated tensions around the movement of people migrating countries or crossing a city; the movement of cultural ideas and social practices; the movement of matter through time and across space, and through transformations of state; the movement of other-than-human species; and the movement of the forces that shape and change weather, land, water environments, and ecosystems. Works invited us to move with them. At RMIT Gallery, Jondi Keane and Kaya Barry's PAN & ZOOM, an interactive performance installation of expanded image-making and viewing, invited visitors to collaborate in making digital imagery in order to re-explore relations between media technologies and embodied experience. At Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, David Cross and Jem Noble conducted the live process of building a HOUSE OF WISDOM, inviting visitors to join afternoon lectures, performances and critical reflection and exploration of ideas and practices for self-improvement.

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PASSAGES of mobile performance projects took to the environs around and between the two galleries, offering ways to encounter art in various live and mobile manifestations. You might have encountered a large black-plastic sphere inhabited by an invisible walker; a tour whose subject is other tours available in Melbourne; a woman repairing a bitumen road surface by hand; a VERY LOCAL RADIO broadcast operating from a shopping trolley; or a fleeting composition of space and sound enacted in a PORTABLE TEMPLE. Numerous mobile performances invited you to walk with the artist, including Angela Kilford's WALKING ON FALLOW LANDS #2, stepping one foot after another in a way that the First Peoples of Melbourne and New Zealand traditionally value place and motion.

Performing Mobilities brings the differing arcs of these projects into adjacency with one another. Gathered in this way, the program invites you to register the wide-ranging and mutually entwined scales of movement in space and time, and your presence among it all. These experimental creative works examine the forming, performing and transforming of contemporary conditions through the dynamic tensions of mobility.

Lastly, it is the quiet, persistent momentum of hope that activates these works, and looks for ways of thinking and feeling that might shift hardened beliefs, ideological certainties, received truths, and vested interests. As the world's largest island continent, Australia may be framed by its coastal borders, but it is also constantly under reconstruction through the shifting processes of movement. The relations of land, water and sky; of solid, liquid and gas; of knowing and unknowing: the dynamics of these relations persist and sustain. Hope allows us to open up to the possibility of being enchanted by live and embodied ways of noticing and attending to the problems, pleasures and uneven distributions of PERFORMING MOBILITIES.

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Following the 2015 events of Performing Mobilities, Curator Mick Douglas gathered the Companion Curators in mid 2016 for a discussion to reflect on the project.

#### I: Dramaturgy

Mick Douglas (MD): The project of Performing Mobilities emerged over a number of years through dialogue. It commenced through my conversations with you Fiona, and then gathered shape and momentum through the discussions of this group. Having performed the mobility, as it were, let's revisit the three-part dramaturgical structure that gave rise to the project: the seven-week programme of TRACES expositions of journey-based projects held in two university galleries at either end of the central Melbourne city; the one-week programme of PASSAGES of mobile performances departing from the galleries; and the four-day ASSEMBLY that brought the whole Performing Mobilities activity into a state of culminating intensity, with people offering and experiencing performances, events, interventions and scholarly presentations. What were the virtues and limitations of this curatorial dramaturgy? Did it enable engaging with and thinking about performance and mobility together in particular ways?

Fiona Wilkie (FW): The different patterns offered ways for people to move in and out of experiences, spending lengthy moments of engagement over multiple weeks, or for a quick intense period. I came in by plane for an intense week and then left, so my experience seemed to roughly match the people who also came for the Assembly, whilst many others dropped in and out of the gallery expositions and performances over a longer period. These patterns enacted relationships between movement and stillness and so on. The Assembly tried to gather and allow space for multiple ways of thinking mobility and performance together. There was a strand around disability, immobility and interdependence; another strand around indigeneity, belonging, place and movement; there were strands around walking arts, migration, refugees; around global commerce, shipping and cargo, and so on. There was something really useful about accommodating all of these things, but we couldn't possibly do justice to the political and the social and the structure.

MD: In that dramaturgy, the Assembly of people and activities provided the most intense experiential element of Performing Mobilities, and I notice it has made the strongest impression on our conversations reflecting on the whole project to date. I hope the catalogue publication will offer engagement in the Traces and Passages programmes that offered slower, less intense forms of encounter. Yes there are weaknesses and strengths produced through the structures embedded. And that raises for me how the program had a lesser degree of Indigenous involvement and contributions that came to fruition than was hoped for, because of various people's circumstances. I feel the responsibility for that, and disappointment with it.

Bianca Hester (BH): When holding open a space for multiple strands, as soon as you bring greater attention to one of those strands, you have to really rework at a structural level. The whole curatorium would've had to be restructured with Indigenous involvement influencing the way the whole project unfolds. And likewise for any of those strands.

MD: Yes, by privileging the networked breadth of the program, the emphasis became the weave of intersecting examples of mobility and performance. I'm interested in how mobility projects gather momentum, conduct movement, and create moments of intensity.

Laurene Vaughan (LV): I felt there was a sense of revealing different arrangements of proximities through this movement. The long process of development towards the gallery works and the performances over the seven weeks made the Assembly so rich. Early on in the process, Mick engaged the curatorium group in the experience of walking salt from Flinders St Station to

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Docklands and unexpectedly travelling on the river – it shifted us from talking about what it could be to an embodied experiential moment about how this might be.

David Cross (DC): Yes, our terms of engagement started with praxis. I was performing my own mobility from the very first moment. We weren't thinking about how we would structure it, we were actually engaging in doing it. I think the profundity in that is the way in which once you've cast the die, it's really going to determine what you do.

LV: The work was embodied; it wasn't an event that was purely conceptual. If you wanted to be part of it

Meredith Rogers (MR): You had to move!

DC: The dramaturgy had two factors in train. It's us sitting round a table, plotting a praxis and how a gallery show sits in relation to temporary performances, in relation to a gathering, in relation to a publication. Then there is the reality of confirming a gallery space, who can join in, what the budget is, and how this is going to come together. There was a lovely oscillation between the purity of ideas generated on criteria of artistic and intellectual capital, that was then mediated with pragmatic realities. For me, it is that balance between a fluid set of ideas, and paying homage to gallery practice, to temporary performance practice, to site-based practice, and to our reflections on that, and at the same time, knowing that we had finite energies, finite money and a lot of stuff out of our hands. To me, that risk is still one of the most beautiful things about what emerged through Performing Mobilities, partly because of planning and partly because of luck.

MD: Does actively working with contingency play a role?

MR: It is also to do with the participants, and I think because there was an appetite to engage.

DC: Yes, the quality of artists and performers and thinkers was excellent. But there's also something about careful orchestration. Sure, there was space for the happenstance, but the care of thinking through the different modes within the Assembly, for example, enabled that beauty to happen.

MD: Is that something particular about the intersection between performance and mobility?

MR: Yes, because once you're talking about mobility you're talking about movement between, so that you're then always in a state of enquiry and discovery and between-ness.

LV: The idea of embracing fear to see what would happen is very important – a certain bravery, which is consistent with both performance and mobility. There has to be a certain ambition about where you want to go. And I think there was a certain bravery of knowing that some things could completely go wrong, but if they did, they would be what they would be.

II: Curatorium structure

MD: Let's talk about our roles. I sought out to create a network of relations between people involved in Performing Mobilities. At the core was the interweaving of the multiple roles that many of us have played: as being part of this organising group of this multi-layered project; of undertaking the role that I proposed to you as 'companion curator' to participating projects; of inviting you to undertake and propose your own project as an artist, and a performance, scholarly presentation or artist's talk that would be reviewed for selection by this group along

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with other invited proposals. How did you experience taking up multiple roles? Was this enabling or inhibiting? Are their virtues to this approach?

BH: Well, I loved it! It deepened relationships within my own network. It's always productive to engage with people through different registers. And I think it brings a greater sense of responsibility to those of us on the curatorium, to each other personally and intellectually.

MD: Many of us were already experienced in working in, as you put it, 'multiple registers', in roles as organisers, initiators, curators, academics, activists, and as artists undertaking project works. However often those roles are not overlaid in the same frame; they're often kept separate.

BH: Which establishes a hierarchy. So for example, I felt that I was able to be really honest working with Australian Performance Exchange. I could bring a criticality to the discussion because, like them, I was also an artist (as a member of Open Spatial Workshop) participating in the Traces programme and could talk with empathy to the process, allowing me a greater criticality, and an honesty to bring to bear in the discussions.

DC: It's incredibly audacious to think that we can play those roles simultaneously. We tested the nature of how those roles can be blurred, how they can be set in a register next to one another. But I think we found a limit. I found that the different headspaces of being a curator, a writer, a panel chair, and of being an artist were extraordinary difficult to find an accord with particularly as it became more intense around the Assembly.

MR: I thought that the companion curatorship was really quite difficult at times, but it was a learning role for both participants and became an expansive process.

FW: We were inventing what we might mean by 'companion curator' all the way through. Inevitably, like any set of relationships, some will have worked better than others, and some worked just differently. It was left open, so that it could be the relationship it needed to be.

LV: I felt that I had the role of host. There was this dimension of care. It wasn't necessarily something I had to have, but I felt aware of wanting to help hold the space of the event.

BH: Mick, being the OSW companion curator, set an example for how I might improvise my being in a companion curator role to others, or do it differently. I love this working in response with, against, and through something. That was productive because, in a way, that becomes a 'companion' curator, not in terms of the curator to artist relation, but in terms of curator to curator, slipstreaming, the same as the artist slipstreaming with the artist.

DC: It was an exercise in a radically interrogating praxis.

FW: Rather than simply gathering a set of proposals and putting them into a program, which is what generally happens, we attempted to set up space for conversations to happen.

MD: I think you're making a distinction between a predetermined directorial approach of commission and selection, and an emergent process of discretion and inclusion. The structure that we were exploring tried to create relations between the participating people and projects, trying to allow the relations between them to emerge over time. I trusted that the emergent process would enable the artists' project interests, and our curatorial shaping of the overall project, to be responsive to one another.

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FW: I think we set off the possibility for conversations to start beforehand, to circulate around the events, to continue afterwards, but that means we can't capture everything that came under the umbrella of this thing we set in motion.

MD: There was an effort to have creative practice work and scholarly reflection in the same conversation.

FW: It's a clich that often at scholarly events, the most interesting and useful stuff for your ongoing work is the stuff that happens in the coffee break, but there are different languages that people coming from one or other of those groups are used to working in, and it can take a while for those to settle with each other.

DC: How does one sustain an ambitious multi-voiced project with the ambition that we put on the table over a period of time? How might have we thought through the notion of intensities? How can you establish a really rich and vibrant and celebratory sense of praxis in an organisational structure like ours over an 18-month period?

MD: I was very conscious of cultivating conditions where there's an interweave between social actors - particularly the multiplicities of being artists, curators, writers, academics - to actually explore the multi-layeredness of what it is to cultivate exchange, and what it is to move together. I felt it was necessary to mobilise a grouping, to mobilise connections between individuals who cared, because to me that was part of what was going to generate ways to reveal something about our contemporary condition, and the different forces of mobility that we experience.

DC: Could the means of doing so been improved?

MD: It could have been more time efficient. We can territorialise responsibilities, such that an autonomy of action can take place within those territories. But whilst that gains something in terms of time efficiency, it also can have the consequences of reducing attention and capacity for working the threads of relation between entities.

#### III: Transdisciplinarity

BH: Artistic work is assembled through a whole range of methodologies, some more scholarly, some more experiential, so for me, artistic research is already a convergence of research enquiries, > > > COMPANIONS & CURATION

and the same potentially goes for scholarly output, right? To bring them together foregrounds and embraces the truth of research in a way - the multi-modal, multi-registered way that research happens - that takes different formats and can achieve different outputs. It's very true to form in my own experience of producing work, where artwork is, like interrogating the archives, writing, collaboration, site research, field work, critical, dialogical process, studio production. So it already contains multiple registers. As workers, we are thinkers and writers and presenters and artists and friends: many possible relations go into the mix of making work.

LV: Similarly, I think there was an equity of literacies in the programme bringing richness – a literacy of performance, of image, of text, the literacy of discussion, and of silence. Holding these with the same emphasis in a space allowed for each to speak, and allowed people to enter and leave as they could.

MR: Yes, a capacity to take in and embrace other forms that you might not ordinarily.

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MD: I wanted us to reflexively explore this kind of multivalent and networked milieu of contemporary cultural production that we exist within, so that the movement patterns of people, practices and ideas could be attended to in the ways in which they fold back into the larger emergent project.

FW: I particularly enjoyed that, through the structures that we set up and the spaces to break out of those structures, we were enacting the ubiquity of the themes that we were arguing. I do think there was a fundamental premise that Performing Mobilities isn't a niche topic within performance studies, but is actually something we need to tease out, because these are conditions that we find ourselves working, living and operating within. Mobilities can become about so much that it becomes nothing – a vague, empty concept. So for me, that was the value of having very specific foci, asking what do we mean by that in this instance, and in this instance? People come with very particular examples, either through a piece of creative work that they've produced, or a piece of writing or whatever, and these examples gave important moments to get down to the detail of what does mobility mean in particular instances.

BH: It's important to offer a critique of the endless mobility that we all find ourselves in, and the kind of post-Fordist labour that we do as artists in terms of an endless readiness and mobility across registers, across disciplines, as that's what neo-liberalism demands of us, constant fluidity, right?

FW: Yes. And it can't be expected that we carry on in a kind of business model, where our labour is moved unproblematically from place to place, as if there's no other ties or anything that would connect it to places, particular places at particular times. Seeing Paul Gazzola and his partner coming along to events with their babies was a good reminder of ties to people and places.

BH: Maybe that's one way for the future. In a workshop I did in New Zealand, when we went down to the Marae, there are mattresses and people laid down on them, and they're still participating now. This space of accommodating the body, accommodating children, accommodating nursing mothers – it is really important that there are multiple spaces, sites and opportunities for gathering in a range of different ways, and for incorporating other knowledges and Indigenous practices.

IV: Fluid States - Performing Mobilities

MD: What are your reflections on the interrelation between our Performing Mobilities regional activities project and the global PSi project 'Fluid States: performances of unknowing'?

FW: It was a kind of micro/macro model. We were doing on a smaller scale what Fluid States seemed to be doing on a larger scale. We didn't have to artificially have the conversation about what a Fluid States model of research and thinking and gathering might be, because we were enacting this on a local regional level. For me at the moment everything is about mobility. However, the invitation that Fluid States set up for participants seemed to presuppose a particular kind of staying at local levels of mobility, which isn't actually how many people operate in their working lives, in their scholarly lives, in their artistic lives and so on.

DC: I think we use this constant logic of delay. We never allowed people to settle on an ideology, a kind of framework, a kind of system, if you like, that enabled them to put it in a box and then to be able to take a step out and say 'it was this'. I think because the project has this extraordinary elasticity, and a commitment to a pan-disciplinary engagement in the process that people felt incredibly compelled, because it didn't fall into an easy typology of being a project of a certain kind.

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MD: Does this delay reveal something of the value of performativity as a mode of knowledge construction?

MR: It is true there's something unique about the performative gesture, in terms of a way of thinking about how we are, and where we are, and what we are, that takes us beyond. The gesture of performance is a way of knowing, or not knowing, as the case may be.

DC: It's where liveness in praxis exists. I do think that, to some degree, Performing Mobilities is the triumph of a new kind of academic worker that is fully cognisant and embracing of praxis. The fact that so many people in this group are academics is something we haven't really talked about. This was a strongly academic-driven set of people who put this in train and, to some extent, we were trying to voice our dissatisfaction with the academia that we live in, the conservative constrictions and the silos, etcetera. Performing Mobilities gave us a genuine sense of joy to engage with a richness of ideas and practice that was not stultified by neo-liberal forces.

MD: I'm often conscious of averting the territorialising impulse of an organisational form to claim a mandate over a project. This project needed to be built upon our mobile relations and to start to build a field of work, rather than reproducing the interests of organisational forms.

DC: And in that sense, there are kernels of a new model for how pan-institutional education might operate.

#### A FEW STEPS NOT HERE NOT THERE Mammad Aidani, Omid Movafaqh, Mike Fard, Mohsen Panahi & Hoda Kazemitame



#### Companion Curator > Mick Douglas

In 1988, soon after arrival in Australia, Mammad Aidani wrote *A Few Steps Not Here Not There*. The text is bound by an exilic narrative of displacement, of being a stranger experiencing invisibility and an interloper in a foreign country, of being neither *here* nor *there*. The text later became a play, first performed in 1997 at La Mama in Melbourne, with a second production in 2002 at Arts House Meat Market in Melbourne, and a third production due at La Mama again in late 2015.

Aidani has been working with Iranian asylum seekers and refugee artists who have recently arrived in Melbourne. With backgrounds in Iranian film and theatre, Omid Movafagh, Mike Fard and Mohsen Panahi formed a small group that became immersed in Aidani's text as a prism through which to find locations of affinity and belonging. Together the group made a short film.

This new installation of *A Few Steps Not Here Not There* creates an intimate setting for experiencing the looping film and encountering the original text. Together, these layers of the installation reveal two generations of asylum seeker experience endeavouring to come to terms with trauma, hopes, movement of identity, and forms of self-authorised creative expression that negotiate cultural displacement.

> The third play production since 2001 of the text *A Few Steps Not Here Not There* was presented at La Mama 18-29 November 2015, directed by Lloyd Jones >

A FEW STEPS NOT HERE NOT THERE Mammad Aidani, Omid Movafagh, Mike Fard, Mohsen Panahi & Hoda Kazemitame

The displaced stranger Respondent > Evelyn Tsitas

Performing Mobilities challenged audiences to take the leap from being passive to active participants – literally. Many works were only fully activated with physical engagement.

I am asked by audiences to act as the 'interpreter' when I take guided tours through RMIT Gallery exhibitions. 'But what does it mean?' and 'what does the artist mean?' are frequent questions. In turn, I ask the audience to do some work and throw the questions back. 'How does this work make you feel?' and 'what do you think the artist is trying to say to us?'

Audiences don't want to give the 'wrong' answers, but we all take our own subjective interpretations into exhibitions, and can't help become intellectually and emotionally involved in the work if we find it speaks to us.

A Few Steps Not Here Not There by Mammad Aidani, Omid Movafagh, Mike Ford, Mohsen Panahi and Hada Kazemitame, invited audiences to engage not just intellectually but emotionally and empathetically. The installation explored asylum seekers' experiences of displacement, with group members using Aidani's narrative of exile as a way to negotiate their own responses to the longing of the past and the uncertainty of the future in a new country. What does it take to belong in a new place? How does one find familiarity in a new location?

Located in a narrow exhibition space at RMIT Gallery, the installation provided a theatrical space with black walls that enveloped the audience and focused attention on an illuminated chair facing a screen that played the looped short film. This intimate setting included two facing bench seats, forcing the audience to look at each other while reading the handwritten text chalked on the black walls. These words created the somewhat unsettling talking points for the audience – 'talking about substance does not make you a person with substance', 'I write to forget and it is not possible', 'words, in what language?', and 'trees' The phrases, mixed with Persian text, were introspective, making reading the words seem vogeuristic.

The work is a new installation of Aidani's text, which he wrote after arriving in Australia in 1988, exploring both the invisibility and disruption that an 'alien' feels and causes in a foreign country. How do you find your place within a new space? You walk, you feel the city beneath your feet, and you see what is the same and what is different. People, architecture, nature, trees

As a child of migrants, this installation resonated with me. I remembered stories that seem embedded in my DNA: my father not speaking the language and looking 'foreign' and a 'wog' as a 1950s Greek arrival in contrast to my mother, the blue eyed blonde, alienated by her German name and accent, a hated interloper in post war Melbourne. Melbourne is my home, but I felt the story of movement and identity as I watched the film and read the walls.

There are few things as unsettling than the spectre of homelessness, disruption, exile and reinvention. With economic uncertainty and the images on the news each night of the European refugee crisis, it is hard to turn away and pretend disruption is not in our midst.

The group of older women who sat with me as I gave a guided exhibition tour had no migrant experience to share. Yet they were moved, and unsettled, by the installation.

Despite what governments and politicians and fanatics may try to tell us, people do care about the refugee crisis, and *A few Steps Not Here Not There* provoked discussion about what it might mean to start again in exile, where the food, customs, culture and language are very different, and you may be utterly alone.

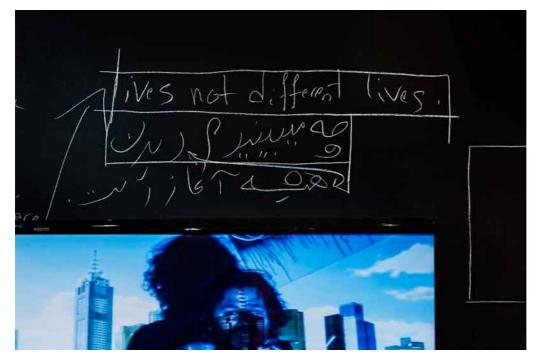
There were questions: 'Is the man in the film an actor or an asylum seeker?', 'I hope he is alright – do you know what happened to him?', 'It's awful being lost in a new place', and 'There must have been terrible things that happened to him.'

A Few Steps Not Here Not There strips back stories of the courage and tenacity in finding exile to reveal the ongoing vulnerability and fear of the displaced stranger in a strange land. It is this naked authenticity that connects so powerfully with the audience.

A FEW STEPS NOT HERE NOT THERE Mammad Aidani, Omid Movafagh, Mike Fard, Mohsen Panahi & Hoda Kazemitame



A Few Steps Not Here Not There, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.



A Few Steps Not Here Not There, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.

A FEW STEPS NOT HERE NOT THERE Mammad Aidani, Omid Movafagh, Mike Fard, Mohsen Panahi & Hoda Kazemitame

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A Few Steps Not Here Not There, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.



A Few Steps Not Here Not There, still image from 7min digital video, 2015.

BEHELD Graham Miller



Companion Curator > Fiona Wilkie

Since 2006, UK artist Graeme Miller has been collecting and presenting instances where stowaways have fallen to the ground from the undercarriage of aircraft throughout the world.

Beheld gathers fragile traces of these charged places in glass, sound, and 180 images. For this Melbourne installation, Beheld features an Australian incident amongst other occurrences around the globe. The installation poetically engages with the tragic consequences of desperate acts of attempted informal migration to enchant audiences into a meditation upon a shared human condition – a global connection to human life on earth, relationships between the living and the dead, and how individuals and societies negotiate responsibilities and intractable issues.

Being with *Beheld* offers a live experience at its most artfully affecting and hauntingly powerful. In a blackened space seemingly opening out to the universe, we are called to reflect on the tension between our bodily encounter with specific places, with desperate acts of migration, and with urgent globally-proportioned questions of human rights and ethical action.

Beheld was first created at Dilston Grove, London, and has since been exhibited across Europe, adding further instances of falling to the ground in the places in which it is shown. This is its first presentation in the Southern Hemisphere.

BEHELD Graham Miller

Respondent > Mammad Aidani

I approached the room, it was calm and welcoming. A bowl was placed in the centre of the room. I fixed my eyes towards it. I wanted to be introduced to the space by this object. That is what I began to think. When I faced the room, the feelings of beauty and anxiety invaded my being.

When focusing on what was happening in the room, I thought of human begins falling from the sky. As I watched the walls, I stopped and uttered to myself: '*for the purpose of finding a new home, somewhere that is welcoming and safe*'. Desperation and determination to run away from violence and the fear of persecution forces millions of people to act upon things that are impossible to comprehend for those of us who have not experienced political, racial or cultural repression.

The space that *Beheld* occupied drove my attention to the beauty and tragic importance of the zest for life, survival and resilience. The dark room and the tension that it created took my attention to the sky and the stars. It made me think of the insignificance of objectification, and I began to be immersed into the poetic space of subjectivity and the lived world of the body of a human being.

Migration, if I have to interpret it within the context of *Beheld*, does not mean an act of 'I want to go', but an act of 'I must go'. These are two very different notions: 'I must go' does not leave you with many options whereas: 'I want to go' does. It is softer and safer. 'I must go' means I must run away from injustices and violence. When I saw *Beheld*, I felt that I was facing a powerful installation with all its appearance of simplicity and normalness.

There was something haunting about the installation. The way Graeme chose to point us to spots of lights was very poetic, illuminating and welcoming. The core of the experience of the exhibition for me was the glass bowl that was installed in the middle of the dark room, as well as the inclusion of the lights, which softened the space without losing the powerful presence of the bowl.

The bowl and lights had a unique impact on me. Memory and emotions were evoked by touching the bowl; the darkness and lighting spots reminded me of how fragile and, at the same time, how resilient human beings can be.

It took me a while to decide to touch the bowl. And when I touched it, I was led to think beyond the immediacy of the walls surrounding the room. It led me to see the sky and the tragic falling of desperate human beings striving to live in a safe place. When I saw those houses, offices and a plane, I just closed my eyes.

I hold the bowl with my hands as gently as I can. When I was doing this, I was so anxious that it could fall from my hands onto the ground. It was in these moments that I looked around the room and saw those bodies falling from the sky into a city or country where they dreamed to begin a new life, to live in peace and freedom. This dream was not only unfulfilled but they also faced a tragic death.

I have realized that we can share our humanity by showing the injustices and horrors that others undergo, and I think Graeme's work has achieved this. I wanted to tell him how I saw the bodies falling from the sky, but then decided to keep this feeling to myself. Holding the bowl and the sounds that reverberated from it caressed my body and emotions.

BEHELD Graham Miller



Beheld, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Graeme Miller.



Beheld, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.

BEHELD Graham Miller



Beheld, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.



Beheld, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Graeme Miller.

# >>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITIE RFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>>>

CRUISING (A JOURNEY INTO CULTURE) Chris Barry



#### Companion Curator > Meredith Rogers

In Chris Barry's current project, a group of Aboriginal women artists living in various town camps in Alice Springs undertake the daily journey of being picked up from their respective residences and taken to the Art Centre known as *Tangentyere Artists*.

For two years, Barry has been a daily co-driver, as well as being contracted by Tangentyere Council as Studio Manager. During this period, Barry developed a close relationship with six of the women and together discussed the possibilities of making a video project based on their relationship and the everyday *lived* experiences of those lives.

'Cruising' is a term the women enjoy using when they have the opportunity to drive around Alice Springs looking for fellow artists in multifarious locations, and engaging with other kin walking around town. 'Driving' is a form of accessibility into their mutual *inter-* and *intra-* subjective lives. The concept of *journeying* also registers the complexities of living under the propriety of a hegemonic community, and its inherent 'expectations'. In contrast, *cruising* suggests the unexpected, ad hoc, incremental, provisional, and multivalent nature of Aboriginal life-worlds.

The project *Cruising* continues Barry's ongoing interest in the 'performative moment' set in culture and a practical methodology. The performative moment positions all subjectivities – those in front of the camera and those behind it. It becomes a *reworking by performance*, a space of proximity, mobility, wherein the camera acts as a catalyst and not as a neutral recording device – its actual 'presence' is responsible for creating the responses of the participants being filmed. Photography and performance form part of an act of auto/biographical re-presentation. By using a handheld camera, Barry enacts both mobility and proximity. In cultural terms, proximity suggests accountability, reciprocity, and the potential for enduring relationships.

CRUISING (A JOURNEY INTO CULTURE) Chris Barry

We are here Respondent > Petronella Vaarzon-Morel

A paradox in Chris Barry's work *Cruising (A Journey into Culture)* is that the subjects of her photographs – Betty Conway, Margie Boko, and other Aboriginal artists – are, in a literal sense, not moving. Given the Performing Mobilities theme of the project and the highly mobile lives of Aboriginal people both today and in the past (albeit using radically differing modes of transport and technologies) this might seem strange. Yet, the apparent stasis of Barry's images belies their work as 'mobiliers" that facilitate encounters between Barry, her subjects, viewers and differing notions of cultural (im)mobility. Let me elaborate.

The central figures in the photographs are artists who Barry came to know while working in central Australia at the Alice Springs based Art Centre, Tangentyere Artists. One of Barry's tasks was to provide transport to and from the Centre for the artists who live in Aboriginal 'town camps' and residential housing around Alice Springs. The existence of these neighbourhoods is profoundly political because, prior to 1964, the government enforced strict controls on Aboriginal movement in the town, displacing local Arrente traditional owners of the country. During the self-determination era that followed, Aboriginal people's presence in the town increased and the places where they camped – on the fringe of town and oriented in the direction of their home communities – acquired distinct identities. Socially marginalised as 'other' and lacking basic services, the town camp residents agitated for secure tenure and recognition. This led to the granting of special purpose leases to housing associations, which are serviced by the Tangentyere Council, of which Tangentyere Artists is an offshoot.

Today, residents of the town camps represent diverse language groups comprising local Arrente and people from remote communities. Still economically disadvantaged, people's lives are marked by uncertainty, flux and contingency as they negotiate state interventions and their complex, intercultural life-worlds. People highly value sociality and there is much toing and fro-ing of people between the town camps and other places as they visit relatives, participate in social events such as funerals and ceremonies, and otherwise conduct business. Hence the mobility of Aboriginal people is not merely physical but cultural. In the last few decades, Aboriginal art has exploded onto the world stage, and with it the work of Barry's subjects. Their depictions of daily life in the town camps and houses challenge mainstream media images of dysfunction associated with cultural difference. They also paint self-portraits, which playfully reference selfies that are captured on mobile phones and circulated on social networking sites such as Facebook. The quiet dignity, measured pride and sense of being at home in the world conveyed by the subjects in Barry's compelling photographs attest to their intimate relationship with her. In posing for Barry, the artists are self-consciously engaging in a performance that says 'we are here' and beckons viewers to positively reimagine their relationship with Aboriginal Australians.

1 S. Greenblatt, *Cultural Mobility: A Manifesto,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2010

CRUISING (A JOURNEY INTO CULTURE) Chris Barry



Cruising (A Journey into Culture), video still (Joanne Wheeler) HD 5 Screen Video, duration: 16 minutes. Courtesy the artist.



Cruising (A Journey into Culture), RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.

CRUISING (A JOURNEY INTO CULTURE) Chris Barry



Cruising (A Journey into Culture), video still (Joanne Wheeler) HD 5 Screen Video, duration: 16 minutes. Courtesy the artist.



Cruising (A Journey into Culture), video still (Margaret Boko) HD 5 Screen Video, duration: 16 minutes. Courtesy the artist.

# >>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITIE RFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>>>

FAULT Open Spatial Workshop



Companion Curator > Mick Douglas

Fault investigates the multiple temporalities that matter registers through forces of contraction, dilation, folding, compression and erosion. Through video-collage, OSW explores the convergence of these forces that give rise to an earth that is 'indelibly inscribed' (Claire Colebrook). Anchored around the material specificity of a geological specimen, this work follows fissures that expose glimpses of differing tempos resonating from events that knot together accumulation and extinguishment.

Beginning with a Sea Lily fossil' selected from the Natural Sciences collection at Museum Victoria, OSW presents a videowork of 'temporal-fragments' that visualise the movements of matter across durations, and complex convergences brought into relation by the specimen. Approached through the framework provided by the Sea Lily fossil, matter's movement includes the massive sea-floor landslides and tectonic subduction that occurred over millennia, which contributed to the formation of the Eastern Australian coastline. The Sea Lily specimen persists as a tiny material remainder registering these processes, whilst also connecting with recent anthropogenic activity.

The circa 1903 event of this fossil's excavation is contingent upon the brick-making industry reliant on the clay reserves that dominated West Brunswick. Formed by the ancient landslides taking place before the emergence of homo-sapiens, this clay provided the primary material for the Hoffman's brickworks, a key supplier meeting Melbourne's brick requirements in post gold rush development. The hunger for clay generated two extensive excavations on either side of Albert Street<sup>2</sup>, which widened proportionate to the surge in Melbourne's built fabric.

The Sea Lily fossil has stimulated a process of temporal excavation through such relations, making apparent materiality's complex durational qualities, and entanglements with the politics of extraction, forces of production, geo-bio-human history, energy and economies.

1 The particular fossil is a 'holotype' providing the initial description of its kind.

2 The first excavation was backfilled with domestic refuse from 1947, taking 17 years to fill. By 1981, it had settled sufficiently to be redeveloped becoming Clifton Park. Hoffman's second pit became Gilpin Park, situated next to a contemporary housing development incorporating the remaining buildings associated with the brickworks.

FAULT Open Spatial Workshop

a composite of screens or transforming matter(s) in time Respondent  $> \mathsf{David}$  Thomas

The artwork *Fault* is a composite of many things: media, representations, thoughts and sensations. As as an artwork, it is a composite of screens, images, movements, spaces and times that OSW bring together for us as viewers to engage with over time.

OSW is itself a composite of individuals: Terri Bird, Bianca Hester and Scott Mitchell. *Fault* is not simply an illustration of pre-existing facts; it problematises our experience of time and our place amid it.

Fault is a composite of differing time registers: geological deep time – the incident of a fossil, the compression of matter the historical time of settlement, of the gold rush brick building boom of Melbourne the invisible time of the interval, the gap of the missing histories and of the continuing presence of the displaced, the replaced and the survivor of transitional flows, natural, historical and personal.

These experiences are manifest through the differing pictorial structures and devices of the time of video. Collaged, montaged, juxtaposed and superimposed times/ situations are presented for us as viewers to negotiate in relation to the printed material's linear yet layered chronological history.

Importantly, *Fault* manifests the felt time of ongoing change the pulsing between the external time of knowledge and the internal lived time of the viewers, unfolding according to our intention and our apprehension of the visible.

Usually videos are active within their screens but static within their space. Due to the use of multiple screens and a sensitive use of placement, OSW offers us a geometry of screens like the predella in a Renaissance painted altarpiece. In doing this, it enables the viewer to move during the act of looking, activating a passage and movement in actual space and time, creating a dynamic relationship between viewers in front of and amid the unfolding complexities of information and sensations presented on the screens.

One of *Fault's* contributions for me, is that it enables me to feel, it presents not only ethnographic knowledge, but it manifests how three people can collaborate to create a poetic work of art a vision encompassing deep times and short times from the internal to external experience, from micro to macro and back the work enables me to feel the poetics and mystery of time here 'Romantic' awe meets the pragmatics of factual record.

Importantly, *Fault* enables us to become aware of way something is done, to become attentive to how an artwork is made, revealing the sensitivities of timing, placement and modulation within video installation.

In the end, I am left with a sense of wonder in the way diverse things are able to be revealed and brought together the wonder of art in being able to assist us in recognising the wonder and vitality of life. It is in mediating this as experience through art that OSW in *Fault* gives us an understanding not simply of the intellectual or the aesthetic but of the felt. *Fault* energises us while at the same time enabling us to consider the wonderful connection between a fossil and a brick – reinforcing the fact that we are living amid an ever-changing world.

FAULT Open Spatial Workshop



Fault, RMIT Gallery, 2015.



Fault, RMIT Gallery, 2015.

FAULT Open Spatial Workshop



Fault, RMIT Gallery, 2015.



Fault, installation view, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.

FRICTION ATLAS laJetee



#### Companion Curator > Laurene Vaughn

Always implicitly present in any public space, law tends to be algorithmic, quantitative and invisible. Local and national regulations discretise human behaviour; sometimes they are rigorous and mathematical, other times loose and underdefined. They lend themselves to be represented visually, and through staged choreographies.

*Friction Atlas* is an ongoing critical archive, where laws regulating behaviours and gatherings in public spaces, sampled from different contexts, are represented and collected. *Friction Atlas* is also the enactment of such choreographies through staged performances in public spaces. Addressing the issue of legibility of public space, it aims to make regulations explicit, through graphical devices. By drawing 1:1 diagrams, and enacting laws on public surfaces, the project makes legal prescriptions and loopholes debatable. Through the engagement of the public, the dynamics of authority become discernible.

The diagrams represent cases from different cities, including Athens, Genoa, Cairo, Washington, Stockholm, Sydney, New York, and Rome. We invite the public to participate in a choreographed debate, in a rereading of urban space, highlighting some of its hidden aspects. *Friction Atlas* was initiated in 2014 during *BID 50*, the 24th Biennial of Design in Ljubljana, Slovenia. A second iteration took place within the programme of Adhocracy Athens, at Souzy Tros in July 2015.

FRICTION ATLAS laJetee

Respondent > Smiljana Glisovic

To enter into a game means to put yourself at risk. These risks might be physical, fiscal or some other kind of personal loss. Play often involves public spectacle and danger, 'reworking paradigms of status quo by experimenting with artificial identities, self-expressive environments, and humorous scenarios'.<sup>1</sup> Witnessed play is a communal act of complicity and accountability in the making of these new imaginaries. Rules and fair-play underpin games. The players we enjoy to watch and become are the ones that play fairly whilst exceeding the boundaries of the game drawn by the rule-makers. These sorts of players enact wholly new scenarios which carry with them a sense of danger and a sense of excitement.

In *Friction Atlas* we are invited to play out laws that govern how bodies relate to one another in public space. The laws do not necessarily target transgressive intentions, they more generally target how bodies move in space. LaJetee have schematised the language in which these laws are given by drawing diagrams that illustrate the laws: the distances, proximities and compositions that bodies enact. Typically the artists use tape to mark out shapes that articulate different laws from around the world. Participants are recruited to collectively enact the shapes with their bodies in public spaces. The performing bodies make visible and feel the laws that govern them, the permissible ways of being and relating to one another. By fixing the language into shapes and giving those shapes names, they use humour and poetry to transform the intention of the language – leaving clues for transgression and inversion.

For Performing Mobilities, the scene for this particular enactment was the State Library of Victoria. As the artists were drawing up the shapes on the ground, a security guard advised them that nothing was allowed to happen on these steps without prior permission from the Library, which they did not have. The markings had to be removed, and another plan concocted. Collectively, we (the artists and participants) decided we would use the maps in our hands, without the markings on the ground, to improvise a game. We didn't speak, we played, we followed the rules of the map and we broke them. We ran around the steps in confusion, and we sought different ways of being and moving together. We attracted spectators and participants and questions and quizzical looks.

The choreographies we enacted were a little hysterical, new to our bodies and the ways we related. These choreographies impelled us to move in new ways, think different thoughts and in different rhythms. This disruptive public spectacle was made more dangerous because our witnesses on the steps of the Library, together with us, did not know what predetermined lines we were following. The paths we were marking out on the ground and the compositions we created remained fluid, where the limits of what was and was not permissible were continually erased and redrawn.

This was not an act in simply following rules, but rather pushing play into that dangerous space of transformation and renewal: all that soft tissue and laughter, creating the possibility of leakage, of flowing over – revisioning the paradigms that govern our bodies and folding the spectators into this game of risk.

1 M Flanagan, Critical play: Radical game design, MIT Press, Cambridge, 2009.

FRICTION ATLAS laJetee

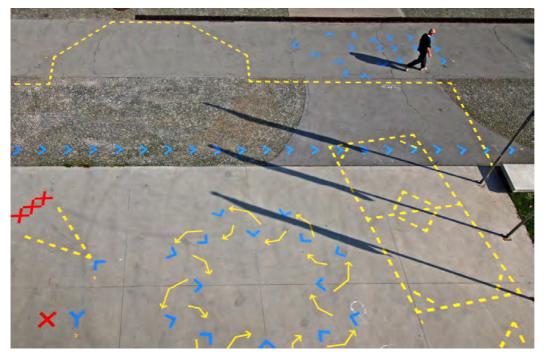


Friction Atlas, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.



Friction Atlas, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.

FRICTION ATLAS laJetee



Friction Atlas, BIO50, Ljubljana, September 2014.



Friction Atlas, BIO50, Ljubljana, September 2014.

# >>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITIE RFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>>>

HOUSE OF WISDOM David Cross & Jem Noble



Companion Curator > Paul Rae

In 1258, one of the most extraordinary cultural and scientific experiments came to a sudden and highly destructive end. Mongol raiders, laying siege to Baghdad, set about systematically destroying the incredible archive of research and scholarship that had come to make up the House of Wisdom. Operating for nearly half a millennium, the House of Wisdom was an Islamic research centre devoted to ideas of self-improvement through the arts, sciences, and humanities – where 'self' was understood in non-atomistic terms: as culture propagating its own growth and refinement for the good of all.

Ideas of self-improvement implicit in the activities of the House of Wisdom are today manifest in different forms. While scholarship is still a cornerstone of knowledge accumulation and dissemination, other non-cerebral activities have become central to our contemporary sense of self-improvement. Physical and psychological wellbeing and social connectivity are seen as fundamental components of today's individual, no longer defined through modernity's ideal of 'well-roundedness', but ever unfinished in a milieu of urgent specialisation and 'life-long learning' for competitive advantage.

Taking the House of Wisdom as inspiration, artists Jem Noble (Vancouver/Melbourne) and David Cross (Melbourne) stage a new manifestation of this intellectual hothouse. As a project developed under the auspices of Performing Mobilities, the artists instigate a new House that interrogates what self-improvement can mean in our time. The artists working with an invited group of 15 collaborators/participants will collectively build a temporary *House of Wisdom* in Melbourne. Through lectures, art making, performances, and critical reflection, *House of Wisdom* will attempt to build a centre for the study of self-improvement.

HOUSE OF WISDOM DavidCrass & Jem Nable

Respondent > Michelle Braunstein

The House of Wisdom (HoW) – a centre for the study of self-improvement – was facilitated by David Cross and Jem Noble. To say it was ambitious implies there was a goal, thus, 'audacious' is more fitting. For many of us working within the HoW, it became clear that there was no telos to aim for. But whether, in its non-linearity and attempted immanence, it was a liberatory process for all who engaged with it, I am unsure.

Our daily excavations of second-hand shops for artefacts were telling about the new economy; in particular the corporatising of charity opportunity shops into social enterprises, and the sheer quantities of disowned self-help detritus. Following our morning forages and debriefs, our afternoons alternated between lectures – by Drs. Laura U Marks, Jonathan Lyons, Ika Willis, Geoff Boucher, Peter Hill and filmmaker/ethnographer Ben Russell – and art-making at the Margaret Lawrence Gallery at the VCA. Lyons and Marks shared their knowledge about the *Beit al-Hikmeh (House of Wisdom*) in Baghdad in the Middle Ages, wherein Arabs preserved and developed philosophical ideas and technologies from ancient Greece, which benefitted and informed scholars of the western Enlightenment era. Also, one of our daily op shop mobilities doubled as a lecture on the construction of the self with Dr. Geoff Boucher. Among the bookshelves and clothes racks at Footscray Savers, HoW members coalesced in critical discussion. Then, in-situ we engaged with Dr. Peter Hill about SuperFictions, the Situationist-style blurring of fact and fiction as a subversive art-form.

To our process, some visitors expressed bemusement by what resembled a House of Bedlam. But it largely depended on what moment in time across the day or week people came as to how they experienced it. Daily, knowledges were assembled then dismantled as HoW members negotiated the gallery space, artefacts, affective research, visitors and each other, sometimes in a process resembling consensus decision making.

We interrogated how in a time of insecure work and corroded community, it suits the ends of neoliberalism for us to believe there is something wrong with us as individuals, that only a new 'Shakeweight' or neuro-linguistic DVD set can resolve. Working collaboratively in our making and curation also dispelled the master superstition that we are each alone. However, when so many of us are accustomed to atomised culture, collaboration can provoke great friction, so it was not always pretty. But it sure was beautiful. As an artist/researcher, Arab Jew, and child survivor of self-improvement, both HoWs continue to inspire me.

For our last curation in the HoW, we consensed to elevate all self-improvement artefacts to the top of a dividing wall appropriated as a plinth, not as an illuminated conclusion but rather as a crepuscular, liminal storage measure. However, given HoW's critiques of transcendence discourses implicit in self-improvement, perhaps our conditioning ambushed us here in this move to elevate. Or did we become enlightened? Future HoWs may speculate, should they recur. Long live the *House of Wisdom*!

HOUSE OF WISDOM David Cross & Jem Noble

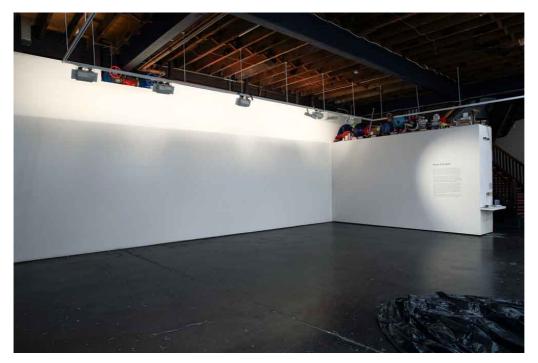


House of Wisdom, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015. Photography: Kay Abode.



House of Wisdom, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015. Photography: Kay Abode.

HOUSE OF WISDOM David Cross & Jem Noble



House of Wisdom, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015. Photography: Kay Abode.



House of Wisdom, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015. Photography: Kay Abode.

O-T-D#2 ORIGIN-TRANSIT-DESTINATION Australian Performance Exchange



Companion Curator > Bianca Hester

Why do people risk their lives on perilous boat trips and take extreme actions when faced with being turned back? Referring poetically to the physical, emotional, and spiritual journeys made by asylum seekers, *Drigin-Transit-Destination* (*DTD*) developed organically into a mobile performance work that generates a series of unsettling experiences for audiences, while simultaneously offering them intimate encounters with asylum-seeking artists and the places along their journey.

Always active, never passive, these artists are in control of their representations at all times. First staged in Western Sydney in March 2015, OTD developed a process that is a template for site-specific, community-engaged performance that works anywhere asylum seekers or refugees live.

'Who are we? Who is 'one of us'? What codes must we live by? Who are we part of? Whose humanity do we recognise as akin to ours? And a further terrible question: What do we owe those whose humanity we fail to recognize?' (Sevendrini Perara, 1968). With 60 million displaced humans on the move today seeking havens (UNHCR), how can the rest of the world, particularly those privileged to live in peace and relative justice, respond ethically? In OTD we invite, inveigle, and coerce audiences into a space of identification, recognition, curiosity.

OTD is an activist work, driven by a refusal to be silent and a determination to engage in uncomfortable conversations. It deals with our societal complicity in government policy and community collusion in the dehumanising discourses passing as debate in media representations of people seeking asylum. OTD insists on the audience taking steps to walk in another's shoes. It builds layers of experience, shared dilemmas, laughing and singing. It simultaneously introduces small discomforts – relinquishing a mobile phone, entering a blue light space alone, being assigned a name or number. It is at all times an invitation *to speak*.

O-T-D#2 ORIGIN-TRANSIT-DESTINATION Australian Performance Exchange

Respondent > Caroline Wake

It is a stellar title - poetic, bureaucratic, and acronymic all at once. Yet perhaps my favourite aspect is the #2. Over the past fifteen years, I have seen scores of performances made by, with, and about refugees and asylum seekers. These include autobiographical monologues, verbatim and documentary plays, physical theatre productions, circus and comedy acts, as well as performance and installation art. No matter the genre, they rarely - if ever - have a second life. One or two have toured, three or four have been photographed, five or six have been anthologised.<sup>1</sup> Thirty-two have been catalogued in an appendix to Rand Hazou's article 'Staging Hidden Stories: Australian Theatre and Asylum Seekers'.<sup>2</sup> The rest, however, live on in our oral histories of performance: remembered but not recorded, and thus with less cultural respect and reach in a world that privileges the written word.

In its first iteration, *Origin-Transit-Destination* was a mobile performance that took audiences around Sydney's western suburbs. In Auburn, marshals took our mobile phones, gave us numbered badges and put us on three buses. On the Red Bus, we listened to Osamah Sami and Ram Adulazeez sing, play guitar and tell stories. In Villawood, we stopped in the carpark outside the immigration detention centre; seconds later security guards approached and sent us on our way again. This time we were accompanied by two different artists: Daniel Saeed and Shakufa Tahiri. In Fairfield West, we stopped in another carpark, this time outside a supermarket and underneath a billboard of a politician where Saeed and Tahiri asked his image, and implicitly the audience, what he was doing and why. We reboarded the bus, along with artists Jamal Ali Al-Hallaq and Mohammed Alanezi. Finally, in Liverpool, we disembarked and entered the Casula Powerhouse where Sean Bacon's video dominated the foyer and the performers played a strange soccer game and conducted a brief citizenship test. In the final room, Shahla Shohani, a Kurdish-Iranian artist, ran on a treadmill while her video self narrated her escape, occasionally interrupted by a media montage. The night ended without applause: audience members retrieved their phones and retreated home.<sup>3</sup>

For me – and I realise that my experience may have been atypical – the installation in the Margaret Lawrence Gallery at the VCA was both a continuation of this live performance as well as a remediation of it. Media scholars Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin define remediation as 'the representation of one medium in another' or 'the formal logic by which new media refashion prior media forms'.<sup>4</sup>

*Origin-Transit-Destination #2* was a remediation in the sense that it represented the live performance by including some of the same materials: Bacon's footage and Shohani's treadmill. It was also a remediation in the sense that it recomposed the prior performance, by absenting the live body of the performer and pointing to this absence by leaving an orange life jacket lying on the floor. I recall Alanezi's story about a life jacket – he took his own but gave it to a fellow boat passenger, a small girl, who he was worried would drown without it – but I did not remember the object itself. Perhaps that's because it was not a life jacket. When I looked more closely, I realised that it was a small backpack: brightly coloured, decorated with daisies and butterflies, and a bit dirty. Did it belong to someone? Had I misremembered something, even everything? Did it matter? Suddenly I was struck by the horrible mismatch between all three objects in the space: the screen that displayed an endless sea; the treadmill that sat clumsy and motionless; and the backpack pressing against my neck, which was suddenly hot and clammy. I wanted to go home.

3 For a more detailed account, see my review: Caroline Wake 'Shoulder to Shoulder: Casula Powerhouse Arts Centre, Origin-Transit-Destination', RealTime, no. 126, April-May 2015, pp. 6–7. <a href="http://www.realtimearts.net/article/issue126/11877">http://www.realtimearts.net/article/issue126/11877</a>, accessed 1 June 2016.

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<sup>1</sup> Emma Cox, ed. Staging Asylum: Contemporary Australian Plays About Refugees, Currency Press, Strawberry Hills, 2013. See also 'Art & Asylum: Politics, Ethics, Aesthetics', RealTime, 7 September 2010, 'http://realtimearts.net/feature/Archive\_Highlights/9992', accessed 1 June 2016. 2 Rand Hazou, 'Staging Hidden Stories: Australian Theatre and Asylum Seekers.' In/Stead, no. 3, 2010 'http://www.insteadjournal.com/article/asylum/>, accessed 1 June 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Jay David Bolton and Richard Grusin, Remediation: Understanding New Media, MIT Press, Cambridge MA, 1998, ρρ. 45, 273.

O-T-D#2 ORIGIN-TRANSIT-DESTINATION Australian Performance Exchange



O-T-D #2 Origin-Transit-Destination, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015. Photography: Kay Abode.



O-T-D #2 Origin-Transit-Destination, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015. Photography: Kay Abode.

O-T-D#2 ORIGIN-TRANSIT-DESTINATION Australian Performance Exchange



Origin-Transit-Destination mobile performance, Shahla Shohni on running machine in media montage by Sean Bacon



Origin-Transit-Destination mobile performance. Shahla Shohni on running machine in media montage by Sean Bacon.

# >>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITIE RFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>>>

PAN & ZOOM Jondi Keane & Kaya Barry



#### Companion Curator > Mick Douglas

Pan & Zoom take the effects inscribed in the global language of cinema and turn them into performative and participatory image-making apparatuses. Jondi Keane and Kaya Barry's installation invites visitors to collaborate in the construction of the images in order to re-explore relations between media technologies and embodied experience. The result is an expanded, amplified and dilated experience of the performative power of image-making and image-viewing.

Pan activates an accumulating collection of moving panoramic images – provided by Kaya Barry and PSi Fluid States participants from around the world – that visitors may interactively inhabit. The visitor manipulates relationships between an image projector mounted upon a dolly track, and a trackpad that scrolls the projected panorama. The live event of constructing-perceiving panoramic tracking shots opens up in ways that expand sensory experience beyond usual peripheries.

Zoom co-opts the 'dolly-zoom' effect in cinema – wherein the camera zooms in while moving backward or zooms out while moving forward – resulting in the image expanding to amplify an intense moment of realisation. Hitchcock developed this technique in *Vertigo* to show audiences how the protagonist experiences his fear of heights. Jondi Keane pulls apart the double movement of the camera effect by himself performing the pulling back and forth of a moving wall as a backdrop. Moments of realisation are created between visitors who take up the camera operation, and an improvising actor's role, to accompany Keane's durational wall moving. An updating collection of filmic moments made throughout the installation duration screen 'on-set'.

Amongst the pervasive languages of cinema, photography, television and mobile media, *Pan & Zoom* explores how audiences here are performative inter-actors, rendering the image toward the body's expansive inhabitations of space, and challenging the grip of technological seduction.

PAN & ZOOM Jondi Keane & Kaya Barry

Respondent > Philipa Rothfield

Zoom: According to Merleau-Ponty, perception typically forgets its origin in the body and loses itself in the object. I watch this screen, vaguely registering the tap of my fingers on the keyboard, but give no thought as to the curve of my spine, the droop of my jaw. The gestures of the camera are equally implicit. They guide my vision, which is completely preoccupied with its object. Such is the lure of the image-object. The camera is my visual delegate, my perceptual agent in charge of the scenic field. But I have forgotten all this.

Jump cut – Jondi Keane shoulders a strange burden: a large photographic image of an urban scene. He picks up two large ropes and tugs this scene towards a camera. Next, he leans and thrusts, pushing the image away. Zooming in, zooming out. His sweat equity lends weight to the work behind the image. Our bodies now join this trio between Jondi, the camera and its image-object. It looks like a play when we re-play the camera's recordings, as if the recorded image were this work's ultimate destination, more important than our lived experience in the making. The image takes over – so easy to be seduced by what things look like, digitally immortalised. But memory plays its own game. It's not the images of the screen-dance that stay with me but the feel of Jondi's body pushing, pulling, dragging, leaning, sweating.

*Pan*: And now it's our own bodies who must do the work. We slide a camera along tracks to reveal another kind of scene. It's odd, the marked parallelism of the tracks serially unfolds images which are purportedly panoramic. A linear revelation of that which ought to be circular, 360 degrees, flanking our corporeal point of view from all sides. We are the agents of these images appearing. They are linear but also sutured; consisting of very different scenes, content, colours and vistas. One scene after another slides into view, posed against another kind of backdrop: the nuts and bolts of the space itself, metal struts, boards, supports. This is weird. The emergent panorama moves one way, the supporting backdrop slips the other way. It's like backing a trailer down a driveway.

The camera's pan and zoom are, by now, gestures of the cinematic every day: their movements are habitual, implicit, hardly noticeable. Pan & Zoom make a play out of these techniques. Yet nothing happens unless and until we enter these mini-worlds. When I was little, I loved London's Science Museum because there were knobs to push, buttons to press.Pan & Zoom are like those little glass cases with their knobs and buttons. To push those buttons is to reveal something, to unravel the mysterious. We are inside these 'cases', however, a part of their mystery. Our participation in these adaptations of cinematic technique puts our bodies in the foreground, not as objects but as agents. The visual field is thereby converted into a domain of actions and interactions, between bodies (camera, artist, participant), but also within a volatile dynamic of image, experience and perception.

PAN & ZOOM Jondi Keane & Kaya Barry



Pan & Zoom, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.

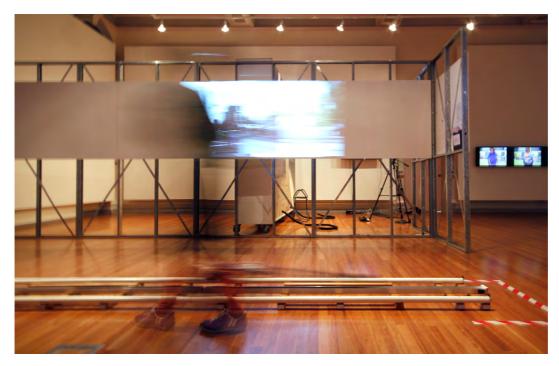


Pan & Zoom, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.

PAN & ZOOM Jondi Keane & Kaya Barry



Pan & Zoom, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.



Pan & Zoom, Performing Mobilities, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.

REMOTE VIEWING Lucy Bleach



#### Companion Curator > David Cross

Humans, like pigeons, may be drawn to a particular place throughout their lives via a form of deep magnetic attraction. In the work *Remote Viewing*, Lucy Bleach invites members of the Moonah Homing Pigeon Association' to share their 'sites of attraction'. The fanciers provide maps, GPS locations, verbal directions, and a small flock of pigeons. The members do not reveal why the site is significant to them, why they endure an ongoing pull towards it, as it is their own private magnetism.

Sanctioned by each fancier, as an envoy between place and magnetic pull, the artist travels to each fancier's location of attraction, accompanied by their birds. A spy camera secured in a purpose-built harness is attached to the breast of one pigeon. On release, the birds leave their fancier's selected site and, by drawing on minute magnetic particles in their beaks, navigate their way home using the earth's magnetic field, as the site and aerial journey home are recorded on the video camera.

At the completion of all flights, the aerial footage is previewed in a one-off screening at the Moonah Pigeon clubhouse, (re)connecting the fanciers to their sites of enduring attraction. The footage then migrates to Melbourne to be screened as simultaneous individual flights, indexing journeys travelled and connections performed as persistent loops within the TRACES exhibition for Performing Mobilities.

1 The Moonah Pigeon Homing Pigeon Association was founded in 1926 is one of the oldest clubs in Australia. Moonah is a northern suburb of Hobart.

REMOTE VIEWING Lucy Bleach

Inflight Respondent > Camila Marambio

I am in the air as I write this. Flying from Melbourne to Stockholm, I am now suspended some 35,000 feet over the Earth's surface. Attached to the belly of this airplane there is a camera capturing images of the gliding globe below. I am able to observe the Earth's spherical shape and its changing skin condition through a small TV screen attached to the seat in front of me. I am transfixed. Streaming into my field of vision, the steady image of the world strikes me as artificial in comparison to the choppy, jerky, even dizzying images of *Remote Viewing*. I look out, onto the wings of plane, they are not flapping. I look now to my own wings: the left holds the notebook that holds the words that that I now type into the computer, the right grips the pencil that flows evenly back and forth over the piece of paper.

By attaching bra strap harnesses with tiny cameras to homing pigeons, Lucy Bleach affords us a peek at the magnificent journey of a group of birds, but what strikes me most about this creative register of a body mass moving through airspace is the directionality. The magneto-reception ability of pigeons is a proven fact. Still unresolved is whether the sense ability to perceive direction, altitude and location – by detecting the magnetic fields of the Earth – is achieved thanks to cryptochrome-mediated receptors in the eyes or if it depends on a beak magnetite. Either way, or actually both ways, is testament to the sweeping choreography of individual bodily function and earthly guiding forces.

Being alive during the sliver of history in which the human desire to fly is finally a lived reality, makes me think back to the myths, attempts, and ultimately to all of the projecting that it has taken for the fashioning of a vehicle that allows me, now, to perform airborne mobility. In the midst of this fantastical, mortal feat, I notice that the performance of this utmost engineered mobility actually entails that my own individual body be buckled in. Though not fully motionless, freedom of bodily action is highly restricted. Seated, supervised, I am a consumer. Every so often, I stop writing to look at the screen that shows me the Earth I belong to, and I use this time to practice a blood circulation method I learned from a dear, old Korean woman. Her vitality had always been apparent to me when I mustered up the courage to interrupt her and ask what she was doing. Her reply was that I should mimic her actions: hold out your hands, palms facing each other, touch the fingertips of one hand to those of the opposing other, keep the palms hollowed out as if holding a large grapefruit. Proceed to rotate one thumb around the other, holding the pressure of all the other finger tips and the hollowed palm. Move through all ten fingers, rotating in both directions. This she said 'will circulate the blood around the whole of your universe, avoid stagnation in the home'.

REMOTE VIEWING Lucy Bleach

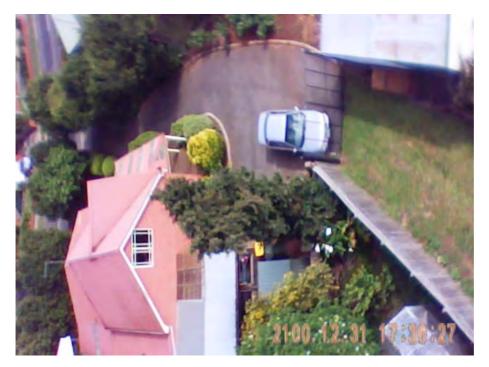


Remote Viewing, homing pigeon with camera.



Remote Viewing, video still. Courtesy of the artist.

REMOTE VIEWING Lucy Bleach



Remote Viewing, video still. Courtesy of the artist.



Remote Viewing, video still. Courtesy of the artist.

ROBE/S Punctum



Companion Curator > David Cross

The Robe to Central Goldfields Track, walked by thousands of Cantonese in the 1850s, informs one of the great east/west migration landscapes in Australia. In a reverse movement, artists/participants walked sections of the track towards Robe from the Goldfields, which is located approximately 1.5 hours from Melbourne.

After consulting with their 'local knowledge' guide, with whom they were put in contact, artists/participants departed with a kit of quartz marker stones to indicate and record places and feelings of estrangement or strange belonging. They walked their chosen section of the Robe Track over one full day (or 30kms, whichever was more achievable).

Documentation of each walk, including their marker sites, reflections, responses, and recordings were then uploaded onto the *Robe/S Blog* to inform a collective installation – a quartz cairn marker with an interactive tablet/plaque that draws on the custom of cairns throughout the region that mark passages.

*Robe/S* culminated in a collective walk for Performing Mobilities participants, from the original Central Goldfields alluvial gold rush site in Chewton, through a migration landscape, to a gathering at an ancient rice paddy field site at Vaughan Springs (a total walk of 2.5 hours) ahead of the Performing Mobilities Assembly in Melbourne.

ROBE/S Punctum

Collecting Landscape: A Scenographic Meander Respondent > Tanja Beer

In September 2015, I took part in *Robe/S*, a project which explored the act of global itinerancy within Victorian migration landscapes – initiated and curated by Jude Anderson of Punctum Inc. I was one of a group of selected artists invited to undertake a section of the goldfields track in response to the thousands of Chinese migrants who walked from the small port of Robe in South Australia across unmarked country to the Victorian Goldfields in the 1850s.

My response to this historical context was to undertake a 'scenographic' meander in collaboration with two women (Angela Campbell and Amy Tsilemanis) by surveying a small section of the mass migration route undertaken by Cantonese workers in Ballarat. Through the act of three women 'performing' a scenographic passage across the Central Goldfields, the project aimed to explore how Australian landscapes are shaped by migration and how these landscapes shape experience.

Our task as artists was to consider how historical migration landscapes could be placed at the centre of contemporary experience. We wanted to capture or 'collect' how the spatial, visceral, sensorial and haptic dynamics of our selected passage might shape feelings of estrangement, 'strange belonging' or dis/connection as we responded to the un/familiarity of landforms, cultural contours and climatic conditions. By examining ways to reveal the historical narratives of cultural and regional development, we asked: How do the layers and fragments of historic and contemporary migration shape our sense of being in the world? How do we relate to these fragments and how do they inform our conception and perception of space? And what are the tactics that we might use to capture these sensory experiences?

We began our walk from Open Monument, a newly minted public art work by Chinese Australian artist John Young, and finished our trek at the end of the 'old creek road'. As we engaged in the act of imagining the migrant experience of 'estrangement' for ourselves, we actively scoured the ground for clues, accidents, chances and unforeseen circumstances of the 'unheimlich'. Our journey was a surrogation of sorts, but what was revisited was not the Chinese experience, but their own connection with landscape and the materials that we encountered as part of it.

Using place-based scenographic, eco-material and scientific methodologies, our project sought to reveal alternative narratives of cultural and regional development through a direct engagement with the haptic and sensorial. We collected specimens in glass jars, leaving white quartz stones (provided by Punctum Inc) to mark our progress. We collaborated to author and document the journey through our direct engagement with found objects, photography and field notes – a collective experience of a familiar landscape made strange. Geological, temporal, material, vegetable, human and non-human forces were 'preserved' in jam jars (as 'marquettes' or 'miniature worlds') in an attempt to capture the essence (or 'concoction') of the meandering experience. The journey became a scenographic investigation in reconnecting human experience with landscapes of the past and of the present.

ROBE/S Punctum



Robe/S, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.



Robe/s, 2015 'Cairn marking a migrant passage to the Central Goldfield'. Photography: Jude Anderson.

ROBE/S Punctum



Robe/S, 2015 'Alluvial field of estrangement'. Photography: Jude Anderson.



Robe/s, 2015 'Place of abandon'. Photography: Jude Anderson.

# >>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITIE RFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>>>

SAL DE SAL Mick Douglas



#### Companion Curator > Paul Rae

The Circulations series employ salt to activate encounters in the dynamic inter-relationships of globality and locality. Salt is a ubiquitous form of matter; a material in the hydrological cycle that is essential to life and a potential cause of breakdown of living systems; a substance of historically significant social and economic exchange, whose cultural usage gave rise to food preservation and sedentary lifestyles. Salt is a material in cyclical movement and transformation – through bodies of water, through the bodies of humans and living organisms, and through land – that elicits awareness of the porosity of entities and raises questions of equilibrium and change. The Circulations series draw upon regional resonances of salt: the historical emergence of mercantile practices and wealth through dominating salt trade in the Adriatic; the loss to local economy with the closure of foreign-owned salt pans on Long Island Bahamas; the oceanic imaginary in the Pacific islands; the post-tsunami consequences of seawater flooding agricultural lands in northern Japan and the symbolism of spiritual purification through salt. Our attention is directed to the range of human negotiations with natural systems and resources – commonly containing and capitalising – whilst circulations of salt continue to exceed control.

Sal de Sal activates three sites through which the human body can register global and local dynamics. At RMIT Gallery, a body of salt is encountered, recently collected from an area of increasing salinity exacerbated by agricultural irrigation demands on the Murray-Darling Basin. At Margaret Lawrence Gallery, a body of water is encountered, linked with the Wonthaggi desalination plant established in times of drought to meet metropolitan Melbourne's water demands, that has not yet been required to supply desalinated seawater to Melbourne. Passing between Galleries one crosses the lower reach of the Yarra River, where freshwater and saltwater are in constant seasonal negotiation.

SAL DE SAL Mick Douglas

Mick Douglas' Pickled Butch: 'Sal de Sal' as NatureCulture Respondent > Maaike Bleeker

Mick Douglas is floating in a water basin, attempting to maintain an equilibrium. Amaara Raheem scoops salt on his body. As the amount of salt increases, Mick's body is pushed down into the water. When the water touches the salt, it begins to dissolve, thus reducing the downward push on his body while at the same time the salt dissolving into the water increases the mass per volume of the water and, with it, the upward push to Mick's body. Performance takes the shape of a constant rebalancing in response to the changes brought about by the material transformation of the salt from solid crystals to solution.

This may be considered a posthuman performance in how it decentralises the human performer. Mick's role is that of a sensor detecting changes brought about by the salt in the milieu in which his body finds itself, rebalancing itself in response to these changes. Perhaps we could consider this performance an embodiment of the rebalancing of ecological systems in response to processes of salination and desalination as they result from (among others) agricultural irrigation, desalination plants, and dams created to offer protection from flooding.

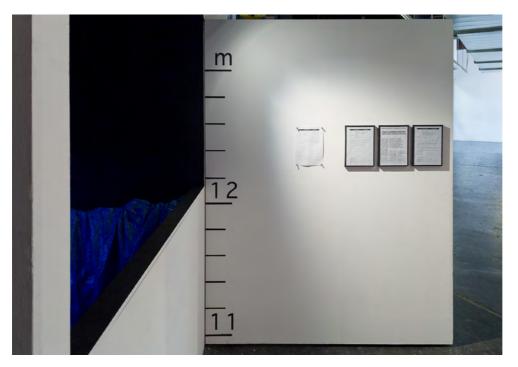
Witnessing Mick's performance in the water basin, and earlier in a gallery covered in a thick layer of salt, I am reminded of the intensity of Butoh. His performance has a similar intense physical concentration and responsiveness, and, like Butoh, it is not about the expression of individual identity that has been such an important trope in much body art and performance. Instead, the intensities channelled by his performance have a kind of abstract quality that is reminiscent of Land Art works; these contemporaries of body art and performance that mediate in relating to a larger environment and in developing understanding of the environment from bodily engagement. Drawing attention to the performance of salty water, *Sal de Sal* brings to mind Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970), the remarkable construction of basalt rocks in the Great Salt Lake in Utah. The spiral structure created by Smithson is sometimes visible and sometimes not, depending on the level of the water in the Great Salt lake. Its becoming visible and invisible marks the transition of huge amounts of salt from solid to solution, and vice versa. When visible at all, the structure is sometimes like a spiral dam dividing the water, sometimes it is a sculpture in a desert of salt.

The series of performative interventions of which Mick's 'pickled Butch' in the water basin is part, draws attention to the performance of salt as something Donna Haraway proposes to call 'NatureCulture' (*The Companion Species Manifesto*, 2003). With this, she points to the inevitable entanglement of the natural and the cultural, the body and the mind, the material and the semiotic. The series of works presented during Fluid States under the title *Sal de Sal* similarly draws attention to this entanglement. Salt is a mineral with certain characteristics that make it appear as solid in certain conditions and as solution in others. Salt is nature. Yet how, when and where it appears as either solid or solution is entangled with culture, with the cultivation of land and water, with the various uses of and struggles with salt, and with the value of salt in different cultures. Salt crystallises and dissolves at the intersection of nature and culture.

SAL DE SAL Mick Douglas



'Sal (de Sal)' (circulation #0007), RMIT Gallery, performance.

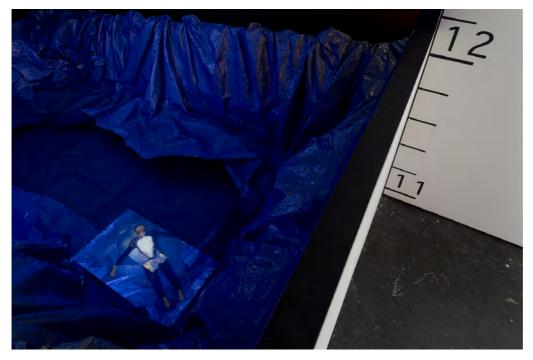


'(Sal) de Sal' (circulation #0007), Margaret Lawrence Gallery, installation view. Photo Christian Capurro.

SAL DE SAL Mick Douglas



(Sal) de Sal' (circulation #0007), Margaret Lawrence Gallery, performance video installation view. Photo Christian Capurro.



'(Sal) de Sal' (circulation #0007), Margaret Lawrence Gallery, performance video installation view. Photo Christian Capurro.

TAKING A LINE FOR A WALK David Thomas & Laurene Vaughan



Companion Curator > James Oliver

Taking a Line for a Walk is a participatory performance work that employs principles of playfulness, participation and colour as a means to make visible the trajectories and duration of transition within and across 'place'.

David Thomas and Laurene Vaughan draw on previous work to present this performance installation as an outcome of their practice-based conversations on the nature of place, and modalities of articulating invisible/intangible aspects of (spatial) transition. Within this practice, colour is used as a navigation device.

Taking a Line for Walk, extends the artists' articulation, with the development of a two-part installation/event linking the RMIT Gallery and Margaret Lawrence Gallery in Melbourne. At each site, a series of different coloured and sized lines are stacked in the gallery, presented and waiting to be taken to the streets. Members of the public will be invited to draw their path – a line – from, between or around one gallery to the other gallery. These lines 'walked' and thus drawn in space will connect experiences of exteriority and interiority, nature and culture, by making visible the ephemeral experiences and connections of daily life.

The action is not prescribed in a way that participants *must* make their way from one gallery to another – participants may elect to perform more or less movement – and it is anticipated that, as a public-sited work and situation, there will be a multiplicity of sociocultural engagements. It is part mobility, part encounter.

The project encourages active looking and greater awareness of the spatial practices of mobility. It will be variously documented and represented with small colour images and photographs accumulating in the galleries. No matter what the distance of the journey, the work makes visible individual passages through space, embodied and accompanied, from one location to another.

David Thomas & Laurene Vaughan

Respondent > Amaara Raheem

Taking a Line for a Walk by David Thomas and Laurene Vaughan is a participatory artwork taking its title from Paul Klee's famed description of a drawing. A bundle of sticks painted in contrasting colours (red, green, blue, white) stand against RMIT Gallery and Margaret Lawrence Gallery walls awaiting human activation. Taking a Line for a Walk invites viewers to draw the space between these two places by taking a line for a walk, literally.

When I first entered RMIT Gallery, it took me time to notice these painted sticks standing silent and immobile against the white wall. I often find that a quiet work takes a while to make itself known but, when it does, it shimmers. Each stick is the same and also different; different in colour, weight, length, breadth. My hand tentatively reached out, all twenty-seven bones clasped a long, lean, white body of wood. Do you choose the stick or does the stick choose you? It's hard to say, we must imagine that it's a dialogue, certainly that's how it seemed to me when I found myself unexpectedly faced with latitude. What I recall now is that one afternoon in October, a pile of footfall took me down to the river. I didn't exactly choose my direction, it was most certainly an interweaving of footsteps with stick-steps. Sometimes dragging, sometimes wielding, sometimes a feather, the white one in my tail, through people, trees and trams, the lean, light, white, wooden stick and I crisscrossed southward, all in lines on a grey day.

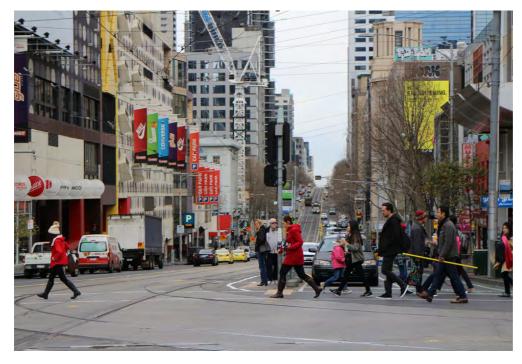
When taking a line for a walk, the artwork multiplies its resonances, bringing my attention to all manner of lines. There is the line in my hand, sometimes horizontal, at other times vertical; there are topographical lines between the two galleries; there are timelines, all of which are to be mapped through moment-to-moment awareness and play. There are lines between human and object, those detailed moments when lifelines and longitudinal lines laced my focus to the interconnectedness of time, body, place and things. There are mythological lines, kinaesthetic threads loosely sketched between body and imagination. By drawing a line in continual motion, by sharing a path and sharing a pulse, I can say for certain we were here, and also somewhere else.

In this artwork, the familiar route is stretched just enough to push me over the edge of comfort. A journey walked a hundred times transforms into once-upon-a-time. Down by the river – where exactly, I cannot say – I crossed a line, a line that I had not seen before, and only appeared on the day that I held a split cut cord in the palm of my hands. How long is a line? Why it stretches all the way around the globe. It is straight and narrow, curved and white. It disappears from time to time into fog or pattern. It is a woodpile, a walker's tracks, it is a bundle still growing, another year's cutting.

TAKING A LINE FOR A WALK David Thomas & Laurene Vaughan



Take a Line for a Walk, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.



Take a Line for a Walk, 2015.

TAKING A LINE FOR A WALK David Thomas & Laurene Vaughan



Take a Line for a Walk, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.



Take a Line for a Walk, 2015. Image contributed by participant.

#### TOWN CROSSINGS

Paul Gazzola & Nadia Cusimano in association with plan b



#### Companion Curator > David Cross

Town Crossings is an experimental performance/mapping project that utilises gameplay as a civic and social strategy of engagement across the physical landscape. Highlighting movement and mobility as an inherent and fundamental actioning of the everyday, the project exposes the transient nature of relationships that generate and form the daily spaces we operate in.

In 2015, a series of directed yet meandering cross-town journeys were generated by a play of exchange between one person (the *player*) and the response invoked by throwing a passer-by (*the other players*) a Frisbee. A GPS marker on *the player* records the winding pathways, which accumulate as a series of mappings that make visible the meandering and haphazard nature of the overall trajectories – exposing the dynamics between the intended direction and the actual manifestation of each journey. Understanding that cartography is an attempt to fill geographic spaces with knowledge, in a graphical form that we can communally understand, the exhibited maps reframe the hegemonic values granted to notions of efficient and economic trajectories of human activities across space and time.

As a light and flexible model, *Town Crossings* encourages participation as an open and flexible apparatus. Valuing cultural production through non-economic exchange, where the ability for anyone to participate allows for the constant propulsion of the mediating object, it is a fluid and open process, engaging with a strategy of performative acts as *generative sites* of social inclusion.

Sited in the everyday, *Town Crossings* can also be seen as an evolving *choreography of interpretation*, as it produces new engagements via each outing. Activated in the immediacy of the space, and the instantly forming and dissolving of the participatory relationships that occur, the project revalues play and playfulness in our society as a way to collectively produce and rethink new understandings of *place*.

TOWN CROSSINGS Paul Gazzola & Nadia Cusimano in association with plan b

ldle ideology – it's more than a game Respondent > Cameron Bishop

Surveying the Occupy Movement's camp at New York's Zuccotti Park in 2011, the media theorist McKenzie Wark posed the question: 'How is it possible to create forms of life for ourselves, even if it's in the shadow of tall buildings that cast long shadows?' Paul Gazzola and Nadia Cusimano's ongoing project, *Town Crossings*, responds by suggesting that the spectral vector of the Frisbee offers a counter-practice to the networked, digital, economic and social flows of the city. The work for Performing Mobilities in 2015 tracked the Frisbee players by GPS through the streets of Melbourne as they engaged members of the public in a game. Activating and re-mapping the city as a playground seems like a playful thing to do, but the trajectory of the Frisbee leaves a more serious contrail for us to consider.

In stumbling across their project in the city, or in its gallery incarnation (as Frisbee remnants and mapped trajectories across the grid of the city), we bear witness to a form of play that traces a haphazard score written by the player and their assorted partners. The player throws a Frisbee and someone chooses to catch it in the city street – a simple premise that arcs in, around, and against conventional ideological trajectories. These interactions between the thrower and the receiver (the stranger turned partner) are not dictated by the everyday relations we have with time, space, labour, capital and ourselves, but by the humble Frisbee slicing through each of them, in what might be described as a game of call and response.

'Hey, you there' is the famous call Louis Althusseur's policeman uses to hail the subject into ideology.<sup>2</sup> Gazzola and Cusimano's work does the opposite, for the receiver chooses to enter into a field of play, and opt out of the system of accepted discourses and practices that cast our everyday trajectories. It may only be for a short while, but in catching and throwing a Frisbee across public and private spaces, and entering into a conversation about the activity and other things, at the very least, *Town Crossings* ruptures the individual's journey from point X to point Y. It says: 'Hey, you there' not to rebuke or bring into line, but to offer a counter practice to capitalist consumption and/or our conventional use of public space – most often a place to walk without notice.

To some, the Occupy Movement was incoherent in its messaging, but it was clear in what it resisted when it put late capitalism on notice in 2011. The movement proffered what the social theorist Michael Warner suggests is a 'counterpublic': a public that does not respond to the call of officialdom or mainstream publics and resists ideological assumptions (and their translation into actions).<sup>3</sup> The Occupy Movement signified rebel idleness, and a way to live decoupled from the smooth and easy flow of capital (whether we imagine that as a monetary transaction across geopolitical borders or as the office worker walking to work). The Frisbee is a modest intervention by comparison, but in this project, alongside the mappings of the player's movements, it signifies idle play, non-economic exchange, collective participation, and, as suggested, resistance to the capitalist rhythms of city. To be sure, this project is a situated counter-practice and not just a game.

- 2 L. Althusseur, Essays on Ideology, Verso, London, 1984, p. 48.
- 3 M. Warner, 'Publics and Counterpublics', in Public Culture, 14 (1), 2002, pp. 49-90.

<sup>1</sup> M. Wark, 'Zuccotti Park, a Psychogeography', *Verso*, 2011 <a href="http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/735-mckenzie-wark-zuccotti-park-a-psychogeography">http://www.versobooks.com/blogs/735-mckenzie-wark-zuccotti-park-a-psychogeography</a>, accessed 27 May 2016.

TOWN CROSSINGS Paul Gazzola & Nadia Cusimano in association with plan b

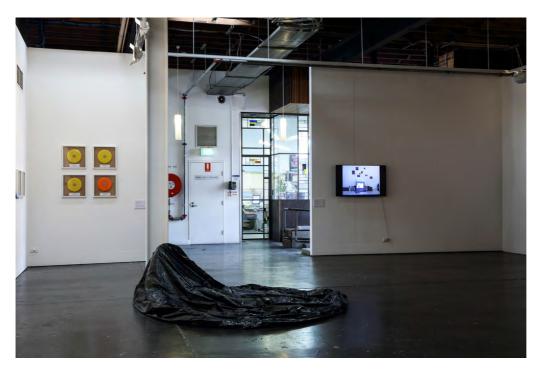


Town Crossings, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.



Town Crossings, RMIT Gallery, 2015. Photography: Mark Ashkanasy.

TOWN CROSSINGS Paul Gazzola & Nadia Cusimano in association with plan b

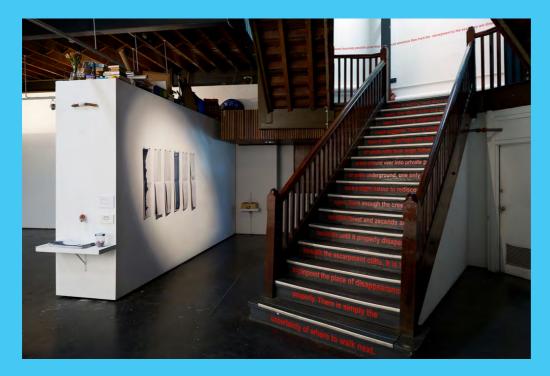


Town Crossings, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015. Photography: Kay Abode.



Town Crossings, Parghelia.

WALKING UPSTREAM: WATERWAYS OF THE ILLAWARRA Brogan Bunt & Lucas Ihlein & Kim Williams



#### Companion Curator > Laurene Vaughn

Hemmed in between the Tasman Sea to the east and steep escarpment to the west, the Wollongong (or Illawarra) region has few large rivers, but an abundance of small watercourses. Rainwater seeps down the escarpment forming gullies and creeks. These watercourses run through backyards, alongside sports ovals, through industrial estates, and variously constitute picturesque (desirable) water features and unsightly concrete-lined drains.

Walking Upstream: Waterways of the Illawarra has roots in the avant-garde practices of the past century: conceptual art, socially-engaged art practice, land art, and happenings, for example. It is at this site, between land and sea, that these three intrepid artists actively adopt Donald Brook's definition of art as 'unspecific experimental modelling'. Through embodied acts of walking as a trio, and in consort with fellow walkers, they seek to be in these places as they traverse the diversity of landscapes.

The walkers begin at the sea, at an identifiable 'mouth'. They walk their way upstream along named and unnamed creeks, hacking through weeds and undergrowth, skirting along property boundaries, talking their way into people's yards. They continue for as long as geography, topography, and social boundaries allow.

Through this simple methodology, their trajectories intersect with various cultures of land use - mining, bush regeneration, weed infestation and suburbanisation. These walks are a form of 'ground truthing' - a means of comparing official maps and aerial photographs with the lived experience of tramping along actual creeks. *Walking Upstream: Waterways of the Illawarra* is a resolutely local project - born from the desire of the key walkers to engage more deeply with the topographical, ecological, and social fabric of where they live.

WALKING UPSTREAM: WATERWAYS OF THE ILLAWARRA Brogan Bunt & Lucas Ihlein & Kim Williams

Walking Upstream: a simple arts practice method with unexpected outcomes Respondent > Josie Stockdill

My viewing of this work took place in three parts. Firstly, attending the *Performing Mobilities* exhibition with the objective of focusing on the collaborative multimedia work presented by the *Walking Upstream: Waterways of the Illawarra* artworks. Secondly, gaining an insight into the *Walking Upstream* method by participating in a *wander up Edgars Creek in Coburg North with Karina Quinn* and some of the *Walking Upstream* group and various other artist/researchers in tow). Lastly, reexamining the printed broadsheet, which is best described as an unconventional catalogue of the project's works, and reading over the project's website. As my viewing encompassed several works, writings and an activity, I will approach this task as a reflection on the arts practice method of the *Walking Upstream* project, and how the resulting artworks of the embodied experiences translated within an exhibition space.

Setting off on the Coburg poetry walk, I was able to chat with the group more generally about unspecific experimental modelling and the brave notion of starting a walk (or indeed an entire project) having no clear idea of where you will end up, or what might come out of it. We also spoke more fully about the 'ground truthing' technique, and considered the real risks of researchers using a process that is so 'deliberately vague' and 'open ended'.

During the walk, we traversed some landscaped and some wild areas, we found swimming dogs and rubbish, native birds and introduced weeds. All of these expected and unexpected discoveries intersected with our path and our conversations, creating atmospheric conditions rich in thought and creative provocation. Walking and interacting with others gave me access to readings of the waterways that I would have never before pondered.

A fellow artist/researcher and permaculture buff pointed out that some of the replanted native species in the area were not the best flora to be re-introduced to the current environment, and that this type of conservation was often nothing more than a romantic attachment to what we think *ought* to be there. Someone else shared her concern that we were not going to get very far at our current pace, although the distance travelled did not concern me at all. Personally, I was most taken by the excellent swimming dog we saw and how he relished the dirty, muddy waterhole. I can imagine that if we were to present our artistic response to the same walk in our individual disciplines, the outputs would be unanticipated and diverse. Nevertheless, they would have all been provoked by authentic embodied encounters with the waterway itself.

The exhibition included several multimedia installations by three artists, including a display of the broadsheet. Accordingly, this exhibition presented both individual and collective creative outputs of the *Walking Upstream* project. The complete exhibition gave me a sense of an ongoing chat, a scholarly yet playful conversation, which continues to consider and prod the waterways with the concerns and interests of the group. Part of this chat was literally demonstrated in the broadsheet writings, an experimentally logged form of communication between the three artists. The other multimedia artworks proffered alongside one another in the same space highlighted the fact that despite the conversational connection, each artist experienced a disparate 'ground truth'. Overall, the exhibited works materialised as though the writings carried an ongoing thread of the group's conversation. This conversational thread then intersected well with individual installations that functioned as singular thought bubbles linked to each artist.

The *Walking Upstream* project explores the experimental practice of ground truthing, a process that I had not yet considered; yet the simple techniques employed here are applicable to a wide range of topical concerns within arts practice. It is clear that something productive, playful and inventive has emerged from this project, resulting in interesting new ways of *knowing* the Illawarra waterways.

WALKING UPSTREAM: WATERWAYS OF THE ILLAWARRA Brogan Bunt & Lucas Ihlein & Kim Williams



Walking Upstream: Waterways of the Illawarra, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015. Photography: Christian Capurro.



Walking Upstream: Waterways of the Illawarra, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015. Photography: Christian Capurro.

WALKING UPSTREAM: WATERWAYS OF THE ILLAWARRA Brogan Bunt & Lucas Ihlein & Kim Williams



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# > PASSAGES > mobile performances > >

A TRUE GARDEN Eddie Paterson & Lara Stevens



#### Companion Curator > Paul Rae

I entered unsuspecting, it was a garden; from the gate we saw that the earth existed. Then gently closed the gate and we were in the garden. And far enough out, people went to war. Some bombs fell and shook the tent. There was one long never called heaven because down here we saw tear and fraying over the walls. The earth felt good.

#### -Helene Cixous, Un vrai jardin (1971)

A True Garden was an interactive audio performance based on French writer and feminist theorist Helene Cixous' short story Un vrai jardin. Participants could download the .mp3 audio file of the performance onto their personal media device between 25 September – 7 November 2015. Participants received instructions as to how, where, and when to access the System Garden at the University of Melbourne – the selected site where the work was designed to be experienced by a solo listener.

The reading, translation, and mistranslation of Cixous' story as a bedtime fable within a public garden invites reflection on both the experience of intimacy with nature and the overwhelming global challenges to rapid environmental change that threaten this fragile and fraught relation. The interactive performance was placed within the only system garden in the Southern Hemisphere – a design that aims to demonstrate the evolutionary development of plant species. The audio performance invited participants to explore different parts of the garden, bringing together rationalist enlightenment science, religion, poetry, and the politics of human-nature relations.

A TRUE GARDEN Eddie Paterson & Lara Stevens

Respondent > Meredith Rogers

I first encountered the System Garden at the University of Melbourne in 1969. I was in the first year of what would prove to be a very desultory BA. I was meeting new people and experiencing new things all the time. I found a friend who lived in North Melbourne. Her Lithuanian parents imported art and she already knew about the Victoria Markets. We would skip lectures and walk to the markets to buy exotic food that I'd never encountered before – salty, sheepy feta cheese, fat green Queen olives and smaller black Kalamatas, all kinds of sausage – salami, cabana, mortadella, sopressa. Even the bread was exotic – pasta dura rolls, Kaiser rolls, mountain bread, flat bread, pumpernickel. Then we'd take our feast back to the garden. I know it's the System Garden now and that it has its own rich history, but then it was a fairly neglected, seemingly secret place. We called it the Botany Gardens only because it was behind the Botany building. Apart from the palm in the middle, which is still there, the only plants I remember were in a group of tired looking vegetable beds (it was March after all). We collected (no doubt illegally) hard dry cobs of blue Indian corn but had no idea what to do with it. Mostly we just lay on the buffalo grass surrounded by our picnic, describing ourselves to each other. The garden bore its apparent neglect with a patient melancholy that suited our youthful sensibilities.

Now in 2015 I am older, but the garden is younger. It is revived, remodeled and returned to its intended purpose as a 'System Garden' in which the original 1856 plantings based on Carl Linnaeus's systematic principles are augmented by more recent methods, such as DNA sequencing, which have had an impact on the classification and renaming of plant groups. Now the garden has 'an evolutionary narrative' embedded in its planting design.'

This exquisitely realised work, *A True Garden* weaves together the history of the garden, simple instructions on how to navigate the actual space and the evocative telling in English and French of another memory (perhaps). The history goes back to times before the place was a garden, when it was the ancestral lands of the Wurundjeri people, and much further back to the algae and the lichens from which all this detail and extravagant life has arisen. The instructions take us to places in the garden where we can locate that history and this present abundance. In one memorable passage, we are asked to look into a pond and see our own evolutionary moment in the algae there. The voice in our ear asks in a deceptively gentle tone: 'Is this your true reflection?' Later I will remember this moment and wonder. When I have heard Cixous' disturbing story about abuse at the hands of her nanny, her belly button pinned to the ground by the point of an umbrella, the Omphalos, the navel of the world in a garden that may be true or may be (merely?) real. At this moment, these imagined memories and my own align beside the here and now. I hear the sounds of the garden. I smell the fragrances drifting across it. I feel the sun on my back and the soft resistance of the spongy grass. I don't need now to know the classifications of the plants or the order of the evolutionary story they tell. Like Cixous, 'I [am] the garden. I [am] inside the garden and I [don't] have a name.'

1 'Garden evolution', *Voice*, vol 6 no 9, Sept 6 - Oct 10 2010, http://wayback.archive-it.org/org-197/20160102103042/http://voice.unimelb.edu.au/volume-6/number-9/garden-evolution

#### BIT-U-MEN-AT-WORK Julieanna Preston and Jen Archer-Martin

Discourses and practices in the realm of *make and repair* are typically gendered and domesticated – situated somewhere near or within the home. Often driven by the actions by both skilled and unskilled labourers, these practices have foundations in frugality, need, moral value, or material scarcity. Propelled by issues of sustainability and idealisation of the local, vernacular or artisan, there has been a recent resurgence of interest in how we craft and make the material world. These localised acts have served as critiques of globalisation, mechanisation and dehumanisation – a separation between bodies, people, the manufactured and distributed worlds.

Julieanna Preston's site-specific intervention, *Bit-u-men-at-work*, serves to explicate the machine-like devouring needs of perpetual mobility that our road systems manifest. The freeway, the highway, the road or the lane – across scales of distance and efficiency – these are the bitumen veins of mobility. Ever present, these are the norms of our landscape, and in Australia they run the periphery of the mainland and are repeated on our smaller islands. These veins seem to hold us together; a bitumen veiny network that is in a constant state of repair, being made by road teams, and being unmade by the vehicles that pound across its surfaces.

Companion Curator > Laurene Vaughn

BIT-U-MEN-AT-WORK Julieanna Preston and Jen Archer-Martin

Respondent > Smiljana Glisovic

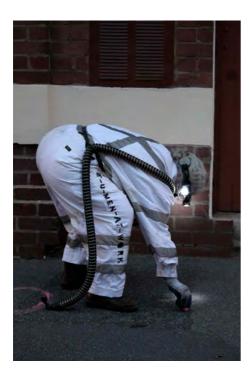
Reflectors, torches, visibility markings, and traffic cones make up this work. Sounds of steam and engine and reverse gear signals mark the processes undertaken in repairing a road. All of these things work to focus the audience's attention both on the road itself and the process of repair which the artist/machine enacts. The artist is not playing or imitating a road resurfacing machine. Her human contours are accentuated by the white boiler-suit. Sounds of affection and longing that follow the sounds of steam consistently undermine any real attempt for the artist to fully become the machine. And though she makes sounds that might echo what a road resurfacing machine sounds like, she is not trying to pass for likeness. Rather, she gives the machine her own flesh and her own breath and takes from the machine its functional qualities. One does not collapse into the other: neither woman-machine nor machine-woman. Empathy and agency are difficult to locate.

This is not an anthropocentric expression of feelings shared between machine and asphalt. The artist as machine/womanwoman/machine, in the act, creates moments where artist, machine and asphalt are experienced together. But still I want to write of smells and mouths, of being close, of skins touching – because this is how the road and machine/womanwoman/machine come to know one another.

The spectacle of resurfacing roads is reimagined as an intimate act, performed as a sensuous experience. The figure murmurs lovingly to the road, heaves and undulates over the markings that need attention, speaks to it in indecipherable loving tones, caresses it, warms it and humps it with her belly. But to say 'belly' and to gender it is to lean too heavily on the human and on dominant structures that try to order the world. There is a kind of perversity in this sensuality which induces discomfort – the interchangeable qualities of human and machine, of textures, the soft and hard, the organic and inorganic. This is a private and intimate moment unfolding in public. This intimacy complicates the relations between road, machine, and human. The human voice sounds the machine, heaving and spluttering in its labour. The artist embodies the machine but also bodies-forth human desires.

The labour of the work in resurfacing a road is emphasised here by way of time. There are numerous stages involved in road repair: identifying the parts that need repair, marking those areas, covering the imperfections with cement, pressing them in. In this particular performance, the work was painstaking in the time it took, but it was not systematic. The work of resurfacing was messy. The task and labour took on agendas other than the functional. The objectives seem displaced from resurfacing parts of a road that need fixing, to another kind of intention that is complicated with human desire. These are performative acts as opposed to enacted tasks. This is vital: the audience must endure this work so that they might access these indeterminate spaces of human, machine and road as they are held together by flesh, breath and bitumen.

BIT-U-MEN-AT-WORK Julieanna Preston and Jen Archer-Martin



Bit-u-men-at-work, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015.



Bit-u-men-at-work, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015. Photography: Julieanna Preston.

BIT-U-MEN-AT-WORK Julieanna Preston and Jen Archer-Martin



Bit-u-men-at-work, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015.



Bit-u-men, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015.

#### CROSSINGS

Benjamin Cittadini, Ceri Hann, Fiona Hillary & Shanti Sumartojo



#### Companion Curator > James Oliver

*Crossings* is a performance work and a multi-disciplinary, practice as research enquiry. It is formed from emplaced practice of four artists/researchers who are 'thinking through action' to reveal four propositions/positions on contemporary (pedestrian) *crossings*.

The mobile methodology takes the form of the 'crossing guard' to reveal the embodied negotiations of flows in the urban context. By becoming emplaced 'listeners', the artists activate urban locations of pedestrian engagement in the 'present' term of crossing. To assist a public in a crossing is not just to help people negotiate obstacles between the past and the future, but to *be* with them in the present, to listen to the flow and observe the passage of the shadows of time, to live in a space that is neither departure nor destination, but a deeper space that is only *crossing*, never *crossed*. A crossing is not an overcoming of an obstruction, it is an opportunity to *listen* to the flow of movement that is everywhere, at all times: to coalesce in a constant state of becoming, to listen to the journey in its present passage.

In Hermann Hesse's *Siddharta*, the ferryman takes people across the river, people for whom the river is an obstacle, a nuisance, a barrier to forging ahead. Meeting the ferryman, Siddharta notes his serenity and the seemingly timeless character of the river's present. He asks the ferryman to teach him how to be present like the river. The ferryman answers that he is not a teacher, the river is. He *listens*. Crossing the river and observing its ever-changing rhythms and moods have taught him this. Siddharta lives with the ferryman, tending the boat and learning to listen.

>> http://www.performingmobilities.net/symposium/passages\_mobile/crossings/

#### CROSSINGS

Benjamin Cittadini, Ceri Hann, Fiona Hillary & Shanti Sumartojo

Respondent > Craig Peade

Thursday.

Twilight.

St Kilda Road, alive with the freedom and madness of rush hour. Pedestrians, anticipating being home or prematurely celebrating the weekend, actively forget the travails of their recent past – the daily grind of their own presences and presentness.

Each passer-by hurries, harrying hither and thither, as four blue-coated, cream pant-cladded figures armed with white umbrellas and resplendent skivvies eerily cross back and forth through the intersection. Like lost resolute ships in the night, are these damned ghosts from a condemned future (fore)shadowing our present presences and/or our pasts?

A child's gait slows, entranced, asking curious and wondrous questions of their guardians about *Crossings*' silent phantasmatic spectres rendering the familiar strange. *Crossings*' performative logic of the pedestrian – the 'civilising process'' of merely walking from here to there – courts a limbo-esque utopian place/no-place and a timelessness somehow beyond the here-and-now, neither future nor past.

Within *Crossings*' liminal threshold, (mis)recognition of knowledge and ignorance, an alterity exteriorising intimacy and alienation, the accumulative estrangement of repetition and its affective effects impact upon the enduring immediacy of life's everyday reality. With all the time in the world to repeat each of their crossings – time stands still, going nowhere – *Crossings* becomes a dialectical image of messianic walking<sup>2</sup> and entropy.

From *Crossings*' simple quotidian observation of a prosaic or commonplace ritual secreted or hidden in plain sight, the energy flow of the street's vibrations ripples transfigured and/or transformed. These uncanny presences delightfully bemuse, perplex and bewilder, as a revelation of the emplacement we are subject to when negotiating the social fabric of urbanity, and those ebbs and flows imposed from within and without – including their transgressions.

Like stepping machines<sup>3</sup>,we pedestrians take for granted Baudelaire's insight that when crossing amidst the chaos of (post)modern urbanity, t/here is 'death galloping at me from every side'<sup>4</sup>. These – our crossings – consume and unconsciously transcend, sublate or negate death's shadow. For might not crossing intersections court defiance? That is, the defying of death; a gateway to a temporal immortality?

The everyday or quotidian performance of *Crossings*, as a mobilisation of our common 'death-defying' corporeality, hazards the street as a parade ground, whose procession expresses concrete lived experience, and an awakening from urbanity's abstracted dream reality, unto nightmarish 'profane illuminations' that we are indeed hauntological – dead ghosts<sup>5</sup>. For within *Crossings*' formal utilitarian uniformity, these figures comfort and intimidate as though *memento mori*. Irrespective of urban guardian angels or grim reapers, *Crossings*' seductive solace manifested itself within a besuited man, whose temerity inspired mirroring one of the figures' prone bodies upon a traffic island. Another passer-by enquired, concerned, until a 'selfie' – the post-modern eternal equivalent to Benjamin's 'ruffle on a dress'<sup>6</sup> – allayed fears. It was this entrancing enactment of emplacement and the strange uncanny familiarity of a bin-cast umbrella that *Crossings*', as a research enquiry, proposes that those deaf and dead amongst us might listen still – at least figuratively speaking.

1 T. Ingold, 'Culture On The Ground The World Perceived Through Feet', Journal of Material Culture, vol 9, 2004, pp. 315–40, cited in J. Urry, Mobilities, 1st Edn, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2007, p.66.

<sup>2</sup> M. Pensky 'Method and Time: Benjamin's Dialectical Images' in D. Ferris ed., The Cambridge Guide to Walter Benjamin 1st edition, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, pp.191–4.

З Urry, ор. cit, р.68.

<sup>4</sup> C. Baudelaire 'Lost Halo' Paris Spleen: Little Poems in Prose Wesleyan University Press, Middletown Connecticut, 2009, p.88, cited in M.Berman 'The Mire of the Macadam' All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity, Verso, London, 1983, p.156 & 159.

<sup>5</sup> R. Wolin, Walter Benjamin: An Aesthetic of Redemption, 2nd edn, University of California, Berkeley, 1994, p.132.

#### CROSSINGS

Benjamin Cittadini, Ceri Hann, Fiona Hillary & Shanti Sumartojo



Crossings, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.



Crossings, 2015. Photography: Shanti Sumartojo.

#### CROSSINGS

Benjamin Cittadini, Ceri Hann, Fiona Hillary & Shanti Sumartojo



Crossings, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.



Crossings, Performing Mobilities, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.

#### MALAYSIA AUSTRALIA RAFT PROJECT (MARP)

Anthony Pelchen, Tony Yap, Trevor Flinn, Kavisha Mazzella, Robert Millar, Frank Tagliabue, Alison Eggleton, Pete Grey, Karin Matsuda, Andrew Lindsay - Australia; Soong Ro Ger (Roger) – Malaysia; Monica Benova – Slovakia (Jacqueline Schulz – filming and editing; William Heathcote and Matthew Vaughan – additional video and stills).



Companion Curator > James Oliver

MARP is an installation and performance work initiated in 2013. This was a homage to the 2012 Malaysian raft journey by Soong Ro Ger (Roger) and Andy Lim Kah Meng, who constructed a raft and travelled for ten days through the lakes system of the Royal Belum State Park in Perak, Malaysia. During this unauthorised journey, the artists witnessed the deforestation of some of the most pristine areas of the jungle.

The raft is now fully hijacked, marooned for its broader symbolic potential, and as a platform to enact shared vulnerability and the possibilities of generosity. MARP was originally conceived as an artistic vehicle to bring some fine foreign 'others' into Australia, rather than ship them out – a simple act of generosity on a micro level. MARP is also a work to bring others on board.

The sense of inequality of safety and privilege in movement is a call to action for the artists – a cry for orientation, a desperate call to the gods. The performance work that plays out on the stationary, marconed raft is 'anchored' more in the raft's symbolic potential – an improvised vessel for transporting with a destination in mind, and the daunting but sometimes exciting potential of going off course to arrive somewhere unintended, to even disappear in the enactment.

MARP raft was sited on the almost littoral dry zone between VCA and ACCA, with blue tarpaulins, marcon tents, an open kitchen. Think smell, smoke, and incidental engagement. Small orange Origami boats pass from hand to hand. Around midday, a memory and medley of sound and song emerges through the colour: Code Marcon (All God's Beggars) begins. The relative emptiness of the site's surrounds is open to visitation, to whoever may interact, perform, or simply occupy.

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Shifting States (of awareness): Malaysia Australia Raft Project Respondent > Alison Eggleton

In a clearing among tall eucalyptus and cypress trees, a collection of tents and structures stand. As people gather, a small village forms. I hear 'All God's Beggars', and simultaneously witness the site, vibrating with meditative stillness, anxiety and resignation of the body. It is in this space – where order and disorder, distance and proximity share the same continuum – that I notice the central structure of a raft. It sits marooned on the grass, as though a shrine to a monumental journey. I wonder where this vessel has come from, where it had travelled. Embedded with a kind of solidarity and exciting potential, it is charged with impermanence, vulnerability, and an otherworldly uncertainty of going off course. Built from recycled cooking-oil containers, bamboo poles and canvas, I am reminded of the literary classic *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, in which we are drawn into the world of two boys seeking freedom, and finding a place where generosity and kindness come to fruition.

Later, I would meet artist Soong Ro Ger (Roger) and hear of his raft journey in 2012 with fellow artist Andy Lim Kah Meng, in which they constructed a raft and travelled for ten days on an unauthorised journey through the lakes system of the Royal Belum State Park in Perak, Malaysia.

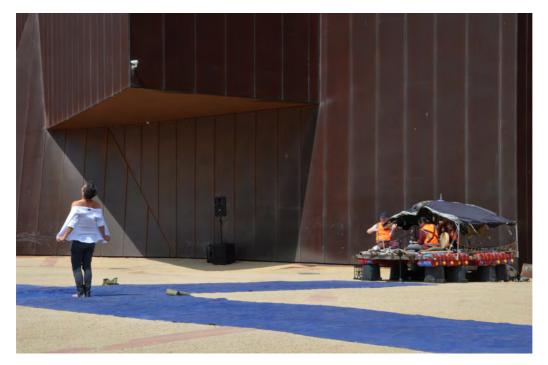
With few tenets, Anthony Pelchen has tangentially brought the people that surround him on board the *Malaysia Australia Raft Project* (MARP). Witnessed as audience among the backdrop of Nati Frinj Festival in my home town of Natimuk in 2013, and as participant at MAPFest in the old city of Melaka, Malaysia in 2014, and again on the forecourt of Australian Centre of Art (ACCA) for Performing Mobilities in Melbourne in 2015, Pelchen has also brought me along. And I have come to the realisation that through a metaphysical accumulation of experience, MARP has become a vessel of souls. In exchanging energy, temporal and generous in nature, each act is a series of ethereal moments.

Immersed in the sounds of the old city from MARP's St Paul's hill site, Australian sheep calls rang out. Recorded at night in Western Victoria, their calls in the dark, perhaps in need of orientation, paradoxically call to the heavens. In accenting their dislocation, Pelchen's recording awakened a sense of familiarity and longing in me for home (Australia). He describes MARP 'as a platform to enact shared vulnerability and the possibilities of generosity'. Against this ethereal backdrop, MARP evoked a sense of sadness and purpose, one that's anchored in hope and justice for people moving from one country to another.

Pelchen's work offers us an interminable number of responses that deserve to inhabit our minds for some time. It is a site of unexpected associations. And in the forecourt of the ACCA, against the monolithic structure of its rusted steel walls, he escalated the potential of MARP further. In the shadow of its authority, the remade raft with a crew of international artists occupied the relative emptiness of the site for a single day. In these surrounds, Pelchen characteristically orientates himself within a world of ordered and disordered states, open to whoever may interact. Excited by the potential, once again I found myself arriving somewhere unexpected.

#### MALAYSIA AUSTRALIA RAFT PROJECT (MARP)

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MARP, 2015.



MARP, 2015.

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MARP, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.



MARP, 2015. Photography: Marshall Webber.

NIGHT WALK Sam Trubridge



Companion Curator > Mick Douglas

Night Walk is a performance work and process conducted as a blind navigation with the landscape, as part of an ongoing study into nomadic states. A large sphere of inflated black plastic is inhabited by a walker. As a journey takes its course, the sphere's movement across various surfaces perforates the thin plastic, creating a constellation of pinpricks that afford the invisible walker within a mapping system to navigate by.

The clandestine-like movements of the black sphere reveal a hidden interior motive, for these acts of blind navigation produce a milieu in correspondence with each terrain encountered. Surfaces, materials, spatial qualities, rhythms, and other movement systems are gently intruded upon: a dark intrusion creating alternative, non-linear, nomadic narratives in relation to landscapes. A condition of blindness reveals tensions between the body and the geological, geographic, cultural, technological, and architectural terrains encountered.

In the specifically Australian context, walking country has particular significance as a mode of culturally-located knowing, resonant with the 'songlines' of Aboriginal tradition. Arriving in this 'storied terrain' of the Australian continent, this work by Sam Trubridge – whose formative childhood was spent under stars living on his parents' sailing boat – performs as an autopoetic register of intersections between mobile spatial practices, non-linear narratives, and the organisational fixity of the state polis and urban architecture.

Following an experimental journey in the Murray Riverland, *Night Walk* journeyed through city spaces at irregular times over two periods of 48 hours in relation to the two Performing Mobilities gallery sites. Temporarily lodging at the entrance thresholds of the galleries and their spaces within, this nomadic object unsettles the architectural loci of the gallery with a provisional spatiality; inviting entry into its own interior; opening out the potential for multi-dimensional re-inscriptions of moving with and knowing the environment.

#### >>>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITIE

NIGHT WALK Sam Trubridge

Night Walk - Migratory grounding Respondent > Sven Mehzoud

A large black sphere moving slowly and laboriously through the landscape – a vast deserted beach in New Zealand; on a former grazing and cropping station by the Murray River; on a crowded footpath in the centre of an Australian metropolis - that is the performance of Night Walk. Each instance of its performance generates a set of connections with the local, with the site-specific circumstance of time, nature, body and culture. The audience as witness partakes at a distance in the unfolding of this event. The artist, inside the sphere, remains invisible to the eye. And yet, a strange attachment is felt with the seemingly absent artist body - its labouring to drive this sphere forward is viscerally tangible.

Night Walk reveals migratory operations at work through performative acts of grounding, traversing and transgressing. Mieke Bal offers the notion of 'migratory aesthetics' through which she invites us to explore the interrelationship between the migratory condition and the aesthetic dimension of a work of art.' 'Migratory' for Bal is characteristic of mobility, the formational, the connective, and expresses 'the state of the world' – and migratory aesthetics seek to explore how art in relation to this dynamic notion of formation can have agency and be political.

Night Walk performs this mobility and formational condition through the act of traversing ground, of traversing country. The sphere and artist, joined in tandem, intrude into the site as a foreign body. The migratory in the local tells us something about difference, otherness and the peculiar. Difference is made tangibly present as borders are transgressed and the demarcations between the conditions of the site and the other are mapped, measured and comprehended. The performance's labouring action is the ongoing process of locating, of establishing connections, and of uncovering the relationship between things, people, endeavours, conflicts and politics.

Paul Carter speaks of the migrant's condition as being in the constant process of footing, of finding ground, of an act of settling.<sup>2</sup> It suggests a personal relating to the conditions of a place through the operations of the migratory, the momentary and ongoing connections that are being made - actions that bring forth the personal dimensions of the complexity of 'grounding oneself'. This draws attention to our own actions as witnesses and co-authors to the aesthetic event. An aesthetics of performance proposes a shift from understanding 'art as object' to 'art as event', which collapses the binaries of subject and object and, in the case of Night Walk, collapses the performance, witness, artist and environment.<sup>3</sup> It involves a role-reversal, an oscillating relationship and feedback loop between witness and artist, resulting in a shared experience of grounding. These are reality generating, self-referential, constitutive acts of the performance event

Moslund, Petersen and Schramm describe such artworks producing a recognition of the world.<sup>4</sup> They transgress and reconfigure reality as a process of an ongoing moving forward. Therein also lies the agency of Night Walk: it encompasses migratory processes or operations that uncover existing narratives, express instability, and a potential for change through which new narratives can be generated.

- 1 M. Bal & M. A. Hernandez-Navarro, eds., Art and visibility in migratory culture: conflict, resistance, and agency, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 2011, p. 11. 2 K. Lindsey, 'Creative cartographies: Notes on an Interview with Paul Carter', Australian Humanities Review (online journal), no. 1, April 1996, <a>http://australianhumanitiesreview.org>, accessed 18 May 2016.</a>
- E. Fischer-Lichte, The transformative power of performance: a new aesthetics, Routledge, New York, 2008, ρ. 17.
  S.P. Moslund, A. R. Petersen & M. Schramm, eds., The culture of migration: politics, aesthetics and histories, I.B. Tauris, London, 2015, p. 15.

NIGHT WALK Sam Trubridge



Night Walk, RMIT Gallery, 2015.



Night Walk, RMIT Gallery, 2015.

NIGHT WALK Sam Trubridge



Night Walk, Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA, 2015. Photography: Kay Abode.



Night Walk, RMIT Gallery, 2015.

#### NOW AGAIN

Shaun McLeod, Peter Fraser, Olivia Millard, Sophia Cowen, Victor Renolds



Companion Curator > Meredith Rogers

*Now Again* is a participatory performance made up of a series of individual and group activities that create opportunities to notice how we fit and shift in our environment. Reflecting the dance histories of the artists, the variable dynamic possibilities of the city are brought into focus through specific 'scores' that, as propositions for engagement, activate simple movement patterns or observations. The aim is to allow responsive noticing of the immediate environment, but also to enliven it in unexpected ways. Individuals who are participants and observers, dedicated or incidental (passers-by), become part of the disclosure of the physical and the social.

The rigid structure of the city is re-imagined as a fluid, choreographic entity invested with organic qualities. Performances move between a series of city locations, each with differing activities. Designated 'nodes' in the city grid (certain streets, a square, a doorway, footpath, a hole in a wall or a particular tree), have been chosen for their imaginative, affective, or energetic resonances. These are 'mapped' by the perambulatory, physical, sensory, and relational engagement of all participants. This is a collective dance created through noticing the feelings and patterns of the physical self in the built, natural, and social environment.

In some sites, the artists perform, while in others they lead a participative performance. Ephemeral, self-led, performance experiments designed to disappear into the fabric of the city, will also be invited.

A mobile app enables audience participation. The app employs GPS data to trigger information specific to that site (written prompts, sounds and scored provocations).

To access the app visit: http://oliviamillard.net/nowagain/

NOW AGAIN Shaun McLeod, Peter Fraser, Olivia Millard, Sophia Cowen, Victor Renolds

Respondent > Sally Gardner

The event *Now Again* evokes practices of walking and 'walking in the city'. Walking practices remain for some a necessity for getting from A to B. There have been the romantic walking practices of sages and hermits seeking the sublime or for knowledge through contemplation in nature. Walking in the city has had numerous incarnations and subjects including the flneur, a stroller and (non)participant observer. Alternatively, there was the man of the street depicted by Poe and Baudelaire who experienced the shocks of being jostled in the new urban crowds. Other walks and walkers have followed in the wake of 'the society of the spectacle' and have attempted to gesture to something outside its logic. These include Alan Kaprow's practices of 'just doing' and the Situationist 'traipses through Paris' whose aim was to survey the city 'for what might be salvaged and used in a utopian reconstruction of social space'.' In Australia, walking has a particular resonance related to the Indigenous concept of 'country', 'walking on country', questions of legitimate/illegitimate sovereignty, and the right to feel at home or in place.

The event *Now Again* comes out of dance. More specifically, it comes out of a certain dance subculture, where basic physical activities and experiences such as transferring weight from one foot to another, ordinary balancing, touching, the whole field of accent experienced in the musicality of ordinary locomotions, leaving the ground as well as partnering with it, and shifting one's axis away from the vertical, are all valued as fundamental practices. The attitude is of always being a beginner in one's body and situation, of making sure to return to fundamentals over and over again, as in any oral tradition.

There is also a dance improvisational awareness in the decisions underpinning *Now Again*, if one understands dance improvisation in the tradition of what has been called 'new dance' – the somatically informed practices of various artists, many of whom can be related back in some way to Halprin, Forti, Paxton, and the milieu of contact improvisation with its focus on developing haptic awareness. Improvisation is a way of being present in the present moment, such that 'your awareness of yourself within that moment both challenges and refines your presence in each subsequent moment'.<sup>2</sup> The title *Now Again* refers to this perpetual condition of 'now' as a becoming present and as one's unstable presence with, of and to the world. In keeping with this tradition, *Now Again* leaves a light footprint; and while it encourages an attention to the 'here', it does so by means of a relational or pathic rather than specular focus. The event's route is guided by considerations of the everyday more than of the kinds of hidden or architecturally notable spaces of the RMIT campus and its CBD environs that might have been visited. *Now Again* is a group event. It structures a form of sociability – like parallel play. It accepts but does not demand communication.

1 Alice Kaplan, Alice and Kirstin Ross, 'Introduction', Everyday Life: Yale French Studies, no. 73, 1987, pp. 1–4. 2 Kent De Spain, 'The Cutting Edge of Awareness: Reports from the Inside of Improvisation' in Taken by Surprise: A Dance Improvisation Reader, Albright & Gere (eds), Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Conn., 2003, pp. 27–38.

#### NOW AGAIN

Shaun McLeod, Peter Fraser, Olivia Millard, Sophia Cowen, Victor Renolds



Now Again, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.



Now Again, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.

#### NOW AGAIN

Shaun McLeod, Peter Fraser, Olivia Millard, Sophia Cowen, Victor Renolds



Now Again, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.

PORTABLE KOMUSO TEMPLE COMPOSITIONS Brian Tairaku Ritchie & Stuart Tanner



Companion Curator > Mick Douglas

In the Japanese Komuso (mendicant monks) tradition of Shakuhachi (bamboo flute), the Komuso would roam between temples and gain alms along the way, whilst seeking to experience enlightenment through performing the Shakuhachi, as conveyed in the Komuso saying: 'Ichion Jobutsu: become a Buddha in one sound'.'

The collaborative project of musician Brian Ritchie and architect Stuart Tanner acknowledges this Zen monk tradition of transitory wandering, whilst exploring contemporary instances of how space, sound, movement, and experience might poignantly intersect. Ritchie and Tanner share an interest in clarity and simplicity. Ritchie's sonic pursuits are underscored by both the active directness that first propelled and continues to sustain his punk-acoustic group the Violent Femmes, and his traditional training and ongoing practice in the Shakuhachi, for which he is a licensed teacher/performer granted the name 'Tairaku', translating as 'big music'.

Traditional Honkyoku (Zen compositions) of Shakuhachi are expressed in three forms: Shin, Gyo and So. 'Shin' is the basic form learned from the teacher; 'Gyo' are variations retaining the basic form; and 'So' improvise new interpretations expressing the basic sentiments of the piece, but with a great deal of flexibility allowed to the performer. Ritchie and Tanner extend the improvising potential of 'So' expressive form to create compositions interplaying space and sound. Each particular temporary installation in different public environments composes a performance zone that is distinguishable from that of everyday busking. This affords Ritchie an opportunity for the live composition of new Shakuhachi performances in relationship to the material consistency of the 'temple' space, and in concert with the contingencies of its present environmental conditions and social circumstances. The compositions that emerge are the aesthetic gifts of ephemeral moments, lightly extending an ancient wisdom practice to encounter the 'real now' of a live urban condition.

1 David J. Duncavage, 'A Brief History of the Shakuhachi', http://www.northsideaikido.com/en/shakuhachi

PORTABLE KOMUSO TEMPLE COMPOSITIONS Brian Tairaku Ritchie & Stuart Tanner

Big Music comes to PSi Respondent > Edward Scheer

The international community of scholars, artists, activists, and ratbags that comprises PSi is not used to rock stars. Encountering Brian Ritchie of Violent Femmes fame at the tea break at RMIT last October was to sense a shift in the force, the way that a celebrity entering a space changes the atmosphere. Everyone else, all the non-celebrities, must acknowledge this change in some way even though we may try not to. Our behaviour is thereby oriented around the fame that person carries with them. This everyday 'media ritual' as Nick Couldry describes the encounter with celebrity, is significant as it reaffirms the continuous efforts made by the media to constitute the centre of meaning-making activity within the social, as fame is generated by media, the encounter with it reinstitutes the centralising position of the media in our societies.

This is all fine and explains the odd sensation of discomfort that often arises in this situation. Do we go up and chat to the celebrity or not? We want to be touched and acknowledged by the significant figure as it might convey upon us in turn a special status. But Brian Ritchie was not in Melbourne in his role as rock star /celebrity but to perform some humble Shakuhachi compositions. He studied these Japanese bamboo flutes for seven years in New York City, achieving the rank of Jun Shihan (teaching license) in March 2003 and the professional name 'Tairaku' meaning 'Big Music'.

In his *Portable Komuso Temple Compositions*, Ritchie was reactivating the tradition of the mendicant zen monks (komuso) of Japan who travelled between monasteries, playing the shakuhachi and seeking enlightenment. In this project, Ritchie collaborated with the architect Stuart Tanner who designed the collapsible mobile stage for the event that Ritchie dutifully wheeled around the city of Melbourne for the duration of the conference to reach the different locations for his recitals.

One of these was the M-Pavilion, at Queen Victoria Gardens opposite the Arts Centre, where Ritchie performed a selection of traditional Honkyoku (Zen compositions) alongside some adaptations of jazz standards. As I learned from the Performing Mobilities conference pack, Shakuhachi compositions are expressed in three main forms: Shin, Gyo and So:

'Shin' is the basic form learned from the teacher; 'Gyo' are variations retaining the basic form; and 'So' improvise new interpretations expressing the basic sentiments of the piece, but with a great deal of flexibility allowed to the performer.

The 'So' variations performed by Ritchie, and repeated later at RMIT, were around 45 minutes in duration and were accompanied by his matter of fact introduction to the practice and the construction of the flutes (he used a variety of instrument sizes to vary the tone, some have five holes, others only four). In this sense, these performances were perfectly in accord with an event like Performing Mobilities with its attempt to think through performance and movement to engage with the dynamics and contingencies of different spaces and conditions (environmental and social) for human symbolic activity.

The afternoon I saw the performance in M-Pavilion was astonishing, as I did not know Ritchie would be there, nor that he was a Shakuhachi player. I found the performance mesmerising and also quite moving in its simplicity, its complete lack of spectacle, its repudiation of mediation. I was doubly floored by his reappearance at RMIT a few days later. Maybe next time I will read the program more closely. And I didn't talk to him at the tea break. Celebrities need some time off too.

PORTABLE KOMUSO TEMPLE COMPOSITIONS Brian Tairaku Ritchie & Stuart Tanner

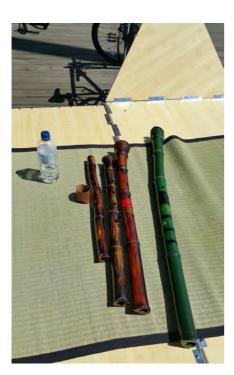


Portable Komuso Temple Compositions, 2015. Photography: Rob Eales.



Portable Komuso Temple Compositions, 2015. Photography: Rob Eales.

PORTABLE KOMUSO TEMPLE COMPOSITIONS Brian Tairaku Ritchie & Stuart Tanner



Portable Komuso Temple Compositions, 2015. Photography: Rob Eales.



Portable Komuso Temple Compositions, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.

## >>>>>PERFORMING>>>MOBILITIE RFORMING>>>MOBILITIES>>>>>>>>

REPEATING SILENCE Chris Braddock



Companion Curator > David Cross

For *Repeating Silence*, Chris Braddock carries out four one-hour public performances in and around Melbourne's CBD. For each performance, Braddock stands stationary, with eyes closed, slowly turning his head from side to side as if surveying the 'scene'. The gesture of closing his eyes accentuates Braddock's stationary silence but also troubles one's expectations of public mobility and visibility. This gesture is the simple but profound key to appreciating these performances, and operates in different ways for the public and performer. With eyes closed, the body of the performer is transformed into an object for the scrutiny of passers-by; they come close, stare and photograph, disturbing what would normally be a subtle, spatial zone of privacy. For the performer, such a lack of visibility increases other sensibilities including sound. Accordingly, a hierarchy of the ear over the eye suggests a phenomenology of acoustic space.

These performances punctuated the Performing Mobilities ASSEMBLY symposium by live video feed. This relay between live performance and live video projection introduces another public audience, who witness both the solitude of the performing figure as if 'from above' and a dramatised close-up experience of the performer's face as it slowly turns from side to side. Through this close-up cinematic view, the passivity of the face remains intensely active. It is not a simple antithesis of action but, rather, reveals discreet and incremental levels of mobility. As a kind of face-to-face encounter, *Repeating Silence* endeavours to explore a radical passivity of sensibilities beyond vision, mobility and touch.

Watch the Repeating Silence ASSEMBLY symposium performances online.

REPEATING SILENCE Chris Braddock

S (H) IFT Respondent > Jondi Keane

As a performer sifts through that which enters a shifting membrane of a public performance, the public sphere can be made to flicker and multiply the number of thresholds that cradle presence, intensifying the inter- and intra-actions laid bare. The public, of course, can hold steady to their intended course, pause to consume that which is offered by a performance or choose to participate in the coursing anticipation that flows through the veins of an emerging event such as Chris Braddock's work, *Repeating Silence*.

The vulnerability that emerges from Braddock's careful placements of technology is modulated by the specific constitution of the performance membrane. That is to say, the way each iteration of this particular performance is constructed – the camera pole armature, the live feed to another location or screen within view, the selection of the spot around which the circulation and flow affect the tempo and porosity of the public event.

The pace and the scale of the performance images distributed through a live feed on the armature or to nearby screens and tablets, are not wildly out of sync or size with human scale. The speed is just slowed and the scale is neither huge nor microscopic. The technology in *Repeating Silence* momentarily conjoins interior space with the not-yet-collective space bursting the flickering bubbles of attention and inattention, interest and care, impatience and eagerness to learn. The technology nuances the movement of one sphere into another in opposition to a spectacle of sheer size or speed.

The silt of encounters, as a function of Braddock's sifting and shifting from live action to mediated event, present an opportunity to enhance the connection of the passers-by to each other and to the material environment, inviting infinitesimal adjustments of sensory engagement and attenuating the rush to judgement. *Repeating Silence* petitions persons, again and again, to behave in different ways – subtle enough to shift something, strong enough to sift the affected from the affecting.

The dynamic spatial and temporal flickering of this work turns the event into a point cloud. The atmosphere becomes hyper sensitive. Its animate qualities, in part, depend on the self-affecting system Braddock sets up through and with the technology. The feedback is designed to exceed itself, feeding outward – or 'forward' as Mark Hansen suggests – expanding the membrane of a constantly enfolding/unfolding shared event.

The technology prompts the performer. The life of the technology asserts itself in the radical passivity Braddock maintains by resisting the impulse to direct action or attention and instead welcoming all comers. The radicality of this approach shifts the encounter away from passivity as non-action by prioritising multi-sensory slowness over fleet-footed visuality.

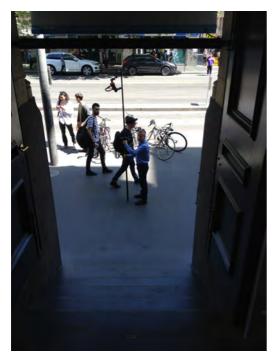
The work is a peripatetic. The performer, the mediated spaces and amorphous attention of passers-by circle around a small slowly slower point in time and space. This system, gently held by the performer, is a bubble machine that with each breath and movement of the head, emits fragile spheres of collectivity that break on the hard and soft edges of the shape of passing awareness.

Mark Hansen, *Feed Forward: On the Future of 21st Century Media*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2015. Thomas Carl Wall, *Radical Passivity: Levinas, Blanchot, Agamben,* State University of New York Press, Albany, NY, 1999.

REPEATING SILENCE Chris Braddock

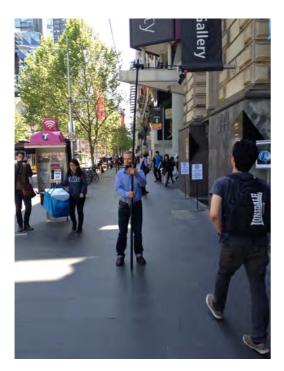


Repeating Silence, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.



Repeating Silence, 2015. Photography: Mick Douglas.

REPEATING SILENCE Chris Braddock



Repeating Silence, 2015. Photography: Mick Douglas.



Repeating Silence, 2015.

TECHNOPIA TOURS - WORKING MELBOURNE Kim Donaldson



Companion Curator > Meredith Rogers

Wear an orange safety vest as your *Technopia Tour* guide accompanies you on a journey that unfolds to reveal something unfamiliar.

Visit an artist's studio, a librarian at the State Library, a beekeeper in the CBD or a kitchen in a five-star restaurant. Through a *Technopia Tour*, the concealed working parts of Melbourne open up. Participants contribute to a progressive collaborative drawing as the events unfold.

Several tours are offered daily. Select your tour from the Performing Mobilities website or from the *Technopia Tours* representative in the foyer of RMIT Gallery. Tour sizes and duration vary according to the destination. Bookings can be made by email prior to departure with a gold coin donation confirming passage on the day. All proceeds go to the *Asylum Seeker Resource Centre*.

Sharing one of the fundamentals of her own art-making practice through the hand-drawn record of the journey as an 'alternative' documentation, Kim Donaldson merges the work of the artist with the work of others in the city, and places both within the frame of the language and tropes of the tourism industry. The tours investigate an industry, a city, and a set of work processes through the sharing of artistic, curatorial, and performative practices – a 'persistent form of seriousness'.

TECHNOPIA TOURS - WORKING MELBOURNE Kim Donaldson

The Emancipated Tourist: Kim Donaldson's Technopia Tours Respondent > Paula Hunt

Everywhere there is that flickering fluro orange there are workers.

In factories and on construction sites in the late 1980s, there was no *hi-vis* (high visibility) clothing. By the late 1990s, it was ubiquitous. At first, the builders, forklift drivers and machinists wore featherweight synthetic vests, but donning and ditching the vest every time you entered or exited the worksite became a boring rigmarole, so a panel of hi-vis material was sewn permanently into the uniforms. Initially there was resistance – who wanted to be branded in the lolly-coloured outfits in public – but over time, the branding has come to designate a tradesperson and labourer, expertise and activity. There are still hi-vis vests, temporary identifiers for the occasional visitors, the managers and politicians. Workers call them tourists.

Kim Donaldson's *Technopia Tours* are all about the hidden workings of Melbourne. Donaldson takes her tourists below (the plumbing tours), behind (to the creative workspaces of artists and chefs), to before (the library archives), and to after (processing food scraps into fertiliser). The first thing we did on joining the plumbing tour is put on our orange *Technopia Tours* vests. Guided by generous and enthusiastic expert-workers (tradespeople and engineers), we descended down into the cool underground of Melbourne to encounter the pockmarked underbelly of the main pool in the City Baths, and the black water treatment facility at the City of Melbourne.

Rubbernecker. Day-tripper. Tourist. Like the worksite visitor, the tourist is classified as just an observer, passive, uncommitted, a spectator. But in a *Technopia Tour* there is a disruption to this truism, achieved not least by the ambiguous orange vests supplied by Donaldson. Sure, the vest marks you out as just-a-tourist, but it maintains its illuminating authority and its signal of activity. The vest may denote a distance between the expert-workers (who, in the case of the plumbing tour, were not wearing any hi-vis clothing) and the tourist, but it supposes communication. As Jacques Ranciere has said, this distance is not a barrier but a necessity, and the normal condition of communication.<sup>1</sup> The expert-workers provide the tourists with their knowledge, but the tourists arrive with their own knowledge and experience, through which they interpret the expert-worker. The tourist, like Ranciere's emancipated spectator, 'is active, just like the student or the scientist: He observes, he selects, he compares, he interprets.<sup>12</sup> Emancipation, Ranciere reminds us, can only occur through this position of intellectual equity. The equality of intellects is the common power, and is acknowledged by the vest. It allows us to work 'through unpredictable and irreducible distances through an unpredictable and irreducible play of associations and dissociations.<sup>13</sup>

On the plumbing tour, we discovered the black water treatment system was an experimental leap that failed to become operational, but the project provided information that allowed other successful systems to be developed around Melbourne. The tourists, many of whom were artists (although certainly not all), understood through their own practices the necessity of failure.

1-3 Jacques Ranciere, 'The Emancipated Spectator', in *Artforum International*, vol. 45 no. 7, 2007, <http://go.galegroup.com/ps/i.do?id=GALE%7CA160874380&v=2.1&v=monash&it=r&p=A0NE&sw=w&asid=9a95f6ab02e94ddba796914cd3a96034>, accessed 13 May 2016.

TECHNOPIA TOURS - WORKING MELBOURNE Kim Donaldson



Technopia Tours, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.



Technopia Tours, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.

TECHNOPIA TOURS - WORKING MELBOURNE Kim Donaldson



Technopia Tours, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.



Technopia Tours, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.

THE TOUR OF ALL TOURS Bill Aitchison



Companion Curator > Fiona Wilkie

The Tour of All Tours is a guided tour like no other: a performance that takes the form of a guided tour, the subject of which is other tours (real and potential, guided and otherwise) available in Melbourne.

British artist Bill Aitchison, himself a visitor to Melbourne, guides each group around the city and describes different tours that inscribe their various narratives onto the places stopped at. Each tour ends with a convivial open conversation in a cafe. The work draws attention to both the city itself and the wider potential of the tourist gaze. In doing so, it opens up questions of globalisation, the meaning of these exchanges between local and visitor, and how we use and give identity to places. It draws out the inherent politics, both local and global, of describing the city, and collages radically divergent narratives, such as conventional self-serving histories with sex tourism, protest marches, and artist projects.

The Tour Of All Tours brings visitor and local into the same frame as equals. It achieves this by focusing upon the experience of taking tours in the city and looking at what the different tours do and don't tell you about it. Altchison has presented versions of the project in cities around the world, including Stuttgart, London, Beijing and Amsterdam.

Aitchison reforms the guided tour into an engaging and truly unique medium for art outside of the institution and in the public sphere For 90 minutes, Aitchison interrupts and utilises this stage to show us, the audience, the layers of branding, expectations and reality of which it is comprised. Aitchison's quirky and peculiar mix of disclosure and captivating storytelling offers fun and enlightenment (Time Out, Beijing).

THE TOUR OF ALL TOURS Bill Aitchison

The Tour of All Tours: Bill Aitchison's Meta-Tourism Respondent > Maaike Bleeker

Bill Aitchison's *The Tour of All Tours* offers an inside view of how cities – in this case, Melbourne – are subjects of inside views presented by various other tours. *The Tour of All Tours* does not present an 'authentic' view of Melbourne or of other cities, nor a critique of such views, but instead offers a view of how tours produce cities as the object of what Aitchison terms 'the tourist gaze'. Recalling Lacan's notion of the gaze, the tourist gaze manifests itself in patterns of inclusion and exclusion, attraction and rejection, visibility and blindness, as they are part of how the cities are made visible in relation to points of view that are no-one's in particular, yet somehow implied in the ways in which the cities are shown to be what they are. The tourist gaze describes a becoming visible in relation to a point of view from 'nowhere' – a point of view somehow 'out there' to which tours and other practices of self-staging relate, not unlike how individuals present themselves to the camera on a selfie-stick.

What Aitchison proposes to term the tourist gaze is symptomatic of what Boris Groys describes as the imperative to take responsibility for one's self-design; an imperative not only for individuals, but also for companies, organisations, and cities: 'Where it was once a privilege and a burden for the chosen few, in our time self-design has come to be the mass cultural practice par excellence. The virtual space of the internet is primarily an arena in which my website on Facebook is permanently designed and redesigned to be presented to YouTube – and vice versa. But likewise in the real or, let's say, analog world, one is expected to be responsible for the image that he or she presents to the gaze of others."

Not all the tours that are addressed in *The Tour of All Tours* are necessarily intended for tourists (although many of them are). Yet, they share the aim to present an inside view to how it is with (aspects of) Melbourne or other cities, and to make visible what is there. According to these tours, a closer look at 'how it is' reveals a result of performative gestures that actually produce what they claim to reveal. Drawing attention to how these views are organised, how attention is directed, what they show, and what they do not show, *The Tour of All Tours* may be considered an instance of metatourism. The prefix 'meta' is used to describe a kind of 'about its own category' – like in metadata, referring to data about data. Or in metaphysics, referring to a type of philosophy that takes the study of physical reality to a level above concrete reality. Or in 'meta-theatre,' where it refers to theatre that highlights and invites reflection about being theatre. And while meta-theatre may draw attention to theatre being theatre and therefore 'mere play', it may also end up blurring the distinction between 'mere play' and so called real life. Similarly, Aitchison's meta-tourism, taking the tourist tour to the next level, blurs the distinction between the tour and 'how it is' and shows life to become 'real' in the eye of the selfie-stick.

1 Boris Groys, Going Public, Sternberg Press, New York, NY, 2010, p. 41.

THE TOUR OF ALL TOURS Bill Aitchison



The Tour of All Tours, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.



The Tour of All Tours, 2015. Photography: Mick Douglas.

THE TOUR OF ALL TOURS Bill Aitchison



The Tour of All Tours, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.



The Tour of All Tours, 2015. Photography: Mick Douglas.

VERY LOCAL RADIO (IN FOUR MOVEMENTS) Sasha Grbich/Heidi Angove



Companion Curator > Paul Gazzola

Very Local Radio (in four movements) is an Internet radio broadcast and live performance. This project explores ephemeral communities brought together through radio broadcasts and employs sound to navigate cities.

Via journeying, listening and broadcasting, *Very Local Radio* foregrounds unpredictable performances with places encountered. The project looks like a portable Internet radio transmitter assembled in a shopping trolley pushed by the artists. Audiences access the work as an Internet radio station and tune into the unpredictable sound of movements through places.

During the Performing Mobilities program, four passages of movement were undertaken amongst the spaces between the RMIT Gallery and Margaret Lawrence Gallery, taking place at midday and midnight, sunrise and sunset. Whilst moving, interesting urban sound ecologies were actively sought out, whilst the trolley broadcaster was used as a tool to explore, meet, and sometimes hand over the microphone to the community. Shared as a live sound broadcast, and generated by navigating on foot, the station was live only during the movements, and each broadcast lasted 1-2 hours.

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VERY LOCAL RADIO (IN FOUR MOVEMENTS) Sasha Grbich/Heidi Angove

Respondent > Maddy Macfarlane

At midday, I tune in to *Very Local Radio*, a live performance and/as live Internet radio stream that uses portable broadcasting technologies to highlight interactions of sound, place and space in realising an ephemeral community. Internet radio is the only way to hear the broadcast, though the live performance can be witnessed. If you spot a shopping trolley laden with broadcast equipment and a boom microphone being pushed through Melbourne's city centre – across four trips, back and forth, along St Kilda Road and Swanston Street – you are likely witnessing the live event. But without your headphones connecting you to that online stream, you cannot know what is being broadcast.

Midday is the first trip, passage, or episode. There's a text box on the website inviting the listening audience to identify and comment on what it hears.

Birds. Trams, we comment. Pedestrian crossings. Horses and carriages.

Our comments reveal our presence as audience. Our comments reveal and generate connection, demonstrating personal connections to public locations and interpersonal connections through mutually familiar spaces (the aural geographies being broadcast and the shared space of the website).

That man, playing the Chinese string instrument, someone types. He's always outside the National Gallery.

I know exactly where I am listening. Of course, these connections are occurring across space – connections that are simultaneously disconnections. The distance between us as listeners, and our distance from the locations we hear, often feels bridged by the radio stream. But, at the same time, the broadcast highlights our distance and difference from the streetscape we hear, a difference that hinges on our position as audience and consumers.

So who's listening? asks someone on the street, but my '/ am' does not reach them.

Alongside unmistakable locations, I hear the unmistakable and unavoidable rattle of the shopping trolley used to transport the broadcast equipment through the city. The trolley is a key feature, highlighting the intersections of sounds, space and place as a way of acoustic knowing.<sup>1</sup> The radio audience experiences the trolley – its physicality and mobility – in its sound. Rendered as sound, the trolley is experienced blurrily as material, immaterial, ephemeral and substantial – a fluid materiality. The broadcast enacts an aural duplication and dissemination of object and place across space, a transformation that also transmutes trolley, place and space into consumable broadcast content. Yet, unrecorded and non-downloadable, the place-as-sound content continues to resist form and definition.

We also hear the trolley's impacts on and in the places it broadcasts to us. Even when the trolley pauses silent, deliberately hovering over a moment, the broadcast activity and technology is revealed and responded to by the public. *Let's give it up for the boom mic*, a busker invites his applauding audience, this relationship asking: who is in whose world?

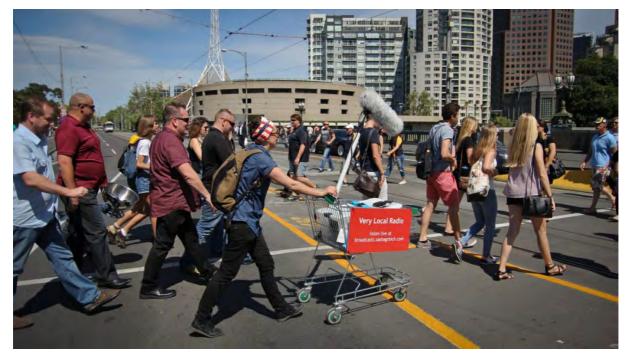
I hear the microphone moving through space. The music of buskers regularly fades in, lingers, and fades out – accidental music tracks interspersed in the broadcast, activated by, rather than curated for, the microphone's presence. I hear the passage of a bustling world through the shifting boundaries of the microphone's sphere, the technology's reach, the broadcast's documentation and projection.

1 R. Kanngleser, 'A proposition toward a materialist politics of atmospheric listening', paper presented to Royal Geographical Society – Institute of British Geographers Annual Conference, 28-30 August 2013, pp. 1–4, http://anjakanngleser.com/a-materialist-politics-of-listening, accessed 20 May 2016.

VERY LOCAL RADIO (IN FOUR MOVEMENTS) Sasha Grbich/Heidi Angove



Very Local Radio for PlaceLab, Noarlunga, 2015.



Very Local Radio, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.

VERY LOCAL RADIO (IN FOUR MOVEMENTS) Sasha Grbich/Heidi Angove



Very Local Radio, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.



Very Local Radio, 2015. Photography: Zihan Loo.

WALK ON FALLOW LANDS #2 Angela Kilford



Companion Curator > James Oliver

Walk on Fallow Lands #2 is a performance work that invites people to walk the land – and engage with the heavy and multiple narratives of colonisation – thereby excavating the multiple histories in the landscape. The act of walking, as ritual and guiding, brings forth oral histories and a valuing of land. The work simultaneously proposes an engagement with two indigenous worldviews. With reference to her homeland, Aotearoa/New Zealand, the artist traces her Maori temporality and whakapapa (geneaology) back to Papatuanuku the Earth Mother and Ranginui the Sky Father, which is fundamental to the way in which Maori value land. Equally, for Aboriginal Australia, many people consider the land as 'Mother, for she gives birth to us and nurtures us through our life'.

Aboriginal and Maori people have expressed and shared these ideas through oral history and language, which have been threatened (and sometimes eliminated) by colonial structures, identities and formations. *Walk on Fallow Lands #2* thereby draws on a Maori view of history that requires an understanding of whakapapa in affirming identity. The saying 'I nga wa o mua' alludes to the past being something that lies in front of you, rather than something you leave behind, and illustrates a cyclical view of history as each person is added to whakapapa, and the story moves forward, bringing the past with it.

In honouring the memories and myths of significance to the first peoples of Australia, and presenting these through a Maori lens, the artists seeks to disrupt Western narratives of place by removing dominant hierarchies. 'Just as when I am walking, my feet are the *waka* and I carry the embodied knowledge within me.'

This walk is being conducted with blessings from the Wurundjeri Tribe Land and Cultural Heritage Council. With the support of Creative New Zealand.

WALK ON FALLOW LANDS #2 Angela Kilford

Respondent > Jen Rae

Traditional fallowing is a conservation land management practice that allows for natural regeneration of soil. It is an ancient agricultural practice of resting soil, one way of ensuring sustainable food production and future food security. Practiced for generations by First Australians and Maori peoples who valued and understood the cyclical nature of rest and regeneration, it was largely unrecognised and dismissed by colonial agriculturalists and pastoralists interested in maximising yields on the same land. Historian Bill Gammage argues that Australia pre-colonisation was a 'farm without fences', where Aboriginal Australians systematically cultivated land by fusing ecological philosophy with theology and The Dreaming.1 First Australians' comprehensive and intimate knowledge of land sustained them for over 50,000 years, which Australian Indigenous writer Bruce Pascoe contends 'has been grossly undervalued for the past 200 years'.2 As such, the research and evidence uncovered by Gammage and Pascoe challenges the Western myth that Aboriginal Australians were nomadic hunter-gatherers.

In the Western world, intensive agricultural practices (which have a low fallow ratio to maximise commercial yields) combined with rapid urbanisation have resulted in impoverished soils and denuded landscapes. Newton and Ashton contend that, as a consequence, there is a complete 'disjunction between where we are, and what we eat'3 in Australia. Almost all of our basic nourishment needs are caught up in a complex commercial agricultural network, to the extent that many of us have lost basic knowledge and skills to feed ourselves. In the Western world, 'reliance on convenience, supply chains and industrious production processes have superseded our understanding of localised seasonal harvests, sustainable permaculture'4 and Indigenous land management. More extreme and unpredictable weather events, along with declining water availability as a result of climate change, directly and indirectly pose significant risks to our future food supply in Australia. The feast is over. A sustainable future relies on how we live *in the land* – what we cultivate and how we fallow.

Watching Angela Kilford prepare for her performance walk *Walk on Fallow Lands #2* – folding army-issued wool blankets, preparing maps, filling water bottles and wrapping bread – immediately piqued my interest. Her props, specifically the bread and blankets, reminded me of the smallpox-infested blankets given to Aboriginal peoples during colonisation, and the lost recipes of Indigenous breads, many of which are now adulterated by wheat flour, sugar and lard. Was she going to guide us through a colonial reenactment, or takes us on a pedestrian urban survival course and feed us at the end?

Angela Kilford uses the term *fallow* metaphorically, as a way of unearthing multiple layers of history and meaning in the urban landscape. She invites participants to walk *in the land*, while engaging with two Indigenous worldviews simultaneously. At analogous Melbourne landmarks, ritual acts of handwashing, walking and listening together draw participants in close where Kilford reveals intimate stories about time, energy, water and fire from her Maori heritage. It is an iterative and reflective performance evolving over five days, summoning reciprocal dialogue about the ways we value land and different knowledge systems in spaces where dominant colonial narratives continue to reign. The guided walk ends at Birrarung Marr, a culturally significant site of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation. Here, Kilford serves the participants *rewena paraoa*, a traditional Maori sourdough potato bread. I take note that it is made with wheat flour. Like the indigenous bread (Bannock – La Galette) of my own Canadian Metis heritage, once made with flours from wild plants and moss, *rewena paraoa* is also a melding of old and new agricultural knowledge and cultural traditions. In a time of increasing uncertainty, reconnecting with Indigenous agricultural practices may well ensure land regeneration and future food security in Australia.

4 Jennifer Rae, 'Art and the Anthropocene: Processes of Responsiveness and Communication in an Era of Environmental Uncertainty', RMIT University, 2015, p. 60.

<sup>1</sup> Bill Gammage, The Biggest Estate on Earth: How Aborigines Made Australia, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2012.

<sup>2</sup> Cathy Pryor, ABC RN, 'Rethinking Indigenous Australia's Agricultural Past', Bush Telegraph, 2014.

<sup>3</sup> John Newton & Paul Ashton, 'Can We Be Australian Without Eating Indigenous Food?', The Conversation, Melbourne, 2016), p. 4.

WALK ON FALLOW LANDS #2 Angela Kilford



Walk on Fallow Lands #2, 2015. Photography: Angela Kilford.



Walk on Fallow Lands #2, 2015. Photography: Angela Kilford.

WALK WITH ME Deirdre Heddon



Companion Curator > Fiona Wilkie

This performance is created from more than 25 hours of conversation recorded on-the-move. All the words heard were spoken by co-researchers in the project *Walking Interconnections: Researching the Lived Experience of Disabled People for a Sustainable Society.* 

Walking Interconnections, and the resulting audio-play, Walk With Me, recognise and respond to the fact that disabled people's voices have been largely absent from the sustainability debate. Representing one-fifth of the world's population, disabled people have unique contributions, often overlooked, to help build resilient societies and communities. Setting as its foundational tenet the fact that disability does not mean inability, Walk With Me uses walking with as a way to identify and make tangible the everyday, embodied knowledges of disabled people – their habitual experiences of their environments, and their persistent enactments of resilience within these.

What can we learn from disabled people's experiences of walking? How might these experiences help us create more sustainable futures? Join us for a 30-minute audio walk. Listen out for performances of creativity, commitment, risk-taking, resilience and interdependency. Walk as if in someone else's shoes.

WALK WITH ME Deirdre Heddon

Walking Interdependently Respondent > Fiona Wilkie

'This is why I don't go for walks', Tiz tells me, as we pause the audio play Walk With Me to navigate a section of paving that has been dislodged by tree roots. 'Because when you're walking you're in your rhythm and don't have to think about it, whereas I'm in my chair getting colder and colder and trying to negotiate the terrain and dropped kerbs, and get round tricky paving slabs or roots sticking out all over the place. It's not relaxing. I'm really concentrating the whole time – you know, everyone else is walking along having a chat and I'm absorbed in not crashing or falling off a kerb or something'. My sister and I are using Deirdre Heddon's audio walk as a rare opportunity to go for a walk together, but it becomes clear that what it means to 'go for a walk' is not the same for each of us.

Developed as one of the outcomes of the *Walking Interconnections* research project, *Walk With Me* shares dialogues between disabled people and sustainability practitioners as they take a walk together. The project 'explores whether there are skills, insights or knowledge that disabled people can offer to our understanding of living sustainably, in particular recognising our interdependency with others and our environments.' In ten scenes, across 30 minutes, audiences are invited to walk while listening to conversations about, among other things, routes and risk, access and awareness, wellbeing and hybridity. One speaker reflects upon the desirability or otherwise of weeds; another considers the possibility of rethinking waiting time as an opportunity rather than a problem; many chart unexpected obstacles and the necessity of detours. Undertaking the walk with my sister – she in her wheelchair, me on foot – reminds us both that narratives of walking usually, and apparently unproblematically, adopt an able-bodied perspective. The critical literature on walking claims that it creates opportunities for reflective thought, that it is based upon physical contact between the foot and the ground, that it occurs at a pace of three miles an hour – claims that are often challenged by the experiences of people with disabilities.

A photograph. Tiz and I stop for a selfie before we get much further than the end of my drive, and before we press play in sync. Looking back at the image now, I note three things: that I'm wearing fewer layers, in anticipation of being able to warm up on the walk, that Tiz is carrying my bag for me at this point, hooked onto the back of her chair, and that she's experiencing this walk far closer to ground level than I am (I'm stooping to take the photo).

I've written about walking elsewhere, noting that it sets the terms of reference for all other mobile practices. I've suggested that 'ideas about speed, freedom, creativity, city, landscape, access and agency all become significant in a critical vocabulary because of the ways in which artists and others work through walking'<sup>2</sup> – and I've attempted to interrogate this model by showing how it has been complicated by a variety of artistic works addressing other modes of transport. What *Walk With Me* reveals is that walking as a practice is already complicated by a range of augmented walking experiences: with mobility scooters, trikes, walking sticks and guide dogs. What it also reveals is that prizing autonomy and agency might mask the need to find more sustainable, ecological models of movement: ones that aim for in*ter*dependence rather than independence and that value shared wayfinding and reciprocal knowledges.

1 Text from the audio play, available from *Walking Interconnections* website, <http://walkinginterconnections.com>, accessed 4 February 2016. 2 Fiona Wilkie, *Performance, Transport and Mobility: Making Passage*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK, 2015, p. 18.

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> > > PROJECT CREDITS

COMMUNICATION DESIGN > Neal Haslem WEBSITE MANAGEMENT > Robert Eales COORDINATOR > Kate Riggs PRODUCTION VOLUNTEER TEAM > Felipe Cervera > Amaara Raheem > Adva Weinstein > Margie Mackay > Wil Campbell > Rob Eales EDITING > Din Heagney SCROLLING SCREEN TEXT SOFTWARE > Josh Batty PHOTO & VIDEO DOCUMENTATION > Loo Zihan > Marc Morel > Mark Ashkanasy > Christian Capurro VISITING CORRESPONDENTS > Theron Schmidt > Felipe Cervera > Jacqueline Naismith VIDEO EDITING > Errol Tyson VIDEO SOUND EDITING > Simon Maisch ARTS MANAGEMENT > Auspicious Arts Inc.

>>> SPONSORS

> presenting partners:

- > RMIT Gallery and Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA
- > The Victorian Government through Creative Victoria
- > RMIT University > Design Research Institute > Industrial Design Program
- > University of Melbourne > Faculty of VCA & MCM > Melbourne Social Equity Institute
- > Pflab > performative creative practice research lab



Design Research Institute











#### > > > ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The program Performing Mobilities is inherently built through the critical insights, creative initiative, collegial generosity and goodwill of many. My discussions around intersections of performance and mobility began with Fiona Wilkie. The ambitious PSi Fluid States project that provided an international context for a series of comparative local enquiries has been graciously led by Marin Blazevic, Dorita Hannah and Bree Hadley and their team, with PSi President Maaike Bleeker always warmly demonstrating her support. Early discussions with Meredith Rogers for Australia's contribution to Fluid States helped generate the initial momentum for what has emerged. I am most grateful to the companion curators and fellow organisers and friends - David Cross, Paul Gazzola, Bianca Hester, James Oliver, Paul Rae, Laurene Vaughan, Meredith Rogers and Fiona Wilkie - for accepting my invitation to join this experimental undertaking, and for their willingness to creatively and critically explore ways of working, including an enormous commitment to discussions face to face and virtually, with or without my cajoling antics often involving cheese on the side. A special thanks to Kate Riggs who has been an unflappable organiser and ally throughout. The Assembly was so generously brought into being with the voluntary enthusiasm, initiatives, and fast-quipping humour of Felipe Cervera and Amaara Raheem, Taco and Coco. Thanks again to long term collaborators Neal Haslem and Rob Eales for the constant development and refinement of the project communications and online platform, and to Din Heagney for making our words make better sense. The keen support and commitment to the project shown by the RMIT Gallery team led by Suzanne Davies, and the Margaret Lawrence Gallery led by Vikki McInnes. is greatly appreciated, along with the commitment of the RMIT Design Research Institute, the extra support bought by James Oliver from the Centre of Cultural Partnerships at VCA, and the Melbourne Social Equity Institute support initiated by Julie McLeod. Dealing with Auspicious Arts Inc's Deirdre O'Brien is always pleasingly dependable. Lastly, thank you to the many artists and writers who have brought their practices, concerns and engagement to Performing Mobilities.

> Mick Douglas

#### > > > CURATORIAL REVIEW PROCESS

A two-stage call for proposals was conducted. The first stage called for proposals for (a) TRAC-ES of journey-based projects, (b) PASSAGES mobile performance projects, and (c) ASSEMBLY events. The second stage called for ASSEMBLY (d) papers and performative presentations, and again for (c) performances, interventions and events. All proposals submitted in both stages were blind peer-reviewed by the nine organising group members.

The organising group of companion curators was formed under the invitation of Mick Douglas. Each member was encouraged to propose contributing projects for blind-peer review. The organising group members were invited to take the additional roles of 'companion curators' for TRACES and PASSAGES projects, with the intent of: fostering a rich interweave of creative practice and critical curatorial guidance; reflecting on the multiple modalities through which these individuals are currently working; and representing the increased intermixing between the creative arts sector and the academy.

	Proposals	Accepted	Percentage
TRACES + PASSAGES	46	14	30%
ASSEMBLY papers and presentations	55	43	78%
ASSEMBLY performances, interventions and events	43	20	46%

#### > PERFORMING MOBILITIES ACCEPTANCE RATES

#### > PERFORMING MOBILITIES ATTENDANCE

> RMIT Gallery Opening night attendance: 399 (gallery count) Total Attendance: 2947 (gallery count)

> Margaret Lawrence Gallery VCA Opening night attendance: 300 (gallery estimate) Total Attendance: 2000 (gallery estimate)

> Assembly Registered participants: 126

#### >>> BIOGRAPHIES

Mammad Aidani is an Iranian-born playwright, theatre maker, director, poet and philosopher whose work uses the performing arts as a medium to address the trauma of violence and alienation in diaspora communities.

Bill Aitchison is a performance artist who has presented his performances, soundworks and videos in galleries, theatres and festivals in Europe, Asia, America and The Middle East. www.billaitchison. co.uk

Heidi Angove is a technologist and artist with more than 18 years of experience in the IT industry.

Jen Archer-Martin is a spatial designer and teaches at the School of Design, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand.

Australian Performance Exchange (APE) creates performance work at the interface of intercultural practice and community engagement, responding to the politics of identity, social justice, colonialism and international diplomacy. www.australianperformanceexchange.com

Chris Barry explores photography, performance and auto/biography within Aboriginal sociality, working with specific Aboriginal families in a town camp in Alice Springs for the past 14 years. www.chrisbarry.com.au

Kaya Barry is a new media installation artist and researcher who recently completed a practiceled PhD at Deakin University. www.kaya.com.au

Tanja Beer is a scenographer and Research Fellow at The University of Melbourne.

Cameron Bishop is an artist, curator, writer and Lecturer at the School of Communication and Creative Arts, Deakin University.

Lucy Bleach is a Hobart-based artist and Coordinator of Sculpture at the University of Tasmania. www.lucybleach.com

Maaike Bleeker is Professor of Theatre Studies at Utrecht University Netherlands, and president of Performance Studies international.

Michelle Braunstein is a PhD candidate in creative writing at Murdoch University.

Chris Braddock is an artist, writer and educator in visual arts, performance and performance philosophies, and is Professor of Visual Arts at the School of Art & Design, AUT University, New Zealand. www.christopherbraddock.com

Brogan Bunt works in media art, photography, writing, and lived action, and is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law, Humanities and the Arts, University of Wollongong. www. broganbunt.net

Benjamin Cittadini is a writer, director, researcher and live performance artist.

#### >>> BIOGRAPHIES

David Cross is Professor of Visual Arts at Deakin University whose curatorial practice includes 'One Day Sculpture' across New Zealand, 2008–09, and whose art practice often involves inflatable objects and structures that draw audiences into unexpected situations and dialogues. www.davidcrossartist.com

Nadia Cusimano works across dance, performance, theatre and dramaturgy.

Kim Donaldson is an artist and curator whose self-initiated projects challenge exhibitionary form through a performative and many-faceted process that engages institutions, collections, artists and the public. www.technoparkstudios.com

Mick Douglas works across performance, art and design, and supervises creative practice PhDs at the School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University. www.mickdouglas.net

Alison Eggleton is a visual artist and Curator at Horsham Regional Art Gallery, Victoria, Australia.

Mike Fard (Hamidreza) is a filmmaker, photographer and interior designer involved with the film industry since 1997, and his own studio Alftab Film Co.

Sally Gardner is Senior Lecturer in Dance at Deakin University, Melbourne.

Paul Gazzola works in socially engaged practice across art, architecture, performance, installation, choreography, scenographic design, video and theory. www.paulgazzola.org

Smiljana Glisovic is a sessional academic at RMIT University in the School of Media and Communication.

Sasha Grbich is an artist, writer and lecturer working predominantly in the fields of sculpture, installation and video art. www.sashagrbich.com

Ceri Hann teaches at RMIT University where he is also a PhD candidate who explores manifesting theory through action and refining awareness through performance.

Deirdre Heddon is Professor of Contemporary Performance, University of Glasgow with an enduring interest in the relations between place, politics and performance.

Bianca Hester is an artist and postdoctoral research fellow in the Sydney College of the Arts.

Fiona Hillary is an artist, curator, producer, and Lecturer in the School of Art at RMIT University with a specific focus on art in public space.

Paula Hunt is an artist living in Melbourne.

Lucas Ihlein works with social relations and communication as the primary media of his creative practice, and is a founding member of artist groups SquatSpace and Big Fag Press. www. lucasihlein.net

#### >>> BIOGRAPHIES

Hoda Kazemitame is a graduate in Persian literature, storyteller and author of short stories and plays.

Jondi Keane is an arts practitioner and Associate Professor at Deakin University.

Angela Kilford is an artist based in Wellington, New Zealand. Her practice investigates memory, memorialisation and landscape.

La Jete is a design collaborative initiated by Paolo Patelli and Giuditta Vendrame that manipulates research, design, and art practice into self-initiated and commissioned projects. www.lajetee.info

Maddy Macfarlane is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of VCA/MCM, University of Melbourne, and a broadcaster and trainer at PBS 106.7FM.

Camila Marambio is founder and curator of Ensayos, a nomadic interdisciplinary research program that considers Tierra del Fuego the centre of the world.

Sven Mehzoud is Senior Lecturer at Monash Art, Design and Architecture, Monash University.

Shaun McLeod, Peter Fraser, Olivia Millard, Sophia Cowen & Victor Renolds (About Now) are a collection of performers/performance makers. www.oliviamillard.net/nowagain/

Graeme Miller is a UK artist working across performance, installation, video, music and sound in the spheres of dance, theatre, radio, gallery and public art. www.artsadmin.co.uk/artists/graememiller

Omid Movafagh is an actor and director whose acting credits include the 2013 feature film 'Dark Ocean', a film about asylum seekers and refugees and the issues of diaspora; and the 2014 short film 'Like a Bear in the Night', a true story about a film director who has been arrested by the Iranian government.

Jem Noble is an artist working across digital image-making, video, music, sculpture, performance and text. www.jemnoble.com

Mohsen Panahi is a filmmaker, set designer, costume designer and photographer who was involved in set production in the Iranian film industry since the 1990s. Eddie Paterson researches intersections between performance, politics and everyday life, and lectures in scriptwriting in the School of Culture & Communication at the University of Melbourne.

Craig Peade is an independent researcher and co-founder of ROARAWAR/FEARTATA. Anthony Pelchen is a visual artist who formed MARP for Natimuk Festival 2013, and the visual arts program of the Melaka Art & Performance Festival 2014. www.anthonypelchen.com

Julieanna Preston is a spatial artist, architectural designer and Professor of Spatial Practice at the College of Creative Arts, Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand. www.julieannapreston. space

Punctum Inc. is a central Victorian live arts organisation founded in 2004 and led by artistic director Jude Anderson, creating contemporary performances and blueprints for collaborative and interdisciplinary practice in regional and international settings. www.punctum.com.au

#### > > > BIOGRAPHIES

Lara Stevens is a Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Melbourne, where she is writing on ecofeminism in contemporary Australia.

James Oliver is a research artist and academic at the Faculty of the VCA and MCM, The University of Melbourne. www.jamesoliverculture.com

Open Spatial Workshop (Bianca Hester, Scott Mitchell, Terri Bird) has developed a collective practice since 2003 involving socially-engaged methodologies, combined with materially-driven investigations, collaborative workshops, video-making, object production and writing. www.osw.com. au

Jen Rae is an artist-researcher at the Centre for Cultural Partnerships, Faculty of VCA/MCM, University of Melbourne.

Paul Rae is a performance scholar, theatre maker and is Associate Professor at the, School of Culture & Communication, University of Melbourne.

Amaara Raheem is undertaking a choreography and performance practice based PhD at RMIT University.

Brian Tairaku Ritchie is a musician whose projects include Violent Femmes. He is also Music Curator at MONA in Hobart, Tasmania.

Meredith Rogers has worked in theatre as a director, designer, dramaturg and performer for 40 years and is managing editor of Australasian Drama Studies, co-editing a special issue 'Transported' arising from the Performing Mobilities Assembly.

Philipa Rothfield is Honorary Senior Lecturer of the Philosophy Program at La Trobe University, and reviewer for RealTime arts magazine and Momm Magazine, Korea.

Edward Scheer is Professor at the School of the Arts and Media at UNSW, author of The Infinity Machine published by Schwartz City Press in 2010, and former President of Performance Studies international PSi.

Josie Stockdill is currently completing a PhD at RMIT in Creative Writing.

Shanti Sumartojo is a sociologist and geographer employed in research at RMIT University, questioning relationships between place, memory, history, experience and collectivity.

Stuart Tanner is a Tasmanian architect, and recipient of commendation from Royal Institute of Architects for Best Australian Home 2008.

David Thomas is an artist and Professor at the School of Art at RMIT University. www. davidthomasartist.com.au

Sam Trubridge is a performance designer, artist, and director for The Playground NZ, and Phd candidate at Massey University, Wellington New Zealand. www.theplaygroundnz.com

Evelyn Tsitas is Media, Education and Public Program Coordinator at RMIT Gallery.

#### > > > BIOGRAPHIES

Petronella Vaarzon-Morel is an anthropologist, Lecturer at New York University Sydney, and Research Associate at The University of Sydney.

Laurene Vaughan is an artist, writer, curator, designer and Professor in Design and Communication at RMIT University.

Caroline Wake is Lecturer in Theatre & Performance Studies and Australian Research Council DECRA Fellow at UNSW Australia.

Fiona Wilkie is Senior Lecturer in the Drama, Theatre and Performance Department, Roehampton University UK. Her latest book, Performance, Transport and Mobility, was published by Palgrave Macmillan in 2015.

Kim Williams works in multimedia installation, sculpture, drawing and locating socially-engaged practice in the land. www.kimwilliams.com.au

is the Australian program of PSi#21 > Fluid States > >>>>>> the Performance Studies international globally distributed performance research project taking place in a sequence of 15 different locations over 2015 > >>> www.fluidstates.org >