STUDIO CONDITIONS

Spiros Antonios Panigirakis

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Painting (RMIT)

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Diploma of Education (The University of Melbourne)

Monash University

Faculty of Art and Design, Department of Fine Arts

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    (An insert following the examination and first publication of exegesis)

STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I certify that this research contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution and affirms that to the best of my knowledge the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the exegesis.

Spiros Antonios Panigirakis

Notice 1

Notice 2

RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

Research created as part of the doctorate has been exhibited/published before the examination exhibition *STUDIO CONDITIONS* at the Faculty Gallery, Faculty Art & Design, Monash University, May 2011.

Solo Exhibitions

FERNTREE GULLY, 2010, Sarah Scout Presents Gallery, Melbourne
STUDIO CONDITIONS, 2008, Victorian College of the Arts, Margaret Lawrence Gallery.
WITHOUT, 2006, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces

Group Exhibitions
Secrets From The Working Men's College, 2010, RMIT Project Space, curator: Stephen Gallagher
west Brunswick Sculpture Triennial, 2009, 135 Union Street Brunswick and Ocular Lab, curators: Open Spatial Workshop
Instructional Models Blue Oyster Art Project Space, Dunedin New Zealand, curators: Terri Bird and Julie Davies
Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture, 2008, Federation Square, Melbourne
Redrawing, 2008, RMIT Project Space and Contemporary Art Services Tasmania Hobart, curator: Fiona Macdonald
Everybody's Free, 2008*,* Billboards nightclub, curator: Ulanda Blair.
Informal Rituals, 2008, TCB art Inc. curators: Alex Vivian and Helen Johnson
Y-2K Biennale, 2008, TCB art inc. curators: Chris Hill, Liv Barrett and James Deutcher
workshop.non.stop, 2007, LOOSEprojects, Sydney, curator Lisa Kelly
Shrine on, Platform artist spaces, curators: Olivia Poloni and Jessie Borrell
Omnipresents, 2007, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, initiating artist: Christopher Hill
Five Minutes to Midnight, 2006, Victoria Park Gallery, curator: Meredith Turnbull
Collaborative commission with Christopher Hill for *SLAVE 4*, 2006, Adelaide Biennale for Australian Art, Gallery of South Australia.

Publications

Larger than the Room, catalogue essay, Andrew Atchison, *Larger than the Room,* Kings Gallery exhibition, 2010

"It And Then Some," in Fiona Macdonald *Gratuitous Intent,* CLUBSproject Inc., 2009

"Tentative Typology of Alternatives," in *Critical Publics,* eds. Paula Booker and Marnie Slater, Enjoy Public Art Gallery, Wellington, 2008

Fags and Flags, catalogue essay, Marcus Keating, *All Things Pass into the Night,* Utopian Slumps, 2008

"CRACKS," catalogue essay, *Objects in Space*, A Next Wave Festival Event, http://www.objectsinspace.net/, 2008

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ABSTRACT

STUDIO CONDITIONS is a site-driven art project that explores how institutional structures and subjective identities mutually constitute each other. The project involves two types of sites: the artist's studio in a university art department; and four fieldwork sites—a friend's lounge-room, parent's backyard, a student common room and an urban foreshore area. The work explores the roles artists play within the institution of art and academia. These concerns are explored in a material form via the production of sculptural furniture, related sited installations and performances. The artist's fieldwork draws upon various community frameworks both within its understanding of site and its enactment of collaborative processes. The fieldwork highlights both local social narratives and the project's institutional boundaries. The artistic activity in each respective site results in a 'propositional artwork.' These propositions involve publication of a sited idea rather than an actual sited intervention. As a result, the work is 'site specific' but only in the sense that it offers a discursive exploration of the idea of site.

The exegetic text that accompanies *STUDIO CONDITIONS* explores the social aspects of the work. It argues that art is always, already, social, as the conditions of its production, exchange, and reception are products of society. The exegesis first contextualises *STUDIO CONDITIONS* within the tradition of *Institutional Critique* and draws on Andrea Fraser's framing of this methodology as 'critically reflexive site specificity.' This strategy of interrogating the role of the co-opted artist within the institutional siting of art draws on a range of artistic, social and political considerations. The artwork is interpreted via a range of concerns that include: the historical lineage of identity politics; the psychological dimension of artistic failure within the progress-driven paradigm of the university; the complex community dynamics that surround any site of artistic process or presentation. Next the exegesis assesses how social relations within art are valued, give value and are evaluated within both heteronomous and autonomous conceptions of art. The discussion of sociability, art, and site includes an examination of Nicolas Bourriaud's notion of 'relational aesthetics' and argues that this reading needs to be supplemented by a richer understanding of the ways in which sociability is embedded in art objects, in processes of production, in audience reception, and is embodied within the formal languages of objects and representation.

Figure 1: Spiros Panigirakis, *Supervision 1*, 2009, video still, 45 minutes digital video recording.

INTRODUCTION

RESEARCH: Autonomy, Legitimation, The Social and Me

This is research.

This research is concerned with the way in which institutions frame, produce and distribute notions of site within artistic production via an understanding of self that is personal, collective and psychological. Engagement with institutional context has long been a part of artistic production; however, in the 1960s this characteristic became self-consciously and reflexively embedded in the artwork of Institutional Critique. Here, the site of art's presentation became framed within the artist's own complicit role within the institutionalised conditions of presentation. Institutional Critique broadened the social and political agendas of post 1960s site-specific practices in parallel with a similar expanded consideration of the constitution of the artist's self within art's production undertaken by artists concerned with feminist and other forms of identity politics. This text takes these various forms of institutional critique as its departure point.

This research is one project with multiple parts. It is an experiment in publishing art that derives from the very particular site context of the university. This context imposes specific requirements for the process, distribution and reception of a particular artwork. Therefore this text is a reflection on a project made specifically for the research and not on my artistic practice as a whole. And while the project's methodologies are used in other major projects (*WITHOUT* [2006], *MORE HONEY* [2007], *MORE SILENCE* [2008] and *FERNTREE GULL*Y [2010]) completed during the candidature – this exegesis concerns only one (see Appendix 1).[1]

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[1] Spiros Panigirakis, *WITHOUT,* 2006, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne; *MORE HONEY,* 2007, Loose Projects, Sydney; *MORE SILENCE*, 2008, RMIT Project Space, Melbourne; and *FERNTREE GULL*Y, 2010, Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne.

This is an exegesis.

The exegesis is one part of two intrinsically linked components of 'research' that fulfil the requirements of a practice-driven Fine Arts PhD. The first component consists of an artwork.[2] The second component is the exegesis. Since the practice-driven Fine Arts PhD is at a relatively early stage of development, the form taken by the exegesis is relatively free and not yet constrained by a weight of precedents.[3] Of course the term 'exegesis' suggests a scholarly interpretation of a text of major significance, like the bible or political treatise: the exegesis therefore gives value to the artwork's framework.[4] Within the university context neither aspect is autonomous. Neither element has the legs (or arguably, is given room to) stand on its own accord.

Andrea Fraser drawing on the sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, reminds us that a critic's assessment of any artwork is an essentially arbitrary act:

> Every judgment then becomes a referendum, not on the work, but on the dominance, the legitimacy, the authorship, of the judge whose pronouncement must be defended all the more violently to conceal their fundamental arbitrariness.[5]

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[2] The artwork might consist of anything. A dominant model is to make artwork within a defined framework. This framework might be linked to the candidature period and be influenced by aspects of the university. This might include aspects of pedagogy and research emanating from interrelated fields—education, science, philosophy, art history, theory and so forth. It might also mean addressing pre-existing concerns—business as usual.

[3] The last two years has seen a proliferation of books published to explore and debate the place, constitution and validity of the artist's research within the university. Corina Caduff, Fiona Siegenthaler and Tan Wälchli eds., *Art and Artistic Research*, (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2010); Steven Henry Madoff, ed., *Art school: (propositions for the 21st century)*(Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009); James Elkins, ed., *Artists with PhDs: On the New Doctoral Degree in Studio Art* (Washington, New Academia Publishing, 2009).

[4] The Greek etymological origin of the word exegesis means to explain or interpret. However the use of the terms 'explanation' or 'interpretation' are rarely used for this task. These words do not weigh the writing with enough cultural prestige. An exegesis also alludes to an object of interpretation that is complex and of great worth; 'exegesis' in *OED Online*, "Oxford English Dictionary Online," http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/entrance.dtl (accessed April 3, 2010).

[5] Fraser, "It's Art When I Say It's Art, or. . .," 42; Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste,* trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984); Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature,* ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993)

This account of the arbitrariness of artistic judgment concerns the wider art world. The stakes involved in defending the authority of judgment are perhaps even higher within the progress-driven domains of knowledge that the university represents. Whilst there are significant overlaps between what these two institutions validate, it is questionable whether the 'outcomes' are equivalent. The exegesis could also be seen to straddle these two lineages. The emergence of writing associated with Conceptualism and other dematerialised art practices is an important link.[6] This artistic tradition however uses fields of knowledge that are shared with writers in more academic contexts. It is entirely conceivable that the exegesis could attain its own self-determined significance. Exemplars of the relatively autonomous place of writing within an artistic practice are: Adrian Piper's dense philosophical research; Daniel Buren's polemics; and the personal yet detailed sociological critiques of Andrea Fraser. However, the potential for this realisation within this exegesis is slight.[7] Artistic 'research' privileges the making of art. This takes time away from the possibility of a broad and thorough analysis of the discursive field that the exegesis might utilise. Instead artists replace this knowledge and expertise of a field with reference to their own art. My limited exploration of sociology does not endeavour to replicate the expert grounding of a philosopher or sociologist. Instead, I have cherry-picked these disciplines for theories that I feel might usefully frame my own artistic practice. The exegesis's relationship to the artwork differs from the texts written by the artists: Andrea Fraser, Joseph Kosuth, Robert Smithson, Martha Rosler, Daniel Buren and Thomas Hirschhorn. This is because the exegesis needs the legitimation of the university. It does not simply make 'reference' to the exegetic form in the content or style of writing.

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[6] 'Dematerialised' is an umbrella term used by Lucy Lippard to refer to post-1960s art practices that challenged the permanent, static and stable material quality of the art object. Lucy Lippard, *Six years: The Dematerialization of the Art object From 1966 to 1972 ...* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972)

[7] It is interesting to note that both Adrian Piper and Andrea Fraser both took up to a decade leave from their art practices to concentrate on their significant scholarly endeavours. While Fraser modestly terms her research on Bourdieu as one completed by a "high school dropout… autodidact," Piper completed her PhD thesis on Kantian metaethics at Harvard University. Andrea Fraser, "'To Quote,' Say the Kabyles, 'Is to Bring Back to Life'," *October* 101 (Summer 2002): 8; Adrian Piper, *Biography: Adrian Piper*. APRA Foundation, http://www.adrianpiper.com/biography.shtml.

This body of reflective writing by artists offers an invaluable resource. It provides insights and forms of expression that resonate with me more strongly that do most works that are shaped by the potentially reductive forces of academic convention. These pieces of writing have a significant value even if they are variously farcical, polemical, self-serving, melodramatic or personal. In contrast, the present document has quite a different purpose. It is an amalgam of an artwork and an exegesis that seeks a place within the university as a Fine Arts PhD. The relationship is one in which the desire for artistic and social legitimation is foremost.

This text grapples with the various ways in which art legitimates itself within society: from Institutional Critique's echoing of Antony Giddens's theory of structuration or Pierre Bourdieu's account of the way artists and the art field mutually constitute one another;[8] through Hal Foster's consideration of the artist's ethnographic concerns when representing sited community dynamics in museological contexts;[9] to more recently Nicolas Bourriaud, Claire Bishop and Grant Kester's arguments concerning the instrumental qualities in relational art practices.[10] But what about this text—how do I legitimate it? A self-conscious questioning of the ideological structures that bind the text and link it to my artwork is a central subject of inquiry. The question is on what grounds might my art be justified within a university context and why? Is this a pedagogical exercise? Or is this a way for art to challenge its own independence? Art's autonomy, its lack or its loss is another interrelated thread through the exegetic text. This theme subtends Theodore Adorno's notion of autonomy as a critical practice; the representations of struggles for marginalised social narratives to be recognised amongst dominant institutionalised knowledge as enacted by feminist cultural practices; and Brian Holmes or Maria Lindt's critique of the social gains

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[8] Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method* (London: Hutchinson, 1976); Pierre Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature,* ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993)
[9] Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer," In *The Return of the Real: the Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996), 171-204.
[10] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Dijon: Les press du reel, 2002); Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October*, no. 110 (Fall 2004): 51-79; Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Grant Kester, "Another Turn: Letter," *Artforum* (May 2006): 22.

granted to an artist, for their representation of communities as aesthetic postures of amelioration. This is reminiscent of the Modernist avant-gardes' preoccupation with testing or guarding art's autonomy. While Realism, Dada, Constructivism and the Bauhaus are not examined in any depth in the research, these movements cast a long shadow on the post 1960s art practices my work is influenced by.

Unlike my hesitation about the legitimacy of this text within the university, my practice or the field of art, the text's lack of autonomy is unambiguous. This text is parasitic; it exists as an adjunct or addendum to my artwork. Like many Fine Arts PhD students I originally aspired for this text to somehow transcend the potential limitations of the exegesis's (still questionable) place within the university. I feared that the conventions of the exegesis would reduce my art to officially sanctioned concerns and forestall the potential for a wider contextualisation. I thought I wanted to explore incoherent, discordant and proliferating ideas in an un-structured way in this text, as I do in the series of 'diagrams' that I consider as a central part of my reflective drawing practice (see Appendix 2.1). I also thought that I could resist articulating a defined position or a central question from which to hang my research. How, I wondered, can an artist pin down their concerns when the process of making art is faced with uncertainty, complicity and failure? My modus operandi, wavering between apathy, polemic instrumentality, reflexivity, nihilism and back again, seem inadequate for the task of framing a coherent question—let alone a stable position. Nevertheless, in spite of my reservations, I have endeavoured to shepherd my impulses into the crafted form of an academic exegetic text. While I would prefer my writing to reproduce the clarity and forensic detail of Fraser's text, it often has more in common with Liam Gillick's unruly literary tendencies.[11] Gillick is another artist whose writing is central to his practice. He has been described as "intangible—full of deferral and possibility, rather than… present and actual…" and combining "an academic tone with a frustrating oracular vagueness;" he is possibly not an ideal academic writing influence.[12] But as this relatively new genre develops within the

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[11] Andrea Fraser, "A "Sensation" Chronicle," *Social Text*, no. 67 (Summer 2001): 127-156.
[12] Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," 61; Marcus Verhagen, "Conceptual Perspex," *New Left Review*, no. 46 (July/August 2007): 155. Two examples stand out where artists have convincingly critiqued the editorial dominance of October journal's academic framing that might otherwise have been accepted into received understandings of art history without any rigorous questioning. Liam Gillick, "Contigent Factors: A Response to Claire

university, it may be productive for it to draw from (and accommodate) the 'possibilities' found in the existing idiosyncratic tradition of the artist's text.
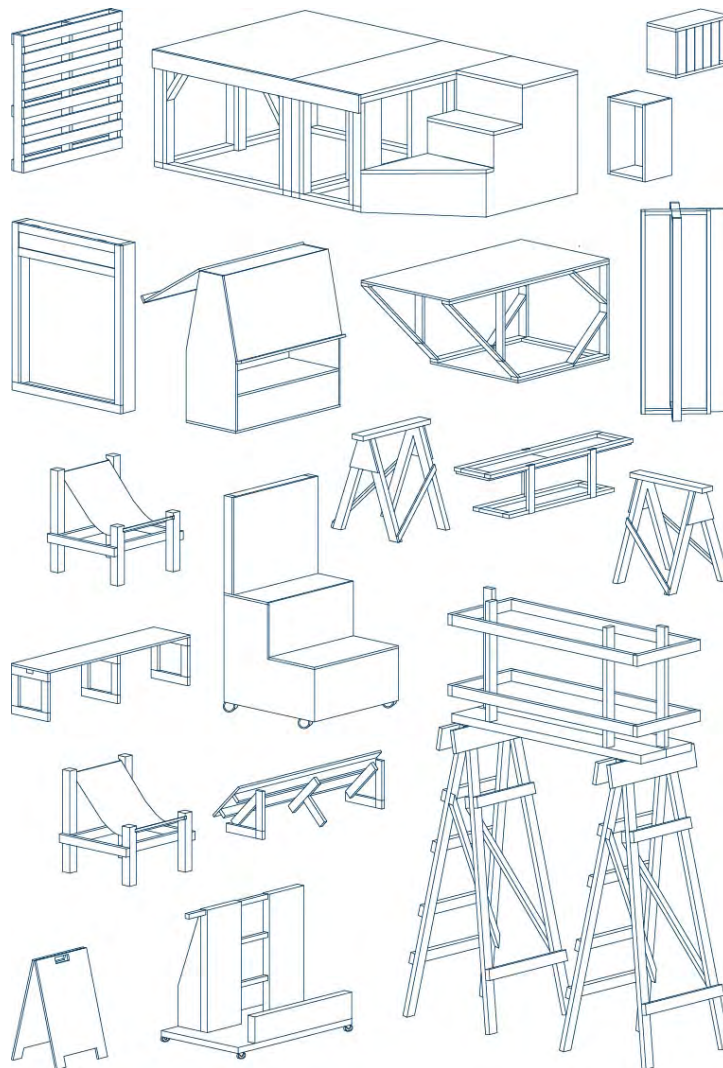
Figure 2: Spiros Panigirakis, *Studio Conditions that Float in Space*, 2008, digital drawing, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery catalogue, made with the assistance of Saskia Schut

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Bishop's "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetic," October, no. 115 (Winter 2006): 95-107; and Joseph Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub, "Reply to Benjamin Buchloh on Conceptual Art," *October* 57 (Summer 1991): 152-157.

The Artwork

The initial instigating structure and the first part of the project is the studio space allocated to a research student in a university context. This sited preoccupation drives the logic of the project's methodology. This involves not only the spatial constraints of the studio architecture but also the ideological boundaries of the university as the facilitating site of production and distribution. I draw on the notion of research within the social sciences and adopt the aesthetic and form of the research centre linked to external sites of fieldwork. With this in mind I make the studio the base for the project as a whole and produce studio furniture that has the potential to facilitate multiple forms and procedures involving social interaction, display, archiving and craft-driven activity. The timber-constructed furniture is produced using basic do-it-yourself craft methods that are gleaned from amateur manuals. The broad range of objects includes seating, plinths, staging, stools, various storage compartments, desks, benches and so forth. Using an austere black to white tonal range for the coverings and surfaces, and the raw state of the timber and manufactured sheeting for the exposed structural elements; the furniture has a quality of the prototype of furniture rather than a utilitarian object. The unused state and its fastidious appearance suggest that the furniture is a model that might be put to use in the future (see fig. 3).

The second part of the project performs the logic of research that is sited outside the physical boundaries of the university: it adopts the mode of fieldwork. The fieldwork sites are a friends' lounge-room, my parent's garage, an inner-city foreshore and the student common room. These were chosen for their marked difference from the institutional context of the studio based in a university (see fig. 26). While the personal narratives that initiated my interest in the fieldwork sites oppose the reflexivity of the institutionalised studio, the ideological lenses of the university and the field of art are ever-present. It could be said that one form of insider-culture is replaced by another.[13] Nevertheless, a number of factors disrupt the narrowness of this idea. An approach to fieldwork that borrows from reflexive sociology (the sociology

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[13] Buren explores the displacement that occurs to the object of art as it moves from the studio space to the gallery context. He notes, "from one enclosed place/frame, the world of the artist, to another, even more closely confined: the world of art." This challenges my production as it makes this the subject of the studio part of the content of the work. Daniel Buren, "The Function of the Studio," *October* 10 (Autumn 1979): 54.

of the sociologist's work) allows for the self-centered subjectivity of the artist's intervention to be challenged.[14] The artist's authority within the intervention as manifest by forms of mapping, presence or documentation needs acknowledgement within the representation of site, that is invariably constituted by a community dynamic. This dynamic is played out further by discursive qualities utilised in the fieldwork that challenge the grounded quality typical of site-specific art practices.[15] The first discursive quality is the respective artistic methodology used in each fieldwork site: pedagogy for the student common room; commissioning process for my parent's garage; the tradition of the salon in a friend's lounge room; and community based practice for the foreshore (see Appendix 2.2).[16]

Each of these intervention processes involves a collaborative or participatory mode of practice that distributes authorial intention from the singular to the plural and differentiated. The second discursive factor regards the displacement of the site intervention that is grounded in the site of the initial fieldwork. Propositional forms challenge the permanency or actualised presence of the artist in the site of the fieldwork. Therefore the site of presentation for the propositional form is dislocated from the foreshore, common room, garage and lounge room. The propositional form,

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[14] Bourdieu notes "I believe that the sociology of the sociology is a fundamental dimension of sociological epistemology. Far from being a specialty among others, it is the necessary prerequisite of any rigorous sociological practice. In my view, one of the chief sources of error in the social sciences resides in an uncontrolled relation to the object which results in the projection of this relation into the object, What distresses me when I read some works by sociologists is that people whose profession it is to objectivize the world prove so rarely able to objectivise themselves and fail so often to realize that what their apparently scientific discourse talk about is not the object but their relation to the object—it expresses resentment, envy, social concupiscence, unconscious aspiration or fascination, hatred..." Bourdieu, Quoted in L.D. Wacquant, "Towards a Reflexive Sociology: A Workshop with Pierre Bourdieu," *Sociological Theory* 7 (1989): 33.
[15] Both Miwon Kwon and James Meyer explore the discursive qualities of sited practice. Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity,* (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 2002); James Meyer, "The Functional Site; or The Transformation of Site-Specificity," in *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, ed. Erika Suderburg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 23-37.
[16] Some of this fieldwork was presented in contexts outside of both the site of research and the university frame. These sites of presentation were additional contexts that were embedded back into the content and process of the work. For example "the salon in a friend's lounge room" was presented as part of the Open Spatial Workshop's curatorial event *wBST*, Spiros Panigirakis, *A Hedged Domestic Condition,* 2009, west Brunswick Sculpture Triennial, Melbourne; the "community based practice for the foreshore" presented as part of the Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture, Spiros Panigirakis, *Bauble in Bushes,* 2008, Federation Square, Melbourne.

like 'paper architecture' privileges the mediated form of the idea for the site as opposed to its actualisation.[17] This approach to sited intervention places the fieldwork back into the discursive forms found in domains of knowledge present in the university that instigated the artistic research to begin with. The propositional form translates the artistic site intervention to a recommendation or a suggested mode for how art can manifest in an alternative site of presentation.

The Exegesis

The first chapter introduces the institutional framework of the research. The enabling and overlapping conditions of art and the university facilitate both aspects of the project: the artwork and the exegetic text. The methodology to address the sited context of the artwork uses Andrea Fraser's notion of 'critically reflexive site-specificity.'[18] Fraser's understanding is derived from a historical and sociological tradition of Institutional Critique where the artist's complicity in the institution's limitations is acknowledged within the body of the work.[19] The artist's role as derived by Fraser's commitment to Bourdieu's sociology is expanded. This includes the artist's subjectivity as a consideration of a collective political identity. This exploration is made possible by the critique of the status quo initiated by feminist political discourse rather than Fraser's reflexive critique that depends in part on feminist deployment of Freudian psychoanalysis.[20] In addition to this use of psychological rhetoric, the notions of distraction and compulsion are explored as a dimension of the research that inhibits and enables research.

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[17] 'Paper architecture' is un-built architecture that remains in its drawn form. Its primary function is to create discursive shifts in the culture that inhabits the site or the field of architecture in itself. A pertinent historical example of 'paper architecture' is the utopian design of Futurism and Constructivism; it is also come to be known as 'critical architecture.'
[18] Andrea Fraser, "What is Institutional Critique?," in *Institutional Critique and After*, ed. John Welchman (Zurich: JRP/Ringier, 2006)*,* 305.
[19] Ibid., 305.
[20] Ibid., 307

According to the Monash Graduate Research School, a PhD project must make a "contribution of substantial cultural significance."[21] This framing inevitably creates a psychological dynamic that leaves an imprint on the production of an artwork. This notion of 'cultural significance' is discussed as a challenge to a field of art that is at odds with some of the values of the university. Regardless of the growing prevalence of this mode of artistic training, the PhD as process driven research has an approach to failure that is inconsistent with contemporary practices with a Conceptual Art lineage. Scientific research, like Modernism, welcomes failure derived from experimentation as a means to 'progress.' For example the 'trial and error' associated with Modernist formalism leads to 'advances' being made for the material discipline. And the 'falsifiable hypothesis' is a central technique of scientific research.[22] Theories in this case are substantiated by failed tests. Contemporary art differs in that it has a performative and relativist relationship to failure. This can be linked to Conceptualism's embedded and public acknowledgement of failure within the theoretical discourse the artists used to support their art with.[23] This borrowing or 'acting out' of social strategies and forms (like research) by artists poses a challenge to art's autonomy. This also characterises the historical usage of the term fieldwork as a type of sited research. Robert Smithson's performative escape from the museum is an example of this strategy—only to return to the gallery with his abstracted recordings he designated as non-sites.[24]

The second chapter investigates the place of sociability within art practice. Art is always, already, social as the conditions of its production, exchange, reception and

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[21] Monash Reserach Graduate School, *Chapter 7.9 Criteria for the Examination of a Thesis,* http://www.mrgs.monash.edu.au/research/doctoral/chapter7i.html (accessed January 13, 2011).

[22] Karl Popper, "Science as Falsification: 'Science: Conjectures and Refutations' 1963," in *Readings in the Philosophy of Science*, ed. Theodore Schick (Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2000), 9-13.

[23] Art & Language's *The Fox,* newspaper headline reads, "the failure of Conceptual Art." Blake Stimson, "The Promise of Conceptual Art," in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), xliv.

[24] Robert Smithson, "Cultural Confinement," in *The Writings of Robert Smithson: Essays with Illustrations*, by Robert Smithson, ed. Nancy Holt (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 122-123; Robert Smithson, "Unpublished Writings: A Provisional Theory of Non-Sites," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (California : California of University Press, 1996), 364-365; Lucy Lippard, "Escape Attempts." in *Six years : The Dematerialization of the Art Object From 1966 to 1972 ...*, ed. Lucy Lippard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), i-xvii.

meaning are products of society. This chapter not only connects art and the sociable as a critical practice but also questions the mode and quality of this critique. I pay close attention to how social relations within art are valued, give value and are evaluated. This is understood within the dialectical poles of the heteronomous and autonomous constitution of art in society, drawn from Theodore Adorno's notion of autonomous art.[25] Within the notion of heteronomy, I move through and beyond Nicolas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*. Bourriaud espoused a 'microtopian' paradigmatic model in his framing of sociability within art, privileging the representation and enactment of collaborative and participatory models.[26] While noting the importance of Bourriaud's treatise (and those of his detractors) in offering a narrative of contemporary art in the 1990s—I offer three alternative conceptions of how sociability is considered within practice. The first draws on a lineage of art that dates from the late 1960s. This sees the process of making art conflate with the subjective concerns of the artist's life as manifest by the artist action or presence within the work. This is explored in work of Lucy Lippard and Robert Morris respectively.[27] Second, Adorno's notion of autonomous art is used to position a critical practice through an abstracted sense of sociability found in the formal constitution of art. This requires the commodity of art to resist political instrumentality and privilege the disruptive mode of muteness and social uselessness. Third, through recognising objects as 'assemblages' of vast interconnected decisions, disputes, designs, thoughts, processes, people and places, Bruno Latour's Actor-Network-Theory allows for an analysis of the animate complexity of the object of art.[28] These modes of interpreting the social are then used to unpack the receptive engagement found in my projects.

The third chapter investigates the understanding of site that is implemented in both the practical and theoretical components of the project. Site is considered using lenses

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[25] Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory,* trans. R Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970)

[26] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics, 13.*

[27] Lippard, *Six years: The Dematerialization of the Art object From 1966 to 1972 ...*; Robert Morris, "Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making: The Search for the Motivated," in *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), 71-94.

[28] Bruno Latour, "On recalling ANT," in *Actor Network Theory and After,* ed. John Law and John Hassard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers/The Sociological Review, 1999), 15-25.

that understand it through the notions of place, community, alterity, discursivity and institutionalisation. This set of criteria is the inevitable consequence of the de-pedestalling of the object of sculpture, which Rosalind Krauss describes as a phenomenological movement away from a centred conception of space.[29] This movement invites consideration of space as an intersection of social boundaries and differentiation—rather than just a formal, material and spatial 'expansion' posited by Krauss. The grounded historical sense of site-specificity of the early Minimalist and post-Minimalist practices is dislodged by what Miwon Kwon suggests is "an altogether different notion of site as predominantly an intertextually coordinated multiply located discursive field of operations."[30] Hal Foster, in "Artist as Ethnographer," describes this mode of operating as the expansion of the expanded field.[31] Again the use of Bourdieu's account of reflexive sociology is used to account for the artist's mapping of the social aspects of space. As an artist I feel the trepidation of walking a tightrope when engaging community, simultaneously avoiding what Kwon describes as the pitfalls of "identification, misidentification, dis-identification, reductivism and counter-reductivism."[32] This socially driven constitution of site is what Kwon would describe as discursive; this is the quality of the artistic methodology that I employ in the distribution of the form, content and process within the fieldwork.[33] This results in the site of presentation not necessarily aligning itself with the initial fieldwork site or any particular grounded locale. The sited propositional forms that I create are a distance away from the 'site intervention' that can be historically attributed to the late 1960s. The discursive as a more dynamic interrogation of issues, spaces and forms is compared to the incongruent idea of place; defined as a grounded subjective identification of locale. The notion of place has been critiqued for its insular valuing of the personal, intimate and local. In my research, I broaden the implication of place making through Edward Casey's theoretical survey.[34] Place is used as a departure point in the investigation of site. My tentative material approaches to site interventions and my predilection to shift artistic outcomes away from the fieldwork site, challenges a more conventional notion of place.

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[29] Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30-44.
[30] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 159.
[31] Foster, *The Artist as Ethnographer*, 171-204.
[32] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity,* 145.
[33] Ibid., 165
[34] Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997)

The Examination

Everything is sited.

A commitment to 'critically reflexive site-specificity' means more than just moving an art object in relation to the gallery's windowsill, audience thoroughfares or floor tiling.[35] Each site of research or presentation imposes a specific ideological logic that has consequences for how an audience engages art, and how an artist makes it. Therefore, the final examination exhibition in the Faculty Gallery also has an influence over this project. In the context of the examination exhibition there are at least two forms of judgement occurring. The first encompasses the assessment garnered by an audience's experience but also involves as Fraser notes, a referendum "on the dominance, the legitimacy [and] the authorship" of the judge.[36] The second judgement is an explicit assessment for admissions to a qualification. Therefore the advice that suggests the art should be presented and finished somewhere else and that the examination exhibition is a formality that the art must politely accommodate is problematic. It presumes the Faculty Gallery and the circumstance of the exhibition are best ignored: a type of site-less-ness. The 'final' exhibition associated with the PhD is one of many iterations of the research. A commitment to 'critically reflexive site-specificity' means that while I have given some thought to the site, the presentation does not exist at the time of writing. Both parts of the artwork—the studio and the fieldwork—will bare traces of previous research and sites of presentation but will engage a new formal dynamic specific to the context of the exhibition.[37] In Chapter One I discuss the various iterations of the art and the consequences these have for the sited conditions of the research.

This text is part of an assessment task.

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[35] Fraser, "What is Institutional Critique?*,*" 307.

[36] Fraser, "It's Art When I Say It's Art, or. . . ", 44.

[37] For example there are four distinct publishing iterations of the studio furniture in the research. These include: the furniture presented as a museological artifact at the VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery; the furniture as sited in the studio, a backdrop to the video-recording of a critical feedback with my supervisors; the furniture as documented in a photographic light-box display; and the furniture crammed and squashed in a cupboard (see figs. 3, 4, 5).

Despite my stated desire to avoid allowing this exegesis to narrow the contextualisation of my art, I have become complicit in framing my artwork in a particular way. I have made a choice to emphasise the social context of sited practice as against focussing on the formal, material and spatial analysis of the art. I have made minimal reference to woodwork, do-it-yourself amateur crafting, digital drawing, diagrammatic structures, architectural interventions, video documentation and so forth—a telling absence. I understand the exploration of form does not need to be simply a description of studio processes. Form has consequence. In Chapter Two I discuss how we might consider the complex matrices of social relations that are embedded in the object of the art, the reception of the art and the objects that facilitate sociability. However an actual experience of my practice might highlight other prominent issues: the sometimes fastidious crafting in relation to issues of control— both in terms of engagement and institutional contexts; the spatial dynamic I constantly use in organising data and form—where I counterpose absence and restraint with the expansive, disparate and the unravelled; and the tension between sensorial and critical experience.

These issues were partly not addressed due to the limited space given to the exegesis. There are innumerable frames an artist can use to contextualise his or her art, decisions need to be made that prioritise certain subjects and exclude others. When I was structuring the exegesis, forethought was given to Hal Foster's description of the expanding artist's role.[38] The sociological focus is an attempt to add theoretical depth to what Foster describes as the vertical axis of his research model. I realise that the vignettes of sociological theory in this exegesis are diverse and sometimes incongruous. These frameworks might appear to be my attempt to validate my art by drawing on other fields that I judge to be less arbitrary that the aesthetic domain. In the context of a Modernist artistic lineage that has used society or sociological theory to assess the autonomy of art, this assessment of an attempt to infuse cultural capital from an intersecting field seems apt.[39]

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[38] Foster, *The Artist as Ethnographer*, 202.
[39] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 229-231.

The assessment therefore is an assessment.

The exegetic essay within a Fine Arts PhD is a form of auxiliary discourse attached to a given artwork. While the artist's intention in some ways bears little weight in the actual interpretation of an artwork; it is part of a discursive community surrounding the artwork. The form of this discourse insists on the artist's ideological position. Without the artist's discourse, the artwork cannot help but proclaim that the conversation ends with it. An artist's silence is untenable once accepting the support from a university, an institutional body that requires reflection on communication models. Not reflecting on the communication model also perpetuates the role of the artist as the unquestionable genius that will not reveal the secret underpinnings of his or her work. Of course curators, historians, theorists and critics contribute to this discourse as well. And while this reflection does not take into account these positions (the artist role plays their voices), this discursive community surrounding work requires more than an initial spluttering of the artwork itself. It requires a continual back-and-forth exchange between artist and audience. So, far from closing meaning down for an unfinished artwork, this might be the beginning of a new conversational path.

Figure 3: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS*, 2008, manufactured boards and timbers with various surface treatments, laminates furnishings and coverings: stage; canvas slumped chairs; trestled scaffolding; pin-board; sandwich-board; newspaper reading desk; workbench wall and cutting board; museum/sheet trolley; OHS folder storage; pallet; stool; tiered-group seating with storage; sawhorses; plinths (aggregate, pegged, enamelled and acrylic), construction made with the assistance of Johan Oevergaard, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne.

Figure 4: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS in studio B6.32D*, 2009, 70 x 45 cm., light-box for Faculty Gallery Monash University.

Figure 5: Spiros Panigirakis, STUDIO CONDITIONS in cupboard off B6.35, 2009-2011, Monash University, Melbourne.

CHAPTER ONE

INSTITUTIONAL CONDITIONS

> We are the institution of art: the object of our critiques, our attacks, is always also inside ourselves.
>
> Andrea Fraser, What is Institutional Critique?

> It's obvious; as an artist my interest and my aspirations have always been orientated toward accumulating as much authority, legitimacy, recognition, as I can.
>
> Andrea Fraser, It's Art When I Say It's Art, or…

This chapter investigates the interaction between the public and the private within artistic production. While recognising that the distinction between public and private is a complex and artificial one, and that social structures and individual agents are mutually constituting, I seek to examine how private concerns, psychological motivations and social institutions shape contemporary artistic production. In investigating these ideas and connecting them to my own practice I am guided by the work of Andrea Fraser. Fraser's work on Institutional Critique draws implicitly on sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's analyses of the relationship between agents and structures—reminding us of the mutual constitution of artists and art-institutions, and of the limitations of each.[1]

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[1] Fraser's writing draws heavily from Bourdieu's 'thinking tools' that frame the agents and structures that constitute social fields. It is important to note that Bourdieu's sociology is positioned within its own 'cultural field' dominated by Anthony Giddens's analogous theory of 'structuration.' Giddens notes "every act which contributes to the reproduction of a structure is also an act of construction, a novel enterprise between structures and agents of the critique of cultural production, enterprise, and as such may initiate change by altering that structure at the same time as it reproduces." Anthony Giddens, *New Rules of Sociological Method* (London: Hutchinson , 1976), 128. Structuration theory like Bourdieu's field theory grapples with the constitution of cultural fields—between subjectivism (individual agents) and objectivism (broader social structures). Bourdieu understands a field as a site of struggle for (cultural, social, symbolic and economic) capital between agents (or players). For

As an artist I am complicit in the creation of art-institutions that are sites of exclusion. As an artist, a PhD student, and a sessional university teacher, I like Andrea Fraser, am seeking to amass authority legitimacy and recognition. My current preoccupation in completing this doctoral thesis via practice is to benefit from the hierarchical exclusions that attainment of a postdoctoral degree engenders. My pursuit of the qualification is motivated just as much by my hope that it will make me more competitive in seeking employment as by a desire to gain experience framing my practice within a historical and theoretical framework. The university provides the artist with resources to frame his or her own practice and offers the art community an alternative to the dominant framing of curatorial, historical or commercial institutional voices.

I am constantly reminded of the privileged position that my position affords me and do not want to extricate myself from the aforementioned institutions because I enjoy the time they afford me to explore ideas, craft and contexts. I am aspirational and I understand the difficulty in sustaining a long-term career in the arts. While my audience within an art context is small, my audience within an academic field is smaller still. But the prestige of a postgraduate degree speaks to a far wider audience. My aunties in Chania will understand that in some incomprehensible way Dimitra's black sheep is making good. My PhD is a way of validating my occupation as an artist against a family, cultural, and class background characterised by antagonism to the arts. 'This will show them' I think. This decision-making process reflects an interaction between individual notions of the self and the social world, with its institutionalised methods of advancement.

Bourdieu a cultural field reproduces it values via the notion of habitus. Habitus is the 'embodied' values agents possess that make the struggle for the distribution of capital on the field worth playing. Therefore within both of these sociological contexts we might consider the institution of art as a cultural field represented by artist, curators, dealers, collectors, theorists and historians 'create the creator.' A detailed account of Bourdieu's account of capital can be found in Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 229-231; Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature,* ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 37.

Art has always connected to other social structures (or institutions) in order to gain legitimacy. Religion, sovereigns and academies have each shaped art by their institutional priorities. In each case the artist has received official patronage in exchange for work that enhances the symbolic power of the sovereign, religion, or state and an acceptance of a set of constraints regarding form, content, context and process. The effect of social institutions on art is illustrated by the philosopher John Searle's description of the essential role and purpose of an institution as:

> … not to constrain people as such, but, rather, to create new sorts of power relationships. Human institutions are, above all, enabling, because they create power, but it is a special kind of power. It is the power that is marked by such terms as: rights, duties, obligations, authorizations, permissions, empowerments, requirements, and certifications.[2]

Within the complex dynamic of power that Searle describes, the artist is driven by a tendency to seek artistic and social goals simultaneously. While the institutional shifts between church and state were historically significant—change within systems of patronage is a constant and replicated today on a smaller subcultural level.[3] Fraser drawing on Bourdieu notes that the field of art is a site of struggle "in which what is at stake is the power to impose the dominant definition of the artist, that is the standards of criteria, the norms according to which producers and their products will be evaluated."[4] In recent decades, the contemporary (or 'conceptual') art-world[5] has

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[2] John Searle, "What is an Institution?" in *Institutional Critique and After*, ed. John Welchman (Zurich: RP/Ringier, 2006), 34.

[3] "I am an artist. As an artist I have the double role of engaging in the specialised production of bourgeois domestic culture on one hand and on the other, the relatively autonomous reproduction of my own professional subculture" in Andrea Fraser, "An Artist's Statement," in *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser*, ed. Alexander Alberro (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), 5.

[4] Fraser, "It's Art When I Say It's Art, or. . .", 42.

[5] This use of the term conceptual in this context is a misappropriation of historical agenda of conceptual art. It is commonly used to designate any contemporary art that appears not to privilege formalist aesthetics, to art that is being marketed as elite via its esoteric discursive accompaniment. I am represented by the commercial gallery Sarah Scout that describes itself in terms of: "a private gallery established to represent, and develop opportunities for, a number of outstanding early to mid-career artists with critically engaged *conceptual* practices." Kate Barber, and Vikki McInnes, *Sarah Scout Presents,* July 20, 2009, http://www.sarahscoutpresents.com/gallery (accessed January 10, 2011). Liam Gillick (an artist who is no stranger to the esoteric) wanted to "reintroduce a little historical awareness of ideological specificity" to the indiscriminate naming of contemporary art as Conceptual. He

become increasingly enmeshed in an elite or state-sponsored gallery system either within the university or as a form of 'research' that the university legitimates via a funding paradigm.[6] Each of these forms has its own set of expectations of the artist, and these expectations shape artistic production even when institutional expectations reflexively demand their own critique and subversion.

My role as a PhD candidate allows me to perform an artistic experiment concerning a mode of distribution, display and reception that differs from the previous gallery based sites I have dealt with. While this and the sociological contexts presented could be interpreted as a partly cynical relation to research outcomes; a critical commitment to site specificity should differentiate itself from just responding to the architectural and social boundaries, that might constitute a site in art. 'Critically reflexive site specificity' interrogates the artist's role within a site intervention. The institutions of art and the university are the social sites that frame the beginning of the research. The pairing of these institutions—art and the university—is obvious, especially within this very exegetic text. But this methodology extends to all site contexts that I engage in my art practice. Therefore the fieldwork sites are also interrogated through the lens of art, the university but also the other intersecting social institutions that make up the foreshore, common room, lounge-room and garage. These critical interventions into the sites are not agreeable public relations exercises for art, just as this exegesis is not

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notes "1. Conceptual art is an art form exclusively confined to the late 1960s and early 1970s. 18. Conceptual art tried to be democratic or at least make a point about the way art can proceed beyond craft and traditional skills. 19. Conceptual artists usually had beards. 29. Conceptual art relies on social Interaction." Liam Gillick, "Statements for a Lecture on Conceptual Art," in *Proxemics: Selected Writings 1988-2004*, ed. Lionel Bovier (Zurich: JRP/Ringier, 2006), 93-96.

[6] A complex classification matrix exists for the validation of research outcomes performed by anyone affiliated with the university. While there is no explicit hierarchical listing of spaces or art institutions, as there is for journals in other academic areas; a number of preferred publishing conditions can be deduced from this funding schema. A creative work that has been "commissioned" and is accompanied by a "scholarly, analytical and descriptive" text is preferred over anything without a publication. The academic quality of the text is an important distinction to most of the fifteen possible categories within the creative arts. An invitation (by a curator) to exhibit in a "recognised public or commercial gallery or museum" is also preferred over an enterprise that is self-initiated and shown in independent artist-run-space without a publication. This criteria is evidence that the substantiation of artwork as research within the university does not only privilege dominant avenues of distinction but also requires the art to have some dependency on theoretical fields. Monash Research Office, *Current DIISR HERDC Categories*, http://monash.edu/researchoffice/pubs/categories.html (accessed February 12, 2010).

marketing for my research outcomes. I wonder if the exegesis can play a role as a testing ground not only for the artwork made, but the artist's role and process within that artwork. This exploration of potential failure and limitations are part and parcel of the reflexivity of Conceptual Art and Institutional Critique. Can the ideological framework of the university interrogate the process of being an art student not only within the realm of pedagogy but as a compromised art project? On a more basic and personal level can this interrogation of my PhD candidature incorporate an exploration of the psychological dimension of this aim to make a significant work or contribution?

In this chapter I review the changing relationship between art, the artist and various supporting institutions that emerged as a consequence of removing the pedestal from sculptural practice.[7] I examine the 20th century tradition of 'Institutional Critique' paying particular attention to Fraser, an artist from a subsequent generation who has used 'critically reflexive site-specificity' as a key methodology in her research.[8] While Fraser's practice is inflected with a rigorous feminist politic, her historical appraisal of 'Institutional Critique' relies on the perpetuation of the canon and separating it from allied art practices associated with feminism and other forms of identity politics.[9] The collective subjectivity represented in feminist art exposed the dominant social paradigms embedded in accepted modes of artistic production.[10] The

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[7] While Rosalind Krauss describes the de-pedestalling process of sculpture as a narrowly formal/material enterprise; I regard her 'L schema' as an instigation of an expansion that would lead to the architecture, not-architecture paradigm inferring to the social. Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30-44.

[8] Fraser, "What is Institutional Critique?," 305.

[9] There is no doubting Fraser's feminist credentials, from her involvement with feminist performance group V-Girls (1986-1996) to her use of a psychoanalytic models in both her framing of Institutional Critique and in her actual performances (*Projection*, 2009, Friedrich Petzel Gallery). Her perspective on the first generation of Institutional Critique however, does not resist the male-centred canon of: Daniel Buren, Michael Asher, Hans Haacke and Marcel Broodthaers. See also: Andrea Fraser, *The Cooper Union School of Art Interdisciplinary Seminar*, SMAC Scribmedia Art Culture, October 10, 2008, http://vodpod.com/watch/3974108-andrea-fraser-1 (accessed January 2, 2010); Andrea Fraser, *Strategies for Contemporary Feminism,* Exquisite Acts & Everyday Rebellions: 2007 CalArts Feminist Art Symposium, March 10, 2007, http://vimeo.com/12633024 (accessed January 2, 2010); It is also important to note that while the conservative canon of conceptual Art at this point in history is dominated by male artists – writer, curator Lucy Lippard was a proponent of crossing conceptual Art with feminism. The pivotal *c. 7,500* exhibition curated by Lippard and was first shown at the A402 Gallery at CalArts in 1973.

[10] This will be explored with the close reference of Helen Molesworth, "House Work and Art Work," *October* 92 (Spring 2000): 71-97.

final part of the chapter examines the influence of the university on artistic production with particular emphasis on the aesthetic imperative of 'research' that it demands. This discussion examines the incongruent notion of failure in relation to the seemingly progress-driven agenda that the scientific ideal of research borrows from. Failure within artistic research is either a relativist phenomenon or a performative measure and cannot be equated to failure found in other knowledge-based domains of the university.[11] The chapter also draws on the politics of self and subjectivity in its analysis of art history and theory. It is within the discussion of my artistic research that I make reference to the personal psychological dimension of working within the university. I explore the phenomenon of distractions and compulsions in relation to how these factors reduce an artist's autonomy but at the same time enable the production of a critical artistic practice.

Figure 6: Andrea Fraser, *Strategies for Contemporary Feminism*. Exquisite Acts & Everyday Rebellions: 2007 CalArts Feminist Art Symposium, video still, March 10, 2007. http://vimeo.com/12633024 (accessed January 2, 2010). This is an example of how Fraser engages critique and performance across forms and public contexts.

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[11] Unlike all other fields (apart from music and theatre performance) in the university, the Fine Arts PhD (or the PhD in the speciality of the visual arts) requires a "contribution of substantial cultural significance" as opposed to "significant contribution to knowledge and understanding of the field," Monash Reserach Graduate School, *Chapter 7.9 Criteria for the Examination of a Thesis,* http://www.mrgs.monash.edu.au/research/doctoral/chapter7i.html (accessed January 13, 2011).

Critically Reflexive Site Specificity

Fraser's notion of 'critically reflexive site specificity' is used as the predominant methodology in the production and framing of the research. I propose that critical reflexivity is a tool that places the act of intervening into a site of artistic reception under scrutiny; not only in the act of reflection (for instance the exegetic text) but in the body of the artwork itself. Fraser's research into Institutional Critique as a form of 'critically reflexive site specificity' offers a historical precedent for my project. Art historical and theoretical models are a persistent accompaniment to practice. However since 1968 the ideological space of the university either directly influenced the discursive foundations of Institutional Critique or has had a burgeoning influence on artists' training.[12] The research takes cues from both these precedents and also uses the polemic found in Daniel Buren's "The Function of the Studio" to the university's liberal arts and social science traditions as a methodological influence on my dealing with site.[13]

Buren's pivotal essay: "The Function of the Studio" explored the ideological distance between the gallery and the artist's studio. Buren notes that the tradition of the studio is a "place of multiple activities: production, storage, and finally, if all goes well, distribution. It is a kind of commercial depot."[14] Buren positions the gallery as a 'graveyard' for artistic practice. He argues that the posthumous display of Brancusi's sculptures in the site of their production (the studio) is indicative of a more productive and brave representation of his practice.[15] Pertinent to a project committed to the notion of sited practice and its representation, is Buren's repeated reference to

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[12] The October journal editors perpetuate the link between practitioners of first generation Institutional Critique (Daniel Buren, Michael Asher, Hans Haacke and Marcel Broodthaers) with the social radicalism of 1968; and Michel Foucault's observation of the Paris riots. The police invasion of the Sorbonne at the administration's invitation meant as Foster notes, "a consequence, [where] discourses—whether in the form of the police interrogation or the university exam—were suddenly understood to be disciplinary. This was the source of Foucault's decision to organise the promulgation of knowledge (discourse) around the imposition of power (discipline)." Hal Foster...[et al.], *Art Since 1900: Modernism, Antimodernism, Postmodernism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004), 545-548.
[13] Daniel Buren, "The Function of the Studio," *October* 10 (Autumn 1979): 51-58.
[14] Ibid., 53
[15] Ibid., 56

'reality/truth' in terms of the environmental context the artist is placed in.[16] By exposing the studio space, I might be representing a more authentic representation of my practice without challenging Buren's more artist-centric view of the environment at large. The constructed studio in my project however is not exposing the production of the objects of furniture. To do this would mean presenting my parent's backyard, my bedroom, the timber yard, the hardware store, multiple factories around Melbourne and the university's workshop. If the notion of 'truth/reality' found in an artist's reflection of site were to exist; where does it exist in my work? The installation of the artist's studio is an artifice—as it is not really the site of any production—apart from the production that stems from an audience's experience. It conflates the site of presentation with the 'idea' of the site of production. In this case, it exposes the 'truth' regarding the performativity of the presentation of art, rather than any 'real' process-driven response to site.

Buren is focused more on the institutional limitations of the gallery and the artist's complicit involvement. My critique is squarely focused on the institution of the artist and the conceit represented by the all-encompassing production represented by the bulk and scope of the furniture. Buren is not suggesting that all art should be presented literally in the studio of its making, so that commodifying and reductive distances between the studio and gallery be curtailed. His writing and art advocates material responses driven by site specificity. For Buren site specificity is driven by a broad sociological and political conception of built space and the artist's co-opted relation to that space. He notes "every place radically imbues (formally, architecturally, sociologically, politically) with its meaning the object (work/creation) shown there.... To reveal this limit (this role), the object presented and its place of display must dialectically imply one another."[17] My project considers not one site but arguably up to six sites. This is within a model of research, fieldwork that also has the

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[16] Amongst the incisive critique of the artist's relationship to the institution of art, Buren repeatedly infers to a type of authentic space occupied by the role of the artist: "this 'reality/truth' existed not only in terms of the artist and his work space but also in relation to the environment, the landscape." Buren, *The Function of the Studio,* 55; "This sense that the main point of the work is lost somewhere between its place of production and place of consumption forced me to consider the problem and the significance of the work's place. What I later came to realise was that it was the reality of the work, its 'truth,' its relationship to its creator and place of creation, that was irretrievably lost in this transfer." Ibid., 56

[17] Daniel Buren, "Function of Architecture," in *Museums by Artists*, eds. AA Bronson and Peggy Gale (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1983), 70.

historical implication of finding 'reality/truth' in non-institutional architecture.[18] "The Function of the Studio" deals incisively with the place of art that is "its own" space.[19] This for Buren is inexorably linked (either implicitly or by omission) to the authorial voice of the singular artist as opposed to the singular artist in relation to the community dynamic found in any sited condition outside of the gallery structure.

The project's contextualisation within the historical field of art begins within the first generation practitioners of Institutional Critique (like Buren) via the discourse developed by Conceptual Art practices of the same period. A way to investigate and synthesise the narrative through these diverging histories is via the once incompatible poles of high Modernism. Benjamin Buchloh's "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," contentiously uses this juncture to historically narrate the transition from Conceptualism to Institutional Critique.[20] This considers the object of art as split between firstly a self-reflexive and secondly a critical quality that is developed by a continual expansion into a variety of social frameworks. Buchloh uses the New York-centered reappraisal of Marcel Duchamp to investigate the social dimension of the art object.[21] He posits Conceptualism's "assault" on the art object's "visuality, its commodity status, and its form of distribution" as a narrow interpretation of the Duchampian readymade that ultimately reinforced Modernity's self-reflexive quality.[22] And while this self-reflexivity was "discursive rather than perceptual, epistemological rather than essentialist" it did not "analyse and expose the social institutions from which… the logic" of administrative aesthetic emanated in the first place.[23] Artist Joseph Kosuth

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[18] Robert Smithson's notion of site/non-site within a paradigm of the artist's fieldwork could also be a model in exploring 'reality/truth.' Smithson signposted the restrictive limitations of the gallery whilst referring to a much bigger whole. Site/non-site is a productive way of referencing the social outside the gallery space. Site/non-site was used as tool to capture and code the magnitude of the landscape amidst the controlled boundaries of the gallery space. This is referred to in greater depth in Chapter Three. Robert Smithson, "Unpublished Writings: A Provisional Theory of Non-Sites," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (California: California of University Press, 1996), 364-365.

[19] Buren, *The Function of the Studio*, 57.

[20] Benjamin H. D Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 105-143.

[21] Ibid., 107

[22] Ibid., 107

[23] Ibid., 143; Buchloh's unsympathetic framing of Kosuth's practice as positivist extension of the modernist project is interesting as Kosuth's rebuttal accuse Buchloh of being a modernist too. This is testament to the dominant early 1990s post-modern discourse's perspective on art

and curator Seth Siegelaub accuse Buchloh of a reductive account of Conceptual art—vehemently refuting his historical perspective. For Buchloh the legacy of Duchamp was interpreted by Conceptualism as a serious critique of authorship, context and intentionality via the "factual conditions of artistic production" that lacked the critical acknowledgment of the social legitimation of these factors.[24] But for Kosuth and Siegelaub this emphasis on creating a Duchampian lineage leads to a narrowing of Conceptualism which privileges a critical practice that focuses on the art's institutional politics. This ignores the broader socio-political context of the period and Conceptualism's response to the USA's involvement in the Vietnam War, the May 68 riots in Paris, and the significant fluidity between practitioners of Institutional Critique and Conceptualism.[25]

Fraser on the other hand uses Bourdieu's mapping of the cultural field and his tool of reflexive sociology as a foundation to frame and test not only her own practice but also that of the historical canon of Institutional Critique.[26] Bourdieu's notion of 'reflexive sociology' in conjunction with the development of his 'thinking tools'—'field' and 'habitus'—are used to interrogate the cultural agent's embodiment of the values and struggles played out in the art field. This offers us insight into how artists deploy the power (or capital) that is inherent in any social field.[27] The art field

history. Joseph Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub, "Reply to Benjamin Buchloh on Conceptual Art," *October* 57 (Summer 1991): 152-157.

[24] Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," 141.

[25] Joseph Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub, "Reply to Benjamin Buchloh on Conceptual Art," 152-157.

[26] Andrea Fraser, "'To Quote,' Say the Kabyles, 'Is to Bring Back to Life'," *October* 101 (Summer 2002): 7-11.

[27] In regards to 'field' Bourdieu remarks, "I define a field as a network, or a configuration, of objective relations between positions objectively defined, in their existence and in the determinations they impose upon their occupants, agents or institutions, by their present and potential situation.... in the structure of the distribution of power (or capital) whose possession commands access to the specific profits that are at stakes in the field, as well as by their objective relation to other positions..." Bourdieu, Quoted in L.D. Wacquant, "Towards a Reflexive Sociology: A Workshop with Pierre Bourdieu," *Sociological Theory* 7 (1989): 39; Fraser's references to the embodiment of the institution of art refers to Bourdieu's notion of 'habitus' and the etymologically related term hexis. Bourdieu notes, "[b]odily hexis is political mythology realised, em-bodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable manner of standing, speaking and thereby of feeling and thinking... The principles em-bodied in this way are placed beyond the grasp of consciousness, and hence cannot be touched by voluntary, deliberate transformation, cannot even be made explicit..." Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1977), 93-94; Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, 8-15.

consists of a broad conglomeration of roles, institutions and communities who are associated with the making, distribution, discourse and reception of art. An outside to this field requires total non-recognition to the point of non-existence. And whilst Bourdieu differentiates between mass and high art and Fraser notes the sub-cultural groupings within the meta-field, we all engage in the "struggles and position taking" that determine the distribution of capital and legitimation.[28] Of specific interest to Bourdieu (and subsequently Fraser) is how cultural and symbolic capital is wielded and reproduced to impose a symbolic violence on those with less privilege and thus reproduce the status quo.[29] This privilege is not based on any innate talent, disposition, form and aesthetic but is totally arbitrary depending on whom is in what position and when.[30] Symbolic violence perpetrated by those in position of dominance via cultural consumption is an implicit and sometimes explicit strategy "to legitimate social difference" that does not necessarily follow traditional class lines.[31]

'Reflexive sociology' allows the field of art to recognise not only that art is socially determined but also that reflexive practice is "the condition of possibility of liberation from symbolic domination" (or the aforementioned violence).[32] More precisely, a reflexive interrogation of an artwork would recognise that "many agents (critics, curators, dealers and collectors) create the creator and that a value of a work of art…is part of the full reality of the work."[33] This reflexive sociology (the sociology of the sociologist's work) is a methodology that Fraser describes as "the full objectification, not only of an object, but one's relation to an object—including not only the schemes of perception and classification one employs in one's objectification and not only

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[28] Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature,* 37.

[29] Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 229-231.

[30] It was a liberating moment to read Fraser's account of Bourdieu. Much time is spent as an artist grappling with the taste and acknowledgement of other agents within the field of art. Fraser notes, "Every judgment then becomes a referendum, not on the work, but on the dominance, the legitimacy, the authorship, of the judge whose pronouncement must be defended all the more violently to conceal their fundamental arbitrariness;" Fraser, "It's Art When I Say It's Art, or. . .," 44.

[31] Pierre Bourdieu, "Social Space and Symbolic Power," *Sociological Theory* 7, no. 1 (Spring 1989): 21.

[32] Pierre Bourdieu, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992): PAGE, Quoted in Fraser, "'To Quote,' Say the Kabyles, 'Is to Bring Back to Life'," 9.

[33] Bourdieu, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, 37.

one's interest in objectifying, but the social conditions of their possibility."[34] Reflexive site specificity therefore follows from these ideas as a tool used (differentially) by practitioners of Institutional Critique to interrogate not only the site's ideological role in the distribution and framing of a practice (and the reproduction of the field of art) but the practitioners' own co-opted role within these relationships of social power.

This internalisation of the institution of art does not represent all accounts of historical Institutional Critique.[35] Accounts of practices that figured widely at the time as outsides, or alternatives to the status quo permeated 1970s artistic discourse. The institution of art figured at times as literally the architectural confines of state-run museums and galleries. Even the advocacy and representation of Seth Seigelaub was seen as an alternative due to his support of Conceptualist practices regardless of whether it was a commercial venture.[36] Robert Smithson's ideological contortions

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[34] Fraser, "'To Quote,' Say the Kabyles, 'Is to Bring Back to Life'," 9.

[35] Gerald Raunig offers a major rebuttal to Fraser's account of Institutional Critique via his use of the ancient Greek notion of 'parrhesia' found in Foucault's 1983 lecture *Discourse and Truth* to develop an alternative framework for Institutional Critique. Raunig's ideas contest the models of institutional internalisation and self-reflexivity advocated by Fraser and explored by Buchloh. 'Parrhesia' is a defiant act that regards "freely speaking truth without rhetorical games and without ambiguity, even and especially when this is hazardous" and in a paradigm of power that is all consuming. Raunig develops a framework for Institutional Critique that is explicitly engaged with political practices and social movements. He does not naively position these art practices as a type of 'outside' but sees the 'traversal' of this critique to other fields of power. The artist does not need to cling to their "own involvement, their complicity, their imprisoned existence in the art field, their fixation on… their own being-institution" but a "radical" social critique that is a "non-escapist" idea for escape. Michel Foucault, "Discourse and Truth: the Problematisation of Parrhesia," *FOUCAULT.INFO* . 6 lectures given by Michel Foucault at the University of California at Berkeley. October 1983. http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/ (accessed January 1, 2011), Quoted in, Gerald Raunig, "Instituent Practices: Fleeing, Instituting, Transforming," in *Art and Contemporary Critical Practice Reinventing Institutional Critique*, ed. Gerald Raunig and Gene Ray (London: Mayfly, 2009), 3-12; This type of resistant can be analogised as attempts at "flight, of dropping out, of betrayal, of desertion [and] of exodus" that is reminiscent of Lippard's account of dematerialised practices in "Escape Attempts." Lucy Lippard, "Escape Attempts," in *Six years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object From 1966 to 1972 ...*, ed. Lucy Lippard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), i-xvii.

[36] Admittedly Siegelaub commercial representation and enterprise experimented with the modes of distribution and documentation of conceptual art. From the reproduction of idea-driven projects (the Xeroxbook); art workers rights activism; to the facilitation of international dialogue that engaged with the political contexts of the period with allied practices in Europe and South America. It would also appear that he had a complicated relationship to a profit motive of his entrepreneurship. He was disappointed by conceptualism's co-option of the market (and in some quarters a resistance to social activism) even though he would ultimately be one of the beneficiaries of this situation. He notes, "the

even figured the artist as a prisoner and the museum as a warden of practice.[37] While this position is understandable when formally accounting for Smithson's notion of site/non-site; this might be seen as a productive mis-reading of Foucault's account of disciplinary societies. Vincent Pécoil notes that: "the museum was and remains, first and foremost, a discursive system whose function is to pronounce judgments, and whose ultimate purpose is normalisation.[38] Foucault's studies of prison systems help us to grasp that the museum is an instrument-giving rise to a tangle of systems of knowledge and power.[39] The walls of the prison, hospital or the museum are not boundaries that delineate these social institutions. We have internalised these institutions so that the gaze from the educator, curator, the warden, the judge and the medical practitioner is "a constant, mobile and differentiated supervision."[40] As Eilean Hooper Greenhill notes "the museum was transformed from a localised and limited site, to a program at once disciplinary and fully extended, both spatially and

economic pattern associated with conceptual art is remarkably similar to that of other artistic movements: to purchase a unique work cheap and resell it at a high price." Stimson, "The Promise of Conceptual Art," xliii. Charles Harrison and Seth Siegelaub, "On Exhibitions and the World at Large," in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999), 198-203; Ian Burn, "Sixties: Crisis and Aftermath (or the Memoirs of an Ex-Conceptual Artist)," in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, 392-409. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1999.

[37] Robert Smithson clearly delineates between the institutional qualities of the 'outsider' artist and the restriction imposed by the administration constituted by the gallery and the curator. He notes, "cultural confinement takes place when a curator imposes his own limits on an art exhibition, rather than asking an artist to set his limits. Artists are expected to fit into fraudulent categories. Some artists imagine they've got a hold on this apparatus, which in fact has got a hold of them. As a result, they end up supporting a cultural prison that is out of their control. Artists themselves are not confined, but their output is. Museums, like asylums and jails, have wards and cells – in other words, neutral rooms called 'galleries'. A work of art, when placed in a gallery, loses its charge, and becomes a portable object or surface disengaged from the outside world. A vacant white room with lights is still a submission to the neutral. Works of art seen in such spaces seem to be going through a kind of esthetic convalescence…. The function of the warden curator is to separate art from the rest of society. Next comes integration." Robert Smithson, "Cultural Confinement," in *The Writings of Robert Smithson: Essays with Illustrations*, by Robert Smithson, ed. Nancy Holt (New York: New York University Press, 1979), 132.

[38] Vincent Pécoil, "The Museum as Prison Post Post-Scriptum on Control Societies," *Third Text,* 18, no. 5 (2005): 436.

[39] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York : Pantheon, 1977), 228, Quoted in John Rajchman,"Foucault's Art of Seeing," *October* 44 (Spring 1988): 91.

[40] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language,* trans. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 31, Quoted in Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, "The Disciplinary Museum," in *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (London: Routledge, 1992), 170

socially."[41] The notion of the museum (or the field of art) ceases to be an objective and neutral frame for the accumulated discourse.   Foucault's perspective on the "acknowledgment of the unacknowledged frame" of power that is "politically imbricated," differentiates Smithson from the artists identified as the first generation of Institutional Critique: Buren, Broodthaers, Asher and Haacke.[42] The power dynamic within the institution is complicated and the artist's role is embroiled within this dynamic. The artist might be locked in the prison of the art—but no amount of outdoor work will set her or him free.

The completion of a Fine Arts PhD at Monash University requires an exhibition in the Faculty Gallery. For most of my candidature I resisted the implied legitimation offered by this space. Like Smithson I was playing out (on a theoretical level) inside/outside dichotomies of institutional power, without acknowledging the pervasive quality of institutional power that artists wield. I therefore sought to present the significant portion of *STUDIO CONDITIONS*—the studio furniture—in the allocated spaces given to postgraduate students in tandem with this requirement. This in retrospect replaces the reification of the white cube with the reification of the studio as the origin of practice. I thought prioritising my research outcomes for this quality of public consumption undermined my ethic of resisting the presentation of community engagement in gallery contexts. The studio space however came with its own institutional machinations outside of Buren's critique that provided the research with additional ideological challenges.[43] The postgraduate space is limited due to the economic imperative placed on the art-school's floor space in relation to a large cohort of postgraduate students. I took the permanency of this space for granted but at several points during my candidature was shifted to other sites around the university. Never the less I maintained the importance of exhibiting the studio in 'the (or a) studio' as an alternative measure.

It was during the request by administrative staff to shift out of the university entirely during a brief intermission that I sought to grapple with the now lost privilege

[41] Hooper-Greenhill, "The Disciplinary Museum," in *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, 168.
[42] Pécoil, "The Museum as Prison Post Post-Scriptum on Control Societies," 435-447.
[43] Buren, *The Function of the Studio,* 51-58.

afforded me. I found a large cupboard space that bypassed the economic enumeration of the floor-space. This cupboard was missing from the mapping of studio spaces and therefore was not accounted for in terms of rental income paid by Fine Arts to Monash University. While this move does not place me outside of any institutional context it does transform the reception of the studio furniture and relocates the material entity of my research in the equivalent of a black hole of institutional economics. When it was presented in the VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery (as *STUDIO CONDITIONS*) the furniture took on the quality of a model or prototype (see fig. 3). Placed in a studio corral the furniture takes on utilitarian if slightly too aestheticised quality, which reduces its practical utility (see fig. 4). The cupboard does not only hide the furniture but also strips it of the aforementioned idealisation. The plan to expose the condition of the furniture's storage, crammed and packed in a cupboard too small for viable and useful storage, suggests an aesthetic of dysfunction. This particular siting of the furniture, being one of four sites of presentation that explicitly (and without ambiguity), critiques the role of studio within the university on a material and spatial level. The studio that is tucked away in a cupboard; something between a waste and a secret, is far from an idealisation of studio practice (see fig. 5). An idealisation that whilst ironic is apparent in the other three modes of presentation the studio furniture takes: in the gallery context; in the studio corral; and as a light-box image.

As a foil to the above scenario I have constructed a photographic image mediated via a light-box of the furniture displayed in the corral it was initially envisaged for. I have chosen the light-box so that the commercialism it emanates reflects the university administration's disposition to understand the studio space as calculus derived from a commercial imperative. The commercial imperative that the photographic light-box offers the exhibition is an advertised fantasy that is undermined by the actual cupboard space the furniture inhabits. The light-box is an ideal form to facilitate the representation of the studio space that is a figment of a brief moment where I was able to install the furniture in a studio space amongst eerily empty corrals. It would be disingenuous to pretend that I held no belief in the ideal of the studio or the vast research potential of the university, despite the suggestion of my rhetorical approval of Buren's critique. The site to present this fantasy, as misspent and problematic as I now find it, is the front space of the Faculty Gallery. It is the flagging of my

complicit, ambiguous and complicated role in the institution of the studio and the artist's role within it.

While the aforementioned presentations focus explicitly on my roles within a research paradigm, an invitation to contribute to an exhibition at RMIT's Project Space gave me the opportunity to bridge the institutional factors at play in both my research and 'sites' outside this context. I constructed a simple wooden lectern that had a planar face painted in the regulation pantone blue of Monash University.[44] Through the lectern I wanted to explicitly address the pedagogical authority that seemed absent in the furniture constructed for *STUDIO CONDITIONS*. The lectern was used in two contexts, both of which utilised the lectern as a point of privileged and official address in the space of the administering of an exhibition.[45] The first presentation responded to the curatorial premise for the RMIT exhibition. The premise for inclusion was based on being an alumnus of RMIT who made work within a Queer paradigm; as this was an exhibition programmed for the Midsumma Festival.[46] The sculptural dimension of the lectern was accompanied with a written lecture that reflexively addressed the curatorial boundaries of the exhibition and my student experience at the institution (see Appendix 4). The typed lecture sat on the lectern for the length of the exhibition.[47] I performed it at 9am primarily for the university's lecture recording services. This video document would be freely available online, reminiscent of archived lectures in academic contexts (see fig. 9). The second presentation was for

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[44] The two blues used in *STUDIO CONDITIONS* are sourced from the *Monash University Visual Brand Manual* and are Pantone 2945 C for the lighter 'royal blue' and is offset by the darker navy blue of Pantone 296 C.

[45] Other administrative functions of the exhibition are the invite, documentation, the opening, the artist/curator's floor-talk and the press release. The contemporary artist Trisha Donnelly treats all parts of this administration as part of her art practice. Donnelly is an example of an artist who utilises the reflexive methodology of Institutional Critique without the explicit critique of the dominant power dynamic. Donnelly treats these elements as forms to manipulate as part of her expanded sculptural practice. *Trisha Donnelly,* Renaissance Society: University of Chicago, February 24, 2008. http://www.renaissancesociety.org/site/Exhibitions/Images.Trisha-Donnelly.594.html (accessed January 15, 2011).

[46] Midsumma is Melbourne's lesbian, gay, queer, bisexual, transgendered and pansexual festival.

[47] "Lecture for Another Institution" (see Appendix 4), Recording of performance: Spiros Panigirakis, "A Lecture for Another Institution," in *Secret Files from the Working Men's College*," February 10, 2010, http://schoolofartgalleries.dsc.rmit.edu.au/PSSR/exhibitions/2010/secret_files.html (accessed January 10, 2011).

the Monash Sculpture department's exhibition in the Faculty Gallery. Again my inclusion in this exhibition was based on identity. This time being an academic within a departmental show that is public relations activity. Eminent curator, Robert Lindsay launched the exhibition using the lectern during the opening. I recorded his speech with a video camera, performatively situating myself in the front row of the audience and wearing a shirt that was colour coded to match the lectern. While I was not aware of the content of Lindsay's address: advice he would give to a budding artist—my performed observation during the launch created a layer of critique to an otherwise conservative account of artistic inspiration and prolific production (see fig. 10).

'Critically reflexive site specificity' has given me the tools to interrogate the overlapping institutional boundaries of art and the university not only as simple entities of power that bestow and restrict opportunity. My acknowledged place within the critique relies on institutional enablement and acceptance. An examination of the quality of my co-option however requires a different set of tools to accompany the critique of the aforementioned institutional boundaries of the research. These tools grapple with identity politics and psychological conditions—allowing the quality of institutional critique to become homologous to the social narratives.

Figure 7: Spiros Panigirakis, *A lectern for an institution*, 2010, medium density chipboard, yellow tongue chipboard, hardwood, masonite, acrylic paint and paper, 129 x 64 x 54 cm., "Rapid Slowness" exhibition, Faculty Gallery, Monash University.

Figure 8: Spiros Panigirakis, *Lecture for Another Institution*, 2010, "Secret Files from the Working Men's College" exhibition, RMIT Project Space, performance view.

Figure 9: Spiros Panigirakis, Lecture for Another Institution, 2010, "Secret Files from the Working Men's College" exhibition, online performance documentation, http://schoolofartgalleries.dsc.rmit.edu.au/PSSR/exhibitions/2010/secret_files.html

Figure 10: Spiros Panigirakis, *A lectern for an institution*, 2010, opening address delivered by Robert Lindsay, documentation and performance, **"**Rapid Slowness**"** exhibition, Faculty Gallery, Monash University.

Figure 11: Spiros Panigirakis, *Administration*, 2010, Spiros Panigirakis and Justine Makdessi reading transcript of *Supervision 1*, (see fig. 1) "Rapid Slowness" exhibition, Faculty Gallery, Monash University.

The Self on the Line

> We have learnt that identity is neither fully ours, nor some other force's, but rather something both external and internal, something both incomplete and over-determined, something both too soon and belated.
>
> Julian Stallabrass, *Locus Solus: Site, Identity, Technology in Contemporary Art*

As Julian Stallabrass suggests, the exploration of identity within art finds itself in a discursive field that deals with a level of complexity: a type of minefield. My artwork, as hosted by the university, explores and amplifies the personal identities found in the local spaces I inhabit. This framing of personal sites and narratives might be considered anything from a narcissistically driven act of validation to a pseudo-political act of agency.[48] The locales of the four fieldwork sites—the urban foreshore, student common room, friends' lounge-room and parent's garage—are distinct community contexts with their own complex field of identifications. They also perform in a similar fashion to that of the art institutions I usually present art in. The narratives I explore within these spaces will among other issues be explorations of exclusion.[49] Art in any site context, contrary to adolescent fantasies, does not alleviate these exclusions. Intervening in sites not codified as art institutions is similarly problematic due to the importance of working with the collaborative (yet exclusionary) dynamic of the community.

This situation is problematic in that these communities are interesting in their own right and any art intervention is extraneous to their being and their interest. In addition I have a problem with representing any identity divorced from its community context.

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[48] The artist Ken Lum notes "Foucault turned the localised struggles of everyday life in order to challenge the autonomous production of knowledge. His contention was that these localised struggles produce life knowledges, and that these knowledges are very different from institutionally produced and validates knowledges. I think what's important to grasp here is that life knowledges don't lend themselves so easily to representation." Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences,* ed., R.D. Laing (New York, Pantheon, 1970), 81-83 Quoted in Ken Lum,"Dear Steven," in *Art school : (propositions for the 21st century)*, ed. Steven Henry Madoff (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009), 335.

[49] The political and social notions of alterity and community will be discussed in relation to the notion of site in Chapter Three.

This wariness regards the argument that the exploration of subject-positions creates an essentialist personal universe that can only be unravelled with the author's sense of truth. This invariably leads to interpretive dead ends for an audience stuck on the 'proper name' of the artist.[50] The other argument concerning this exploration of the singular self is its problematic relationship to notions of community. When the artist (somewhat indulgently) talks to her or himself, a distance between audience and art is created. The aura of the self-contained subject builds no relations with a community that could challenge this fixed and stable subject. This again leads to a representation that is reduced. These arguments do not take into account the broader social importance of historical artwork that redressed the type of subjects that have been traditionally privileged in public contexts. Feminist, post-colonial, ethnic and queer discourses highlighted what was left out of the art historical canon before the 1970s. My project is framed and in some ways paralysed by these issues and limitations. I see my role as an artist as being able to present only a potential way of working in the gallery space whilst pointing to these complex identifications of self.

The representation of the fieldwork has troubled me since the inception of the research. I was determined that the four 'propositional site interventions' should have an autonomy outside the body of the research: so framed as it was by institutional boundaries and expectations. This meant engaging in the dynamic field of identities for the research but (unrealistically and perhaps naively) resisting the representation of the communities within a gallery context. I was suspicious of the outcomes that I would personally derive from exhibiting collaborative dynamics but at the same time felt it was imperative that 'local knowledge' was integrated within academia and art— somehow on its own terms.[51] I dealt with this quandary by engaging in the community

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[50] The danger of relying on the biography (or the 'proper name') of the artist is discussed in two divergent texts: Brian Holmes, "Liar's Poker Representation of Politics/Politics of Representation," *16 Beaver Street.* May 5, 2004, http://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/000943.php (accessed December 12, 2009); and Rosalind Krauss, "In the Name of Picasso," *October* 16 (Spring 1981): 5-22.
[51] In *The Order of Things,* Foucault challenges hierarchies of knowledge that aim to create a unified narrative for the way we understand the world. Local knowledge might be better understood as "subjugated knowledges" that is "buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence of formal systemisation." Feminist struggles to expose the everyday narratives, contests and achievements of women are an example of how traditionally the status-quo of institutional knowledge has subjugated this knowledge and deemed it inadequate. Foucault privileges "the claims to attention of local, discontinuous, disqualified, illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary body of theory which would filter, hierarchise and

intervention on site, and translating this within the gallery as an abstraction. This abstraction resists mimetic documentation of the fieldwork and attempts (at the same time) to maintain the representation of diversity found in the community frameworks I explore.[52] This was reminiscent of Smithson's site/non-site methodology, only with a more explicit critique that regarded the lack of community representation within the institution of art and the university. I did not want this critique to centre on my role as an initiator of social change, but envisaged it as an act of pointing. The pointing would be about what is lacking in the institutional framework I inhabit and how I am complicit in this exclusion by engaging with the boundaries of the status quo. I am pointing to the importance of the politics of 'marginal' identities and making a claim that the space to grapple with these issues is somewhere else and not the compromising context of the gallery that is caught up in my potentially ego-driven posture.

Presenting the data collected and documented from the propositional interventions into administrative folders actualises the gesture of 'pointing'. These folders are similar to those found in occupational health and safety (OH&S) pigeon holes found around the university.

order them in the name of some true knowledge and some arbitrary idea of what constitutes a science and its objects." At the same time Foucault would also challenge the idea of any representation of self, being able to be autonomous outside of all consuming political paradigms. Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences,* 81-83; John Rajchman,"Foucault's Art of Seeing," *October* 44 (Spring 1988): 88-117.

[52] Smithson's site/non-site will be explored in more detail in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four, I will explore the strategies of representation in some detail in the individual fieldwork studies in Chapter Four. In brief: in the *Baubles in Bushes* project (foreshore) I worked with participants to determine their own propositional conception of a bauble. Forgoing the option to fix the identity of the participants to gay males—the original community group I was endeavouring to work with; in the *PDU C6.03* (student common-room) became an open ended experiment in pedagogy—this planted the seed for student-driven intervention to completely reinvigorate the interior which I document and observe from a distance; in the *Hedged Domestic Condition* (friend's lounge-room) became a publication that recorded a number of intimate social engagements—the result was an exploration of the conflicting sociabilities that inhabited the notion of the lounge room; and in the *Garazi Project* (parent's garage), a commissioning process engages the compromised conditions of producing a decorative work for my parents.

Figure 12: Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors Even* (*The Green Box)*, 1934, Tate Museum, London.

Figure 13: Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors Even* (*The Green Box)*, 1934, Tate Museum, London.
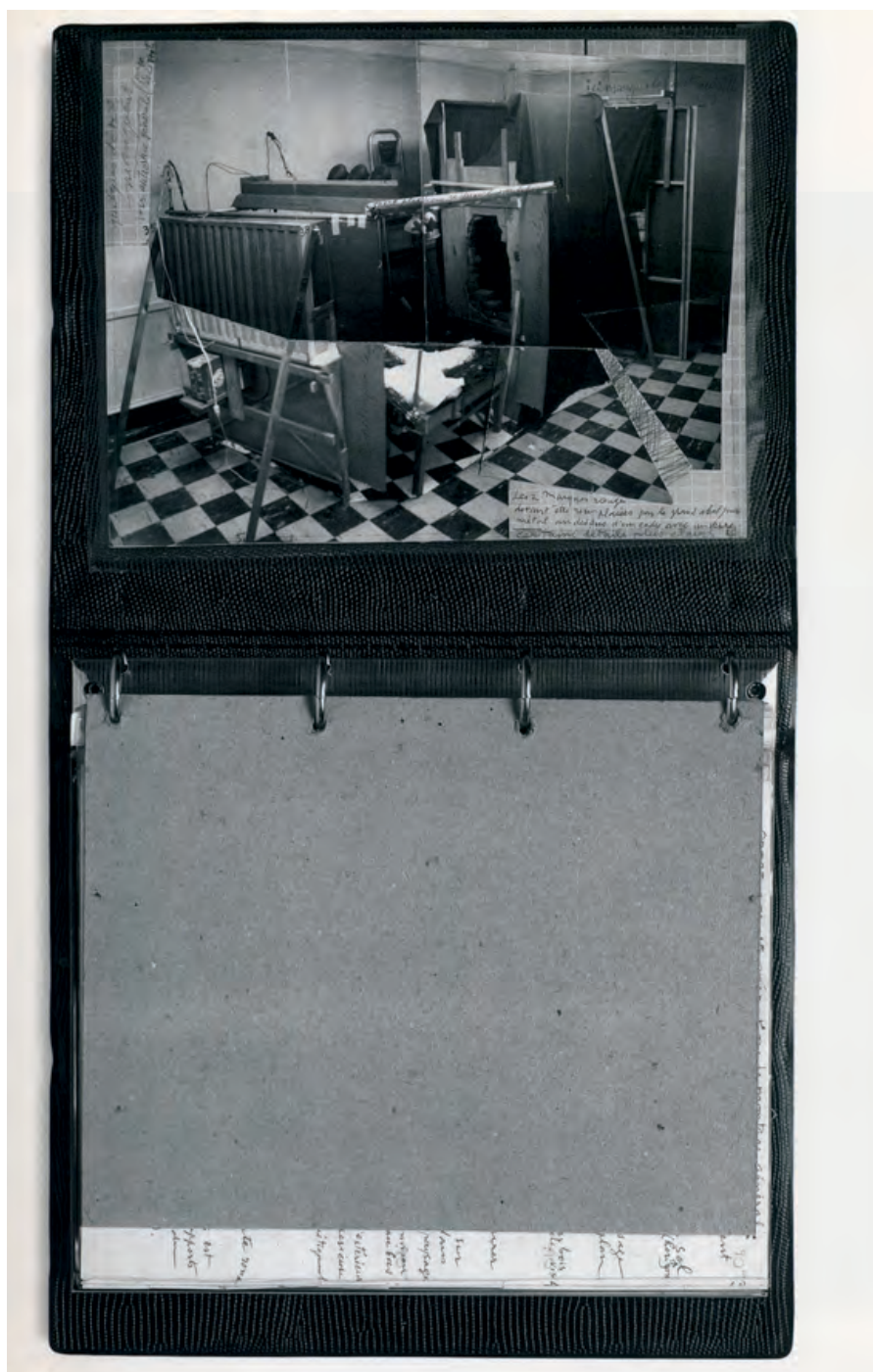
Figure 14: Marcel Duchamp, *The Manual of Instructions*, 1946-1966, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

These folders are also reminiscent of documents produced by Marcel Duchamp for *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors Even* (1915-1923) and *Étant donnés* (1946-1966). *The Green Box* (1934) and *The Manual of Instructions* (1946-1966) were a way of unravelling and undermining the transcendence of art: situating art as a complex series of conceptual, institutional, social and material relationships (see figs. 12, 13, 14).[53] The folders in the university studio context connote a body of knowledge, advice and regulation. I am not interested in replicating the formal language of the manuals as a strategy aligned with the aesthetic methodology of Conceptual Art. The OH&S content in the folders is a bureaucratic requirement that sits in the corridors of the institution in a mostly idle capacity. Their place in the institution is symbolic. My use of them becomes a strategy to analogise the representation of the fieldwork. During the opening I will employ actors to read, animate, unfold and so forth the crafted material representations found within the folders. During the length of the exhibition, audience will be required to book an allocated period to view the content of the folders. This administration will be reminiscent of a library's reading-room. The translation of the sited activities beyond mimetic documentation allows the community identities that participated in the fieldwork a type of autonomy that comes with this type of abstraction process. The aestheticised social intervention is somewhere else and not in the gallery. There are of course problems with this strategy—an accusation of silencing less empowered voice comes to mind. But I regard this strategy as an interim measure. I am positing the identities engaged in the fieldwork within the boundaries of the bureaucracy that the folders represent. This in some ways was always the fate that I resisted for the fieldwork, but was an inevitable consequence of its institutionalisation.

The representation of self, regardless of its hermetic or collective qualities refers to the field of the social and the political. This reference to the social within an artistic paradigm invariably implies a critical or instrumental quality. The representation of the social is instrumental because it imagines, reflects or critiques a sense of the real. Institutional Critique also involves the social. It is an instrument of the art field and

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[53] Marcel Duchamp, *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors Even*, 1915-1923, Philadelphia Museum of Art; *Étant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau, 2° le gaz d'éclairage,* 1946-1966; *The Bride Stripped Bare by her Bachelors Even* (*The Green Box)*, 1934, Tate Museum, London; and *The Manual of Instructions*, 1946-1966, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

endeavours to imagine, reflect and critique the real within the institution of art. My fieldwork sites—driven as they are by my personal subjectivity—are deployed within the logic of Institutional Critique. These sites of presentations are alternatives to the sites of presentation that I had previously engaged with: artist-run initiatives, government-funded contemporary art spaces and university galleries. I thought about the exclusionary and somewhat limited relationship these galleries have with the public. My fieldwork sites do not eradicate these senses of exclusion and limits. The sites offer an alternative exclusion and limit, by explicitly engaging an audience in a site context that they are familiar with. While the site choices derived from an initial limit of the self as individual—the fieldwork that engages the site (and therefore the community that inhabits it) is always attempting to differentiate, challenge and complicate any stable representation of the central author—me.

The sited fieldwork therefore continues with this tradition of social critique as it imagines a way a narrative can be pursued in the institution of art that encompasses the contingency and multiplicity found within any subject position. As Martha Rosler notes, "my work is a sketch, a line of thinking, a possibility" for what art and therefore (in an analogous manner) the world might be.[54] Institutional discourse frames the self in this project. Whilst I will not explore the broad scope of questions regarding subjectivity, the location and constitution of my own subject-hood in the project is an imperative. Between the risks of essentialism and the naivety of self-fashioning—*STUDIO CONDITIONS* explores fieldwork sites (or places) that are connected to my own subjectivity. The question is what is the quality of this exploration? A response might be to grapple with the invariably political constructions of the social self. Judith Butler notes, "it is important to be able to articulate them and to insist on these identities as sites of valuable cultural contest."[55] My own view is that it is important to assert identities at the same time that it is crucial to interrogate the exclusionary operations by which they are constituted. [56]

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[54] Martha Rosler, *Martha Rosler: Positions in The Life World,* ed. Catherine de Zegher (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1998), 31, Quoted in Molesworth, "House Work and Art Work," 94.
[55] Stanley Aronowitz, Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Joan Scott, and Cornel West, "Discussion," *October* 61 (Summer 1992): 108.
[56] Ibid., 108

Althusser's notion of interpellation as a "process where ideology literally recruits subjects," is like someone yelling—hey you there—from across the street.[57] This moment speaks volumes to my private sense of self as I remember key childhood moments where I realised I am a boy, gay, of Greek descent and working class. This is interesting for me, but in what sense is it worth making these subject-positions explicit in the public institutional contexts of art and education. Rosalind Deutsche notes in *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* that "what is recognised in public space is the legitimacy of debate about what is legitimate and what is illegitimate."[58] The importance of feminist discourse is that it legitimated (and critiqued) a mostly 'feminised' private sphere and its important contribution to notions of public worth. Helen Molesworth uses Mary Kelly, Judy Chicago, Mierle Laderman Ukeles and Martha Rosler to articulate the diverse modes feminist discourse took in artistic practices of the late 1960's. Molesworth contends that these practices:

> expand our notion of Institutional Critique, precisely because the feminist critique differs so markedly from the paradigmatic works of figures such as Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, or Hans Haacke…[they] insisted on the reciprocity and mutual dependence of the categories of private and public.[59]

Fraser creates a methodological parallel, when she self-consciously brings together Institutional Critique with feminist discourse, via psychoanalytic theory in her own exegetic texts.[60] Her predecessors were already questioning what occurs once the institution is critiqued within the body of their explicitly feminist practices. Invariably I, along with all these important forbears answer, we are left with a sense of self. When the likes of Kelly, Rosler and Ukeles engaged with content that was once degraded, it permitted "an engagement with questions of value and institutionality that critique the conditions of everyday life as well as art."[61] Therefore Molesworth sees the aforementioned artists' practices as instrumental to not only the broader sense of the political but also the institutional politics of art. This broader social worth of the

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[57] Louis Althusser, "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses," in *Lenin and Philosophy and other Essays,* trans. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001), 174.
[58] Rosalyn Deutsche, *Evictions: Art and Spatial Politics* (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 1996), 273.
[59] Molesworth, "House Work and Art Work," 82.
[60] Fraser, "What is Institutional Critique?," 307.
[61] Molesworth,"House Work and Art Work," 82.

self within the political sphere was expressed in the 1960s and 70s slogan 'the personal is political.' Joan Scott notes that this broader more collective worth was replaced with something more individualistic in the identity-driven practices of the 1980s.[62] Scott maintains, "all politics…collapsed into the personal, and questions of individual behaviours, attitudes, and life-styles stand in for political analysis of the social. Individual political struggles are seen as the only relevant and legitimate form of political struggle."[63]

As mentioned previously Fraser addresses self within an institutional context via the psychoanalytic model. In the conflation of site, institution and self in a critical practice, Fraser uses Freud's "no one can be slain in absentia or effigy" to signal the importance and space of the public interrogation of subjectivity.[64] Therefore Fraser's model of a critical practice does not only use the sociological model of Bourdieu's reflexive analysis (the sociological interrogation of the sociologist's work) but also the role of the private self in the social site of the art field. Due to the inseparable identification of the art, artist and site, the relations between these entities need to be made manifest and clear. This is the space where the subject's phantasies—the effigy--—is accounted for or interrogated against the real social context of site and institution. This means that the service of art need not only to figure, allude or represent these relations but to manifest these relations in actuality as part of the artistic intervention. Thus 'critically reflexive site specificity' "actively intervenes in and indeed transforms the existent realm of cultural, social and economic relations" by the re-enactment of the power dynamics between these relations.[65] Fraser notes that to work reflexively is to work towards a condition of truth within a critical practice which works against the status quo that either takes these relations of power for granted or just ignores them. Fraser notes:

> It's the only thing that really stands between critique, intervention, even possible
> transformation, and the reproduction of the relations of domination expressed and

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[62] Joan Scott, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Identity," *October* 61 (Summer 1992):17.
[63] Scott, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Identity," 17.
[64] Fraser, "What is Institutional Critique?," 307.
[65] Andrea Fraser Quoted in Alexander Alberro,"Introduction: Mimicry, Excess, Critque," in *Museum highlights: the writings of Andrea Fraser*, by Andrea Fraser, ed. Alexander Alberro (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2005), xxiii.

legitimized in the cultural field. If artists and intellectuals are to exercise their historically won freedoms by speaking truth to power, then it is first of all to the truth of our own power that we must speak.[66]

Fraser's use of individualistic subjectivity as a critical strategy within the institution is different from the 1960s and 70s model that was more about an explicit recalibration and affirmation of difference in relation to a dominant status quo: that is white, heterosexual masculinity. It acknowledges that effective critique can only occur once an artist can also reflect on her/his own personal co-option within the institution that potentially he/she feel subservient towards. And whilst at first Fraser's interrogation of self might be regarded as individualistic or essentialism for another era—the use of the term "slain" does not suggest indulgent exploration but a forceful critique not only of the institution but of ourselves.

This critique is echoed (without the psychoanalytic tone) in the thinking of Chantal Mouffe and Butler who both affirm the importance of representing marginalised subject-positions without as Butler notes the risk of "one who would 'use' the term…[being]… established as a 'one' by the term."[67] Both Mouffe and Butler assert the critical nature of the representation of subjectivities by offering certain provisos regarding the risks of fixed and stable subject-positions. By interrogating "the exclusionary operations by which" the identity politics are constituted, Mouffe echoes the reflexivity that Fraser describes in the accounting of power relations within her strategy.[68] Butler on the other hand acknowledges that everyone has multiple subject positions; "what [she is] against is a certain type of identity politics that says what politics is about is the representation of all those identities as they already exist."[69]

STUDIO CONDITIONS places my subjectivity on the line, by allowing the contingencies and critique of self within an institution to be both complicit and antagonistic towards the power that frames and facilitates art practice. As Molesworth

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[66] Fraser, "'To Quote,' Say the Kabyles, 'Is to Bring Back to Life'," 10.

[67] Judith Butler quoted in Stanley Aronowitz, Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Joan Scott, and Cornel West, "Discussion," 110.

[68] Chantal Mouffe quoted in Stanley Aronowitz, Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Joan Scott, and Cornel West, "Discussion," 108.

[69] Chantal Mouffe, "The Identity in Question," *October* 61 (Summer 1992): 41.

notes in regards to Kelly, Chicago, Laderman Ukeles and Rosler:

> [T]hey have not collapsed the distinction between art and life; rather they have used art as a form of legitimated public discourse, a conduit through which to enter ideas into public discussion. So while all of the work exposes the porosity between public and private spheres, none call for the dismantling of these formations.[70]

While no mention has been made of the subjective content of the fieldwork (this will be explored Chapter Four,) it is important for the research to create an ideological link between the institutions of art and the university with the representation of subjectivities found in the fieldwork. The modes of publication that I enact in the gallery are a product of the institutional conflation. They are used to clearly illustrate the all-pervasive and inevitable effect of these dynamics of power on identities made visible by my 'pointing'. My initial intention to keep the fieldwork away from the gallery would only perpetuate the dominant regimes. My solution is not clear or consistent. After all, the fieldwork sites are projects that do not need to hang on a gallery wall; unlike the institutional requirement that some part of the art be presented in the gallery context of the Faculty Gallery. Keeping the representation of fieldwork somewhat elusive allows it to hopefully expose the idea of difference within difference—a resistance to reductive representations of social identification— and allow these sited identities to be shielded from the glare of the gallery.

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[70] Molesworth, "House Work and Art Work," 95.

Figure 15: Spiros Panigirakis, *Supervision 2*, 2009, 6 video stills with transcribed conversation, 45 minutes digital video recording.

Research and the Self

Throughout the four-year candidature of my 'research' I have not held a consistent critical agenda as evidenced by my position on the gallery representation of sited community dynamics. While the site context of the university studio was constant rumination, I experimented with different methodologies. For a significant portion of time, I experimented with different approaches to the role of the studio: the studio made up of modular components that would unify; the studio as an architectural intervention; studio furniture designed to be utilised within fieldwork interventions; the studio as a hub of collaborative activity; the studio as a site where data gathered from fieldwork could be translated and displayed; furniture built at the beginning of the research to be used as physical boundaries for traditional craft forms; and furniture dismantled or destroyed once the stability of the studio site proved not to be so stable. A conundrum emerges: do I declare these missteps within this exegetic text or pretend that the evidence within the 'final' exhibition is a product of definitive intentions of successful research. Within a scientific model of research these ideas might be considered hypotheses. The final displayed outcome would then be my resolute answer to a question that would confirm or refute my position or hypothesis. The problem however is that my answers (in my artwork) are anything but resolute, and are in response to a question that is admittedly not clearly defined.[71]

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[71] The historical notion of research within an academic context is derived from distinctions made between and within fields. Distinguishing between art, morality, sciences and other knowledge-driven fields in the academic context is a vexed question. Some might see Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* as instigating the separation between "moral and scientific imperative[s]"—this being a theoretical precursor to Greenburgian formalism and the divergent, *The Modern System of the Arts* by Kristeller. Others see these notions of aesthetic autonomy as modernist aberrations, highlighting not only art's reliance on "intellectual and moral content and meaning" in the art of the pre-Enlightenment but also the 'mediality' of the critical avant-gardes. In an academic era that Borgdoff describes as valorising "transdisciplinary research programs" and recognising "non-traditional forms of knowledge production," these distinctions are harder to make when defining success or failure in regards to research methodology. Henk Bordorff, "Artistic Research as Boundary Work," in *Art and Artistic Research*, eds. Corina Caduff, Fiona Siegenthaler and Tan Wälchli (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2010), 72-79; James Porter, "Is Art Modern? Kristeller's 'Modern System of the Arts' Reconsidered," *British Journal of Aesthetics* , no. 1 (January 2009): 1-24; Jason Gaiger, "Dismantling the Frame: Site-Specific Art and Aesthetic Autonomy." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 49, no. 1 (2009): 51.

Supervision 1 & 2 (2009) and *ADMINISTRATION* (2010) are examples of this indeterminate approach to research methodology. This work was made in the brief time the administration afforded me to set up the studio in the space conceived for the furniture. I arranged a meeting with my academic supervisors to discuss the consequences of representing the ideal notion of the studio within a critical framework of failure (see figs. 1, 11, 15) (see Appendix 5).[72] The conversation revolved around the difference between the enactment and the critique of the artist's authorship in a studio that reifies the artistic process. Was the setup studio and my central role within it a display of the megalomaniacal artist or a parody of this condition? It was as if my play-acting had turned real as I felt the consequence of the excessive material waste of the constructed studio. The video documentation of the critical feedback aimed to reveal the belief in the idealised space of the university, art and the studio was present but also undermined by my sense that these institutions had failed me. In an educational context these failed presumptions might signal the limits of the research but artistically I hoped the display of vulnerability allowed for productive critique not only of art but also of the role of the artist within it (see fig. 15).

The training of an artist has always been in flux. The academicisation of the artist has been pervasive since the Renaissance where the demands of church and state expanded for the craftsperson-turned-artist.[73] Like most professional endeavours 'degree creep' has meant that a majority of contemporary artists showing in a museological and gallery contexts have completed some form of post-graduate education. Artists completing PhDs might be considered part of this trajectory but there is increasing criticism of the influence of universities on art, despite the now

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[72] These conversations manifest in two works. The first a video document of the conversation. The second is multiple performances between my students and myself, using the transcription of the conversation. These informal readings were conducted in an exhibition in the Faculty Gallery that was based around being a staff member within the sculpture department. In the reading of the transcription I reversed the power dynamic between student and staff member as they played the role of the pedagogue— potentially highlighting the lack or uncertainty of my expertise. At same time I also asserted my authority, as it was clear who was controlling the performance in this public space (see fig. 11)(see Appendix 5).

[73] Robert Storr, "Dear Colleague," in *Art school: (Propositions for the 21st Century)*, ed. Steven Henry Madoff (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009), 58.

traditional and increasing support derived from these links.[74] Within the culture of the PhD, the requirement that research be "contribution of substantial cultural significance" provides a productive tension in the research, which is at odds with a number of contemporary art discourses.[75] My art practice is very much at home within the university context and I offer no resistance to the academy's stranglehold on artists' training. The Monash Fine Arts PhD's framing of artistic research as a "contribution of substantial cultural significance" lends itself to aspirations implicit in the idea of the masterwork. The masterwork is a played out narrative of an artist's career initiated (sometimes performatively) by artists themselves, or by art history that administers a canon.[76] But what happens to the notion of the masterwork; in an art and university context, after the collapse of the Modernist paradigm? After the dematerialisation of the art object, open-ended process driven enquiries, the critique of the original and the completion of the artwork by audience participation, the masterwork is at odds with the dominant art discourse of the last forty years.[77] Therefore how does the university PhD program grapple with these discrepancies and host an art-school that potentially undermines its academic aspirations?

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[74] A conversation between John Baldessari and Michael Craig-Martin - artists and very experienced pedagogues highlights some of the hypocritical perceptions held by the contemporary art field. Baldessari: "The university is a home to a physicist or some kind of biotech lab, but it's not a home for an artist. It's a very uneasy alliance." Craig-Martin: "The terrible thing is, where does a Ph.D. have meaning? In the art world? No. It has meaning in one place." Baldessari: "Teaching." Craig-Martin: "Run by people with PhDs, who have no experience of the art world at all. It could not be a worse situation," in John Baldessari and Michael Craig-Martin, "Conversation," in *Art school : (propositions for the 21st century),* ed. Steven Henry (Madoff, Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 2009), 45.

[75] Monash Reserach Graduate School, *Chapter 7.9 Criteria for the Examination of a Thesis,* http://www.mrgs.monash.edu.au/research/doctoral/chapter7i.html (accessed January 13, 2011).

[76] Henri Matisse, *Joie de Vivre*, 1905; Pablo Picasso, *Guernica*, 1937; Kurt Schwitter, *Merzbau*, 1927-1943, among many others—even Marcel Duchamp played out his artistic practice via the works that encapsulated his oeuvre. *The Large Glass,* 1915-1923 and *Étant donnés,* 1946-1966 were staged as pinnacles that the rest of his work looked towards.

[77] As Foster notes, "…structuralism and post-structuralism…have led us to reflect upon a culture as a corpus of codes or myths (Barthes), a set of imaginary resolutions to real contradictions (Claude Levi-Strauss). In this light, a poem or picture is not necessarily privileged, and the artefact is likely to be treated less as a text in a postmodernist sense—"already written," allegorical, contingent. With this textual model, one postmodernist strategy becomes clear: to deconstruct modernism not in order to seal it in its own image but in order to open it, to rewrite it; to open its closed systems (like the museum) to the "heterogeneity of texts" (Crimp), to rewrite its universal techniques in terms of "synthetic contradictions" (Framptom)—in short, to challenge its master narratives with the "discourse of others" (Owens); Hal Foster, "Postmodernism: A Preface," in *Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (London: Bay Press, 1983), ix.

The notion of the 'significant' work is not only an institutional concern but also a private psychological one in terms of artistic production. I argue that the performance of a private psychology can be used as productive measure in relation to artistic process and the institutional framework of the PhD—turned artwork. Both the propositional works for the four fieldwork sites and the production of studio furniture respond not only to the ideological dimension of the sites but also to a psychological context. The four year process is plagued by insecurities but at the same time (in moments of complete inconsistency) a bravado emerges that is comfortable associating itself with an artistic canon even while resisting this notion of the significant. In some ways the scope of the studio furniture in *STUDIO CONDITIONS* does attempt to create a type of totality. The numerous pieces of furniture that could be used for a breadth of purposes are not exactly a frieze of life—but they might facilitate the production of one. But the studio responds by awaiting content, activity and participants that never eventuate or arrive. The propositional artworks for the fieldwork sites on the other hand, are aspirational forms that rehearse the content of a particular work but do not manage to deliver the intended respective forms. The rehearsal is a process that acknowledges the openness to change. It is a form where uncertainty is a virtue.[78] So while within parts of the project I re-enact the detached administrative qualities of the institution in the material-finish of the furniture to its resolved spatial organisation—there is also a significant component of the project that enacts an emotive flip side. This unfurls my subjective voice within the controlled space of the institutional structure; representing an anxiety in regards to the excess of choice; lack of content; failure of critically instrumental avant-garde practices; and the difficulty of a unified position in an environment that is socially fractured.

The practice-based PhD is receiving criticism as it joins and competes with the other brokers of power that legitimate art.[79] The other validating forces—commercial

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[78] Jean-Louis Barrault noted "the creative period… For the actor it is the specifically artistic moment. He sketches out, he effaces, he repents, he conjurs up," in Jean-Louis Barrault, "The Rehearsal The Performance," *Yale French Studies: The Modern Theatre and Its Background*, no. 5 (1950): 3, Quoted in Russell Ferguson, "Politics of Rehearsal: Francis Alÿs, 2007," in *Failure: Documents of Contemporary Art*, ed. Lisa Le Feuvre (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 2010), 195.

[79] Baldessari and Craig-Martin, "Conversation," in *Art school : (propositions for the 21st century),* 45.

galleries, museums, curated project-spaces and so forth are challenged by the different expectations the university brings to artistic research. My practice, like that of most artists, straddles a number of institutional frameworks that have qualitative differences between them. In the university, however, the autonomy of art is explicitly challenged, as research is required to provide value to the institution, if not society at large. This can be seen as a continuation of the challenge to art's autonomous status seen in the educational, state and industrial links found in Russian Constructivism and the work of the Bauhaus. And second, there is the primacy of expression and its resistance to professionalisation that is held as a virtue by some gallery contexts and is at odds with the administrating of university pedagogy. Boris Groys maintains that "the conviction that the artist rejects schools to become sincere" and to "manifest… an authentic creation in opposition" is based on traces (or myths) left behind by the historical avant-garde.[80]

The exegetic text within a university research context can be positioned in a long line of discourse that has served to legitimate art since the practice of Marcel Duchamp. The anti-aesthetic lineage of contemporary art that Duchamp is the progenitor of can be seen as basis of the tradition of fine arts research in the modern university.[81] The theory required to legitimate art has transformed Duchamp's anti-art gesture to a convention regulated by the university. The university divides the thesis into the art that is considered the primary discourse and the secondary discourse of the text. While this text conforms to academic conventions it could also be considered part of the self-publishing tradition initiated by post-1960s artists dealing with the dematerialised art object. Art & Language, Rosler, Buren, Piper, Smithson and others created a theoretical frame for their own practice that verged on the polemical. This created an alternative discursive framework for their art that is separate from that

[80] Boris Groys, "Education by Infection," in *Art school : (propositions for the 21st century)*, ed. Steven Henry Madoff (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009), 29
[81] Robert Storr, "Dear Colleague," in *Art school: (Propositions for the 21st Century)*, ed. Steven Henry Madoff (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009), 61. Mats Rosengren differentiates between the research that artists have always engaged in (research-driven art) and 'artistic research' that is expected from a university context. Rosengren positions 'artistic research' within a "doxological" paradigm; contending that "all knowledge is human knowledge…doxology acknowledging both the critique of the traditional concepts of knowledge, subjectivity, and intentionality and our still obvious need for knowledge…" Mats Rosengren, "Art + Research ≠ Artistic Research." In *Art and artistic research*, ed. Corina Caduff, Fiona Siegenthaler and Tan Wälchli (Zurich: Scheidegger & Spiess, 2010), 108.

devised by art historians, curators and theoreticians.[82] The autonomy pursued in the Conceptualist exegetic form differs from the approach used by the university artist, due to the influence of a model used by the social sciences. While the artist utilises a number of domains (philosophy, critical theory and art history) within their content, the reflexive relation to the self and researcher that is practiced in anthropology, ethnography and sociology offers the artist a model to reflect on their practice as a type of experiment or fieldwork.[83]

Although artistic research might be seen as continuing this process of empowerment initiated by the Conceptualists—its infancy within the university means that assessment in the postgraduate arena is mostly conducted by practitioners with links to the tradition of the dominant narrative of art history and exhibitions—curators, historians and so forth. The secondary discourse is the pivotal point in both post-Conceptual practices and the contemporary artistic research, which is part of this lineage. This 'captioning' formed in arguably the artist's non-native language performs the role of legitimation. For Conceptualism it was to position the work within a socio-political context and for the PhD to signpost that this art is now research. In both cases its effect on the field of art is contentious. As Joseph Kosuth and Ian Burn maintain the dominant art historical and theoretical discourse (until the

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[82] Kosuth notes that "conceptual art annexes the function of the critic...[it] makes the middle-man unnecessary," in Joseph Kosuth, "Introductory Note to Art-Language by the American Editor," in *Art After Philosophy and After: Collected Writings, 1966– 1990,* by Joseph Kosuth. (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 1993), 39. Stimson echoes this position regarding the relationship between conceptualism and writing practices. He notes "in favour of academic philosophical, literary, and scientific associations, was to aggressively usurp the authority to interpret and evaluate art assumed to be the privileged domain of scholarly critics and historians," in Stimson, "The Promise of Conceptual Art," xli. Buren dogmatically notes "so I felt the need to take the floor, trying to reclaim it from the critics who had been shamelessly usurping it for ages, knowing in advance what possible havoc their prose could provoke, especially for new work, and a havoc from which some work never recovers, especially if the prose that swamps it is eulogy. So, the necessity of trying, by means of my own texts, to escape that discourse so as not to be its object and consequently the victim of its rhetoric," in Daniel Buren, "Why Write?," *Art Journal* 42, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 109.
[83] I would like to differentiate between two forms of fieldwork. The first would be to align the practice with a scientific or bureacratic imperative. The second deals with structures of power and knowledge but does so in a less sustained manner—priveleging the representation of the fieldwork methodology over its potential role as a tool. The artistic practice of Jean-Claude and Christo would represent the former because of the need for their fieldwork to produce an outcome, so to gain permission from various forms of government to enact their spectacles. Jacob Baal-Teshuva, *Christo & Jeanne-Claude* (Cologne : Benedikt Taschen, 1995)

last fifteen years) all but ignored the complex positioning of Conceptualist writing.[84] The position of this exegetic text within a contemporary art context is to dismissively pigeonhole it as an educational qualification—a barb that aims to separate the social field and the so-called transcendence of art above it.

It is this transcendental quality of art that firstly Duchamp and subsequently conceptual practices challenged. In both cases the social spheres of education and the everyday played a significant role in questioning modernist assumptions regarding aura, progress and the ideal respectively. At the same time that the boundaries of the everyday blurred into the institutional boundaries of art and have subsequently almost become a conflation, the field of art has gradually moved closer to the official domain of the university. For this move into an alternative academic milieu, artistic research highlights art's inherent use of the pseudo-scientific notion of experimentation to partly justify its position within the university. These two ideas create an interesting tension for artistic research within the university. As art can be anything and everything, the research within this field is also open to this unfixed boundary in everyday life. The philosopher John Dewey in *Art as Experience* observed a contemporaneous disjuncture with artists framing their production as a quantifiable research outcome in the university.[85] Dewey explored the idea of art as a form of knowledge or philosophical enquiry. But unlike the sciences where experimentation functions as search for some objective truth: art's knowledge is not subjective or objective but functions in the realms of experience.[86] Art becomes a verb that is tinged with doubt or a "problem half-solved."[87] This creates a number of issues in regards to how artistic research is judged in a university. Whilst inter-disciplinary

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[84] Kosuth affirms the place of art writing within conceptualist practices but also explores how this writing antagonises the field of art history that requires artists to be like "bewildered children playing with lumps of wet clay, in dire need of the paternal art-historical and critical presence to swoop down and make sense of it all…. If you are one of the artists who risk standing up to this conception, prepare to be vilified;" Joseph Kosuth, "Intention(s)," in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, 465; Burn notes "it has not been difficult to observe the falsification of the history of the 1970s, even while that history was taking place…as the magazines, the various survey exhibitions and institutional purchasing policies have…set out to convince us that nothing else [apart from revivals of formalist abstraction] was going on." "Sixties: Crisis and Aftermath (or the Memoirs of an Ex-Conceptual Artist)," in *Conceptual Art: A Critical Anthology*, by Alexander Alberro and Blake Stimson, 392.
[85] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* 4th ed. (New York: Capricorn Books, 1959), 54.
[86] Ibid., 90.
[87] Ibid., 90.

research is certainly a welcome and accepted paradigm in the university, the un-specificity that art courts is too broad for fields more tied to a contextualisation with or against the tradition of their research field.

Failure is an inevitable and in some ways welcomed accompaniment to domains that accept experimentation as part of their culture. In scientific research however, failure is analysed and used as a tool for future progress as opposed to an end to itself.[88] Like science, modernist art movements pursued notions of the ideal through a similar approach to progress-driven experimentation. While for Buchloh, Conceptualists like Kosuth performed Modernism's positivist legacy, Sol LeWitt posited the "radical difference" between the "logic of scientific production and…aesthetic experience."[89] Echoing Dewey's notion regarding an open-ended experiment with everyday experience, LeWitt makes claim to artistic research leaping to conclusions that are illogical, mystical and that "lead to new experience."[90] Therefore Conceptualism's openness to failure occurs on two fronts: as a performative measure in the consideration of the experiment in experience as a potential failure; and on an ideological level in the reflexive and published debates regarding Conceptual art's relationship to social instrumentation, the market and formal consequence.[91] This

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[88] Whilst the principles of research methodologies are not universal within non-aesthetic fields; they rely upon a process of substantiation that is approved by field's peer group. In scientific research, Karl Popper's notes "that the criterion of the scientific status of a theory is its falsifiability, or refutability, or testability." This understanding of 'research' poses issues for a practice-driven Fine Arts PhD. It would be difficult to attain any consensus in the field regarding a confirmation, let alone find an aesthetic position and its materialisation as falsifiable. Whilst a position can be taken in regards to artistic research, obtaining "confirmations, or verifications" for a theory does not make it scientific. Popper notes that it is easy to find confirmation for a pseudo-science if you are looking for confirmation. These distinctions for Popper, do not make the research "unimportant, insignificant or nonsensical," it means that the research (even if it is based on observation) is not empirically scientific. Karl Popper, "Science as Falsification: 'Science: Conjectures and Refutations' 1963," in *Readings in the Philosophy of Science*, ed. Theodore Schick (Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2000), 9-13.
[89] Buchloh contentiously notes "In opposition to this, Kosuth was arguing, in 1969, precisely for the continuation and expansion of modernism's positivist legacy, and doing so with what - must have seemed to him at the time the most radical and advanced tools of that tradition" in Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," 123.: and Sol LeWitt, "Sentences on Conceptual Art," *Art-Language*, 1969: 11, Quoted in Buchloh, 115.
[90] Sol LeWitt, *Sentences on Conceptual Art*, 11, Quoted in Buchloh, 115.
[91] The notion of failure was explicitly and reflexively incorporated into the discourse created by the conceptualist artists themselves. *The Fox,* a newspaper created by the Art & Language group announced on their front-cover, "The Failure of Conceptual Art." This in part was a

embrace of failure has expanded to incorporate the identity of the artist dealing with the fraught, subjective and unstable relationships to success, completion, audience and intentionality. This subjective quality is acceptable in the mainstreams of gallery presentation and even in the main body of the 'artistic' research. How does the exegesis, a document required to abide by academic conventions deal with the failed realisation of an artwork, if not in a performative, ironic or cynical manner. In short, the exegesis represents a reflexive or knowing failure.

It is a conceit to create an equivalent between failures found in art and failures found in other research fields. An artist might still encounter failure in terms of professional advancement within a dominant exhibition culture or fail in regards to an inadequate justification of their research outcome in their exegesis. Failure in these situations however deals with the arbitrary privileging of dominant tastes and secondly the judgment of art by adjunct discourses, art history, theory, cultural studies and so forth. Failure found within the content and process of art is a performative measure and challenges binary notions of acceptance and rejection. When failure is seen as a desirable outcome, the refusal (via judgment) of the dominant values of the status quo becomes positive. Failure like any other cultural practice that is co-opted within the art field becomes either a phenomenon to be interpreted or a critical practice that acknowledges the futility of resistance to any dominant regime of power.

Linking to notions of failure, the social conditions of distraction and compulsion at first seem different; however these intrinsically psychological modes of being both challenge personal autonomy. In a project that pivots on the notion of self in an institutional context—distraction can be used to interpret the avoidance of a true sense of self and a compulsion as a repetitive assertion of one's identity. The correlation between the two is a performative measure. The content and process of the research both focus on the institutional structure that enables the art and also allows for a structure to represent the subjective—the fieldwork sites derived from personal history. These alternative sites of research and presentation however are constantly

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reflection on the tension between the conflicting motives of Conceptual Art: the autonomy of art on one hand and on the other a productive engagement with society. The futility of any balance between these pole was openly acknowledged; Stimson, "The Promise of Conceptual Art," xliv.

being deferred both conceptually and materially via the sketched-out outcome of the propositional form. The propositions are dwarfed by my almost obsessive reflexive account of both the university and the dominant institutional power of the art field. The pedagogue and professional artist in me uses the theory of Institutional Critique, discursive site-practice and collective politics to justify this response. But a more crude analysis (and potentially a psychoanalytic one) might need to account for my preoccupation with power structures to the detriment of an actual reflection on the self. While I might rhetorically use Freud's "no one can be slain in absentia or effigy" as a methodology for critically reflexive-site specificity; there is a lack of using this within the psychological context it was devised for. The title of *STUDIO CONDITIONS* suggests not only an institutional situation that enables the research but also the psychological circumstance of being within this framework.

Distraction is a ubiquitous force in human life and serves as both a detriment and benefit. *Distraction* by Damon Young offers a philosophical and sociological account of the phenomenon.[92] Young uses Friedrich Nietzsche to illustrate that:

> we labour at our daily work more ardently and thoughtlessly than is necessary to sustain our life because it is even more necessary not to have leisure to stop and think. Haste is universal because everyone is in flight from himself.[93]

While my art is not a formal reflection on the alienated condition perpetuated by Modernity's industrialisation; it is this notion of distraction that I use to interpret the implicit psychological dynamic that informs the methodology bridging the institutionalised studio furniture and the subjectively-driven fieldwork. Young develops his thinking regarding the avoidance of self by using the philosophy of Plato to connect distraction to that other Modernist characteristic, the ideal. For Young, Plato's inability to "accept the fraught conditions of workaday reality" and focus on his quest to find "solace in imaginary perfection" is an issue of the western tradition

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[92] Damon Young, *Distraction: A Philosopher's Guide to Being Free* (Carlton: Melbourne University Publishing, 2008)
[93] Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditation,* trans. Daniel Breazeale and R. J Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 158 Quoted in Young, *Distraction: A Philosopher's Guide to Being Free,* 17.

of aesthetics and its relation to form and, by my own extrapolation, formalism.[94] For Plato imagined "a realm without pain, decay and death…[as he] …lambasted the arts for their impurity and denied what the Greeks were so impressively honest about: mortality."[95] For Young, Plato deprioritises everyday life and the value of self within an always-limited amount of time for the ideal that is not realisable. I position the studio furniture within this notion of the ideal. It is not equipment that is used in the "workaday reality" of an artist's process but is rather experienced solely as a form: the ideal studio that helps you do anything but actually does nothing but present itself an ideal. Its making and display (within the research as whole) overwhelms the time and space given to the fieldwork. While distraction from the exploration of self and intimate relationships (and the pain or complication that this accompanies) is understandable as it allows for the dealing with the bureaucratic status quo—an institution like the university that structures productivity. *STUDIO CONDITIONS* is not distracted in the conventional sense of a lack of focus. Its lack (or absence) as manifest in the lack of content, authority, decisions and work in the fieldwork exhibits the quality of distraction that avoids the self in favour of a critical enactment of the ideal within the institutionalised boundaries of art in a university.

The condition of compulsion on the other hand regards a type of repetition within the social sphere. In Giddens's exploration of the structures found in *Living in a Post-Traditional Society,* an account of reflexive modernity, he notes that "compulsiveness when socially generalised, is in effect tradition without traditionalism: repetition which stands in the way of autonomy rather than fostering it."[96] Compulsion or traditions are not only part of a personal or collective identity but also conditions that do not allow for complete psychological freedom. The institutional frameworks of the university provide *STUDIO CONDITIONS* with the identity of the project. This identity is a boundary where the known can be separated from any aberrant entity.[97] The project takes the social structure of the university as a ready-made model. This is a way for the university to provide the project with content, form and process, for

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[94] Young, *Distraction: A Philosopher's Guide to Being*, 224.
[95] Young, *Distraction: A Philosopher's Guide to Being*, 224.
[96] Anthony Giddens, "Living in a Post-Traditional Society," in *Reflexive Modernization: Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, eds. Ulrich Beck, Anthony Giddens and Scott Lash (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 70.
[97] Young, *Distraction: A Philosopher's Guide to Being Free,* 79.

example the institutional studio furniture, transcribed conversation, the 'crit' session and the lecture format. This provides a systematic process for decision-making in regards to form, which is known and validated by the inside community that engages the project. This adherence or repetition allows for a comfortable sense of safety in relation to the identity of an art practice with the university.[98] It can resolutely be identified as art about the academy—the question is—is it a critique of institutional art or a mindless re-enactment of the administrative qualities of the academy, as the notion of compulsion insinuates.

Giddens connects social repetitions through tradition, compulsion to the more contemporaneous parallel of addiction when he notes that, "we have no choice but to choose how to be and how to act…From this perspective, even the addictions are choices: they are modes of coping with the multiplicity of possibilities…[within] daily life…"[99] In a society that has dissolved traditional patterns of being and at the same time offers countless life choices—this particular notion of the compulsive allows us to cope with outside forces that threaten stable identity. While considering that this gamut of choice is evident in the sphere of making art in the infinite dimension of the everyday, as Groys maintains, I seek to understand my reliance on the institution.[100] The exploration of compulsion and distraction are not exercises to broadcast widely. These are not the definitive answers to, why am I doing this? It does however have a place within the exegetic text; as I explore how my identity is embedded within the institutional structure that I make so public.

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[98] In *One Flow Induces Another*, OSW ask the question project "What's the symptom and what's the condition?" of my *STUDIO CONDITIONS* project. OSW note [Gilles] "Deleuze suggests artists are 'symptomatologists,' capable of identifying new forms of disorder through practices that reorganise the materials, images and formation of their field." Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense,* trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 237; Quoted in Open Spatial Workshop: Terri Bird; Bianca Hester; Scott Mitchell . "One Flow Induces Another: Some Thoughts on Spiros Panigirakis' Exhibition STUDIO CONDITIONS." *STUDIO CONDITIONS* . Melbourne: VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, November 2009. Giddens notes "In pre-modern societies, tradition and routinization of day-to-day conduct are closely tied to one another. In the post-traditional society, by contrast, routinization becomes empty unless it is geared to process of institutional reflexivity. There is no logic, or moral authenticity, to doing today what one did yesterday; yet these things are the every essence of tradition." Giddens, "Living in a Post-Traditional Society," 71. Giddens also notes "repetition is a way of staying in the only world we know, a means of avoiding exposure to alien values or ways of life" in Ibid., 73

[99] Giddens, "Living in a Post-Traditional Society," 75.

[100] Groys, "Education by Infection," 29

I have used "critically reflexive site specificity" as a methodology for considering the co-opted self within an institutional framework. I have explored the interrogation of subjectivity as a critical device to question the inalienable forces found within art and the university. I do not want to just play lip service to notions of self (through theory and history) but to go some way towards 'slaying the effigy' in the present. It is a position that affirms a collection of potentially discordant positions: wanting the comfort of stable site and identity contexts but understanding the importance of flux; acknowledging the problematic notion of authenticity but using it as an echo when politically advantageous in challenging the reductive forces of the institutional status quo; resistance; resignation and then back to critique.

CHAPTER TWO

SOCIAL RELATIONS

STUDIO CONDITIONS experiments with the sociable context of art. Art is always, already, social, as the conditions of its production, exchange and meaning are products of society; this social quality does not require explicit representation of society, utility or facilitation of human relations. For example, at art school in the late 1990s my peers and I made art by interviewing people, transcribing conversations, hosting food projects, collaborating with other artists and non-artists, and experimenting with alternative modes of exchange and presentation. We thought we were working within a cross-section of post-1960s artistic traditions, even if we were also influenced by Euro-American art magazines and the broader Zeitgeist. We sought an expanded understanding of art's production, to investigate links between art's object-quality and the social world and to explore the intersection between art practice and society. All the while we adopted an apolitical posture reflecting generational (X) apathy rather than historically informed understanding of the avant-garde.

Meanwhile, Nicolas Bourriaud's *Esthétique Relationnelle* (1998, published in English in 2002) was framing similar artistic enterprises by emphasising the non-object form of sociability and its paradigmatic (or 'microtopian') relationship to society.[1] Today, Bourriaud's framework is one of the dominant discourses surrounding art's relationship to sociability. Debate over 'relational aesthetics' remains constrained by Bourriaud's framing, and disconnected from broader traditions analysing art's place in society and the social context of the spatial, material and objective conditions of art. This chapter explores art's sociability beyond Bourriaud's 'relational aesthetics' by first, exploring art and the artist's position within a field of social relations and, second, assessing how audience's reception of art has always been a sociable form in its own right, with or without an explicit use of the everyday social interaction that is associated with 'relational aesthetics.' Through this investigation this exegetic text

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[1] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Dijon: Les press du reel, 2002), 13.

investigates the social dimension within *STUDIO CONDITIONS*, as well as seeking to develop alternative understandings of the place of sociability within art more generally.

 This investigation is prompted by my unease over the mismatch between my practice and discourses surrounding Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*. The term 'relational aesthetics' has become a categorising term describing art that incorporates social strategies into its content, process and/or reception. Bourriaud curated and argued in favour of art practices that publicly represented private 'human relations and their social context[s]'.[2] These practices use sociability like any other artistic material in an 'open-air market' of representation and production in the endless remixing and reinterpretation of cultural scripts.[3] Significantly, Bourriaud's work legitimised an alternative to 'Young-British-Art' and over-produced installation practices that dominated 1990s contemporary art. While debate surrounding 'relational aesthetics' has produced fruitful critical engagement in terms of social exchange, collaborative authorship and participatory models, it has neglected more traditional qualities of sociability that have always been present within art.

Delayed translation of Bourriaud's text influenced the reception of his ideas within the Anglo sphere. For example, Australian art theorists were simultaneously exposed to both Bourriaud's framework and significant critiques of 'relational aesthetics' by writers, such as, Claire Bishop, Stewart Martin, Grant Kester, Hal Foster and others. These writers critiqued Bourriaud for an underdeveloped theorisation of democratic

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[2] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 113.

[3] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Postproduction: Culture as Screenplay: How Art Reprograms the World,* ed. Caroline Schneider, trans. Jeanine Herman (New York: Lukas & Sternberg, 2002), 7. In Postproduction (a continuation of some of the concerns explored in *Relational Aesthetics*) Bourriaud uses idea of the 'open-air market' with its attendant mess and vibrant plurality as a primary metaphor for the artist's 'dominant visual model.' Bourriaurd draws attention to two tendencies within contemporary artistic practice. First the embrace of disparate elements that involves refusal of a unifying force or coherent structuring device. And second the adoption of 'roles'. In postproduction he describes artists as 'producers' who are engaged in the endless remixing and reinterpretation of cultural scripts. This role making is somewhat constructed, directed and mapped but at the same time is also open to complexity and indeterminacy. It allows: disparate elements to coexist; is open to the practice being influenced by other authors; an understanding that anything can be aestheticised or co-opted into the cultural field and that ideas spread like a Deleuzian 'patch of oil.' Allowing for mess and multiple lines of enquiry to hide the social structures that control even the most convoluted and erratic 'script.'

models within community contexts, the commodification of the social sphere, exclusion of activist-driven practices that blur the distinction between art and social amelioration, and an inadequate art historical perspective. Importantly, the terms of these debates centred on Bourriaud's theories rather than the artworks themselves. In contrast, my interest is in a broader discussion regarding art's social context, which considers how traditional objects of art have always been read and made in social contexts. I suggest three key ways of understanding art's sociability:

(i) by exploring critical art practices that utilise and absorb social dimensions without becoming an instrument of a political paradigm. The distinction between an autonomous and heteronomous artwork can be used to highlight how sociability is deployed and understood differentially in both contexts. This approach draws on Theodore Adorno's conception of 'autonomous art';

(ii) by highlighting the sociability in the production of an artwork within the context of presentation. This sociability might not be central to the content of the artwork but has significant consequences for how the artwork is read. This discussion draws from Robert Morris's exploration of social engagement within a practice that articulates this within a process-driven vocabulary and audience experience;

(iii) by attending to the embedded quality of sociability within an object- and spatially-driven understanding of sculptural practice. This approach recognises the sociability of objects as a complicated arrangement of issues, communities, audiences and the artistic process. This exploration uses Bruno Latour's notion of a 'sociology of associations' in providing recognition of the shifting social dynamic that is embedded in an understanding of objects.

These three theoretical lenses will be used to explore the multiple social contexts of *STUDIO CONDITIONS* by highlighting where sociability resides within the project's practical research. This exploration will be organised into four concerns. The first examines how the gallery context influences the presentation of research/fieldwork that constitutes itself as explicitly social and locates this social dimension within an autonomous yet critical understanding of the field of art. The second concern explores how the studio furniture in *STUDIO CONDITIONS* embeds sociability in its sculptural form without enacting the actual social relations advocated in Bourriaud's treatise. The third concern considers how *STUDIO CONDITIONS* addresses collaboration within the fieldwork. This consideration addresses sociability as a process-driven concern that is expressed in two contexts: the actual social relations performed within the fieldwork research; and the formal representation that transforms this social process into a document. The fourth is an exploration of an audience's reception—and the quality of that reception— as a social form. I explore this form of sociability as an engagement with audience that deals with the reading of meaning in any artwork. Regardless of the form and process that is presented within the artwork, gauging an audience's response is difficult as it is beyond any author's control.

While I engage with discourses that are driven by Bourriaud's framing, I work from the premise that sociability within art has always been considered historically against an instrumental or critical agenda. The issue of instrumentality, or the far lesss politically loaded term of 'critical' practice, asserts art's capacity to influence events beyond the art-world, to realise its heteronomous potential. The pertinent question is––what is the quality of the relationship between art and the sociable? Theodore Adorno responds,

> Art…is social not only because of its mode of production…nor simply because of the
> social derivation of its thematic material. Much more importantly, art becomes social
> by its opposition to society, and it occupies this position only as autonomous art. [4]

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[4] Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory,* trans. R Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970), 209.

Adorno's conception of autonomous art (discussed in detail below) provides an interesting starting point from which to consider the distinctions between autonomous and heteronomous art, their differing uses of sociability and their relationship to the critical. A 'critical' agenda need not involve overt political intervention. Moreover, I question the motivations of heteronomous art that has a political purpose. What reason is there to utilise artistic mediums for political purposes unless it is to access the cultural capital that is embedded in the notion of 'art'? The quality of criticality within an autonomous understanding of an artwork arises as a discursive shift within the institution of art. This might have consequences for a broader social framework; or, as per Adorno, the shift may be experienced as a disruptive measure.[5] This mode of engagement therefore is as traditional as the reception of Realist painting. 'The social' is embedded both in its representational content and within the language of art. Regardless of the quality of the shift, its resistance to aesthetic values, or its avant-garde aspirations—the autonomous artwork placed within a social context has a primary value as art.

My art seeks to highlight its own making, its own placement, and its own reception within its sociable context. This context might be a community-based sociability that facilitates artistic production or the representation of a social dynamic or social issue that exists outside the work. These sociable contexts also include the multi-facetted notion of audience reception. It includes: an audience negotiating meaning, narrative or coherence within an unstable communication model, an audience contributing to authorship via interaction, collaboration and/or social relations, and the audience becoming part of a work's form. These social conditions are part of a sited community.

This community context is part of the institution of art—a social field which influences how an audience negotiates issues of power within an artwork's reception. My project inhabits an art institution that explicitly incorporates a tradition of community-driven practice as well as the ideology of Institutional Critique. The quality of institution in 2011 includes, but is not limited to, such disparate traditions

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[5] Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory,* 209.

as: artist-in-schools measures; agit-prop interventions; displays of amateur, hobbyist or therapeutic craft practices; collaborative artists groups; the aesthetic use of design and architecture outside of its convention that relies on social interaction for the production of its meaning; aestheticised interventions by grass-roots political endeavours; explicit representation of social sloganeering or realism; public art measures that seek a diverse range of community engagement; art as curatorial enterprise; gallery-based installations that utilise audience participation in completion of the work; and installation and performance-driven practice. This list highlights the almost countless methods of overt community-based sociability that art has co-opted in the last forty years. The question I explore is: how is sociability used and represented and what is the artist's position within this field of relations? Further, what is the quality of sociability and how does it position itself critically within the institution of art?

Bourriaud's Relational Aesthetics

Recently, investigation of sociability within art practice has been narrowly focussed on the 'relational'. This discourse explores, 'relational' art practices that privilege sociability over all other object-driven forms, the critical capacities of these practices, and the quality of audience participation these practices engender. As mentioned earlier, Nicolas Bourriaud's book *Relational Aesthetics* has been the dominant platform for the initial framing of these ideas. This has provided authors like Bishop, Kester and Foster with the opportunity to reframe Bourriaud's conception within a more rigorous instrumentalist agenda. Stewart Martin in "Critique of Relational Aesthetics" claims "Nicolas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics* has emerged as the text for a new generation of artists, curators and critics."[6] The widely held perception that Bourriaud is the spokesperson for disparate 'relational' practices is problematic—as Nancy Spector notes in the curatorial statement for the Guggenheim's *theanyspacewhateve*r:

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[6] Stewart Martin, "Critique of Relational Aesthetics," *Third Text* 21, no. 4 (July 2007): 369.

> …it is important to note the distinction between critical theory about art and the art itself. The two are not necessarily intertwined. A critique of Tiravanija and Gillick's practices based on the success and failure of Bourriaud's thesis is not, in my mind, a valid assessment of their work as it was conceived independently from it.[7]

The uncritical use of the term 'relational aesthetics' to describe a work as if it is part of a cohesive artistic movement and acceptance of Bourriaud's framing of artist's projects beg scrutiny. Bourriaud's 'relational aesthetics' is one of many interpretative frameworks for a constellation of practices that utilise social exchange within the form of their work. By narrowly reading relational practices in service of their rebuttal of Bourriaud's terms, writers like Bishop, Foster and Martin emphasise the sociable constitution of artworks but neglect other formal considerations.

The book *Relational Aesthetics* explored the practices of Rirkrit Tiravanija, Pierre Huyghe, Liam Gillick, Phillipe Parreno, Vanessa Beecroft and others, and has ignited an ongoing critical debate. It predominantly describes a tendency in European art institutions in the 1990s wherein practices stressed, "art's sociability (as) the principal object or work" with other forms being "subordinate to this social and relational dimension."[8] This form of social exchange manifests in varied spatial configurations but Bourriaud claims "through little services rendered (these practices) fill the cracks in our social bonds."[9] He describes the social gestures performed in this art, work within the limitations of the institutional status quo and provide only an illustrative model of how we might alleviate our collective social alienation. Within this framework Bourriaud claims the 'microtopias' created, engender a democratic ethos within the reception of art.[10]

Bishop also critiques Bourriaud's notion of 'relational aesthetics' and uses it as an opportunity to question sociable models in general and their respective qualities. Bishop's analysis helps differentiate between practices that she describes as "socially

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[7] Nancy Spector, *theanyspacewhatever* (New York: Guggenheim Museum; London: Thames & Hudson, 2008), 26.
[8] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* 42.
[9] Ibid.,36
[10] Ibid.,13

engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, dialogical art, littoral art, participatory, interventionist, research-based or collaborative art."[11] Although these practises share, she writes, "a belief in the empowering creativity of collective action and shared ideas" the quality of the collaborative dynamic does not determine an aesthetic so much as a difference in the critical positions sought. [12] Bishop uses Chantal Mouffe's notion of 'antagonism' as a necessary ingredient of democratic public space to counterpose the 'convivial' practices of Gillick and Tiravanija against exemplars of critical sociability—Santiago Sierra and Thomas Hirschhorn.[13] But Bishop's analysis uses Bourriaud's argument that works by artists such as Gillick and Tiravanija encourage a democratic ethos within their reliance on community participation. This critical strategy does not consider the individual artwork so much as Bourriaud's reading of each practice.

It is not surprising that Bourriaud positions the engagement sought by Felix Gonzalez-Torres as democratic. The picking up of a lolly from a pile in a Gonzalez-Torres's work, as with 'hanging out' in a lounge-room created by Tiravanija, are conceived by Bourriaud as "ushering in all dialogues" in regards to audience engagement.[14] It is easy to imagine some 'errant' actions and dialogues that would not be welcomed by museums and galleries. The transposition of explicit social relations performed within or outside a gallery context changes the terms of access to art, as engagement with the artwork does not rely on traditional learned modes of reception. Eating, conversing, playing and so forth are acts that can notionally be performed by anyone. If democracy in art is considered a virtue, as it seems to be by Bourriaud, then the notion of democracy he has in mind does not constitute a complex social mechanism considering the social boundaries that still exist in relation to the type of audience accessing these museum works. Bishop compares this question of democracy and Bourriaud's reading of Tiravanija's practice with Sierra's use and exploitation of minimum-waged migrants or drug addicts for his artful black and white photographs. Sierra's attempt to recreate an oppressive capitalist social situation in a romantic photographic document challenges our understanding of social democracy according

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[11] Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents," *Artforum* (February 2006): 179
[12] Ibid., 179
[13] Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October*, no. 110 (Fall 2004): 70.
[14] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, 45.

to Bishop. However I would maintain it does not necessarily justify Bishop's belief in "artistic competencies that can be deployed" to counter social alienation.[15]

Grant Kester's approach, by contrast, does not box a practice within an opposition between a social and artistic field. Kester emphasises "a continuum of collaborative and relational practices," that range from more institutionally sanctioned practices to, what he describes as, "more overtly activist but less visible groups like Ala Plastica, Park Fiction and Platform."[16] Whilst Bourriaud and Bishop frame practices that are sited resolutely in the field of art—Kester highlights practices that, while not negating their artistic identity, also claim to be forms of social activism. He suggests that these practices respond to the reduction of the collective self "to an atomised pseudo-community of consumers, our sensibilities dulled by spectacle and repetition."[17] Importantly, in response to Bishop's scepticism concerning the "artistic competencies" used in the socially transformative potential of art—the practices identified by Kester are less concerned with overt aestheticism than by their social consequences.[18] Slipping between fields is part of their strategy of being effectively critical; they deploy the term art only when useful for the overall social cause.[19] The challenge for these practices that sit between art and political agit-prop is to avoid merely highlighting "worthy clichés" to an art-world audience.[20]

Hal Foster also conflates Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetic* discourse with the predictable practices of Tiravanija, Gillick, Huyghe and Hirschhorn. Foster pits 'relational aesthetics' against a broad range of historical precedents from Constructivism, arte Provera, with artists like Helio Oiticica, Lygia Clark and 1980s agit-prop art such as ACT-UP and Guerrilla Girls. What troubles Foster is the uncritical appropriation of what might have been social forms that once aimed to

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[15] Claire Bishop, *Public Opinion: New York.* October 29, 2009, http://artforum.com/diary/id=24062 (accessed October 30, 2009).
[16] Grant Kester, "Another Turn: Letter," *Artforum* (May 2006): 22.
[17] Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 56.
[18] Kester, "Another Turn: Letter," 22
[19] Dan Fox, *Editor's Blog: Underneath the Nine-Hour-Long Conference, the Beach.* October 30, 2009, http://www.frieze.com/blog/entry/underneath_the_nine_hour_long_conference_the_beach/ (accessed November 1, 2009).
[20] Guerrilla Girls, Group Material, ACT-UP and Gran Fury are good examples of agit-prop that tackled the political sphere in a manner not previously addressed by activism alone.

explicitly resist the alienating effects of modernity. Foster regards the somewhat utopian aspirations of relational practices as "ludic" in their intentions; innocent in relation to their politics; and disorientating even though the rhetoric of the active 'beholder-manipulator' is one of empowerment. Foster's critique of Bourriaud's position is summarised in the title of his critique **"Arty Party."**

The proliferation of collaborative practices associated with 'relational aesthetics' are just as alienating and dysfunctional as any kind of social relationship, but the much vaunted promiscuity of collaboration is seen by Foster to be emptied out aestheticism that indulges the art-world audience with its reflexivity. Foster sees the enactment of everyday sociability within an art context as a continuation of the discursivity and sociability found within art since the Renaissance. If this sociability is being enacted for its own sake Foster suggests it might be best understood as a new type of formalism.[21]

Bourriaud, Bishop and Kester's respective framings of social relations focus on the receptive end of the art field. My interest in sociability's interaction with art came about when I began foregrounding the social relations that facilitate art making. This involved presenting the sociable, technical and material processes of art making via video documentation, alongside object-based installations that I organised with varied collaborative groupings in gallery contexts.[22] For example in the curatorial project

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[21] Hal Foster, "Arty Party," *London Review of Books* (December 4, 2003): 21-22
[22] One such context was CLUBSproject Inc. an artist run initiative that I was involved with from its inception in 2002. CLUBSproject Inc. was a gallery and studio space that occupied the upstairs premises of an old pub in Fitzroy, Melbourne. With artists Terri Bird, Cate Consadine, Bianca Hester, Chris Hill, Marcus Keating, Laresa Kosloff, Kate McMahon, Michelle Ussher and Helen Walter —an organisation was developed over 6 years that actively resisted the privilege afforded to a grounded static display of art. With the motto—*Dedicated to the Perpetually Provisional*—CLUBS (as it was to be known) experimented with different modes of making art public. For me the model of the community hall became the dominant ethos in how I organised and made art for the space. The community hall is a space that is occupied by diverging groups simultaneously and allows traces of this activity to co-mingle. It is also a space that uses collaboration to get the respective job done. It is no surprise then that the space was to be associated with Nicholas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics*. And whilst CLUBS hosted fetes, served up soup at openings and frequently encouraged the public access to the procedural side of art's making and presentation—I can say that the discourse surrounding 'relational aesthetics' was only a vague enigma until late 2005. The quality of my involvement with CLUBS was influenced by primarily the site, the organisational model and working in a group environment to get exhibitions up and allowing these factors to be made

There's a Hole in the Bucket (2004) I presented an edited silent montage of the meetings of five collaborative groups who produced works for this installation at my invitation and within parameters I set. Whilst negotiating and working with one another is an integral part of the communication of the curatorial premise usually found in a written text, the video presentation took its cues from a 'surveillance' logic found in the documentation of sociability in reality television (see fig. 16). In *Luminous Fountain Work with Andrea Maksimovic, David Prater, Sarah Roberts, Dominic Redfern and Jonathan Symons* (2005), the same video strategy was used to communicate the collaborative construction of a static paper fountain, emanating from a wooden structure that doubled as individual seating for the process stage of the work (see fig. 17). These relational processes are often relegated to the background of collaborative and solo works. I wanted to display the representation of social relations so that collaboration was not only complicating authorship but that sociability was contributing to the meaning of the work.

There's a Hole in the Bucket and *Luminous Fountain Work with Andrea Maksimovic, David Prater, Sarah Roberts, Dominic Redfern and Jonathan Symons* display some characteristics identified by Bourriaud. An emphasis on exposing social exchange is embedded in the work's form. However, this sociability is neither the dominant form nor one in which the audience participates in a way that differs from the usual engagement with sculptural and spatial practices. Respectively, both projects emphasise explicit sculptural engagement with materials and space: *There's a Hole in the Bucket* incorporates five different projects responding to material processes derived from the nursery rhyme of the same name; and *Luminous Fountain Work* an exercise in which six friends collaborate in making a paper fountain which bursts from a wooden basin-turned-seating. The sociability is presented as video documentation that is displayed as a supplement to the sculptural and spatial aspects of the installations. This supplement exposes the social dimension of collaboration but gives insufficient insight (no audio is provided) for an audience to assess the quality of that sociability. In some ways this work, which precedes *STUDIO CONDITIONS*,

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manifest in the body of presented artwork. The official CLUBS discourse can be found: http://www.clubsproject.org.au/develop.php

is vulnerable to Foster and Bishop's critique of *Relational Aesthetics*. It may be seen as exemplifying Bishop's critique of uncritical representation of convivial relations and confirming Foster's dismissal of the hermetic reflexivity in projects centred around the artist's social groupings. My private motivations were to divest what I considered to be complex formal decisions involved in making a work to other parties, albeit within tightly controlled parameters, and to highlight the complicated social machinations of group authorship. However, representation of this social dimension resulted in a simple picture of collaboration as art making rather than an interrogation of more complex and contingent forms of sociability, which have arisen in my later works.

Figure 16: Spiros Panigirakis (curator), There's a Hole in the Bucket, 2004, CLUBSproject Inc., Melbourne.

Figure 17: Spiros Panigirakis, *Luminous Fountain Work with Andrea Maksimovic, David Prater, Sarah Roberts, Dominic Redfern and Jonathan Symons,* 2005, plywood, carpet, paper, video work, CLUBSproject Inc., Melbourne.

Autonomous Relations

Until the late eighteenth century art was predominantly created to serve state, religious or aristocratic purposes. These legitimating social functions of 'art' created a distinction between craft and art, allowing a disparate group of cultural practices (decorative, useful, industrial, applied or ornamental) to be excluded from 'a place in intellectual life at the same time as intellectual life was being classified and consolidated in museums, academies and universities.'[23] Art's autonomy is historically connected to bourgeois commodity culture, and is antithetical to notions of heteronomy.

Adorno's concept of autonomous art problematises the dialectic between art's social constitution and its positioning as a useless commodity.[24] Adorno uses the idea of the 'social monad' as a metaphor to describe the autonomous artwork. Although the monad appears to have no windows to external social reality, it is totally dependant on this external environment—recognition of this dependency differentiates Adorno's concept of autonomy from formalist understandings.[25] Like the 'closed system' of the monad whose internal structure is dependent on the outside world, the structure and production of an autonomous artwork, together with its literal formal and material dynamic, is constituted by external social conditions. Adorno's concern is with the socio-economic context of production. For Adorno, the artist's productive involvement emerges from the ideological contexts that facilitate practice in society together with technical attributes seen within the historical context of the form itself. This simultaneous independence and reliance on social context also has consequences

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[23] Andy Hamilton notes, "as the artist became free of church and aristocratic patronage … their work simultaneously became autonomous and commodified through entry into the capitalist market-place." Andy Hamilton, "Adorno and the Autonomy of Art." in *Nostalgia for a Redeemed Future: Critical Theory*, ed. Stefano Giacchetti Ludovisi (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2009), 251.
[24] Lambert Zuidervaart, "The Social Significance of Autonomous Art: Adorno and Burger," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 48, no. 1 (Winter 1990): 62.
[25] Clement Greenberg, "Necessity of Formalism." *New Literary History* 3, no. 1 (Autumn 1971): 171-175.

for art's reception. Constant change in social context obscures understanding; thus the very identity of an autonomous artwork is unstable.[26]

Implicit in Adorno's understanding of the autonomous artwork is a Marxist concern with art's instrumental role in transforming the world. The focus on the artist's production corresponds to the notion of labour being alienated from production. Adorno's conception of autonomous artwork therefore differs from the tradition of avant-gardist anti-art that challenged its commodified status. However, for Adorno, the autonomous artwork is not considered instrumental. Adorno is critical of work that explicitly deals with social realism or polemicised critique. It is only by being useless to the capitalist system that art can be autonomous (or free) in the first place. As Adorno notes

> By crystallising in itself as something unique to itself, rather than complying with existing social norms and qualifying as 'socially useful,' it criticises society by merely existing… through its refusal of society, which is equivalent to sublimation through the law of form, autonomous art makes itself a vehicle of ideology.[27]

Therefore Adorno's autonomous artwork may be read as having a critical relationship to its own commodified form through its useless-ness and muteness to the social context it is placed in. This uselessness, which emanates from the artwork's form, subverts capitalism and appears socially irrational—a position that both affirms (ironically) and critiques the society it is placed in. However, the efficacy of this critique is undermined by the insularity of the artistic vocabulary.

On the other hand the notion of the heteronomous artwork draws value from social fields. Examples of heteronomous artworks include paintings found in religious contexts, propaganda art within totalitarian states or the craftwork made by hobby groups. These cultural forms are read through the social institutions of religion,

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[26] Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*; Peter Uwe Hohendahl, "Autonomy of Art: Looking Back at Adorno's Ästhetische Theorie," *The German Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (March 1981): 133-148; and Lambert Zuidervaart, *Theodor W. Adorno*. August 3, 2007. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/adorno/ (accessed January 15, 2010).
[27] Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory,* 229, Quoted in Hamilton, Andy, "Adorno and the Autonomy of Art." in *Nostalgia for a Redeemed Future: Critical Theory*, ed. Stefano Giacchetti Ludovisi (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2009), 257.

political regimes and of convivial companionship respectively. Heteronomy allows for representation and engagement with the world to be influenced by the social institutions that support it. While heteronomous art involves aesthetic traditions its dominant value is one of usefulness.

Martin critiques an audience's engagement with 'relational aesthetics' against Adorno's conception of autonomous art. For Martin, Bourriaud's account of 'relational art' attains one sense of value from an autonomous and formalist understanding of art and another from society at large.[28] Bourriaud interprets art's sociability as a pseudo-formalist concern and, inconsistently, views this form as heteronomously useful or at the very least socially critical. Where Bourriaud presents relational forms as resisting commodification through their attention to social exchanges, Martin counters that sociability itself is easily subsumed within a capitalist paradigm as is evidenced by service industries, tourism and 'life-styling' of leisure and social ritual.[29] Martin notes 'for Adorno it is the non-communicativeness and enigmatic character of art that makes it critical, for Bourriaud it is precisely its communicativeness and transparency' with people.[30]

In contrast to Bourriaud's relational practices, heteronomous art does not require legitimation by the art world since it is assessed within its social context. The difference between the many reading-rooms Thomas Hirschhorn sets up in his series of monuments to philosophers and the original contextual source of this environment —the library—is a case in point.[31] Apart from the formal elements of Hirschhorn's spaces (surface treatments and furnishings) these environments function in a somewhat similar fashion. However, the educational function of both spaces is judged within an artistic frame in Hirschhorn's case (see fig. 18). Icon painting is a traditional example; while conforming to an artistic tradition it gains meaning from its religious social context. Contemporary examples include community mural-projects, where an artist is engaged to work with a disenfranchised community to display its identity.

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[28] Martin, "Critique of Relational Aesthetics," 370, 380.
[29] Martin, "Critique of Relational Aesthetics," 378.
[30] Martin, "Critique of Relational Aesthetics," 376.
[31] Thomas Hirschhorn, *Bataille Monument*, 2002, Kassel, Germany, Documenta 11; *24 Hour Foucault*, 2006, Festival d'Automne, Palais De Tokyo, Paris, France; *Deleuze Monument*, 1999 Avignon, France.

Although this practice has an artistic lineage it gains meaning from its social purpose. These examples differ from the art framed within 'relational aesthetics' because although socio-political discourses might be used to interpret these practices the work does not attempt to validate itself within these fields. Bourriaud's 'relational aesthetics' borrows heavily from community art traditions, but still seeks to be primarily understood as art. While past avant-gardes have utilised similar social strategies they have worked within an anti-art tradition, which ironically preserved their autonomy as art because the critical implications of their social practices were directed toward the field of art.

Figure 18: Thomas Hirschhorn, *Spinoza Library*, 2009, Bijlmer-Spinoza Festival, Amsterdam.

A discussion of autonomy and heteronomy is important to relational practices because sociability challenges the notion of the autonomy as it seeks value beyond the artistic form that it emanates from. The discourse of 'relational aesthetics' attempts to grapple with artistic autonomy but at the same time uses the intentions found in social fields as interpretative devices. The artistic frame transforms human social relations from the everyday into a reified form. This turns social relations into an art form and exposes those relations to reductive commodification. The reification of social relations into artistic forms highlights that regardless of whether the social form is enacted through the audience's experience or as documentation of another form or sociability (video for example) the art is both (simultaneously) closed off from social praxis and dependent on the social for its existence. Nevertheless, I would argue the greatest critical value of sociability—its critical value—remains within the field of art and not as a social measure, no matter how much the artist might desire otherwise. Hence Bourriaud's claim for the creation of convivial social spaces as 'microtopias' is provocative. Regardless of the diminutive political capacity that the notion of 'micro-topia' suggests—it asserts art's role in the shifting the social fabric even though this project (as Bourriaud would concede) is a discredited one.

Jeroen Boomgaard's use of the term 'radical autonomy' illustrates how Adorno's notion of autonomous art can frame sociability away from heteronomous use. Drawing on Adorno's theory of autonomy, Boomgaard, like Bishop, uses Hirschhorn as an exemplar.[32] However unlike Bishop, Boomgaard argues that the social relations found within Hirschhorn's practice do not force the socially 'interactive' forms he utilises to have an 'effect' or 'use' on the social-field that he refers to. Boomgaard notes:

> Interactivity, process art, social involvement: all these things are possible. They only become truly effective, however, when they depend not on the calculated effect of process management but on a radicalised autonomy. The autonomous work of art meets the demand of the abnormal, for the different, which is capable of feeding the imagination once more while doing so in a way that contradicts expectations.[33]

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[32] Jeroen Boomgaard, "Radical Autonomy: Art in the Era of Process Management," no. 5 (2006): 38.
[33] Boomgaard, "Radical Autonomy: Art in the Era of Process Management," 39.

An audience's familiarity with social forms within art is addressed here. Boomgaard believes that if sociability is used seamlessly to bridge the art/life divide then it can only be part of 'process management', a term he uses to describe the co-option of the state and market. 'Radical autonomy' reinforces art's freedom from the social spheres it is reminiscent of. Regardless of its ideological background—Boomgaard's 'radical autonomy' disengages with any notion of the "productive rapprochement between art and life" as its critical value is antithetical to this position. [34]

Boomgaard's 'radical autonomy' responds to the shortcomings of 'relational aesthetics' by allowing for sociability to retain its critical value without adopting heteronomous relations to a field outside of art. This means that sociability becomes as 'useless' as the social critique conceptualised by Adorno. Artist Bianca Hester's approach typifies this position. In '*Please leave these windows open overnight to enable the fans to draw in cool air during the early hours of the morning*' (2010) Hester transforms the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art (ACCA) into a landscape that sits between school field, sports pitch, jail yard and domestic patio. This installation refers to an amalgam of environments that have explicit social uses but in Hester's hands they become the backdrop for incoherent and absurd social actions. Sleeping, kicking a soccer ball, riding a bike and other communal social activities are familiar acts with social functions (see figs. 19, 20). At ACCA, their uselessness disrupts our passage through the gallery-turned-landscape.

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[34] Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents," 183.

Figure 19: Bianca Hester, *Please leave these windows open overnight to enable the fans to draw in cool air during the early hours of the morning*, 2010, performance view 18 September 2010, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne.

Figure 20: Bianca Hester, *Please leave these windows open overnight to enable the fans to draw in cool air during the early hours of the morning*, 2010, performance view 18 September 2010, Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne.

Robert Morris's Processes

Another example of an exploration of sited sociability is evident in Robert Morris's practice. In "Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making: The Search for the Motivated," Robert Morris reflects on Morse Peckham's position on the place of sociability (or behaviour) within art practices. He notes that writers like Peckham divide art into two categories. The first involves the "artist's role playing" and the second the "general semiotic function of art."[35] 'Role playing' in this instance can be understood as both the artist's process and the broader social framework that constructs these roles. I argue that social relations are an intrinsic part of any site, so roles refer to both 'the social' and to site.[36] A strategy of reflexive site specificity can focus on two parts of the sociability explored by Morris and others.[37] The various social relations supported by a sited community, can range from the artist's working process, a community's social dynamics to the audience's reception of the art itself. These two social functions may be entirely distinct, or overlap, (for instance, the audience's engagement within, or with the artwork may be the communal sociability of the site). For example *STUDIO CONDITIONS* negotiates sociability as part of the process of intervening into a site: a social narrative is imbued in the process of making the project and also through audience engagement with the conventions of display, reception and distribution.

The historical precedents that inform a focus on process evident in *STUDIO CONDITIONS* were the 'dematerialised' practices of the 1960s and 1970s that

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[35] Robert Morris, "Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making: The Search for the Motivated," in *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writings of Robert Morris* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993), 71.

[36] In *The Production of Space* Henri Lefebvre explores how social relationships are inherent to the production of space. Lefebvre divides space into a three key and interrelated fields that are: the 'representations of space' which involve the abstract field of power, knowledge and ideology; the 'space of representation' which involves the local and emotive field of everyday experience of inhabitants; and 'spatial practices' which incorporate modes of understanding, perception and action. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space,* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Cambridge, 1991), 33-42; Andy Merrifield, *Henri Lefebvre : A Critical Introduction* (New York : Routledge, 2006), 104-110.

[37] 'Critically reflexive site specificity' is a term used frequently by Andrea Fraser to describe strategies practitioners of Institutional Critique utilise. I explore this field in more depth in Chapter One. Andrea Fraser, "What is Institutional Critique?," in *Institutional Critique and After*, ed. John Welchman (Zurich: JRP/Ringier, 2006), 305; Andrea Fraser, *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser,* ed. Alexander Alberro (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2005)

conflate the making of an artwork with the audience's encounter with it. This encounter and the artist's working process were understood as part of the broader social world and the object quality of art was being superseded by art's intersection with the everyday. As Robert Morris comments:

> the interest here is to focus on the nature of art making of a certain kind as it exists within its social and historical making. I think that previously… such efforts have been thought of a systemless collection of technical, anecdotal, or biographical facts that were fairly incidental to real "work," which existed as a frozen, timeless deposit on the flypaper of culture.[38]

For Morris, the focus on art's process was not only a record of "mutable stuff which need not arrive at the point of being finalised"[39] but of the forms of "behaviour aimed at testing the limits and possibilities involved in that particular interaction between one's actions and the materials of the environment." [40] In '*Six Years: The Dematerialisation of the Art Object…*' Lucy Lippard describes Morris's *Aluminium, Asphalt, Clay, Copper, Felt, Glass, Lead Nickel, Rubber, Stainless, Thread, Zinc* (1969) as a process driven work that "underwent drastic changes during the show, but the results were less important to the artist than the fact of changes and his three-week commitment to continue the changes."[41]Anti-form, scatter, happenings, and Fluxus made an audience aware of the art-work's making and that this making was part of artist's work and therefore life. This did not necessarily result in audiences engaging explicitly with sociability (or 'experience' as it was otherwise known) but with the social being represented as part of art's "submerged iceberg."[42] Lippard documents the various material manifestations of the social that were an extension of the artist's life: On Kawara's *I got up* (1969) postcard that read "I got up at 12.17 p.m."; Bas Jan Ader's *I am Too Sad to Tell You* (1970) an image of the artist crying as if unable to tell the audience something very personal; Hans Haacke's *Visitor Profile* (1969-70) which asked 20 questions about an audience's demographics and opinions; and Vito

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[38] Robert Morris, "Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making: The Search for the Motivated," 73.

[39] Ibid., 68.

[40] Ibid., 73.

[41] Lucy Lippard, *Six years: The Dematerialization of the Art object From 1966 to 1972 ...* ed. Lucy Lippard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 93.

[42] Morris, "Some Notes on the Phenomenology of Making: The Search for the Motivated," 73.

Acconci's *Following Piece* (1969) which photographically documented Acconci randomly stalking a person until he or she entered a private residence or work-place. In each case the audience is made aware of the artwork's making and background sociability.

Figure 21: Robert Morris, *Aluminium, Asphalt, Clay, Copper, Felt, Glass, Lead Nickel, Rubber, Stainless, Thread, Zinc,* 1969, Castelli Gallery, New York.

Lippard also framed projects that made actual social relations the form that is privileged above all other receptive and formal measures in an artwork. Works by Allan Kaprow, Adrian Piper, Christopher Cook and Mierle Laderman Ukeles made the artistic process tantamount to the living process. "Art-as-life, life-as-art pieces" attempted to integrate art into the everyday, but nevertheless utilised some form of documentation (even it was only an anecdote) to frame these practices as art.[43] Discussing the anecdote as a form of documentation might not be empathetic towards the practitioner's resistance to commodification, but it is this documentation that makes these projects visible and able to critique the art field's use of the spectacle. The lasting presence (and biggest audience) for these practices is through retrospective engagement via grainy black and white snapshots. Lippard describes a variety of works: Ukeles cleaning a museum in her *Maintenance Art* (1973) (see fig. 22); Kaprow exchanging dirt for stories; and Cook becoming a gallery director—these artists' interactions were with a large unknowing everyday audience; Lippard describing the work's broader social contextualisation as "vague and underdeveloped."[44]

Figure 22: Mierle Laderman Ukeles, *Maintenance Art: Hartford Wash*, 1973, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Connecticut.

[43] Lucy Lippard, "Escape Attempts." in *Six years : The Dematerialization of the Art Object From 1966 to 1972 ...*, ed. Lucy Lippard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), xvi.
[44] Ibid., xvi

An intention to make social enterprise visible within an artwork was a key concern in *WITHOUT* (2006), a project that influenced the research for *STUDIO CONDITIONS.* *WITHOUT* was hosted by Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces (GCAS) under the auspices of the Midsumma Gay and Lesbian Festival. Despite having a strong sculptural presence the project relied on sociability to activate its conceptual premise. Like many relational projects described by Bourriaud and Bishop, *WITHOUT* did not attempt to be inconspicuous in order to resist institutional co-option—a Lippard 'escape attempt' (see Appendix 1.1). It resolutely used art's representational strategies (and co-optive measures) to instigate sociability within the project. During late December and January GCAS is closed to the public, and it is during this time that the Midsumma festival uses (and rents) the front space as a window display. In order to avoid performing the role of 'gay window dresser' I blocked out the window. Inside I created a private space for a series of social events. This space became similar to a university queer or womyns' space. In keeping with a more recent queer tradition of building identity online a blog allowed a broader public to view, engage and interact with the work. The blog traded in public disclosure/exposure/restraint, exclusion and inclusion by offering unfettered access to the project. Like Lippard's examples in *Escape Attempts*, *WITHOUT* (2006) made institutional critique part of its agenda. However, it was different in two ways: first it critiqued the myth of objective documentation by representing the social activities through very personalised blog entries; second, the social relations produced within the project embraced art's aesthetic dimension. The project's sociability included craft activities such as creation of posters for activists, helmets for the reading group, sculpture for the youth group and party hats for volunteers. Like Morris's *Aluminium, Asphalt, Clay…*(1969) the actual 'quality' of this (usually amateurish) crafting was not as important as its facilitation of sociability (see fig. 21). However, *WITHOUT's* social process is represented via actual enactment and material documentation that forms part of the project (see fig. 23).

Figure 23: Spiros Panigirakis, *WITHOUT*, 2006, digital stills from interior view, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, from the blog—*Outside Gertrude Street*, www.with-out.blogspot.com.

Sociology of Associations

Morris's framing of the social relies on the documentation of the artist's process or its residue, being used as evidence of 'experience.' It does not account for the sociability that is embedded in material outside of the artistic process. In *Reassembling the Social*, Bruno Latour notes that Sociology is tasked with framing or interpreting issues that are not recognised as part of a respective domain. The field of Art (like Psychology, Law, Economics and so forth) uses social frameworks to explore the parts of artistic production that aesthetic theory does not think it can interpret or read.[45] Latour suggests that sociology should be seen as involving a "tracing of associations" that can open interrogative research to "heterogenous elements [that] might be assembled anew."[46] This perspective has ramifications for what we consider to be social or artistic. The "tracing of new associations and…the designing of their assemblages" is prioritised over keeping guard of the art's theoretical boundaries or even thinking there is a non-social space for art to exist in.[47]

Tracing associations has far reaching consequences for how we interpret space and therefore for interpreting artistic enterprise. Tracing, or what John Law terms the "ruthless application of semiotics", has been elaborated as Actor-Network Theory (ANT).[48] ANT traces associations among people (as might traditional sociology) and 'things'. Actors (traditionally understood as entities with agency) are conceived as 'things' that are etymologically derived from an assembly of matter, a concern or an inanimate object.[49] While ANT can sound like a theory of everything, theorists like Latour and Laws have sought to avoid 'god's eye' reduction or simplification via iterative movement between the macro and the micro.[50] ANT seeks to articulate complexity rather than to consider it as unfathomable or beyond reach. The big

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[45] Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social : an Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 3.

[46] Ibid., 5

[47] Ibid., 7

[48] John Law, "After ANT: complexity, naming and topology," in *Actor Network Theory and After*, eds. John Law and John Hassard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers/The Sociological Review, 1999), 3.

[49] Bruno Latour, "Realpolitik to Dingpolitik: or How to Make Things Public," in *Making Things Public, Atmospheres of Democracy*, eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, 2005 (Cambridge, Mass: MIT), 22.

[50] Bruno Latour, "On recalling ANT," in *Actor Network Theory and After,* eds. John Law and John Hassard (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers/The Sociological Review, 1999), 17.

picture is considered an aggregate of "devices, inscriptions, forms and formulae, in a very local, very practical [and] very tiny locus." Latour notes:

> Every object was first a project. The problem is that these assemblages have no assembly to represent them; this is the reason that "technology" can look like a dull, mechanical, autonomous force that exerts power without anyone actually holding the controls….there is not a single technology around which…you do not find a swarm of different people assembled to bring it into existence.[51]

Latour illustrates this argument by using the murals of Diego Rivera to highlight what is absent from a strictly material understanding of a Ford automobile. Here, vast interconnected decisions, disputes, designs, thoughts, processes, people and places come together and apart to compose an assemblage—a thing. Within an art context ANT guides us to consider both sociability between people (audience, artist, collaborators and so forth.) and the sociability inherent within objects, spaces and discursivities. ANT can assist us to unpack a given artwork and embed this understanding within its reception. In contrast, Ina Blom uses Latour to read the sociability of Liam Gillick's architectonic constructions.[52] For Blom, 'sociality' is embedded in the stylistic and material conventions Gillick uses as much as in the sociability the audience performs within, around or underneath his structures. Reception of Gillick's practice occurs "by tracing what happens in the encounter with the…surfaces [or 'things'] of the world."[53] This might include his use of a minimalist vocabulary, corporate furniture, utopian politics, fictional narratives, and modernist design and advertising, which in aggregate allow the "identity of an object or situation [to be] contested, questioned or reconfigured."[54]

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[51] Bruno Latour, "Which Assembly for Those Assemblages?" in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2005), 503.
[52] Ina Blom, "Liam Gillick's Sociality," in *theanyspacewhatever*, ed. Nancy Spector (New York: Guggenheim Museum ; London : Thames & Hudson, 2008), 49-54.
[53] Ina Blom, "Liam Gillick's Sociality," in *theanyspacewhatever*, ed. Nancy Spector (New York: Guggenheim Museum ; London : Thames & Hudson, 2008), 51.
[54] Ibid., 50

Figure 24: Liam Gillick, *Three perspectives and a short scenario*, 2008, Installation view, Witte de With, Rotterdam.

Figure 25: Spiros Panigirakis, *PROPOSITIONS,* 2008, looped digital video and accompanied A2 offset prints (edition of 250 + 1 gallery copy for each), VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne.
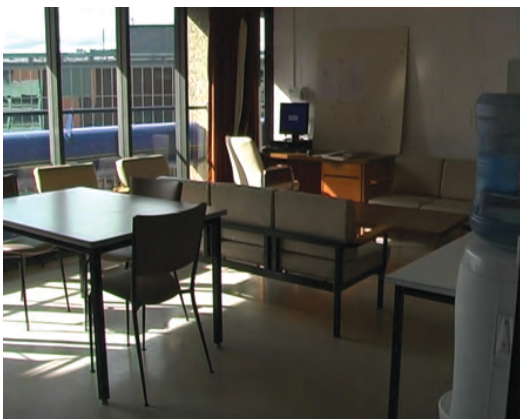
Figure 26: *PROPOSITIONS,* 2008, video stills from looped digital video, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne.

Figure 27: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS THAT FLOAT IN SPACE,* 2008, installation view, A0 digital print on paper pinned to acrylic Pantone 296 C painted wall, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne.
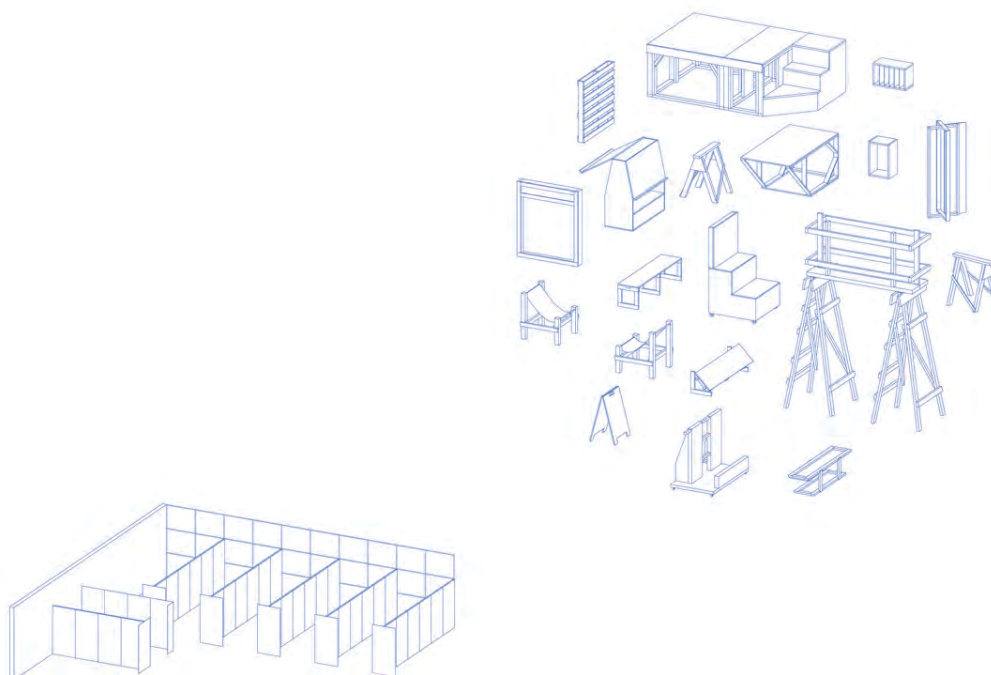
Figure 28: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS THAT FLOAT IN SPACE,* 2008, digital print on paper, 103 x 145 cm, drawing made with the assistance of Saskia Schut, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne.

Figure 29: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS*, 2008, manufactured boards and timbers with various surface treatments, laminates furnishings and coverings: stage; canvas slumped chairs; trestled scaffolding; pin-board; sandwich-board; newspaper reading desk; workbench wall and cutting board; museum/sheet trolley; OHS folder storage; pallet; stool; tiered-group seating with storage; sawhorses; plinths (aggregate, pegged, enamelled and acrylic), construction made with the assistance of Johan Oevergaard, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne.

Representing Relations in *STUDIO CONDITIONS*

STUDIO CONDITIONS at the VCA's Margaret Lawrence Gallery was a display of three interrelated works that centred on spaces used by the university in art's presentation, reception and production inside and outside the institutionalised studio space. The gallery space is roughly divided in half. Past the acknowledgments given to funding organisations and the university itself—a sparse space displays four monitor works and their accompanying informational brochure/poster. The screens depict almost static videos of four spaces: a suburban garage; a shrubbed foreshore area; a lounge room; and a student common room. The screens and brochure holders are organised using the tight spatial logic of a functional administrative corner of an exhibition. The brochure/posters each respectively describe a proposal for an artistic site intervention and community (see figs. 25, 26). This zone of the gallery and the featured paper work on the dark blue feature wall it faces introduces the project to the audience. The pinned paper work—a digital line print depicting an isometric projection of a series of generic partitioned empty studio spaces—is placed next to a circular arrangement of the furniture. The work's title is *STUDIO CONDITIONS THAT FLOAT IN SPACE.* Behind this work and the architecturally scaled wall that supports it, sit the built furniture forms depicted in the print (see figs. 27, 28). Arranged in a cramped yet organised block, the display seems overblown compared to the restraint of the previous space. The furniture is built mostly from wood (manufactured boards and timbers) with each piece incorporating a different surface treatment appropriate to the furniture's use. These particular examples show no sign of use. A bright blue line that, in exhibition contexts, denotes non-admission of audience members binds this display rectangularly.[55]

The exhibition at VCA was one translation of *STUDIO CONDITIONS* (the research project). *STUDIO CONDITIONS* (the exhibition) was contextualised within the logic of its presentational form—an institutional gallery that resides in an art-school. The Victorian College of the Arts and Monash University's Art and Design department

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[55] The two blues used in *STUDIO CONDITIONS* are sourced from Monash University Visual Brand Manual and are Pantone 2945 C for the lighter 'royal blue' and is offset by the darker navy blue of Pantone 296 C.

both incorporate galleries that, alongside other generic social conventions of gallery environments, publicise the university's stance on artistic practices and their relationship to education.[56] While *STUDIO CONDITIONS* is an art project that intrinsically deals with the sociability of multiple sited concerns, I intend the exhibition to privilege the social conventions of the gallery. These conventions mediate the sociability of the studio furniture and the four chosen sites outside the gallery's actual architecture. This act of separation highlights differences between social and artistic spheres—a dichotomy that speaks both of reliance and opposition. It highlights the absence of the sited fieldwork's sociability and so reveals that within the gallery sociability there can only appear a compromised condition within a representational framework.

The gallery's social conventions problematise the representation of sociability. My intention in this gallery manifestation of *STUDIO CONDITIONS* was to grapple with this problem of representing an explicitly social practice in a space already besieged by the reductive forces it imposes on any type of artistic practice. *STUDIO CONDITIONS* did not attempt to recreate the social worlds of the fieldwork within the gallery; it aimed to explore the effect of the gallery presentation on an artist's research and intervention into the sociability that occurs in an artist's studio, a foreshore, garage, lounge-room or common-room. Representation of social scenes in a gallery magnifies the role of the artist. It therefore imposes a level of privilege on the artist's role within the respective sited communities. Whilst the gallery transforms (and reduces) sociability into a formal concern, my goal was to grapple with this process of aestheticisation critically within the framework of the art field.

In *STUDIO CONDITIONS*, I wanted to emphasise that everyday social relations only exist outside the work. This gesture does not escape the inevitable transformation of social relations that occurs when they become the subject of 'art', but it does evade the glare of the gallery lights. A sense of remove is created between the audience's

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[56] A university's gallery or museum space plays an important role in the pedagogy and research of the institution. However these spaces, their program and collections can be also be utilised by the respective institution as a public relations strategy or at the very least a public reflection of the institution's values. As universities are large financial entities with decreasing government funding—the public face of any department's 'output' is seen as a potential marketing tool to lure funding from private sources and add credence to research grant funding.

experience of the project and the actual experience of a studio, the inner city foreshore; the student common room; parents' garage; and my friend's lounge room. References to different community groups and notions of community are scattered throughout the exhibition. These ideas however are primarily represented via absences: the videos are studies of communal settings devoid of communities; the posters propose collaborative dialogue with various groups but the tentative collaboration remains unrealised; and the architectural drawing of a line of partitioned studio spaces contains no human figures or numerical measures that would give a sense of scale. These absences form part of my response to the challenges of representing collaboration with community groups within a gallery context. Whilst display of relational and collaborative processes and their outcomes has been prominent in my previous work, *STUDIO CONDITIONS* interrogates the politics of this representation and the gallery's effect on community art practices by actively excluding representation of collaboration.

The furniture in *STUDIO CONDITIONS* could potentially be understood as part of the facilitating structure of community activity and the artist's central role within it. The problem (and critique) is that this sociability does not exist here. The furniture is dead to its communal use and only refers to it via its display. The thick blue line that surrounds the display of furniture suggests the absence of experiential relations that bring these objects to life and gives them meaning. These social relations can be found outside and therefore will not be spectacularised and/or realised within the space of the gallery. This is a space that both Foster and Bourriaud concede is a pale imitation of everyday sociability. Therefore the gallery cannot substitute for missing social infrastructure—the thick blue line forbids enactment of sociability. The gallery is primarily a space for display.

Regardless of where or how the social is figured within an art practice—an artist engaging social relations in any site context must balance multiple concerns. On the one hand an artist might engage community via the involvement of colleagues, friends and acquaintances and risk engaging only a clique. On the other hand, collaboration with an unfamiliar community risks exploitation. Of course art-theoretical debates matter very little for practitioners who purposefully inhabit a zone between art and social engagement or activism. A pertinent example of this practice would be the

activity pursued by the artist/activist group Squat Space. The Waterloo/Redfern *Tour of Beauty* was a bus tour devised to introduce participants of the historical, political and social fabric of Sydney's inner city—an area rich in indigenous and activist heritage (see fig. 30).[57] This work is an exemplar of the strategy Kester describes, which is in opposition to Adorno's use of critique within the field of art. The questions of what art is and what it is not, or whether framing the social within an art context is problematic, is irrelevant to these practices. For practitioners the issues of artistic significance and the ethical dimensions of cultural capital often are not such a burden. After all, a community mural painter, arts therapist, social outreach worker, youth counsellor or educator are unlikely to be concerned about the public's perception of empowering a disenfranchised group. This dimension—along with balancing the nuanced power relations between participants—is part of these professions' core values.

Figure 30: Squat Space, *Tour of Beauty*, 2009, guided bus tour of Redfern/Waterloo, Sydney.

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[57] Squat Space, *Squat Space.* http://squatspace.com/index.php (accessed December 12, 2010).

Embedded Sociability

Sociability does not only occur between people, sites and communities; it is also embedded in objects.[58] Display of non-realised propositional site projects and studio furniture in a static museological manner highlights the objects that frame and facilitate collaborative and relational practices without necessitating the actual 'display' of these social enterprises within the confines of the gallery. The sociability is embedded in the objects. The artistic status of the furniture in *STUDIO CONDITIONS* is multi-facetted. Within the research the studio furniture is a sculptural study of the multiple roles the artists inhabits, a potential mechanism that influences further craft productions, and a material and conceptual boundary for procedural and social facilitation and display of the collaborators' craft production. Once the furniture is displayed within the gallery it becomes an ambiguous object that has lost its use-value (as a design object) and is not entirely a work of sculpture either. Its value within the exhibition is as a 1:1 prototype that can only have an imagined potential—a propositional object with a very real material presence in the world.

Discourses surrounding *Relational Aesthetics* have created a conflict between the 'immateriality' of artistic sociability and the sculptural or object-driven forms that facilitate the social. The object is seen as 'merely representational' and the social is valorised as a critical intervention that bypasses commodification. This position naively posits artistic sociability as somehow outside representational commodification—an ambition which is impossible even for works that are not documented, like the social performative practices of Tino Seghal. Even a perfunctory viewing of Tiravanija's projects reveals the substantial material presence of furniture/props/platforms that support 'immaterial' social interactions. In fact, stylistic conventions are being used to 'delegitimise' the object (see fig. 31). The object/ support has become rudimentary—the ubiquitous trestle is a case in point. This is exemplified by a 'dumpster' stylistic convention that references both ecological ethics and historical links to arte povera processes of the 1960s. While the impulse to explore the social might be anti-formal, the pseudo-ethical considerations that frame

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[58] Bruno Latour, "Realpolitik to Dingpolitik: or How to Make Things Public," in *Making Things Public, Atmospheres of Democracy*, eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Weibel, 2005 (Cambridge, Mass: MIT), 15.

the work have a style and form. Even if these material supports or strategies regarding the object are placed outside a gallery context—the 'everyday' quality needs to be considered as a series of design decisions—from the object's origins right through to it being considered 'found.'

Figure 31: Rirkrit Tiravanija, *Untitled 1992 (Free),* 2007, above left and right, installation views of *Untitled 1992 (Free)* and a re-creation of Gordon Matta-Clark's 1972 piece *Open House,* 2007, David Zwirner Gallery, New York. Image credit: New York Magazine, http://nymag.com/arts/art/reviews/31511/ (accessed November 2, 2010)

In *STUDIO CONDITIONS*, this desire to foreground the embedded sociability was part of the impetus of the mixed design sources and process making of the furniture. The stage is scaled quite specifically to the site, the reading desk is an appropriation of the newspaper table in Aleksandr Rodchenko's Constructivist workers' room, the pigeon hole is an appropriation of institutional furniture, the chairs are a copy of high-school woodwork curriculum and the plinths are constructed through a process-driven morphing of a rectangular prism. This diverse range in designs and processes underlines the many formal languages that support the social.

Figure 32: Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty*, 1970, Rozel Point, Great Salt Lake, Utah.

Figure 33: Robert Smithson: *Spiral Jetty*, 1970, film, 2 stills from 32 minutes.

Figure 34: Robert Smithson, *Spiral Jetty Film Stills*, 1970, black and white silver gelatin prints.

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Figure 35: Pierre Huyghe, *A Journey that Wasn't,* 2005, film still from 22 minute film.

Figure 36: Pierre Huyghe, *A Journey that Wasn't*, 2005, photographic still from musical, Central Park, New York.

The Social Process

STUDIO CONDITIONS has many social manifestations or senses of public-ness including: its initial academic site contextualisation; sited community fieldwork; varying documentary representations; and presentation contexts that translate the research. There is no sense of a final formal manifestation of the project because the research is translated and retranslated for each audience and site of presentation. This research strategy is reminiscent of Robert Smithson's site/non-site paradigm. For example, *Spiral Jetty* (1970) manifests in three forms—the earthwork, film and magazine article. Smithson's practice is more concerned by material and spatial translations of his research and does not account for the embedded sociabilities that facilitate production (see figs. 32, 33, 34). In contrast, Pierre Huyghe both draws on Smithson and also exposes the social relations that inevitably become part of any sited fieldwork. *In A Journey That Wasn't* (2005) Huyghe led a seven artist and ten-crew member expedition to the Argentinean zone of the Antarctic Circle in a mock quest to find a mythical albino penguin (see figs. 35, 36). This collaborative fieldwork research can be understood to encompass material for future art presentations but it is also a piece in its own right; a work that conflates collaborative authorship with audience reception at almost every turn. Among the many work translations of *A Journey That Wasn't* were: a light-work that intervened in the actual Antarctic landscape; a film of the expedition; a Central Park (New York) musical that presented a commissioned orchestral score and set design of the expedition experience; and another film work of this production that documented both the spectacle as well as the audience engagement with this retranslation of the fieldwork.

The enactment and documentation of social relations that comprise the fieldwork interventions in *STUDIO CONDITIONS* explore two concerns. First, the audience and collaborators of the fieldwork, influence the form of each intervention within the initial site explored. Second, the quality and critical constitution of the social and collaborative processes within the sited fieldwork also effects how the documentation is constructed and presented to a second audience in an exhibition context.

Collaboration is a broad and fundamental concern within my practice. Apart from collaboration and assistance that is explicitly arranged, I also utilise a more incidental sociability to make many decisions regarding my projects. These, along with the fieldwork social interaction, influence each project's process and site-specific collaborative relations.[59] Sociability fits within a spectrum between two improbable artistic models—the 'autonomous artist in a vacuum' marks one end and the 'consensually controlled collaborative group' the other. Within that spectrum is a plethora of processes that are as important as any of the object driven techniques employed in the work. While some of these social relations may not amount to 'authorship' they do influence the work's form and provide its social subtext. These processes include: conversations with my peers, family and partner that nut problems out; brainstorming preliminary ideas; engaging and receiving feedback; accepting advice, ideas and admitting reservations; conversing across interests, positions and backgrounds; seeking technical assistance regarding fabrication; collaborating in different modes with other artists, curators, writers and designers; curation of other practitioners' work; commissioning of production; working with intimate friends, strangers, acquaintances and organisations; engaging in consensus, majoritarian and compromised decision making with groups; and positioning my role as facilitator, director or manager. The list could go on.

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[59]In *The Third Hand: Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism* Charles Green considers a range of collaborative strategies that emerged out of the challenge to the boundaries of the gallery and the studio in the late 1960s. This departure challenged the role of the singular artist and therefore the "implicit self-representation" that this imparts. The social concerns found in these alternative site contexts influenced the way artists dealt with identity and how it was figured in the reception of the work. Green explores how collaboration intersects subjectivity and process in the reception of the art object. "Communality" and "complex hierarchical divisions of labor" can be found in the backgrounds of art made in medieval, renaissance and baroque periods – challenging the dominant paradigm of the singular artist perpetuated by market forces and the media. Collaborative strategies involve the artist's identity being constituted of a composite of roles that has a consequence for how the audience reads intention and the medium of art that has always intersected with the author's identity. These strategies of collaboration do not necessarily need to be made explicit to an audience or be a critique on authorship. As Green notes "artists are thieves in the attic: They far from innocently try out different, sometimes almost forgotten identities in the chaotically organised attic of history, rummaging in dusty, dark rooms where variations of authorial identity are stored away from view." Charles Green, *The Third Hand : Collaboration in Art from Conceptualism to Postmodernism* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2001), ix, xi, xiii, xv.

Collaboration influences both art's social form and other material relations associated with sculptural and spatial practices. Whilst I never renounced primary authorship—my work is interspersed with other voices and I frequently delegate decision-making to collaborative social processes. For example: the common-room site sets up a pedagogical project with students to consider an interior fit-out; the fore-shore site sets up a community-driven workshop to produce individually designed baubles; the friends' lounge room involves an engagement with many friends to attempt to remake a painting; and the garage site is a commissioning process for an artwork made to my parent's taste. These respective aesthetic deferrals do not result from my abrogating aesthetic authority—the outcomes arise from tight arrangements presented in sculpturally driven forms that I have designed and constructed. These deferrals are of upmost importance, however, because they articulate how social authority, power and its position within the site itself manifests within the community that inhabits the site. These relations are privileged within the activities I undertake as an artist within the fieldwork. The publication of this fieldwork is translated into 'non-site' art contexts where these social relations are embedded within the various aesthetic outcomes that are part of the proposed site interventions.

STUDIO CONDITIONS might therefore perpetuate what the artist Douglas Gordon regards as the "promiscuity of collaborations."[60] While Gordon's term affirms the strategies used by his peers—Tiravanija, Huyghe and Parreno—Foster critiques the postmodern complication of originality and authorship using the same term.[61] The fieldwork associated with *STUDIO CONDTIONS* often involves audiences that have some prior investment in the site of intervention. Bourriaud describes this participation as "wavering between the status of passive consumer and the status of witness, associate, customer, guest, co-producer, and protagonist."[62] Whilst Bourriaud notes how this slippery divide between author and audience might leave you feeling like "just one of the extras in the society of the spectacle," Foster reflects on the content of engagement.[63] Foster comments "at times, 'the Death of the Author' has meant not the birth of the reader, as Barthes speculated, so much as the

[60] Hal Foster, "Arty Party," *London Review of Books* (December 4, 2003): 21
[61] Hal Foster, "Arty Party," *London Review of Books* (December 4, 2003): 21
[62] Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetic*, 87.
[63] "…[T]he society of spectacle is thus followed by the society of extras," in Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* 26.

befuddlement of the viewer."[64] Does this further marginalise the experience of art by complicating the engagement with audience as an experience of authorship?

Like past projects *STUDIO CONDITIONS* uses participation within the project as both a form of authorship and engagement. But this engagement shifts depending on the site of investigation, stage of the process or mode of presentation. Bianca Hester described the power dynamic between my role as an artist and the people that I work with and the implication this has for the status of authorship for some of my work that preceded *STUDIO CONDITIONS*:

> Spiros articulated his relation to the collective as a kind of hands-on director who orchestrated and facilitated multiple activities. When discussing his role he often stressed that he regarded himself as much as the director, as the gaffa-tape boy or the tea maker. Each participant was involved with various degrees of creative direction; but Spiros ultimately claimed responsibility, for better or worse, for the whole deal. The authorship in this project was conceived of in terms of a kind of 'pocketing' or 'piggy-backing' across a lateral field of relations.[65]

My work has shifted since Hester made this statement. *STUDIO CONDITIONS* collaborative mode of making and research is sited not within a gallery context but in social spaces that do not privilege the presentation of art. While I might be 'piggy-backing' on a community's activity within the fieldwork research and this may be considered an art project in its own right; it does not mean that this participation is retranslated as a representation every time the project is made public. While due credit is always given to every collaborator—sometimes the relations constructed in the fieldwork sites are left where they were enacted.

The representation of sociability in the secondary mode allows a much larger audience to engage with the social relations. In some ways this sociability (and its documentary record as transcription, photographic recording and so forth) is always bound by the representational conditions of the artistic field. Even though the live (or actual) experience of sociability could be seen to avoid the easy consumption of the

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[64] Hal Foster, "Arty Party," *London Review of Books* (December 4, 2003): 21
[65] Bianca Hester, "Things Full of People." *Bianca Hester.* June 6, 2005, www.biancahester.net/files/pdf/thingsfullofpeople_booklet.pdf (accessed August 21, 2006).

documentation—the frame of art is omnipresent as even non-object based social relations become abstracted and separate from the everyday social conditions they are initially derived from. The codes we use to judge sociability—virtuousness, entertainment, ethics, political efficacy, convivial potential, participation and so forth—are valid criteria for the assessment of social measures, but do they provide an adequate lens for the judgement of social relations as artworks? There is a difference between an artwork that actively grapples with the process of education within a community context and an artwork that translates this process into a representational document. *STUDIO CONDITIONS* in its fieldwork and its multiple manifestations endeavours to deal with this difference.

Regardless of the form that brings the sociability to an audience, with or without the aid of an object, as an actualised experience, or as a second-hand document, the social is bound by the representational field of art. Bishop critiques Maria Lind's support for *Oda Projesi*—a pedagogical project based in social housing of Istanbul—for resembling Christian "self sacrifice" more than a predicament warranting art world consideration.[66] The "authorial renunciation" is seen as a manifestation of art that positions the aesthetic as a useless entity when engaging in practices that are collaborative, socially driven and sited in community contexts.[67] Bishop critiques collaborative initiatives like *Oda Projesi* for becoming "inseparable from the community art tradition."[68] In addition to its inherent condescension, Bishop's statement also seems to retain a faith in the avant-garde project and the possibility for the 'aesthetic' to be 'dangerous' and therefore instrumental (see figs. 37, 38).[69] If social relations used in art practice clearly borrow from infrastructure that sits outside the art field, then what are the artistic competencies that art can bring to pedagogic, employment, business, therapeutic, intimate, familial, welfare or political forms. Broadly speaking art brings the realm of representation to these practices, which is always an aestheticising process. Therefore resisting any aestheticisation either when enacting social relations or documenting them is creating a naïve and superficial relation between the art project and the social form that it borrows from.

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[66] Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents," 183.
[67] Ibid., 181
[68] Ibid., 180
[69] Ibid.,180

Figure 37: Oda Projesi, *Rojesi, Kometli 23 Nisan Resimleri*, 2000, Istanbul.

Figure 38: Oda Projesi, *Conversation between Oda Projesi and the (fictional) Department of Curatorial Facilitation,* 2009, in *Weak Signal Wild Cards*, de Appel, Amsterdam.

Bishop questions what attributes, expertise and outcomes art can bring to a social enterprise that has been transformed for an art audience. While I agree with Bishop that viewing social art practices via the lens of the ethical is limiting,[70] I also think that valorising the artist for exposing darker truths via collaboration with groups that have less cultural capital is problematic and simplistic.[71] It makes art into a spectacle. This presentation is mostly to a progressive and sympathetic audience and typically the only product of this encounter is a sense of self-congratulatory righteousness.

Lind and Brian Holmes both criticise Thomas Hirschhorn's *Bataille Monument* (2002)—the Documenta project that was sited within the community housing of the newly migrated Turkish community in the city of Kassel. Lind positions the documentation of Hirschhorn's project as exhibiting' and making exotic marginalised groups and thereby contributing to a form of a social pornography.[72] Holmes's calls this representation 'picture politics.' Holmes questions what kind of 'game' Hirschhorn is playing by taking Documenta visitors to this everyday site outside of the usual gallery tour.[73] Lind's critique deals with the project's documentation—the dominant form of representation that the art-field engages in. Holmes regards the Documenta audiences' engagement with the work as an issue of representation in its own right. If calling his audience the "worst type of audience"[74] is Hirschhorn's

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[70] Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents," 181.

[71] A conversation I had with Thomas Hirschhorn after his presentation at the Victorian College of Arts' Spinoza conference in September 2006 revealed a colonial euro-centric perspective on the relationship between art and the communities his projects engage in. Responding to criticism regarding the lack of cultural capital these participants might have, Hirschhorn responds: "I looked the other in the eye." Whilst there is an understandable egalitarian attitude regarding the relationship between the artist and community participants—it also lacks the sensitivity required to acknowledge the type of cultural authority acquired by being a male white western artist.

[72] Maria Lind, "Actualisation of Space: The Case of Oda Projesi," in *Contemporary Art: From Studio to Situation*, ed. Claire Doherty (London: Blackdog Publishing, 2004), 114.

[73] Brian Holmes, "Liar's Poker Representation of Politics/Politics of Representation," *16 Beaver Street*. May 5, 2004, http://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/000943.php (accessed December 12, 2009).

[74] Hirschhorn quotes the artist David Hammond "The art audience is the worst audience in the world. It's overly educated, it's conservative, it's out to criticise, not to understand and it never has any fun... So I refuse to deal with that audience, and I'll play with the street audience. That audience is much more human, and their opinion is from the heart. They don't have any reason to play games, there's nothing gained or lost" In Brian Holmes, "Liar's Poker Representation of Politics/Politics of Representation," *16 Beaver Street*. May 5, 2004, http://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/000943.php (accessed December 12, 2009).

acknowledgment of the problematic nature of the representation within the project—
then why Holmes asks, does he bother escorting the Documenta audience to the site
of the *Bataille Monument* (see fig. 39). Why are the inhabitants of the Kassel's
community housing not enough? Holmes's position relies on thinking about the
artist's 'proper name' in relation to the cultural capital accrued from an association
with socially engaged projects.[75] Although Holmes's solution means the loss of an
individual artist's identity to the "vortex of a social movement." Hirschhorn has
subsequently shifted his central position in documenting his projects. In *RE* (2006)
project Hirschhorn gave responsibility for documenting the project to the community
performing within the work—allowing the participant/collaborators an autonomy that
pays respect to their contribution.[76] In *STUDIO CONDITIONS*, I have imposed a
boundary within publication of the fieldwork of limiting the photographic
representation of social relations that took place. Whilst any form of documentation
has the potential to be ethnological—resisting this very accessible quality of the
documentation allows an audience to engage with the representation of the
fieldwork's process and outcomes without it being dominated by the personas behind
it.

Figure 39: Thomas Hirschhorn, *Bataille Monument*, 2002, taxi service that ferries
'audience' to monument, Documenta 11, Kassel.

[75] Brian Holmes, "Liar's Poker Representation of Politics/Politics of Representation," *16
Beaver Street.* May 5, 2004, http://www.16beavergroup.org/mtarchive/archives/000943.php
(accessed December 12, 2009).
[76] Thomas Hirschhorn, *RE*, 2006, International Biennial of Contemporary Art of Seville,
Spain included documentation from Hirschhorn's 2004 project, *Musée Précaire Albine*, Paris.
Musée Précaire Albine involved constructing a makeshift museum for a collection of
significant works held by the Pompidou Museum. *Musée Précaire Albine* was run by locals
of the Parisian suburb the project was sited in.
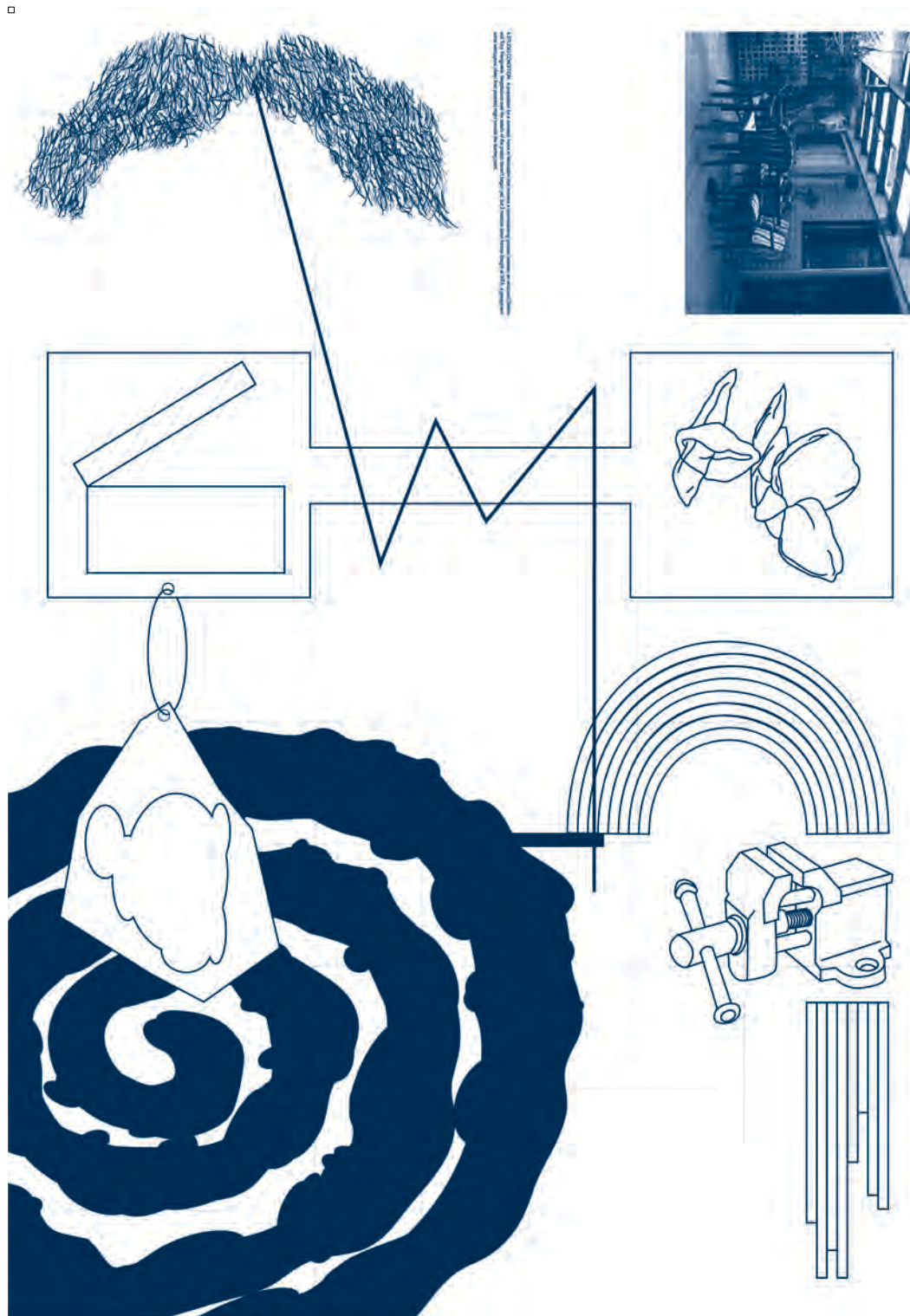
Figure 40: Spiros Panigirakis, *A STUDIO CONDITION: A proposition for a domestic home in Moorabbin that involves a commissioning process between an artist and Dimitra and Tony Panigirakis. Negotiations over the details of the project haven't begun yet, but 2 medium sized frames bought at IKEA, a garage and some xerotugana might provide the starting point,* 2008, unfolded A2 offset prints (edition of 250 + 1 gallery copy for each), VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne.
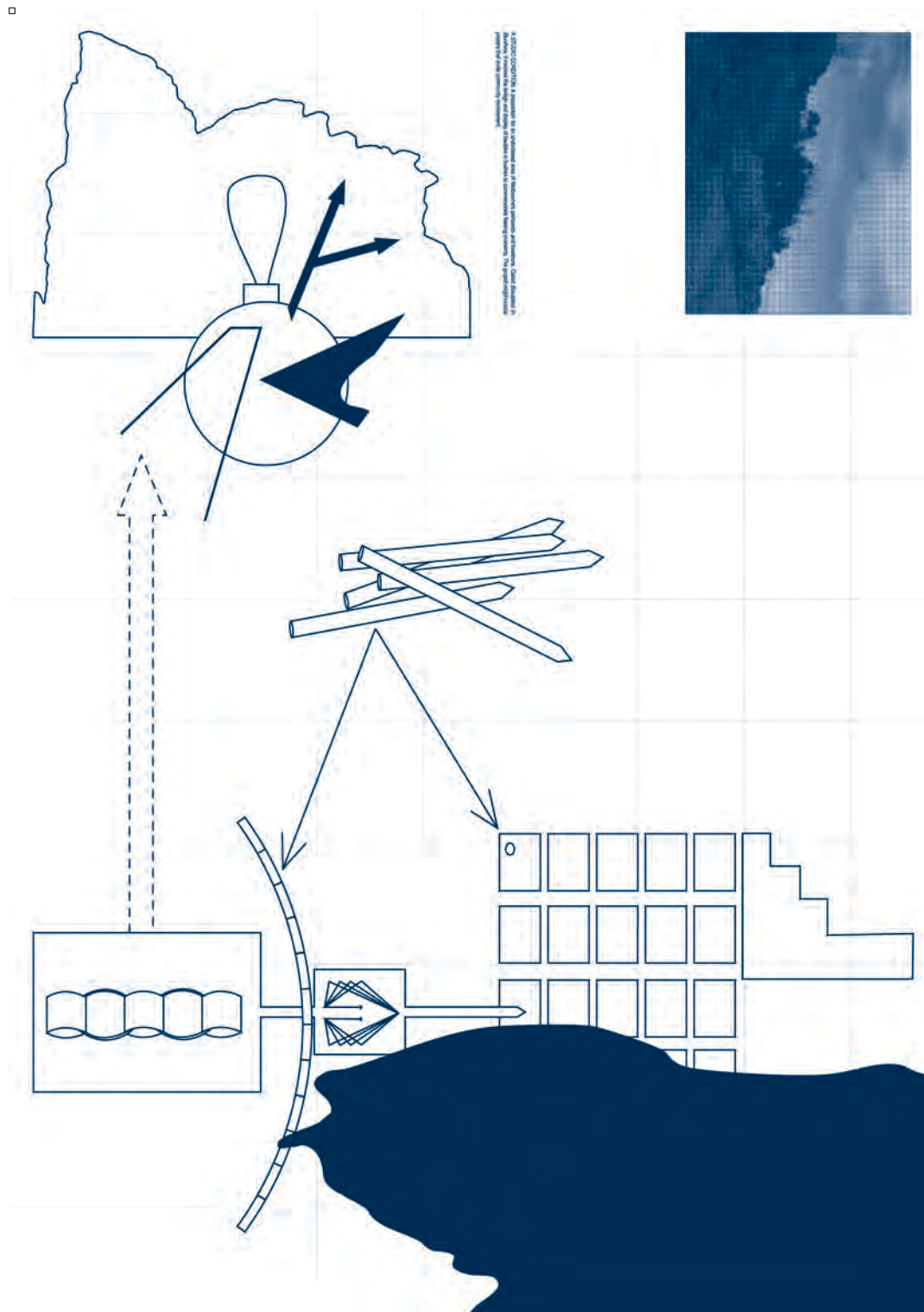
Figure 41: Spiros Panigirakis, *A STUDIO CONDITION: A proposition for an undisclosed area of Melbourne's parklands and foreshore. Called Baubles in Bushes, it involves the design and display of baubles in bushes to commemorate fleeting moments. The project might include posters that invite community involvement,* 2008, unfolded A2 offset prints (edition of 250 + 1 gallery copy for each), VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne.
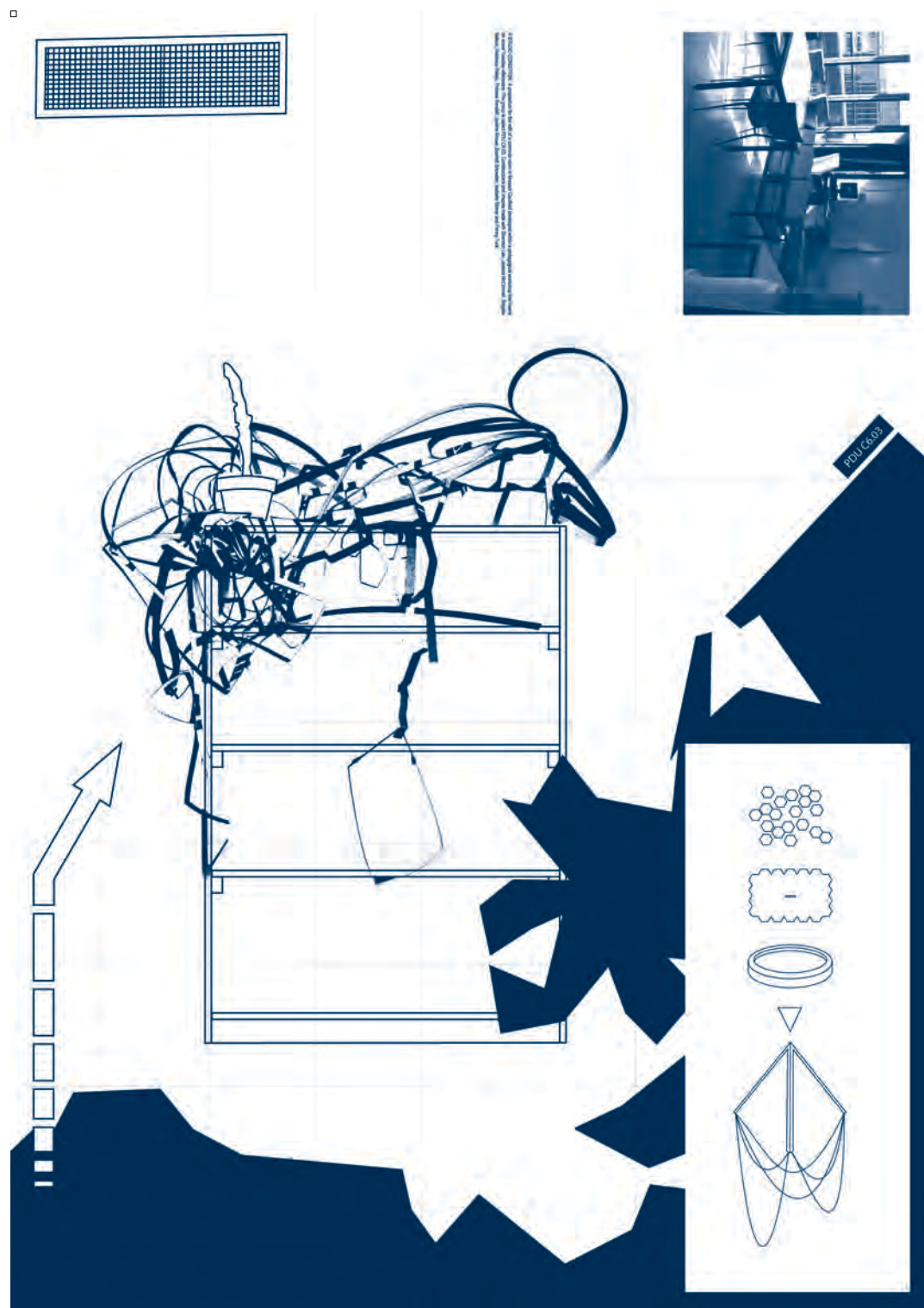
Figure 42: Spiros Panigirakis, *A STUDIO CONDITION: A proposition for the refit of a common room in Caulfield developed within a pedagogical workshop that meets on some Tuesday afternoons. The group is called PDU C6.03. Constructions and shapes made with Shannon Lee, Jessica McConnell, Brigette Nelson, Rebecca Palejs, Thomas Rendell, Justine Rouse, Scarlett Snowden, Isabelle Stoner and Penny Tuck,* 2008, unfolded A2 offset prints (edition of 250 + 1 gallery copy for each), VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne.
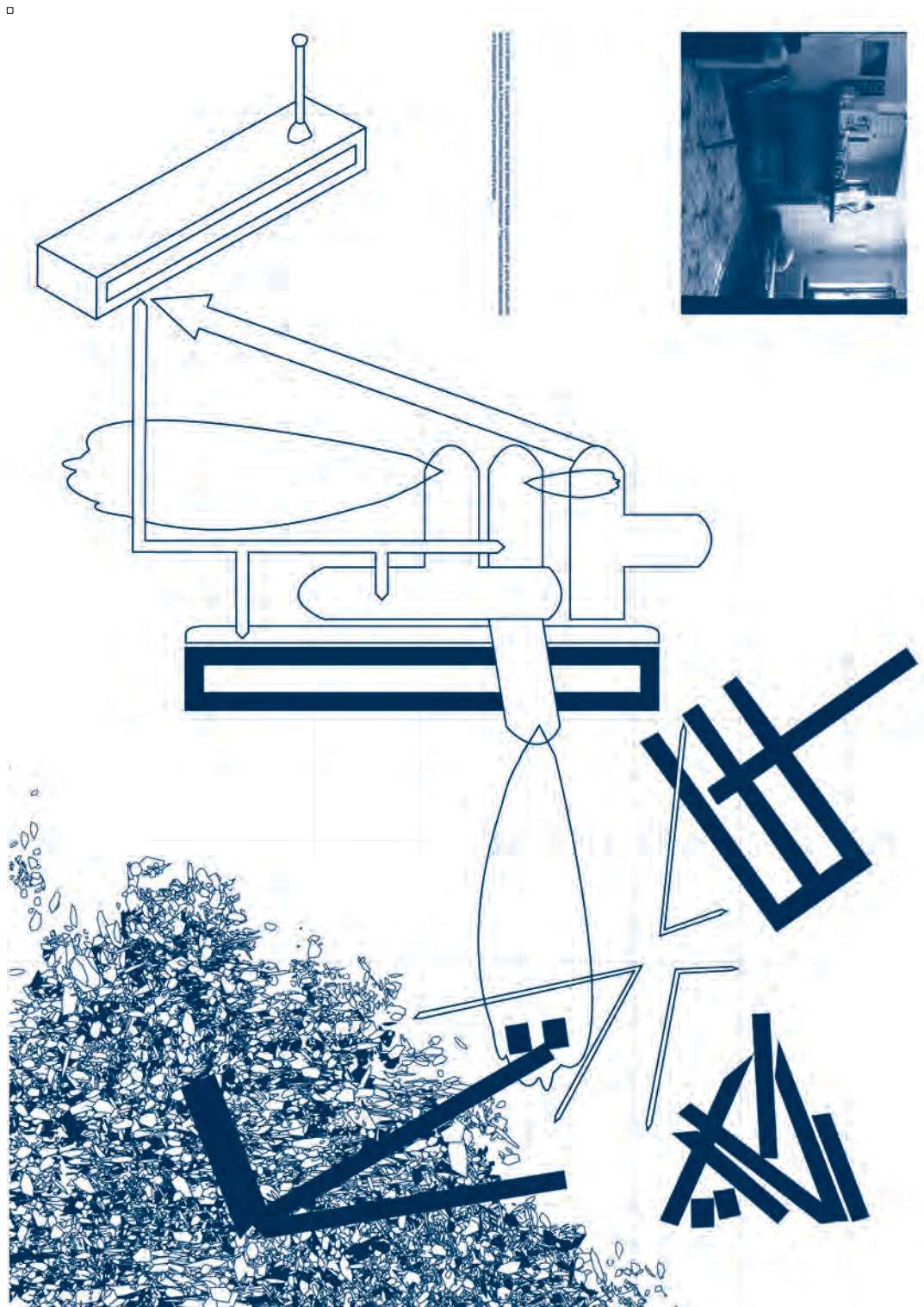
Figure 43: Spiros Panigirakis, *A STUDIO CONDITION: A proposition for Bianca Hester and Scott Mitchell's West Brunswick lounge-room after a series of events which approximate some, but not all, of the conditions of a romanticised and somewhat anachronistic salon. Proposed events include multiple conversations, the acquisition of an unfinished painting and the perpetual remaking of a recipe*, 2008, unfolded A2 offset prints (edition of 250 + 1 gallery copy for each), VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne.

Reading Relations

This chapter has focused on sociability as form, process, content and the politics of representation that these modes inhabit. I will conclude with the most basic (and traditional) social relation that confronts all artists—how does an audience engage with my artwork and what is the quality of this engagement? Asking how an audience is implicated and addressed in the work is a difficult question; reflecting on this engagement is not based on empirical data sourced from audience surveys but on my own intentional communication strategy (or post-rationalisation). Like many artists I do not really know how an audience experiences my work. I am mainly reflecting on presumptions based on past feedback.[77] The exegetic text sits oddly against the usual patterns of audience' engagement—there is rarely a time when an artist sits next to his or her artwork voicing an explanatory panel to passers-by. The aesthetic and procedural decisions I make within *STUDIO CONDITIONS* pose issues for an audience negotiating meaning, narrative or coherence within an unstable communication model. This is not to say there is not a formal vocabulary that sustains a purely aesthetic content and aesthetic experience. But to make 'sense' of the language in *STUDIO CONDITIONS* involves the challenge of moving beyond its formal content and engaging with the conceptual considerations that drive the project; this difficulty becomes part of the content of the work.

In the *Critical History of Installation Art,* Bishop relates the immersive, first hand experiential qualities of audience engagement with an understanding that revolves around the decentered and activated subject within the installation form.[78] This development also has implications for our understanding of authorship as it

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[77] CLUBSproject Inc hosted and facilitated regular group critiques. These 'feedback sessions' proved invaluable in garnering audience insights. The 'feedback sessions' were modelled on a studio critique practice developed by Peter Cripps and Terri Bird in the Sculpture Department at RMIT University in 1990's. The CLUBSproject feedback sessions were a sustained response to an artwork and lasted between 2 -3 hours. These conversations were divided by 3 sections: first a descriptive breakdown of the project and its context; second an analytical response to the mostly materialist breakdown; and lastly the positing of questions to the artist. It is only at this point that the artists is addressed directly and is permitted to address the participants of the feedback. This allows for the discourse surrounding the project to be multilateral and moved away from the artist's intention. A manual for the feedback written by Terri Bird, Bianca Hester, and Andrew McQualter, "*CLUBS Feedback Manual,*" *CLUBSproject Inc.* March 20, 2003, www.clubsproject.org.au/feedback.php (accessed August 10, 2008).
[78] Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History (*London: Tate, 2005), 15

reconfigures an understanding of audiences as 'beholder-manipulars' and as active producers of meaning through the absence of any ideal viewing position, subjectivity or manner in which the work is completed by the audience/participants.[79] A process of authorial exegesis therefore has the potential to close potential paths of meaning garnered and made by audience/authors and is at odds with dominant theories that inform the reception of art practices. However, regardless of Michel de Certeau's manoeuvring, Roland Barthes *Death of the Author,* Deleuze and Guattari's postulation on linguistics or Umberto Eco's *Open Work,* coherent explication by an artist is still a privileged tool in the interpretation of art. [80] The theory does not reflect the dominant practice in the presentation of art. If we were to adhere to these theories, which insist that an audience complete a work utilising an almost infinite range of interpretative lenses, then work is never complete and a receptive frustration would become a virtue. These theories privilege audience participation and democratise the act of interpretation but also make a final comprehension of a work within a community framework, a futile pursuit.

Along with the sited fieldwork, the exhibition at the VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery was only one of many manifestations of the overall *STUDIO CONDITIONS* project.[81]

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[79] Hal Foster, "Arty Party," *London Review of Books* (December 4, 2003): 21-22.

[80] "In modern Athens, the vehicles of mass transportation are called metaphorai. To go to work or to come home, one takes a 'metaphor' – a bus or a train. Stories could also take this noble name: every day, they traverse and organise places; they select and link them together; they make sentences and itineraries out of them. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life,* trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 115; A text… "is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not as was hitherto said, the author. The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text's unity lies not in its origin but in its destination." Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image, Music, Text*, by Roland Barthes, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967), 148; "One can never… assign the form of expression the function of simply representing, describing, or averring a corresponding content: there is neither correspondence or conformity." Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988), p 95; "In other words, the author offers the interpreter, the performer, the addressee, a work to be completed. He does not know the exact fashion in which his work will be concluded…" Umberto Eco, "The Poetics of an Open Work," in *Participation*, ed. Claire Bishop (London: Whitechapel, 2006), 20-40.

[81] The reading of the receptive measures found in the fieldwork sites was covered predominantly in the reflection on the use of social exchange as form and content of a given work. The representation of this fieldwork in other presentational contexts takes the form of display that is conversant with gallery display of the studio in *STUDIO CONDITIONS* that

The conditions of these presentations and interventions are not repeated but recontextualised. The following reflection will be used as a paradigmatic position relating to the communication model that can be imposed on the representation of the artwork beyond its initial sited context.

To engage in the different components of *STUDIO CONDITIONS* at the VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery an audience needs to grapple with the aesthetic of the diagram that lacks an accessible logic, the temporal nature of the video technology that lacks a narrative or clear agenda, the material and spatial quality of the furniture without elucidation on its use or design source, and formal languages that suggest disjuncture in terms synthesising, unravelling or decoding a clear meaning. The relationship between 'author/artist' and 'reader/viewer' and the impossibility of intersubjective understanding are central subjects of the work rather than barriers to its interpretation. The 'author's death' (or the inability of authors to control the meaning of their texts) is not as important as the abandonment of the viewer as a central receptive dynamic of *STUDIO CONDITIONS*. The intentional state of incompletion or having just started something pervades not only the subject of the exhibition (for example the frame being made before the painting) but also the ethic of how an audience member might approach reading the work.

The common critique that my practice is inscrutable, difficult, overly demanding (in terms of time) and is thus ungenerous toward its audience has prompted this exploration. It is true that my work intentionally evades a final, simple or obvious

follows. However reflecting on the notion of the destabilised viewing/experiencing position of installation and site practices might also have repercussion on how an audience interprets everyday and actualised social relations within an artwork. After all, like any other formal relation within an artist's work – the social scenario might not correlate with the artist's intention. Rirkrit Tiravanija 2005 survey show at the Serpentine Gallery might be read as follows. I am excluded from the conversation between Tiravanija and his art-students that are employed (voluntarily) to participate in a number of activities – putting on a radio play, cooking, playing ping-pong or watching videos on beanbags provides. That potential feeling of alienation that was elicited for me as an audience member was reminiscent of the alienation of the playground. And this feeling of alienation might be considered a rewarding experience even though it might not be a pleasant one. Rewarding in the sense that it reflects on the fragile human condition and not on the Marxist underpinnings that his commentators have for the work. This might seem like this audience engagement requires a reflexivity that is beyond sympathetic. But if one thinks of the emotional turmoil an audience tolerates in a cinema environment then this openness is potentially could be a way of interpreting sociability in artwork as well.

reading. The first way my practice does this is by moving away from a phenomenological experience of space and into the realm of interactivity and social engagement that require an audience to read, go online, eat, pick-up or unfold. Rosalind Krauss in *The Voyage on the North Sea* has criticised interactivity for its similarities with an easy and emptied entertainment culture.[82] But I position the formal languages I use as alien to popular syntax. I demand more taxing engagement and slower results. The second way the practice engages difficulty is in its use of visual forms that are appropriated from sources not acknowledged within the body of the work. This allows only a limited audience to engage in their inter-textual quality. The third is in the way formal devices are used with a degree of detail, intricacy and complication without providing a key to unlocking their communicative potential. Admittedly these factors are likely to undermine the conceptual nature of the practice, and lead an audience to only relying on the aesthetic forms that they encounter. But to say that this is the only way my projects can be read would also be disingenuous.

Alternative readings of *STUDIO CONDITIONS* would potentially involve a slower engagement that resists the notion of what Krauss considers "the international fashion of installation and intermedia work, in which art essentially finds itself complicit with a globalisation of the image in the service of capital."[83] The quality of some of this interactivity that is played out in the spectacularisation of space or capitalist labour is at odds with no less interactive forms like painting or even cinema. Krauss, drawing on Fredric Jameson, proposes that the "aesthetic experience is now everywhere, in an expansion of culture that has not only made the notion of an individual work of art problematic, but has also emptied out the very concept of aesthetic autonomy.[84] This heterogenous audience interaction that I rely upon depends on a reading strategy based on forms and codas. It also requires time. My work challenges the notion that art, post-Minimalism, is not like other contemporary entertainment modes that equate bodily passage through the work as a type of understanding. Pre-modern forms always relied on an intertextual quality or a coda representing a body of knowledge not within the painting as the type of interactivity that was encouraged. Of course

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[82] Rosalind Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of the Post-Medium Condition* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1999), 56.
[83] Ibid., 56
[84] Ibid., 56

time and knowledge is not something everyone has and additional handles of engagement are at play to capture other forms of understanding.

The published diagrams are formal elucidations of the videos and also propositional art works (see figs. 40, 41, 42, 43). A propositional artwork has two identities: it functions as the communication of a possible aspirational form and also utilises its own autonomous material form to its own end. The published diagrams are sited in a dispenser—as many supplementary texts would be in a museological context. Once unfolded, rather than provide a clear rationalisation for the video they complicate things further. As informational documents they are scaled and orientated like maps or diagrams, borrowing stylistic conventions from both these forms. But their internal logic works on a mostly private system of symbols. I say 'mostly' because many of the floating pictorial elements have a logogrammatic quality that, if studied, can be deciphered. The proposition for my parent's garage, for example, incorporates a moustache, a vice, a grid, an organic spiral form and a rainbow. All these elements are clearly recognisable and can be considered part of the visualisation of this familial context, the tradition of sculptural siting, or part of a generic symbolic register. What is unclear is how these logograms fit together. No key is provided; instead the work includes a short statement that describes a loose and broad approach concerning how an artist proceeds in an artistic intervention in each site in conjunction with its associated communities. Each answer to the puzzle is in itself a deflection, as these short statements are tinged with uncertainty, scepticism, lethargy and/or cynicism. Do I, the artist, really want to make a proposal for an art intervention through this diagrammatic form or do I just revel in pseudo-surreal juxtapositions of symbols? The proposition, as an aspirational form for social, formal or spatial change, might never be realised, but it at least has a forward-looking agenda. The diagrams with their masquerade of mapping ideas, space and logic become decorative posters or souvenirs of an absent logic. These decorative souvenirs (a term reminiscent of Buren's photo-souvenir to describe his documentation) are given away to commemorate my unfulfilled ideas—ideas that range between the tentative to the confused.[85]

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[85] Daniel Buren, "Photo-souvenirs," in *Contemporary Art: From Studio to Situation*, ed., Claire Doherty (London: BlackDog Publishing, 2004), 24 – 27.

This approach to audience relations raises two issues. One is the possible conceit of the artist purposefully creating an oblique distance between ideas and their discernment by an audience. The other issue springs from my conflicted stance on the place of sociability within an artistic framework. The ideas I propose for each fieldwork site are packaged in the highly finished form of an editioned poster. Embedded within the form of the poster is a potential critique of the artist's roles inside and outside the space of the gallery. The posters reference a broad range of social roles associated with various fieldwork sites. However the administrative, decorative and documentative qualities of the poster/brochure are esoteric and verge on the non-communicative. Apart from the qualities that are lodged in the material form of the poster and its social role within (and outside) the gallery space—the posters offer little potential of consequence to the society-at-large. This situation posits the artist as both relying on sociability for his or her content; understanding their (limited) consequence within society; and therefore having complete freedom to use sociability within the veil of art's representation. Nevertheless, the critical importance of the embedded sociability within the respective forms remains as STUDIO CONDITIONS's best chance to reverberate and find an audience.

CHAPTER THREE

SITINGS

This chapter discusses four site-driven projects that have been developed as individual experiments in making my art practice public. The four sites are a foreshore, a garage, a common room and a lounge-room. They are located 'places' whose selection was no doubt prompted by their relationship to my experience. Interventions in these sites take the form of propositional artworks that have been developed from fieldwork at the sites. Although this work involves site-bound exploration of subjectivity it also seeks to move beyond the singularity of this framework. This broader reflection on these particular sites was informed by five key critical lenses brought to the concept of 'site' within this research. These include:

(i)   the importance of different senses of 'place' and the critique of place via experiential displacement through mediating technologies;

(ii) the notion of 'community.' My exploration of community as site seeks to recognise and assess the place of the artist within a field of power and social hierarchy;

(iii)   the notion of site as a space of 'alterity.' Since sites are loaded with a gamut of social identifications—economic, gendered, ethnic, sexual and so forth—reflection on site as alterity facilitates a resistance to dominant and repressive paradigms.

(iv)   how the artist relates to 'discursive' sites in fields outside art's traditional aesthetic authority;

(v) how the artist, in relation to the complex construction of site, is serving and/or addressing varying 'institutional' frameworks via consumption, framing and hosting.

This chapter seeks to explain, historically contextualise and critically assess the site-related aspects of the project. To this end the chapter opens with a brief contexualising review of key historical developments in artistic discourse surrounding site. This discussion leads to a detailed consideration of each of the five critical lenses outlined above. The third section turns to an account of my artistic motivations in presenting propositional artworks as responses to site. I resist the substantial site-interventions, and take refuge in the project's institutional context and privileging of discourse and ideas that is accepted within the academy. I create an analogy between 'drawing' and the architectural tradition of 'paper-architecture' to locate my work within. This is a conceptually driven space where the contestation of ideas is privileged. Chapter Four is the corollary to the engagement of these five critical lenses that are used to assess the four propositional fieldwork sites in detail.

Discourses of Site

This project is framed by the institutions of art and the university. In this context fieldwork provides me with an opportunity to break out of the literal physical parameters of these institutions and to interrogate external sites. Yet these institutions' influence is inevitable and shapes a significant part of my response to the sites. These sites—of an inner-city foreshore, a student common-room, a friend's lounge room and my parent's garage—also continue a tradition of artists creating sited projects in order to seek alternatives to dominant artistic presentation paradigms. Within the last 50 years, the idea of site-specific practices has shifted both formally and socially. This expansion instigated by artists exploring institutional framing as a type of site as well as the social concerns that emanated from alternative sites of presentation. The intersecting notions of place, community, discursivity, alterity and institutional framing are used to examine artistic site discourse and to assess the value of my fieldwork. This exegesis might be analogised as the report that uses the aforementioned criteria to critically assess the value (or data collected). My goal is not simply to retrospectively rationalise the project but to consider this site discourse from

the outset. It might be argued that site-driven practice emerged (and left the gallery), at least in part, in response to the tendency for the 'white cube' to deaden and homogenise artistic expression.[1] My site-driven approach continues this tradition of resisting forms of social and formal reduction by seeking new contexts for presentation.

Site as constituted by the notions of place, community, alterity, discursivity and institutional framing is a product of a 50-year lineage that was inaugurated by the de-pedestalling of the sculptural object. It is this very removal of the pedestal that an artist like Richard Serra is remembering when he responds, critiques and intervenes into site by re-imagining site as the pedestal at large. Rosalind Krauss notes in "Sculpture in the Expanded Field":

> [S]culpture had entered the full condition of its inverse logic and had become pure negativity: the combination of exclusions. Sculpture, it could be said, had ceased being a positivity, and was now the category that resulted from the addition of the *not-landscape* to the *not-architecture.*[2]

Hal Foster points out that one result of this shift is to create a new emphasis on the "behavioural space of the viewer" as opposed to the pre-modern memorial space of the monument.[3] A sense of a precious, formalist and some would say violent permanency pervades the conditions of this particular mode of site-specificity. In the decades after Serra's *Tilted Arc* (1981), Walter De Maria's *Vertical Earth Kilometre* (1977) and Joseph Beuys's *7000 Oaks* (1982)—the notion of site expanded away from responding to spatial phenomenology and came to be understood as encompassing anything from a physical place, to a social community to a discourse.[4] As Krauss has argued "site-specificity is not the object here so much as a medium, the

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[1] Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space (1976),* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999)
[2] Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 30-44.
[3] Hal Foster, "The Un/making of Sculpture," in *Richard Serra, Sculpture 1985-1998*, ed. David Sylvester (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998), 13-32.
[4] Richard Serra, *Tilted Arc,* 1981, Federal Plaza, New York; Walter De Maria *Vertical Earth Kilometre*, 1977, Friedrichsplatz Park, Kassel; and Joseph Beuys, *7000 Oaks*, 1982, Documenta 8, Kassel, Dia Art Foundation, New York.

medium of "the body-in-destination."[5] If we are to follow and then continue past, Krauss defining site via the body's passage through it—then we must also consider site not as something that is limited to the formal physical sense of the body but as a reflection of the social differences and relations that constitute it.

Foster, in "The Artist as Ethnographer," describes this mapping of social difference as a horizontal movement of the artist's role that is always at risk of being co-opted by an institutional framework—regardless of the distance between field and institution. Foster terms this as "ideological patronage."[6] *STUDIO CONDITIONS* is not able to resist co-option by the institutional framing of art and the university; instead I am seeking to examine and define the terms of this co-option. This is an experiment in how these fieldwork sites affect and shift my artistic practice away from gallery-based site contexts and their associated networks, discourses, communities and spatial conditions. By drawing attention to the process of co-option I seek to interrogate the structure of recognition and publication that frames both practice and academic research. This experiment can be seen as a mode of independent publishing that is outside of gallery-based contexts but still very much inside the field of art.

Within the respective publishing measures, I develop a process of engaging each site with a methodology that is informed by a reflexive analysis of my artistic role within the ideological, social and physical construction of these sites. These methodologies are considered discursive processes that make explicit my position as an artist within the intervention of the site. The concepts from which these methodologies are drawn are: a 'commissioning' process for the garage; 'pedagogy' for the common room; the 'salon' for the lounge-room; and 'community' based practice for the foreshore (see Appendix 2.2). This alignment of the literal locality of site with a discursive site mirrors an idea proposed by Miwon Kwon in *One Place After Another* and developed

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[5] Rosalind Krauss has written: "The specificity of the site is not the subject of the work, but—in its articulation of the movement of the viewer's body-in-destination—its medium." Rosalind Krauss, *Richard Serra: Sculpture,* ed. Laura Rosenstock (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1986), 37, Quoted in, Hal Foster, "The Un/making of Sculpture," in *Richard Serra, Sculpture 1985-1998*, ed. David. Sylvester (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1998), 13-32.
[6] Hal Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer," in *The Return of the Real: the Avant-Garde at the End of the Century*, by Hal Foster (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996), 171-204.

by James Meyer in his exploration of 'functional site.'[7] This quality of engagement with site as Kwon notes "is seen to advance an altogether different notion of site as predominantly an intertextually coordinated multiply located discursive field of operations."[8] This approach differs markedly from the fixed and stable model of site-specificity found in the aforementioned historical site incidents initiated by Serra's *Arc*, De Maria's pole and the basalt stones that accompanied Beuys's Oaks.

Site as Place

The actual sites of the foreshore, the garage, the common-room and lounge-room fit the parameters of what writers within socio-aesthetic practices commonly term 'places' as opposed to sites. To a degree this is an issue of nomenclature. After all, there are differences between artists' use of site discourse from the late 1960s to the early 1980s—arguably its historically attributed period.[9] While within contemporary art discourse, the term 'place' commonly refers to a located space with a clear relationship to the subjectivity of the artist, philosophical discourses contain more diverse and complex conceptions of 'place.' In the following section I draw on a range of philosophical voices to gain insights into the concept of 'place.' I do not offer a sustained engagement with any single philosopher but instead emphasise fragments and ideas that usefully frame the project in productive ways.

I have drawn on Edward Casey's *Fate of Place* to attain an understanding of site as a process of place-making rather than a fixed locale and of place as something that is inexorably connected to the body, and in particular to the body in motion. This is not a case of picking one philosophical lens over another to interrogate the places, but a

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[7] James Meyer, "The Functional Site: or The Transformation of Site-Specificity," in *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, ed. Erika Suderburg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 23-37; Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 2002)

[8] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 159.

[9] One example of this shift in sited practice is described by Miwon Kwon. She posits an understanding of site that is phenemonolgical, institutional and discursive. These divisions whilst not strictly chronological or clear cut are a good way of differentiating the sited practices of Richard Serra's as a phenemonological approach; Mierle Laderman Ukeles as an institutional approach; and Mark Dion's as a discursive approach; Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 30.

way of understanding the differences between the four choices made and why I find these places interesting.

My parents' garage can be understood via Gaston Bachelard's notion of topoanalysis. Bachelard argues that in topoanalysis, "descriptive psychology, depth psychology, psychoanalysis, and phenomenology all come together in a common enterprise, one that can be defined as the systematic psychological study of the localities of our intimate lives."[10] I do not seek to use Bachelard as a philosophical justification for indulgently revelling in the personal. But it is my understanding that vestiges of Bachelard's topoanalysis linger in the art's use (and critique) of the term 'place.' This narrow definition of the term does not allow for the personal essentialist social coding to have a broader relevance to the social world.

The inner-city foreshore as an area where gay men cruise for sex can be considered within Michel Foucault's paradigm of the 'heterotopic' site. At the same time as it is surveilled—visible within an urban experience, it is also excluded and rendered conceptually peripheral—on the edge of residential housing. The foreshore 'beat' sits between a point of crisis and deviation; the main categories Foucault classifies as heterotopic.[11] The heterotopia is "capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible:" for example a barbeque area, children's playground, and a space to walk the dog through with a cruising-ground for men looking for sexual gratification.[12] But as a space of 'crisis' that hosts the homosexual desires of men—repressed in the light of the everyday, it is also a legal 'deviation' and to some, a moral one. Potentially my reframing of the project as an idea to present in a centralised city square plays against this spatial and social geography.

On the other hand, the project designed for a friend's lounge room within the context of a public exhibition, was an opportunity to displace the immanence of the local. This immanence of the local might be considered as a type of parochialism that does

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[10] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space,* trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), xxxii, Quoted in, Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 288.
[11] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 24.
[12] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," 25.

not allow an outside world to disturb its notional stability and uniqueness. The literal domestic site of the friend's lounge was interrupted via a nomadic movement to multiple senses of the local beyond the suburb of Brunswick. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *One Thousand Plateaus* explore the nomadic space as a region-like place. The interrogation of four diverse suburban localities within the one project can be understood as the intermingling and or crossing over of a non-limited place. [13]

A place,

> is not just here, in a pinpointed spot of space, but in a nonlimited locality. For the place at stake in nomad space is intrinsically vast. It is immense without being either infinite or intimate. [14]

It follows that the localised conditions found in my friend's lounge room can be understood within a discursive and spatial framework of other suburban lounge rooms via a number of routes made by both audience and artist. Using Deleuze's work on the nomad in *Difference and Repetition,* Claire Colebrook maintains if "something can be thought" then nomadism offers "no containment" or limit to "thinking's power."[15] For Colebrook nomadic space "is produced from the movements" (either actual or discursive) "that then give the space it peculiar quality."[16]

The student common room can be approached as an architectural condition that can also be understood as a program of events. The notion of 'happenstance' is Jacques Derrida's temporal understanding that "rejects the paradigm of architecture as the trial of the monumental moment" which might be considered as a type of dead-end, a fixed

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[13] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* trans Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988),

[14] Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 301.

[15] Adrian Parr, ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), 181; Deleuze notes "The leap here bears witness to the unsettling difficulties that nomadic distribution introduces into the sedentary structures of representation. The same goes for hierarchy. There is a hierarchy which measures beings according to their limits, and according to their degree from principle. But there is also a hierarchy which considers things and beings from the point of view of power: it is not a question of considering absolute degrees of power, but only of knowing whether a being eventually 'leaps over' or transcends its limits in going to the limit of what it can do, whatever its degree." Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition,* 2nd ed., trans. Paul Patton (London: The Athlone Press, 1997), 37.

[16] Adrian Parr, ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary,* 182.

beginning (arche) and end (telos).[17] Understanding the common room as something that 'happens,' privileges "the intertexuality that makes architecture a highly complex human activity" rather than the "pre-eminence of formal manipulations" as manifest by its walls, ceilings and windows.[18] For Bernard Tschumi, the architecture's program (as derived by a Derridean notion of happenstance) is not just the utility of the common room but also the "multiplicity of heterogeneous discourses, the constant interaction between movement, sensual experience, and conceptual acrobats."[19] This understanding of place allows the life of the intervention to have very fluid boundaries and therefore unpredictable outcomes (or "disjunctions") in relation to the "actions it witnesses" as much as the chairs that needs upholstering.[20]

These aforementioned conceptions of place differ from Lucy Lippard's more art-centric usage of the term, as "a portion of land/town/cityscape seen from the inside, the resonance of a specific location that is known as familiar."[21] It is important to acknowledge that the decision to be driven by the notion of site as 'place' was informed by what Kwon terms, the "hidden attractor of the term site-specificity."[22] This attractor emerges from a romanticised idea that through engagement with place, the artist's identity and its relation to site is able to break free of the stifling homogeneity of late capitalism. The attraction of site-specificity results from an aspiration to make art outside of institutional conditions even though the artist knows that it is an unattainable desire.[23] While Kwon understands that this relationship with

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[17] Jacque Derrida, "Point de Folie—Maintenant L'Architecture," trans. Kate Linker, *AA Files*, no. 12 (1986): sec. 3, Quoted in, Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 312.

[18] Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction,* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), 113-117.

[19] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction,* 117.

[20] Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction,* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), 100; Bernard Tschumi, *Advertisements for Architecture,* 1976, postcard publication.

[21] Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New York: New Press, 1997), 7.

[22] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 158.

[23] Andrea Fraser in "Why Does Fred Sandback's Work Make Me Cry?" explores how art is an impossibility. This is where art cannot obviously "exist outside the field of art" but at the same cannot exist within it either. In a development of her work within the discourse of Institutional Critique—Fraser describes a violent loss associated with the utopian ideal we imagine art once was. She notes "it is the idyllic, primal state of culture we want to imagine once prevailed before the expulsion, when we were driven out into the world of specialisation, hierarchical divisions of labour and competence, and competitive struggles for

site is appealing, she also argues that it is problematic and parochial; she critiques Lippard's "sense of place as a therapeutic remedy."[24] In Lippard's account "sense of place is the geographical component of the psychological need to belong somewhere…and an antidote to a prevailing alienation."[25] Kwon considers interventions driven by these qualities of place as essentialised, romantic and unrealistic as they ignore the dominance of our "technological, capitalist and post-industrial present."[26] My own initial and intuitive preference for place-like sites was informed by an ethical judgement. My own 'home-team advantage' would not create a problematic power dynamic as it would for a site where its connected community would consider me an outsider.[27] As the projects developed, the notion of place became more a conceptual impetus rather than a grounded concern. So while I relied on what Foster describes as the recovery of "lost cultural spaces" and "historical counter-memories"[28] —the literal physical sites would be displaced via a variety of mediating technologies and discursive challenges.

The notion of the essentialised place is therefore disrupted in my research firstly by the 'personal' being exposed and reworked within a broader social narrative. This strategy might be subject to Kwon and Foster's critique that an artist's narcissistic over-identification with community (via self) can be detrimental and result in the reduction of the subject. For example the work might exhibit a geographically 'grounded' version of tendencies found in some 1980s identity-based practices. I argue that the dissemination of authorship (a by-product of collaborative practices) encourages a cacophony of voices or viewpoints in relation to a given place and opens the possibility of a complex multidimensional, rather than reductive, representation of space. The second way of exposing the notion of place to a broader sense of the sociable is to develop it within an organisational framework that is analogous to the intertextual /multiple platformed experience that is a product of a technologically mediated sense of place. The increasing roles of technology in mediating our sense of

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recognition and reward." Andrea Fraser, "Why Does Fred Sandback's Work Make Me Cry?" *Grey Room* 22, no. 22 (2006): 30-47.

[24] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 158.

[25] Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*, 7.

[26] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 149.

[27] Grant Kester, "Aesthetic Evangelists: Conversion and empowerment in Contemporary Community Art,"*Afterimage* 22, no. 6 (January 1995): 6.

[28] Foster, "Thee Artist as Ethnographer," 196.

self—via the 'facebooking' of identity, is resulting in our sense of place being linked to shifting discursivities. Meyer and Kwon would see this shift as playing outside the parameters of place. The broadness of Kwon's theoretical survey of site is considerable.[29] An argument could be made that the notion of place can just as well be associated to describe the intimacy felt within msn chat correspondence as well as the space of the localised encounter found at the farmers' market or school playground. Whilst the quality of 'place' within these contexts differs—the intimacy does not necessarily rely on a fixed or stable locale. The yearning for place can therefore be gleaned from direct experiential research with a localised audience as well as within multiple and dislocated sites of presentation.

A third way to understand the use of place, is through an engagement with it as an alternative social lens through which to experience art—allowing for a broadening of the plurality of the receptive social conditions represented within the institution of art. As no one point in this siting process for each respective place is privileged as the ultimate or essential site of presentation, no one type of audience is privileged either. This approach creates a potential for the sites of the presentation to potentially remain in the private and exclusive sense of place—allowing the size of an audience to remain small and focused. These presentations would then be 'exposed' only within this exegetic text as an academic exercise. These gestures towards these alternative sites (or places) might expand audience—or it might not. What interests me is the

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[29] Jason Gaiger's critique of Kwon's overview of site concerns the broad definition that the notion of 'site' takes in *One Place After Another: Notes on Site-Specificity.* While Gaiger praises Kwon's adept use of the phenomenological, institutional and discursive to create a historical narrative through the notion of site—he also believes that these 'paradigms' could be better used to describe the "progressive relinquishment of the principle of aesthetic autonomy" by canonical modernism in the post 1960s period and highlight how these ideas were "occluded" by high modernism. His key criticisms however concern on the one hand Kwon's narrow historical perspective of sited practice and on the other the use of 'discursivity' that "extends the term [site] beyond its legitimate usage." For Gaiger the sited quality of art is pervasive in pre-modern practice as found in "altar pieces, frescoes, sculptural niches and official portraits for residences." Site is also repressed within the autonomy of a modernist paradigm as seen by the social and political considerations of Dada and Russian Constructivism. Gaiger acknowledges the complexity of Kwon's positing of discursivity as a characteristic of sited practice but ultimately sees it as first, a weak lens as arguably "reference to a discourse or field of knowledge" can be deduced in most post 1960s art practices; and secondly questions it as a indistinct strategy that potentially dissolves art's oppositional status of critique even though this is a key intention to its socio-political expansion. Jason Gaiger, "Dismantling the Frame: Site-Specific Art and Aesthetic Autonomy." *British Journal of Aesthetics* 49, no. 1 (2009): 43-58.

possibility of reaching different audiences rather than a proselytising approach to the creation of wider (and bigger) artistic audience. Here I am responding to the sense of inclusion/exclusion that pervades any site of presentation within the field of art. There are differences between how spaces of presentation, be it artist-run-initiatives, museums or commercial galleries, include (and exclude) audiences. While my intention in relation to audience is not to exclude any particular audience group, it is however to self-consciously acknowledge the insidious and enculturated means of exclusion that all institutions engage with. [30]

Site as Community

Current art discourse that grapples with site-driven artistic practice emphasises the notion of community.[31] These site driven practices generally privilege a definition of site through an amplification of sociability and the privileging of an audience's reception. The prevalence of collaborative, public, relational and/or interactive projects both problematises the concept of authorship and also how we consider the entity of the audience as it blurs with the community of the respective site. If we consider site as having unfixed boundaries of competing and hard-to-define community identifications, then art enters a social realm that emphasises ethical and political concerns. This challenges artists to consider how they understand, interact and represent community within the privileged domain of art. My intention is not to understand community as a disempowered entity. Community formation is not only the discourse of the 'other' or democratic theories but also that of the conservative and dominant paradigms or the 'moral majority.' For this reason it is important that artists reflexively assess their positions of power between these poles of community formation. Recognition of the artist's position within the complex political paradigm would demonstrate an understanding that art does not have the monopolised authority on the various stakeholders' representation and the terms of their engagement with

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[30] Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice,* trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977)
[31] An example of this social trajectory for sited practice might be *Sculptur Projekte Munster* 2007 as compared to the project's manifestation in 1977 and 1987. The 2007 version hosted Jeremy Deller's community garden and planting project; David Hammon's distribution of the weather forecast; Mike Kelley's petting zoo; and Elmgreen and Dragset's theatrical play.

art. While artists have no special expertise concerning social processes, that does not mean that we do not grapple with how art problematises this representation and engagement with notions of community that are actual, idealised and/or imagined.

A level of reflexivity in the political positioning of an artist within a community, is a given for writers in the field. What an artist does with this understanding could range from replicating the socially ameliorative agendas found within community welfare contexts, the representation of interaction with community; to the collaboration with community used to differing ends. Pierre Bourdieu's 'reflexive sociology' is a key paradigm that informs how art might consider an ethical and political interaction between an artist and a community.[32] But the social enterprise as art project explored by Foster in "The Artist as Ethnographer" does not need to read like a sociologist's rulebook.[33] Claire Bishop suggests that an artist's reflexive relationship with a community does not need to lead to a prioritisation of a set of ethical criteria for an artist's code of conduct, as her support of the work of Santiago Sierra attests.[34] Bishop's critical position reveals a realistic picture of how communal sociability works outside of the artistic spotlight. The picture of community formation outlined by Bishop is informed by the exploration of the "impossibility of consensus via commune" and the antagonism found in democratic pluralism recognised by Jean Luc Nancy and Chantal Mouffe respectively.[35]

In *The Inoperative Community,* Nancy speaks of the notion of community as an idealised condition that might never have been real. The notion of community is explored as a perpetual myth.[36] This is a myth that has failed in a number of explicit political contexts historically, but nevertheless is a condition that is continually sought out and worked on. Nancy regards this community 'project' as an "interruption of singularities, or the suspension…[of what]…singular beings are."[37] Nancy recognises the singular subject within the "multiplicity of the community" as the political

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[32] Bourdieu, Quoted in L.D. Wacquant, "Towards a Reflexive Sociology: A Workshop with Pierre Bourdieu," *Sociological Theory* 7 (1989): 33.
[33] Foster, *The Artist as Ethnographer,* 171-204.
[34] Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents," 178-183.
[35] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community,* trans. Peter Connor et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), xi.
[36] Ibid., 51
[37] Ibid., 31

paradigm that resists and disputes what "being-in-common" means.[38] Mouffe, on the other hand, looks at community via an understanding of pluralism. Mouffe regards pluralist democracy as an entity in constant flux and instability.[39] Similarly to Nancy's position regarding community, Mouffe regards pluralist democracy as a problematic social state that is perpetually deterred or altogether unattainable. She states that community pluralism:

> should be conceived as a good that only exists as a good so long as it cannot be reached. Such a democracy will therefore always be a democracy 'to come' as conflict and antagonism are at the same time its conditions of possibility and condition of impossibility of its full realisation.[40]

Further to this, pluralism can only be encountered effectively if one considers the singular subject within this community formation not as fixed and stable but as a "contingent and ambiguous" identification that contributes to pluralism's "constitutive character of social division and antagonism."[41]

Art discourse invariably draws on these social theories and models in responding to sited art practices that privilege the social over the aesthetic. The social dynamic between subject identities (be it plural or singular) are now considered the form that needs to be interrogated. But in order to understand this form, it is helpful to draw on Grant Kester's typology, which identifies and differentiates between the manners in which communities form around artistic practice. Kester differentiates between 'politically coherent community' formations and communities 'created' especially for an art project. Kester supports the stable identification of the politically coherent community that does not allow for the self-importance of an artist within the centre of a community created for the purpose of art practice.[42] Kester notes that the artist within a 'politically coherent community' does not get afforded any great social influence within the group dynamic. This is because the politically coherent group already has a healthy identity without an art premise impinging on its space. Kwon is

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[38] Nancy, *The Inoperative Community,* x.
[39] Chantal Mouffe, *The Return of the Political* (London: Verso, 1993), 8.
[40] Ibid., 8
[41] Ibid., 10
[42] Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, 161.

more concerned with the modes community-driven practices take and borrows explicitly from Bourdieu and Nancy. Kwon is not concerned with how community comes to be around an art project, as she still sees the potential for art to create new social contexts. More important for Kwon is the idea that the very notion of coherent community identification is unrealisable and resisted within her understanding of "collective art praxis."[43] Collective art 'praxis' differentiates itself from more traditional 'community based art' models as it allows for collectivity to emerge not from a sense of authenticity but from grappling with shifting differences. Through a reflexive positioning of the artist within a particular formation of community, an acknowledgement of the impossibility of an idealised coherence is found that describes not only the inclusions but the inevitable exclusion involved within any community grouping. The result is an exposure of unresolved political tension that is made public within the representation of the sited community.[44] Kwon echoes Lippard's position—although it results in very different ends. Lippard regards an artist's place within a community context not as a dynamic that allows the conflict to be laid out bare but as an intervention that requires shifting conciliatory response from the artist. Lippard notes, "community (practice) does not mean understanding everything about everybody and resolving all differences; it means knowing how to work within differences as they change and evolve."[45]

Site as Alterity

The notion of alterity corresponds with the field of art's unquenchable thirst for social expansion and its desire to expose itself to new audiences. This expansive impulse is often defended in democratic terms. However, on those occasions where art reaches out and explores 'new' social identities and communities within the process and/or presentation of an artwork—a 'we and them' dynamic invariably emerges. I seek to examine the problematic elements of the politics of site in relationship to an engagement with community and in doing so I have drawn on Mouffe's work on democratic politics. Mouffe regards "the existence of every identity [as] an

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[43] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 153.
[44] Ibid., 153
[45] Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society*, 24.

affirmation of a difference" resulting in an antagonised outside being created. Mouffe notes that the "creation of we" can only emerge from a "delimitation of a them." [46] Within this logic, an art practice that deals with communal sociability must inevitably deal with (consciously or otherwise) the antagonism that is at play in the political differentiation of identity formation. This analysis of the construction of community within an art framework grapples with differences inherent in the social identification discourses—economic, gendered, ethnic, sexual and so forth. The plurality of social identity is important to my research as the continual representation of a differentiated social space offers a more faithful representation of the world at large. This challenges conservative representations of community perpetuated by a more stable and safe cultural homogeneity.

Foster notes in "The Artist as Ethnographer" that any successful engagement with the notion of the 'other' "disturbs a dominant culture that depends on strict stereotypes, stable lines of authority and humanist reanimations of many sorts."[47] Foster accounts for the strategies artists use to explore the pseudo-outside of the art institution. The motivation of this socially coded site practice is to challenge "the bourgeois-capitalist institutions of art (the museum, the academy, the market, and the media)" and their "exclusionary definitions of art and artist, identity and community."[48] Whilst the political goal of achieving inclusive representations of socially, economically and culturally marginalised groups is a laudable one—the artist in this realm must walk a tight-rope that balances the dangers of what Kwon lists as "identification, misidentification, disidentification, reductivism and counter-reductivism."[49] If the artist wants to avoid perpetuating existing marginalisation they must gauge the distance he or she has to the notion of the 'other' via varying degrees of identification. Both Kwon and Foster do not have definitive answers regarding the correct social distance between the artist and community subject. This is because effective critical practice does not necessarily involve cosy inclusive representations of alterity. They do present the field of post-structuralist Anthropology, which sits alongside these aestheticised social practices, as a potential source for a productive reflexive practise.

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[46] Mouffe, *The Return of the Political*, 2.
[47] Foster, *The Artist as Ethnographer*, 199.
[48] Ibid., 173
[49] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 145.

Foster critiques the 'artist as ethnographer' paradigm; he argues it has three tendencies that do nothing to expand social plurality within cultural practice. These tendencies are: the idea that political agency attained in the social field is synonymous with progressive art; the idea that the 'other' is somewhere else and that this elsewhere has the power to "transform or subvert" the status quo; and lastly that there is a split between those who have cultural authority to 'other' themselves and those who have limited access to this sense of otherness.[50]

Regardless of whether the artist identifies with the role of the "native, informant or ethnographer" or all three, a continual interrogation of the artist's own authority within the fieldwork is required to achieve a reflexive engagement.[51] As this ethnographic fieldwork is made material or mapped for consumption by the audience, Bourdieu suggests that it generates a predisposition to:

> a Cartesian opposition that leads the observer to abstract the culture of study.
> Such mapping may thus confirm rather than contest the authority of mapper
> over site in a way that reduces the desired exchange of dialogical fieldwork.[52]

The dangers of this reduction (played out in the process of 'othering' one's self or the over-determination of the exotic) can play-into the hands of the conservative practices that perpetuate dominant power relations. Bourdieu describes such practices as perpetrating 'symbolic violence' and by Foster as "murderous acts." Whilst the reflexivity promoted by Bourdieu might seem to offer a safety-harness to artists performing this ethnographic tightrope act, Foster cautions that this reflexivity can be a calculating

> insider's game that renders the institution not more open and public but more
> hermetic and narcissistic, a place for initiates only where a contemptuous
> criticality is rehearsed…. The ambiguity of deconstructive positioning, at once
> inside and outside the institution, can lapse into the duplicity of cynical reason in
> which artist and institution have it both ways—retain the social status of art and

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[50] Foster, *The Artist as Ethnographer,*173 - 174.
[51] Ibid., 174
[52] Bourdieu, Quoted in, Foster, "The Artist as Ethnographer," 190.

entertain the moral purity of critique, the one a complement or compensation for the other.[53]

Kwon poses a question for artists engaged in the social that is pertinent for my fieldwork and offers more than Foster's extremely conditional support for art's engagement with social or ethnographic subjects. Kwon asks, "what would it mean now to sustain the cultural and historical specificity of a place (and self) that is neither a simulacral pacifier nor a wilful invention?[54] A 'simulacral pacifier' can be understood as a strategy of over-identification that occurs when an art project seeks to ameliorate a social condition by attempting to calm the antagonism between the 'we and the them.' A 'wilful invention' in the context of alterity involves the co-option of a culture outside of one's authority or experience. This might be a cultural projection that smoothes over complicated and idiosyncratic narratives and does nothing to resist cultural stereotypes.

Within my practice I seek to deal with the construction of self in relation to notions of 'otherness' with a distance that is critical, sensitive and aware of my place as an artist within a field of social differentiation. This means allowing the sited investigation to borrow from social discourse but ultimately accepting that art is useless as a social enterprise to 'make things better.' I would argue that a truly reflexive interrogation of the artist's authority within the social field can always reveal limitations and vulnerabilities within the authoritative frame provided by institutions. Such reflexive interrogation allows for the power of cultural framing to produce a richer and more complicated narrative comprised of intersecting social identifications.

Site as Discursive

The post 1960s concern with locating the artist's role as outside dominant institutional contexts has worked to both expand that role as well as understanding site as being discursive. This expansion can be understood to reflect the movement of the artist

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[53] Foster, *The Artist as Ethnographer,* 196.
[54] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 165.

who infinitely transforms her or his role to suit the locale that is being co-opted into the field of art.[55] The understanding of site as being discursive is informed by Deleuze and Guattari's conception of rhizomic movement within a globalised social context.[56] This has seen sited art practices moving from a direct and comparatively localised courier service as manifest in traditional site-specific practices to the more expansive analogy of a travel consultancy, where site is better understood as an idea within a networked field. More pertinent to an understanding of discursivity beyond the literal travel itineraries of the artist, is the way site is considered within the internal structure of a project. Site can be understood as something that passes "irregularly from one subject or locality to another" or "that runs over a wide range of subjects."[57] In this case site must invariably become a conceptual region with no one point being privileged over another. What is emphasised is not only the points of "departure and return" but also the very relay between ideas; subjects moving through site can be conceptualised as "mobile and contingent."[58] Moreover as one person cannot experience more than one fixed locale within a given region at any one moment—this quality of site attains the material quality of an idea. The site becomes less fixed in

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[55] In "The Artist as Ethnographer*,*" Foster describes the artist's "ethnographic turn" as a horizontal movement across fields of practice, discourse, issues, sites, topics, interpretative lenses and forms of presentation. Distinguishing between the horizontal axis and the vertical which requires a historical perspective and discourse specificity—an expertise or specialisation. Foster warns of the difficulty of working both these strategies simultaneously, which risks a superficial body of knowledge and experience. Foster, *The Artist as Ethnographer*, 202.

[56] Hal Foster's exploration of the artist's ethnographic tendencies via a horizontal expansion of concerns; James Meyer's notion of the 'functional' site; and Miwon Kwon's 'discursive' site all imbue their analysis with Deleuze and Guattari's articulation of the rhizome. For Deleuze and Guattari, the anti-dendritic, anti-genealogical quality of the rhizome allows for a network of "things brought into contact with one another, functioning as an assemblage machine for new affects, new concepts, new bodies, new thoughts; the rhizomatic network is a mapping of the forces that move and/or immobilise bodies." Felicity Colman, Quoted in, Adrian Parr, ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary*, 232. Deleuze and Guattari note that rhizomic movement is like a mapping as opposed to a tracing. The map "fosters connections between the fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency. It is itself a part of the rhizome. The map is open and connectable in all of its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. It can be torn, reversed, adapted to any kind of mounting, reworked by an individual, group, or social formation. It can be drawn on a wall, conceived of as a work of art, constructed as a political action or as a meditation. Perhaps one of the most important characteristics of the rhizome is that it always has multiple entryways…" Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 12.

[57] 'Discursive' in OED Online, "Oxford English Dictionary Online," http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/entrance.dtl (accessed April 3, 2010).

[58] Meyer, "The Functional Site: or The Transformation of Site-Specificity," 35.

physical ground and is enveloped by a multitude of positions and ideas. Once discursive, the site is received via two forms of navigation—one that follows the given artist's field work (or more generally movement) and the other via the audiences' making of site from a gamut of positions taken within an experience of a given work.

Kwon notes that the deterritorialisation of site that comes with a discursive constitution has a liberatory effect as it "dismantles traditional orthodoxies that suppress difference" by creating an unstable grounding of understanding.[59] Such an impulse might manifest in art in which the site of distribution and presentation is only a segment of the entire work and where the intertextual quality of the ideas is made evident outside of the actual experience of the site. Isabelle Graw's investigation of the artist's use of fieldwork within the notion of homelessness provides some insight into how this dynamic is mediated.[60] Homelessness is understood by Graw as an absence of a stable social ground that allows a freedom to use the social to unhinge the identity of site within a given work. Graw highlights didacticism, historical investigation, research driven practices and journalism as some of the representational strategies artists use to position this homelessness within an institutionalised context and a way for an audience to follow the conceptual dynamic of the work.[61] These strategies are borrowed from non-art fields as a way of articulating the complicated social constitution of site and the artist's processes within it. Without the documentary forms that Graw notes, that map the artist's process—the audience would invariably have no entry point into the work. The forms that record these movements (be they literal or conceptual) are capable of holding, addressing and synthesising multiple positions simultaneously. As a result the auxiliary publication (website, essay, photography and so forth) that accompanies an artwork has typically attained a far greater importance in relation to the experiential understanding of an artwork. This

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[59] Miwon Kwon, "One Place After Another: Notes on Site-Specificity," *October,* no. 80 (Spring, 1997): 109. For Adrian Parr, the Deleuzian conception of deterritorialisation maintains its sited quality but of site becoming undone. Parr notes "deterritorialisation can best be understood as a movement producing change. In so far as it operates as a line of flight, deterritorialisation indicates the creative potential of an assemblage. So, to deterritorialise is to free up the fixed relations that contain a body all the while exposing it to new organisations." Parr, ed., *The Deleuze Dictionary*, 179.
[60] Isabelle Graw, "Field Work," *Flash Art International*, November/December (1990): 136-137.
[61] Graw, "Field Work," 137.

contingent quality might be articulated via text-based publication or via camera; as Kwon notes "the space of our public conversation is now fully circumscribed by the camera."[62]

James Meyer terms his notion of the expanded and nomadic site as 'functional.' The functional site privileges the process of movement between entities and the mediation of this movement within an institutional setting. Meyer notes, "it is a process, an operation occurring between sites, a mapping of institutional and textual filiations and the bodies that move between them (the artist's above all)."[63] Meyer identifies a lineage for artistic practice's turn to the nomadic/discursive that includes Robert Smithson's development of an allegorical relation between the site of research and the site of display and the Situationists who "developed a practice of mobile criticality to make temporary interventions in urban settings."[64] Meyer also draws a valuable distinction between two forms of nomadic practice. The first is lyrical and is "thematised as a random and poetic interaction with objects and spaces of everyday life."[65] This reduces movement to an aesthetic of poetic disruption. The second nomadism is "anti-aesthetic and critical" and is considered a practice that is not a representation of a movement or action but which interrogates the "structures of mobility within specific historical geographical and institutional frameworks."[66] It follows that the discursivity (or critical nomadism) that Meyer's advocates has a reflexive tendency. In contrast to Meyer's concern with discursivity being underpinned by a programmatic rationale rather than an intuitive inclination, Kwon's argument regards discursive sites' unstable exposure of place and self. This critical instability accompanies the potential encounter with what Kwon terms a 'wrong' place.[67] Kwon notes that the discursive site might be "a delusional alibi for short attention spans, reinforcing the ideology of the new—a temporary antidote for the anxiety of boredom" within a capitalist paradigm that privileges only a few the freedom to actually roam.[68] Therefore both Kwon and Meyer's critiques of roaming

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[62] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 162.
[63] Meyer, "The Functional Site: or The Transformation of Site-Specificity," 24.
[64] James Meyer, "Nomads," *Parkett*, no. 49 (1997): 206.
[65] Ibid., 206
[66] Meyer, "Nomads," 207.
[67] Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, 164.
[68] Ibid., 109; An impression of the globe-trotting artist offering their site-responsive practices—as a critical service—to the proliferating biennale circuit, might be surmised as a

regard the creation of "undifferentiated equivalence as opposed to articulating the ideological space between two subjects, locales or ideas."[69]

The discursivity I employ in the site investigation component of this research relates to the internal structure of the project as opposed to any movement between the respective sites. While it is imaginable that a singular narrative might be created to link all five sites of engagement—such a narrative would inevitably only highlight my own history and psychology as the centre of the work. What expands the work beyond a journey through four important personal places is the discursive movement within each site. This disrupts the dominance of the narrative of the personal journey and instead instigates a research methodology that questions a stable understanding of each place. The discursive sites explored within each literal place: a 'commission' for the garage; 'pedagogy' for the common room; the 'salon' for the lounge-room; and 'community' based practice for the foreshore—makes certain sense but also resists engaging directly with a self-authored sense of my identity. My parent's garage site is a work created via a structure of a commercial 'commission' but (regrettably) not involving payment; the student common room is a space of leisure as opposed to a space of learning; the salon is an anachronistic notion and the community based project is proposed in a space that privileges anonymity and a type of singularity. By using these discursive organisational structures to construct the respective projects I seek to challenge the stable subjective identity of the sites and allow a measure of determination that is not governed by my personal narrative.

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pervasive tendency for contemporary artists from Kwon's writing. While this might be some-what more common place in the Euro-American art contexts, this situation is rare for the majority of art practitioners in Australia; Miwon Kwon, "One Place After Another: Notes on Site-Specificity," *October,* no. 80 (Spring, 1997): 109.

[69] Miwon Kwon, "One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity," in *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation art*, ed. Erika Suderburg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Pres, 2000), 58.

[69] Ibid., 58

Institutionalised Site

The framing of site as an institutional concern is predicated on two factors. The first regards the articulation of site within a framework of meaning making. Site in this case requires a system of power and knowledge to 'point at it' as a place of significance.[70] Otherwise the space dissolves into the everyday. This is not to say that the institution of art is the only framework that makes space meaningful. The everyday is rendered meaningful via a number of cultural lenses—these lenses do not necessarily transform the everyday into 'art'. The historical accounts of the Situationist International move between an avant-gardist conflation of art and life to a political articulation that measures the "distance between life and revolution."[71] Guy Debord's (latter) antagonism towards art saw him framing the everyday, through the strategies of 'dérive' (aimless urban drifting) and 'détournement' (material disjunctions).[72] As Sven Luttiken notes "even while art still claimed an exceptional role, it was in fact completely commodified and integrated into the society of the spectacle."[73] Debord replaces the institutionalised space of the aesthetic spectacle with "concrete construction of momentary ambiances of life and their transformation into a superior passional quality"—the situation.[74] From our historical vantage, Debord's position seems romantic, naïve or fruitless as we see Situationist strategies co-opted by the city of Melbourne's laneway marketing. Debord however was canny to the spectacle's omnipotence—privileging experience over the capitalist paradigm

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[70] Drawing on Foucault—Hooper-Greenhill notes "discipline as a power/technique operates through hierarchical observation, normalising judgment and examination. The concept of hierarchical observation indicates the connections between visibility and the establishment if deep-seated relations of advantage/disadvantage, and introduces the idea of an apparatus designed for observation, which induces the effects of these relationships deployed through the visibility of those subjects to it "The Disciplinary Museum," in *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*, by Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (London: Routledge, 1992), 170

[71] Gilles Dauve, *Critique of the Situationist International*, Quoted in Gerald Raunig, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, Mass. : Semiotext(e), 2007), 170.

[72] Raunig, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth Century*, 173-174; T.J. Clark and Donald Nicholson-Smith, "Why Art Can't Kill the Situationist International," *October* 79 (Winter 1997):19-20.

[73] Sven Lütticken, *Idols of the Market: Modern Iconoclasm and the Fundamentalist Spectacle* (New York: Sternberg Press, 2009), 57.

[74] Guy Debord, *Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's Conditions of Organisation and Action,* Quoted in Gerald Raunig, *Art and Revolution: Transversal Activism in the Long Twentieth*, 172.

as a model for how we might imagine what Lutticken calls a "counter-public" for sited cultural practice.[75]

The second factor shaping the framing of site concerns art practice's continual resistance to institutional frameworks. Lippard describes these moments as 'escape attempts' that are bound to fail.[76] The institution of art readily co-opts art's dissent whilst making it a broader entity—making the institution of art more progressive but still rarefying it as a privileged framing lens. Spectatorship becomes a form of pilgrimage. These outsides (which are actually insides) are seen across a historical lineage—from 1960's earthwork practices to contemporary excursions to sites still outside a norm of presentation as evidenced by Thomas Hirschhorn's *Bataille Monument* or more recently Claire Doherty's 24hr art—a curated event across New Zealand.

This framing of the everyday is a process where non-art sites loose their abstract quality and become "specific again."[77] Potentially they become entangled in what Foster terms the "the local as simulacrum."[78] In this case site becomes a dead version of itself, bound by its representation as opposed to the spatial and social conditions that ignited the impetus to site the art there. This might be seen as a choice between dead site contexts and concrete strategies developed to signpost and broadcast these forms of fieldwork that read like obituaries or more portable versions of gallery-based tombstones.[79] These postcards/souvenirs are broadcast forms that bring the fieldwork intervention closer to the institutional home. From varying degrees of photo-documentation (for example Christo and Jean Claude to Michael Heizer), coded gallery based allegories (Robert Smithson) to publication avenues that

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[75] Sven Lütticken, "Secrecy and Publicity: Reactivating the Avant-Garde," *New Left Review*, no. 17 (September 2002), 136.

[76] Lucy Lippard, "Escape Attempts." in *Six years : The Dematerialization of the Art Object From 1966 to 1972* ..., ed. Lucy Lippard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), i-xvii.

[77] Foster, The Artist as Ethnographer, 197.

[78] Ibid., 197

[79] Buren's use of the 'tombstone analogy' speaks of the co-option by gallery driven language to account for artistic practices. This translation, from site to studio to gallery however manifests even in Buren's own documentation of his site-specific projects. Buren calls this form of publication a 'photo-souvenir' which is an appropriation of the commercial paradigm for a holiday object or image. Daniel Buren, "Photo-souvenirs," in *Contemporary Art: From Studio to Situation*, ed., Claire Doherty (London: BlackDog Publishing, 2004), 24 – 27.

are more didactic (Andrea Fraser)—the process of the fieldwork's meaning making (as art) becomes integrated into its reception. Fieldwork that does not celebrate its life (or death) outside of its actual form is termed as Public Art. Public Art does not rely on conventional art's institutional architecture (or language) to be received by a public. Its encroachment into the everyday can become a socially ameliorative force or as a decorative measure conceived by government. A by-product of this force might be civic education or pride and/or the alleviation of social disenfranchisement. Public Art is not usually a voluntary experience. As Andrea Fraser notes, it "imposes aesthetic competencies as a condition not just for self-education or social advancement but of living in a city."[80] Public Art's more visible (on a mass level) disruption of the everyday means that the work's value emanates from how it is legible. This legibility refers directly to the audience as an integral consideration in the work's identity. Within this dynamic between the institution of art, the nebulous constituency of the public and space—a rift emerges between the initiates who are familiar with artistic discourse and those who are not. This rift is condescending, as the public are relegated between the us and the disempowered "non-interested and the non-professional."[81] This argument by Fraser applies to everything from a sculpture in a city square, a community driven mural right through to projects that rely on a more experiential engagement from a public for their completion. These forms rely on an articulation of an audience. But who exactly is the 'they' of the audience? The problematic nature of the undifferentiated and abstracted notion of the public is only a rhetorical ruse to cover up the fact that the institutional forces (be they art, municipal or corporate entities) are the primary or privileged audience.

From Fieldwork to Propositional Form

Treatment of the site via the process of fieldwork resulted in the reflection on the role of the university as the commissioning body of the project. The notion of fieldwork alludes to the "practical side of research" that differentiates itself from "theoretical or laboratory investigation."[82] An analogy between the field of art and the Social

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[80] Andrea Fraser, "An Artist's Statement," in *Museum Highlights: The Writings of Andrea Fraser*, ed. Alexander Alberro (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), 10.
[81] Ibid., 12.
[82] 'Fieldwork' in *OED Online*, "Oxford English Dictionary Online," http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/entrance.dtl (accessed April 3, 2010).

Sciences that are accustomed to using this methodology, could consider the studio as a laboratory and the exegesis as the theoretical report. Therefore the art made outside of these parameters is the fieldwork. This is not taking into account that historically site-driven practices circumvented the distances between studio (lab) and sites of presentation outside of the conventional parameters of the gallery (fieldwork) by conflating the two notions and transforming the fieldwork into a lab; and that the theoretical investigation of the Fine Arts PhD is located within the form of the practice.

The notion of fieldwork is an appropriate paradigm for my research because it infers that data collected in the field will be translated into another form somewhere else. This differs from site-specific practices as the experience of the 'then and there' is privileged over the subsequent documentation. This documentation however has the potential to undermine a direct experiential encounter with the original manifestation of art practice. The key historical precedent in the use of fieldwork would be found within the practice of Smithson. His deployment of sited fieldwork into an allied representational context of a 'non-site' was a process of abstracting data that had more in common with map-making than any other mimetic naturalism.[83] But more than collecting and then translating the field's pre-existing data, Smithson's fieldwork (or site) can be understood as the process of making new data that emanates from site interventions. Artistic interventions can be understood to be anything from being present (for instance, through the process of walking) to more substantial material shifts in our imaginings of the site.

My position regarding the fieldwork as research is sympathetic to Smithson's abstracted representation of an artist's varied processes within a given site. Like Smithson, my research does not create a hierarchy between the experience of the site (the fieldwork) and the translated representation found within the non-site, this exegesis and potentially any other site of presentation. At the forefront of my intervention into a given site will be the notion that it is to be framed as 'propositional.' There are many examples of Smithson's unmade propositional site

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[83] Robert Smithson, Robert, "Unpublished Writings: A Provisional Theory of Non-Sites," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (California : California of University Press, 1996), 365.

interventions—it is clear however that the material realisation of the earthwork project is privileged over the idea of the intervention found in sketches, diagrams and texts (see figs. 44, 45).[84] What complicates this notion of the art intervention as a propositional form within this project is that sometimes the propositions have an actual material presence within the fieldwork site that is quite separate from the idea that it is proposing for it. Thus the propositional artwork has two identities that manifest in two forms. The first is the actual material form that articulates the proposition within the site of research or one of display. The second is its projected future form that is articulated within the proposition itself. Therefore the relationships between site of research, site of display and the different states of the intervention would not be analogous to some of Smithson's unrealised earthwork projects. For example, *Island Project* (1970) and *Underground Projection Room* (1971) manifest only in explicit drawn and designed form or *Monuments of Passaic* (1967) is a series of photographs that document ready-found spatial contexts in the landscape that are propositional monuments.[85] It would be more like the research driven activity associated with the *Island of Broken Glass*, (1969) a project proposed for a small island in the Georgia Straight Vancouver but made material as a propositional form in a number of (non-site) mappings.[86] These mappings were abstract representations of the idea of piling one hundred tonnes of broken glass on the island. This idea was then made material via a gallery based sculpture of a white cube filled with broken glass, a temporary pile of broken glass in New Jersey field and a mythical articulation in the drawing *Hypothetical Continent – Map of Broken Glass: Atlantis*.[87]

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[84] Robert Smithson, *Floating Island to Travel Around Manhattan Island*, 1970/2005, Produced by Minetta Brook and Whitney Museum of American Art, Robert Smithson Estate website, http://www.robertsmithson.com/sculpture/floating_island.htm (accessed December 4, 2009).

[85] Robert Smithson, *Island Project*, 1970, drawing on paper, Robert Smithson Estate website, http://www.robertsmithson.com/drawings/island_project_300.htm (accessed December 4, 2009); Robert Smithson, *Underground Projection Room*, 1971, drawing on paper, Robert Smithson Estate website, http://www.robertsmithson.com/drawings/underground_300.htm (accessed December 4, 2009); Robert Smithson, *Monuments of Passaic*, 1967, six photographs and one photostat map, Robert Smithson Estate website , http://www.robertsmithson.com/photoworks/monument-passaic_300.htm (accessed December 4, 2009).

[86] Robert Smithson, Map of Clear Broken Glass (Atlantis)**,** 1969, pencil on paper, Robert Smithson Estate website, http://www.robertsmithson.com/drawings/map_of_broken_glass_374.htm (accessed December 4, 2009).

[87] Robert Smithson, *Hypothetical Continent – Map of Broken Glass: Atlantis***,** 1969, Loveladies, New Jersey, Robert Smithson Estate website,

It makes sense in other traditions for fieldwork-driven research to make recommendations for further action/implementation/intervention—as it is in the fieldwork and its analysis that is the prerogative of some social sciences. This fieldwork and the propositions that follow are understood as part of a process that could include the expertise of other practitioners in the future. It is likely that this research will lead to unrealised propositions being made as well. It makes practical sense, considering the grand infrastructure required for many of Smithson's earthwork projects, for the propositions to be realised using an abstracted material and spatial vocabulary. This is also the case for two Melbourne site projects proposed by Open Spatial Workshop (OSW) and Tom Nicholson. In *Monument for the Flooding of Royal Park* (2008) Nicholson proposes an unlikely environmental gesture in a predominantly pictorial publication of found photographs that memorialise the failed reconciliation between explorers Bourke and Wills and the indigenous populations they encountered. In it, he proposes "the scattering of sporocarp throughout Royal Park" which would become fields of the nardoo plant in the event of a flood.[88] Once the flood recedes and "the plant dries out, they become vast fields of intense red." The fieldwork in this case involved the sites not only within Royal Park itself but the historical archives of the State Library of Victoria that has collected documentation of Royal Park over the last 150 years. The proposition is a poetic abstraction of the idea and is promulgated via discrete captions that accompany the historical representation of the park and the commemoration of Burke and Wills. The proposition is such an unlikely environmental and engineering reality, that the publication underscores this fact by representing an absence of the environmental spectacle it suggests.[89] This is because the proposed spectacle is a part of a much broader enterprise of fieldwork that explores the archive's relationship to the notions of colonialism, indigenous representation, civic duty and the monument.

http://www.robertsmithson.com/photoworks/hc_atlantis_300.htm (accessed December 4, 2009).
[88] Tom Nicholson, *2008: Monument for the flooding of Royal Park,* http://www.tomn.net/projects/2008_03.htm (accessed November 20, 2009).
[89] Tom Nicholson, *Monument for the Flooding of Royal Park* (Melbourne: Schwartz City, 2009)

Figure 44: Robert Smithson, *Floating Island to Travel Around Manhattan Island*, 1970, Graphite on paper, 48 x 60 cm.

Figure 45: Robert Smithson, *Floating Island to Travel Around Manhattan Island*, 1970/2005 Produced by Minetta Brook in collaboration with the Whitney Museum of American Art On view September 17-25, 2005.

Figure 46: Robert Smithson, *Map of Broken Glass (Atlantis)*,
1969, DIA Art Foundation, New York.
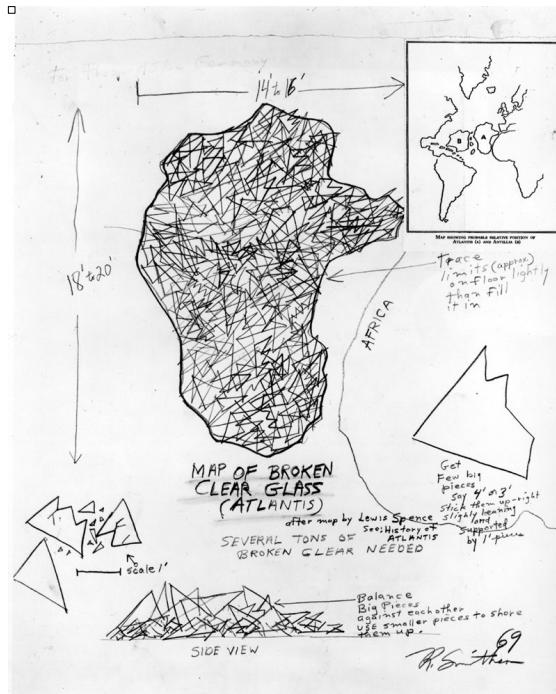
Figure 47: Robert Smithson, *MAP OF CLEAR BROKEN
GLASS (ATLANTIS)*, 1969, pencil on paper.

ing back into the interior, /

King, burying Gray, /

eating the carcasses of starved camels, /

Burke's hostility towards "the Blacks".⁴ /

Figure 48: Tom Nicholson, *Monument for the Flooding of Royal Park* (Melbourne: Schwartz City, 2009), section from publication, pages 24, 25.

the spores hidden again in the ground /

for the next flooding. /
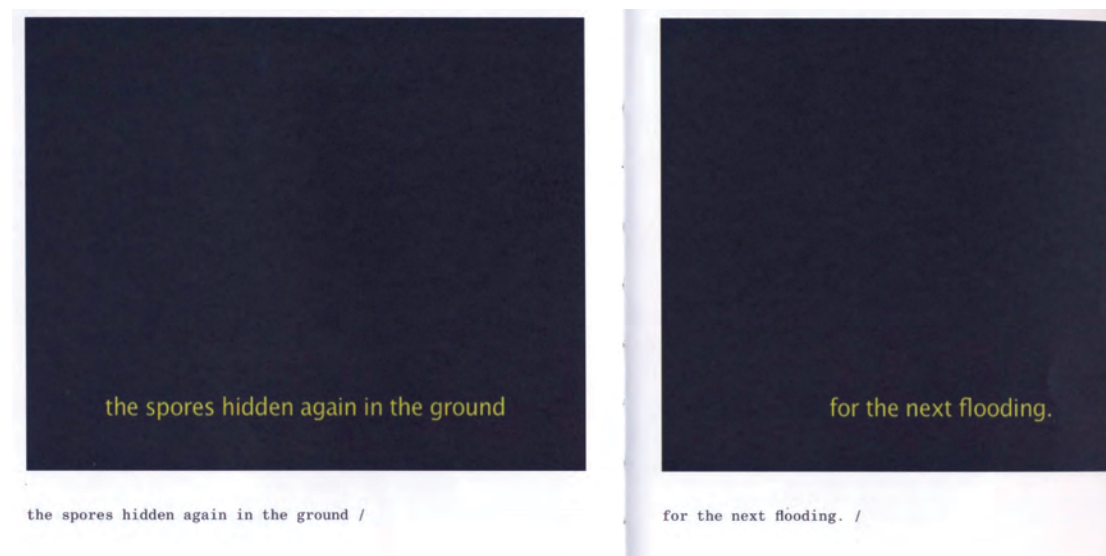
Figure 49: Tom Nicholson, *Monument for the Flooding of Royal Park* (Melbourne: Schwartz City, 2009), section from publication, pages 90, 91.

Figure 50: OSW, *Groundings*, 2005, stop motion animation still,
http://www.osw.com.au/archive/?p=76.

Figure 51: OSW, *Groundings*, 2005, Federation Square, Melbourne Prize for Urban
Sculpture Prize, Melbourne, installation view.

On the other hand in *Groundings* (2005), OSW proposes a huge slowly moving disk of lawn for the Alexandra Gardens in Melbourne.[90] The lawned disc that is inset and flush to the surrounding parkland was proposed via three formal strategies: a stop motion video of friends and family picnicking in the gardens; a turn-tabled, architecturally scaled model; and, most intriguingly, a collection of huge helium filled balls. The floating balls counterpose the notion of the picturesque landscape. Whilst an actualised version of 'Groundings' does anything but float—it is the elevation of the balls that is analogous to the transformation of the everyday—conjuring the abstract idea of the spinning earthed disc as a section of globe-at-large.
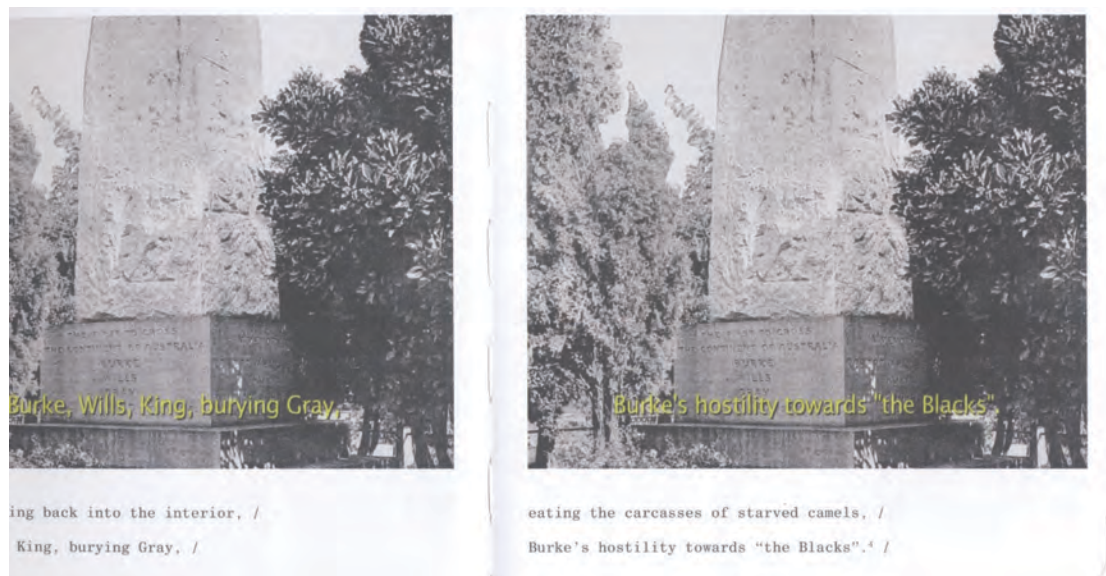
Smithson, OSW and Tom Nicholson's projects have been given as examples of how propositional artworks relate to sited fieldwork. For differing reasons the propositions have been left unrealised while still maintaining their status as independent art objects or experiences. While both the propositions and the propositional forms are resolutely sculptural and spatial they could also be considered as drawings. These projects resist a traditional status of the preliminary drawing as the 'minor form' that leads to the proverbial 'painting.' Drawing can be considered the notional space or platform for the organisation of ideas. We might consider three values 'drawing' as an artistic process has that is pertinent to propositional artworks. First, the drawing is a record of data or space that is either mimetic or conceptual. Second, this representation uses formal devices (example, lines and marks) to have a symbolic relationship to the proposed idea (via simplification, synthesis or abstraction) and requires an act of ideation to be completed by the spectator.[91] And third, drawing is a testing ground that allows for the potential of future shifts to be part of the consideration of the idea being communicated.

It is this conception of the drawing process that allows 'paper architecture' to become a catalyst for discursive shifts within its field.[92] In whatever form and material

[90] OSW, *Groundings*, 2005, Federation Square, Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture, Melbourne, Open Spatial Workshop website, http://www.osw.com.au/archive/?p=76 (accessed December 4, 2009).
[91] Mark Trieb, "Paper or Plastic? Five Thoughts on the Subject of Drawing," in *Drawing/Thinking: Confronting an Electronic Age*, ed. Mark Trieb (London: Routledge, 2008), 19.
[92] I have chosen to use the term 'paper architecture' as it avoids the implications of resistance and negation of the status quo, that the more commonly used term 'critical architecture' by

constraint the architectural proposition takes, it envisions a future after an interrogation of site that does not necessarily engage with the reality of its implementation. The centrality of drawing within architecture manifests the propositional not only as a process but also as a formal and ideological consideration.[93] Beatriz Colomina describes how the form (or media) of the proposition in Ludwig Mies van der Rohe's *Friedrichstrasse Glass Skyscraper* (1921) creates an actual experience within the exhibition space.[94] Colomina notes that the large scale quality of the photomontage positions the audience in the space of the street as opposed to the optic distance one would have with a more traditional architectural projection.[95] Mies's use of 'paper architecture' is one of many ideological strands of the modernist canon that engaged the discourse of architecture not through building but through journals, exhibitions, competitions and publications.[96] Criticism is levelled at the avant-gardes for a certain naivety regarding the social utopias their unbuildable buildings explored. But it is the ideas put forth that were the priority. The proposition is an instigator of a dialogical shift as opposed to a built one.

Tschumi describes this dialogical shift as part of the architect's critical role. Tschumi's notion of 'counter-design,' is the use of architectural drawing as a strategy

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the likes of Tschumi connotes. While 'paper architecture' can also inhabit this critical role in its utilisation of theory in built and social space—I contend it also encompasses the tenuous position represented by the 'post-critical' side of architectural discourse that emerged in the 1990s. Figures like Sylvia Lavin posit the 'projective' as the design of arrangements and scenarios; not making the critique of the effects of late capitalism, a prioritised matter. The architectural practices of Koolhaas and Herzog & de Meuron are associated with this alleged de-theorised theory and are contrasted by the critical architecture of Tschumi and Peter Eisenman. But this framing only reduces Koolhaas's expanded notion of the architectural 'program'. As it not only challenges material, spatial and formal conventions of architecture but also its "global, political, social, and economic reality." Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting, "Notes Around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism," in *In The New Architectural Pragmatism*, ed. William Saunders (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 23; Anthony Vidler, "Architecture's Expanded Field," in *In Architecture Between Spectacle and Use*, ed. Anthony Vidler (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2008), 151.
[93] The architectural historian Robin Evan's remarks "architects do not build, they draw;" Patrik Schumacher, "Aspects of the Work of Zaha Hadid," in *Essays on Architecture*, ed. Sheila de Vallée (London: Papadakis Publishing, 2007), 212.
[94] Beatriz Colomina, "Media as Modern Architecture," in *Architecture Between Spectacle and Use*, ed. Anthony Vidler (Williamstown, Mass.: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2008), 64.
[95] Ibid., 65
[96] Ibid., 65

to "denounce the evil effects of planning practices imposed by conservative city boards and governments."[97] He posits "Archizoom's *No-Stop City* and Superstudio's Continuous Monument (both ironic and critical projects from 1970)" as models of this strategy.[98] Therefore there is a tradition within 'paper architecture' for the propositions to provoke discourse in the community it is placed in: a devil's advocate.[99] This means that the proposed architectural form might still be in a formative state, exaggerated, abstract and open to significant and continual conceptual and formal development. As Foster highlights the architects, Yusuke Obuchi's *Wave Garden* and Rafi Segal and Eyal Weizman's *A Civilian Occupation: The Politics of Israeli Architecture*—not all contemporary 'paper architecture' is preoccupied with its lineage to modernist utopian or instrumental tendencies.[100] Foster notes, "neither entirely fantastic nor quite practical [these projects are] precisely utopian: it forces us to think "Why not?" in a way that questions what is."[101]

Figure 52: Ludwic Mies van der Rohe,
Friedrichstrasse Skyscraper Project, 1921,
Berlin-Mitte, Germany, Charcoal and graphite on
paper mounted on board, 173.4 x 121.9 cm.

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[97] Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction,* 10.
[98] Ibid., 11
[99] Ibid., 13
[100] Hal Foster in Stan Allen, Stan, Hal Foster, and Kenneth Frampton, "Stocktaking 2004: Questions about the Present and Future of Design," in *The New Architectural Pragmatism*, ed. William Saunders (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 111.
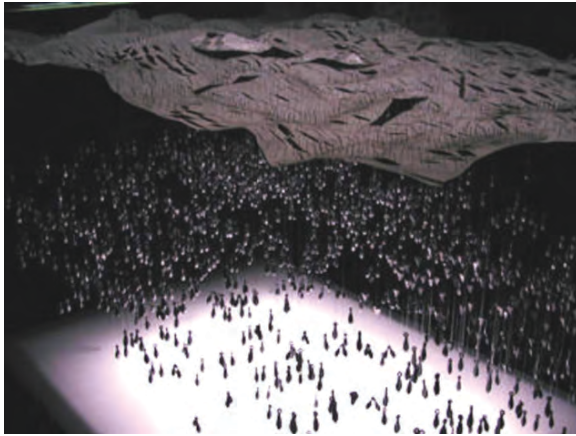[101] Ibid., 112

Figure 53: Yosuke Obuchi, *Wave Garden,* 2002, Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York.

Another exemplar of this tendency can be found in Herzog & de Meuron's presentation of the meandering routes of their research practice at the Tate Modern in 2005. Far from unrealised propositions, the display featured a gamut of material, surface, structural, scale experiments that lead to many paths and 'detours' being made within an abstract architectural vocabulary.[102] As Jacques Herzog notes, "in *some* cases buildings have actually risen out of these process."[103] This research practice evaluates the state of the site and makes propositions based on a discussion made material outside of the built reality. Herzog & de Meuron's propositional research lends itself to understandings of site conditions within very formal and material constructions. Rem Koolhaas's OMA on the other hand provides a socio-economic paradigm for the propositional drawing within an architectural practice. The drawing becomes a moment along a line that might never lead to built architecture. The 'Content' publications are an example of contemporary 'paper architecture' that privileges discursive research (fieldwork) over any final solution for site. As Brendan McGettrick notes in the introduction of *Content*:

> *Content* is a product of the moment. Inspired by the ceaseless fluctuation of the 21st century it bears the marks of globalism and the market, ideological siblings that, over the past twenty years, have undercut the stability of contemporary life. This book is born of that instability. It is not timeless; it is almost out of date

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[102] *Herzog & de Meuron: An Exhibition*, 2005, Tate Modern, London
[103] Schaulager, *Herzog & de Meuron.* May 8, 2004, http://www.schaulager.org/en/index.php?pfad=archiv/herzog_de_meuron/einleitung (accessed November 20, 2008).

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already. It uses volatility as a licence to be immediate, informal, blunt; it embraces instability as a new source of freedom.[104]

This particular approach to site by architects might be incongruent with an art practice. OMA and Herzog & de Meuron also pursue their respective ideas and research—as abstracted and propositional as they begin, on a monolithic and real scale. But what happens when the proposition relating to the fieldwork remains unclear, insubstantial, multi-faceted, irresolute and/or hesitant? What attracts me to the notion of propositional form is not its resolute conviction regarding one projected artistic intervention but the ability of the statements to be "capable of falsity as well as truth."[105] I seek to position the propositional intervention in this research within this state. The propositional form can only assert a possibility and put forward ideas for consideration and discussion. This position privileges the dialogue that emanates from the responses and issues associated with sited fieldwork. As Koolhaas contends "liberated from the obligation to construct, it can become a way of thinking about anything—a discipline that represents relationships, proportions, connections, effects, the diagram of everything."[106]

Figure 54: *Herzog & de Meuron: An Exhibition*, 2005, Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London, installation view.

[104] Brendan McGetrick, ed., *Content: Triumph of Realization* (Cologne: Taschen, 2004), 16
[105] 'Proposition' in *OED Online*, "Oxford English Dictionary Online," http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/entrance.dtl (accessed April 3, 2010).
[106] Rem Koolhaas quoted in Silvia Lavin, Helene Furjan, and Penelope Dean, *Crib Sheets* (New York: The Monacelli Press, 2005), 35.
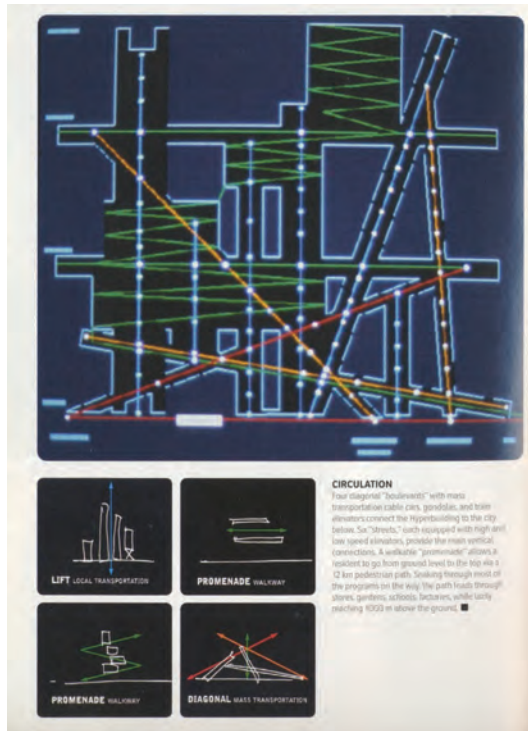
Figure 55: OMA, "Bangkok: The Hyperbuilding—
OMA's Brief, Titillating Brush with Sci-fi" in,
Content: Triumph of Realization, ed., Brendan
McGetrick (Cologne: Taschen, 2004), 424.

Figure 56: OMA, "Guggenheim Hermitage," in *Content: Triumph of Realization*, ed.,
Brendan McGetrick (Cologne: Taschen, 2004), 158-159.

The propositional forms developed for the four site driven projects investigated within this PhD are not final outcomes. They are part of an ongoing investigative conversation that will have a number of material manifestations throughout and beyond the period of candidature. Whilst this workshopping of ideas will have distinct material results displayed in public settings—no one final outcome will be sought for the respective sites. It will be like a perpetual architectural competition that cannot (and will not) select a winner. But through the process of the continual research and engagement with the efficacy, validity or interest of the proposals, the fieldwork's boundaries are rearticulated. New issues will be found and thus new responses will be sought.

As unlikely as it seems, this is similar to Ernst Gombrich's "schema and correction" drawing process used to describe the shifting phases of artistic production.[107] It is through a continual process of thinking through material responses that "new or unrecognised relationships or ideas emerge that stimulate further creativity thus allowing an idea to remain problematic or without a need to be addressed." [108] This approach might be accused of not committing to a position and engaging in a world without material consequences. But my response to this is to suggest that the space of ideas and discourse has a material weight that is appropriate to the site context of the commissioning entity: the university. It is through an engagement with fieldwork that ideas are tested in spaces outside institutional art contexts without imposing the chauvinism displayed by Public Art projects. Kate Nesbitt describes 'paper architecture' as a space where theory is made visual. Its "speculative, anticipatory and catalytic nature" makes an assessment of the field's current position and "offers new thought paradigms for approaching issues."[109] And whilst the overall research project

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[107] Gombrich posits 'schema and correction' as a drawing strategy that involves the following: an idea or schema; producing a representation of the idea; comparison between the perception of the drawn image and the mental schema; and finally the alteration of the drawing in accordance to the idea. Ernst Hans Gombrich, *Art and Illusion: A Study in the Psychology of Pictorial Presentation,* (London: Phaidon, 1968), 28.

[108] Trieb, "Paper or Plastic? Five Thoughts on the Subject of Drawing," 15.

[109] Kate Nesbitt, "Introduction," in *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture An Anthology of Architectural Theory 1965-1995,* ed. Kate Nesbitt (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 16.

resists a claim to any significant contribution to the field—the propositional responses to the fieldwork are as Nesbitt describes "speculative" responses. They remain propositional, as they are resolutely visual notions that sit within an academic research context. It is this academic context that does not so much reject practical implementation but understands that ideas are tested, disputed and shift without them being imposed onto an audience permanently. The academic context does not require the reflexive artistic process to be an (intrusive) intervention into a social space. The primary site context of this art research is found within this academic exercise. This critical reflection on artistic process is performing an academic role. Maybe this project is site-specific after all.
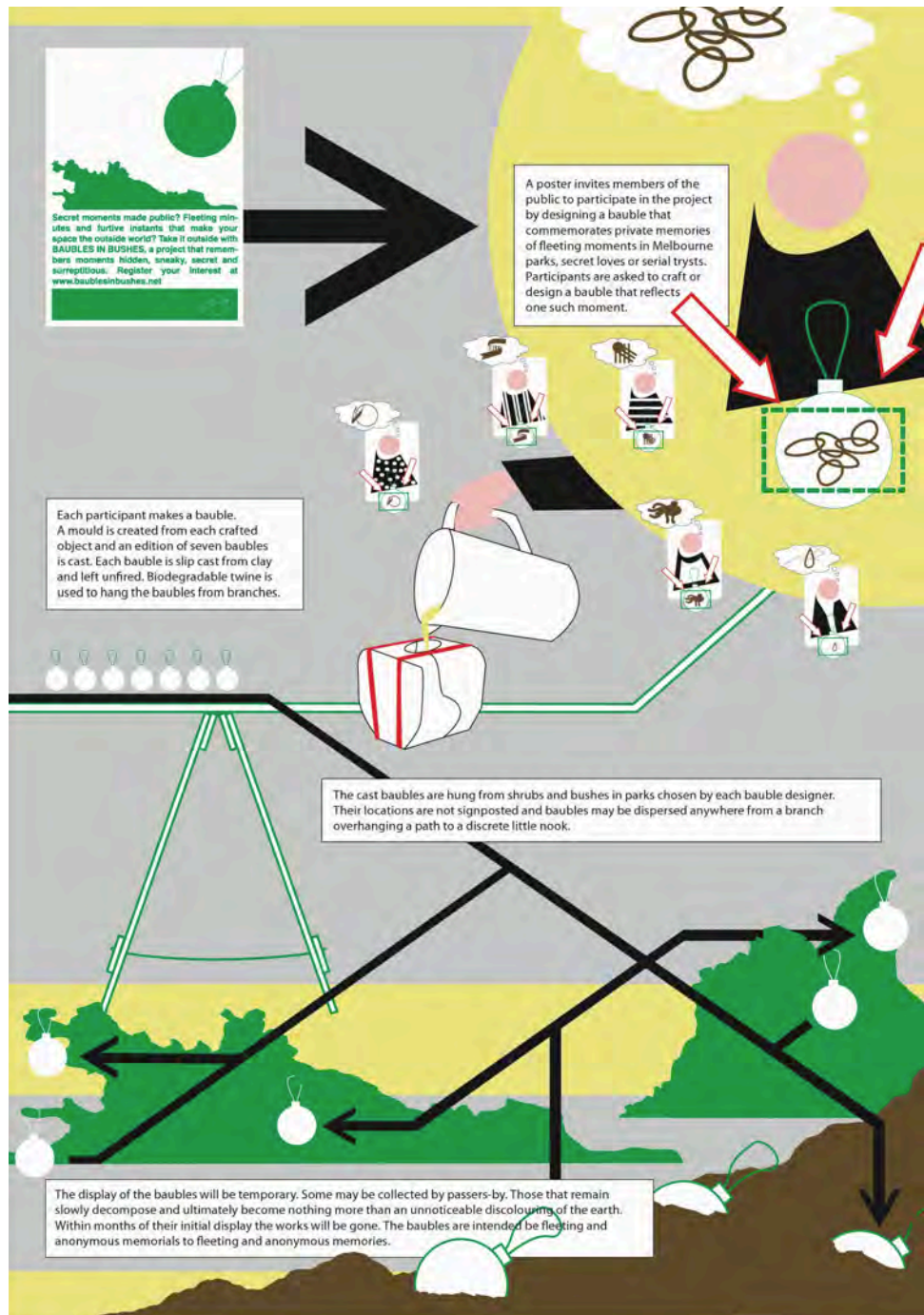
Figure 57: Spiros Panigirakis, *Baubles in Bushes,* 2008, laser print on paper, pasted poster, 59 x 84 cm.

Figure 58: Spiros Panigirakis, *Baubles in Bushes*, 2008, Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture, Federation Square, Melbourne, installation view.

Figure 59: Spiros Panigirakis, *Baubles in Bushes*, 2008, Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture, Federation Square, Melbourne, installation view.

Figure 60: Spiros Panigirakis, *Baubles in Bushes*, 2008, Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture, Federation Square, Melbourne, seating, installation view.

Figure 61: Spiros Panigirakis, *Baubles in Bushes,* 2008, laser print on paper, pasted poster, 42 x 59 cm.

WITH GREG BROCK & THINH TRAN

CATHERINE BELL

NIKOS PANTAZIS

WITH JESS WHYTE

WITH RUSSELL WALSH
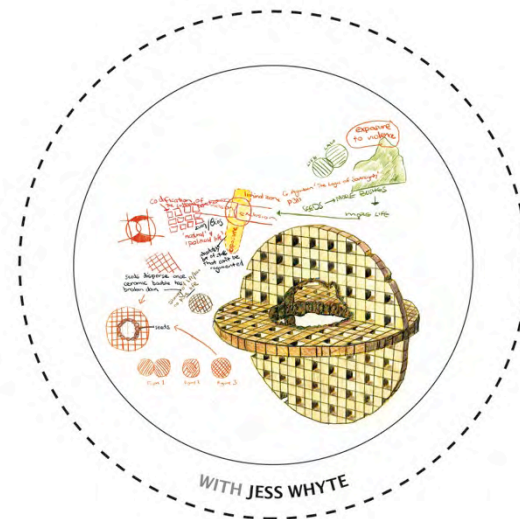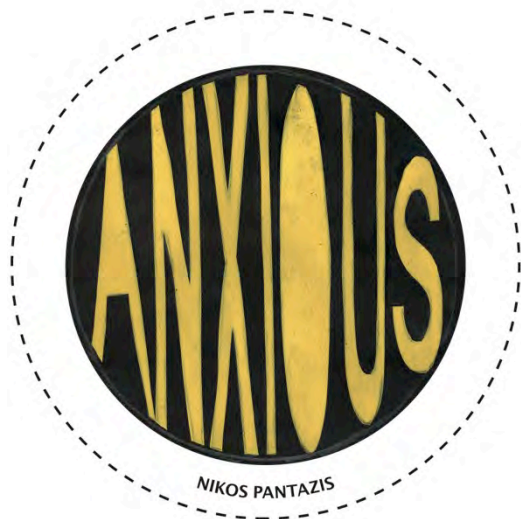
SARAH TAYTON

Figure 62: Spiros Panigirakis with Greg Brock & Thin Tran, Catherine Bell, Nikos Pantazis, Jess Whyte, Russell Walsh, Sarah Tayton, *Baubles in Bushes* (propositional designs), 2008, laser print on paper, pasted poster, 30 cm.
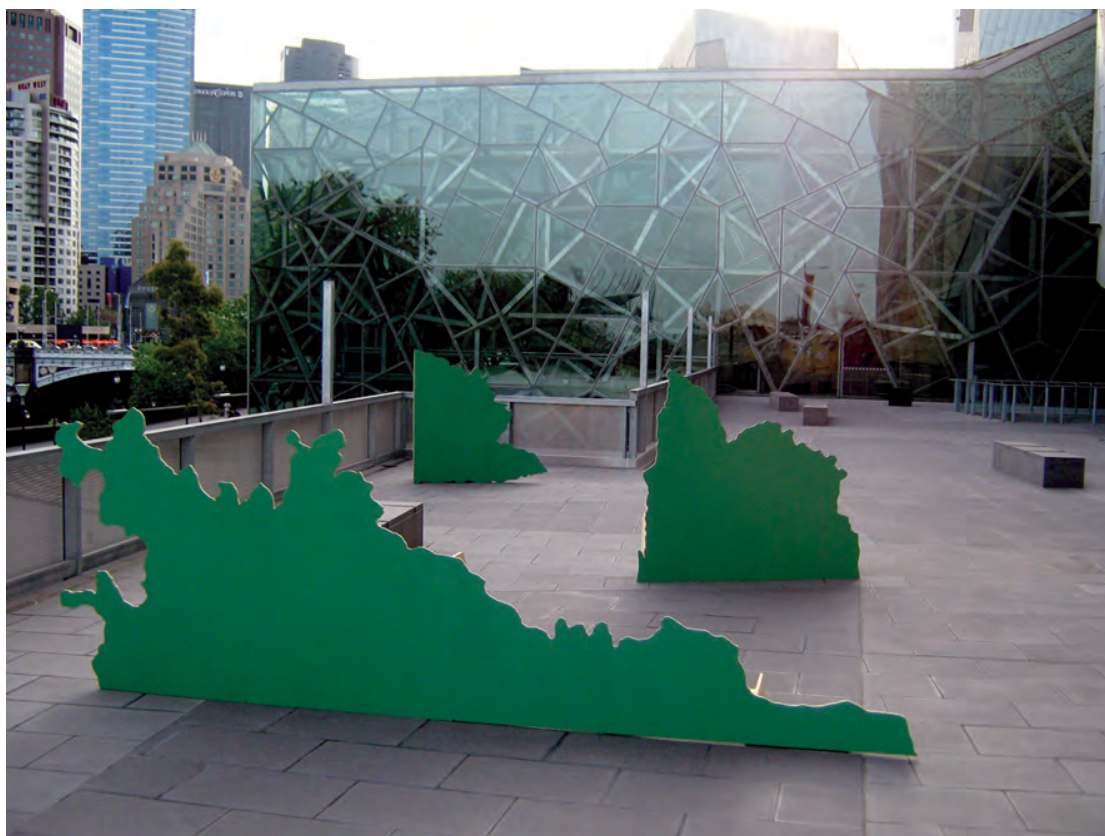
Figure 63: Spiros Panigirakis, *Baubles in Bushes*, 2008, Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture, Federation Square, Melbourne, seating, installation view.

Figure 64: Spiros Panigirakis, *Baubles in Bushes*, 2008, Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture, Federation Square, Melbourne, seating, installation view.

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CHAPTER FOUR

THE FORESHORE: Baubles in Bushes

'Baubles in Bushes' is a propositional project that engages in how art driven by community participation and collaboration can problematise a fixed notion of site and any representation of cohesive communal identification. The initial idea for the project consisted of collaborating with a group of individuals (men-who-have-sex-with-men) to design and make unfired ceramic baubles that would decorate foreshore bushes they frequented in the search for anonymous sex.[1] The baubles would celebrate private clandestine moments in spaces that are paradoxically public. The bauble would memorialise moments as ephemeral as the object made to commemorate such an event. The baubles would be left unfired so that weeks after their initial hanging they would decompose (see fig. 57). A brief public display of a private moment; conceptualised and abstracted within the parameters of the bauble form. The distribution of the baubles would not be sign-posted, therefore requiring an incidental encounter in the bushes. The bauble is typically a showy trinket of little worth. The display of degradable baubles questions the worth, permanence, visibility and value of both the specific act commemorated, and also permanent and civic-minded public sculpture more generally.

The project shifted significantly when the proposition became part of the *Melbourne Prize for Urban Sculpture* exhibition held at *Federation Square*—an archetypal notion of a public site (see fig. 58). How does a marginal community-driven site project that engages participation from members that resist collectivity and public

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[1] The phrase 'men-who-have-sex-with-men' is used by social research and medical research–– organisations such as the Victorian AIDS Council - Gay Men's Health Centre to represent a group of men in society that resist conventional labelling associated with sexual orientation (homosexual), community identification (gay) or academic/political frameworks (queer).

exposure, shift to an unrelated site and an exhibition exploring propositional notions of urban sculpture?

The presentation of this idea as a propositional model with a broad audience creates ethical issues regarding the disclosure of illicit gay cruising grounds. Therefore, as the project's parameters moved from foreshore to city-square, I shifted the project's relationship to community significantly. My centred positioning within the collective of participants would remain. Within the foreshore context my role would invariably privilege an emphasis on how art binds communities through collective representation. This engagement privileges a sociological mapping of a space but only the participants (and reader of this exegesis) would know of my authorial contribution. My role within the city square however represents another questionable paradigm for the artist working within community contexts. This is as artist virtuously representing the community collaboration as a priority over its actualisation.

The initial proposed site is an undisclosed part of Melbourne's inner city foreshore. The low-lying shrubs and bushes that demarcate these cruising grounds are located in public spaces and hold multiple uses for the community. They are recreational and leisure zones that are usually located on the periphery of any residential area. Its identity shifts during the night where it becomes a masculinised space of sexual fulfilment. The urban foreshore park used as cruising ground is paradigmatic of Foucault's notion of a heterotopic site.[2] A site that paradoxically lies within communal view but also engages in the contestation and reversal of the values inherent in the sites that surrounds it.[3] A park used for cruising lies within the periphery of an urban experience that allows us to gain an understanding of the dominant paradigm that in this particular case enculturates sexual mores. The risk of entrapment and violence are real and have been documented within a number of Melbourne parks that 'illicitly host' cruising grounds.[4]

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[2] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16, no. 1 (Spring 1986): 24.
[3] Ibid., 24
[4] An example of an attack in the suburb of St Kilda left a man hospitalised. Scott Davis, coordinator of the Victoria Police's Gay and Lesbian Liaison Officers reports that "three attackers had gone into the park to harass beat-users and had already chased several men out of the park before the assault took place;" Hughes, Ron. *Call for Witnesses to Come Forward* . February 23, 2010. http://mcv.gaynewsnetwork.com.au/news/call-for-witnesses-to-come-forward-007055.html (accessed February 25, 2011).

The community involvement within the context of the foreshore would be procured via internet forums that relate to cruising sites. The likelihood of significant interest in the project within these avenues would be slim. Users of these spaces are prioritising sexual relations rather than aesthetic ones. Beat users traditionally resist collective identification— apart from crude labelling devised by gay health authorities as 'men-who-have-sex-men.' It challenges any notional stability within terms relating to sexuality and identity without the academic and/or radical connotations derived from queer theory. The label seeks to avoid linking sexual practice with social identification of sexuality, race or class. The proliferation of the 'cruising' internet sites coincide with the beat's diminishing presence within the city. Whilst municipal authoritarianism has contributed to this demise, it is the ability for web forums to provide more assurance regarding anonymity and safety that has induced the migration of most cruising activity from the physical to the virtual world.

This social context is testament to the problems associated with an artistic intervention in a community that not only resist the artist's framing but is also (arguably) diminished by it. Men who use beats may identify as gay or straight; they may be motivated to use beats by convenience, habituation or a desire to hide their sexual activities; they may regard beat-use with a sense of shame or equanimity. Yet, they are united by the illegality of their sexual practices. Almost by definition, the act of public cruising involves a choice to work outside, rather than to directly challenge, dominant social norms regarding sexuality. Beat users are a community in the sense that they are a group of people who are socialised into a complex set of shared behavioural norms and who meet at a common place to collaboratively pursue a common interest. However many beat users do not identify with this practice and most would not welcome any form of public recognition. As a group they are sexual outlaws whose community is defined by its alterity. If beat users are united it is by their resistance to exposure and identification.

An artistic intervention that seeks to aestheticise the social relations of the beat must therefore betray the thin ties of solidarity—of respect for privacy and the primacy of desire—which constitutes this community. It is an act of nostalgia that seeks to memorialise a fading social practice, and to reify and hold up for scrutiny a history of

private passions. Worse, this betrayal could only be conducted by a person who has moved on and found alternative sources of social legitimacy, such that they are now empowered to make a spectacle of their illicit sexual history. Such a project of communal representation—as tentative as a decomposing anonymously designed bauble might be—is flawed and artificial. The 'community' that is represented is neither constructed from nothing by the art project, nor is it a sociologically representative reflection of a real beat-using community. Participants in the project are asked to reflect upon and acknowledge the culture of illicit passions in a way that is alien to the community the project seeks to evoke. Placing the project at Federation Square and providing minimal explanation of its content partially redeems this betrayal. By keeping the work's subject obscure its potential for harm is minimised. Further, by shifting the site of the work from actual beats, to Federation Square, the work becomes abstracted. This move at once obscures the location of actual beats and seeks to 'queer' the concept of the 'bush.'

This conflation between the mainstream and the marginal would be transposed to the edge of Federation Square, with its connotations of civic congregation, commemoration and pride.[5] Making every Melbourne park bush a potential site for a private moment solved the translation of the initial idea to its Federation Square context. The expansion of the project from 'those' bushes to 'any' bush in Melbourne is not a cynical and de-politicised act of popularisation. It is a proliferation of the subversive that lies within the public imagination of the often-maligned bush and the repercussions this has for the official planting of a city. The marginalised place of urban foreshore (the project's initial site) where the meandering lines of the cruisers creates paths to follow and depart from, is translated as a proposition for the whole cbd once known as the 'Garden City.' It allows us to envision a private indiscretion in any bush-like nook in any park, encountered by anyone. This problematises municipal government's clearing of bushes in sites that have been accounted for as 'gay' cruising grounds. Municipal programs would be under greater political scrutiny if

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[5] Rosalind Krauss describes the squares of Imperial Rome and Gian Lorenzo Bernini's statues sited on "the Vatican stairway connecting the Basilica" as representing the "logic [of pre-1960s] sculpture" as a "commemorative representation… It sits in a particular place and speaks in a symbolic tongue about the meaning or use of that place;" Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* 8 (Spring 1979): 33.

they were to replace all mature dense bushes with modest shrubs that encourage clear views through public spaces.

The proposition at Federation Square is not a literal illustration of the proposal but an exploration of these ideas via stage like sets that incorporated outdoor furniture (see fig. 61). These create spaces that like bushes in a park mediate sociability, creating nooks, directing human movement and dividing space. As part of this display an open-call invitation as a model for how to initiate a public project was incorporated into the installation (see fig. 62). Sitting alongside this open-call poster was the curation of six unmade designs from a broad range of practitioners. These were initiated as potential propositions that might manifest from the project. These included; Nikos Pantazis's affective exploration of the anxiety and danger; Catherine Bell's proposition of a squid-like fishing lure as metaphor for human desire; Greg Brock and Thinn Tran collaborative exploration of concealed and repressed desire; Sarah Tatum's use of quotations that refer to the enculturated violence embedded in male/female sexual flirtation; Jessica Whyte's use of diagram that Giorgio Agamben uses to illustrate his notion of 'bare life' and its theoretical implications for the violence inflicted on the marginalised; and Russell Walsh's linguistic play for the letter 'J' as a poetic evocation to the name John, johns as a vernacular term for a pimp, Jesus and the French term for the performative (see fig. 63).

The receptive engagement of the propositional model differs significantly from the potential actualisation of the project. The manifestation of the proposition has a didactic quality that explores how community driven sculpture could operate. Whilst the project if enacted would have the explicit intent to memorialise personal transgressive moments, the scope of the audience is quite restrictive, localised and based on the social interaction between the artist and the community member. Three different receptive encounters would ensue from the enactment of the project. The first being the engagement with the participant who responds to the parameters of the project and assists in the making of a bauble in a manner they see fit. This might mean designing, constructing or using my skills to facilitate a design for the making of an edition of six ceramic baubles. The second receptive encounter with the project would be as an incidental audience—the bauble read within the context of urban guerrilla creative practices that includes knitting over power poles, stencil graffiti and poster

paste-ups. The third receptive encounter would again be incidental and read within a creative, decorative context; after all it's a bauble hung from a branch. This creates the potential to create an uncanny poetic resonance within the banality of the everyday.

The agenda for the propositional sculptural model was to privilege and celebrate the notion of private personal moments within a paradoxically public sphere as opposed to any one particular moment referred to in the bauble designs. The rational behind the selected contributions was to provide an expansive representation of activities that require the space of a bush to exist. This would disrupt the conventional memorial that validates official 'truths' or state sanctioned spaces. The didactic quality of the propositional model means that unlike the actualisation of the project—a critical position regarding the importance of bushes in facilitating the subjective, the intimate and the aberrant within our social cognition is created.
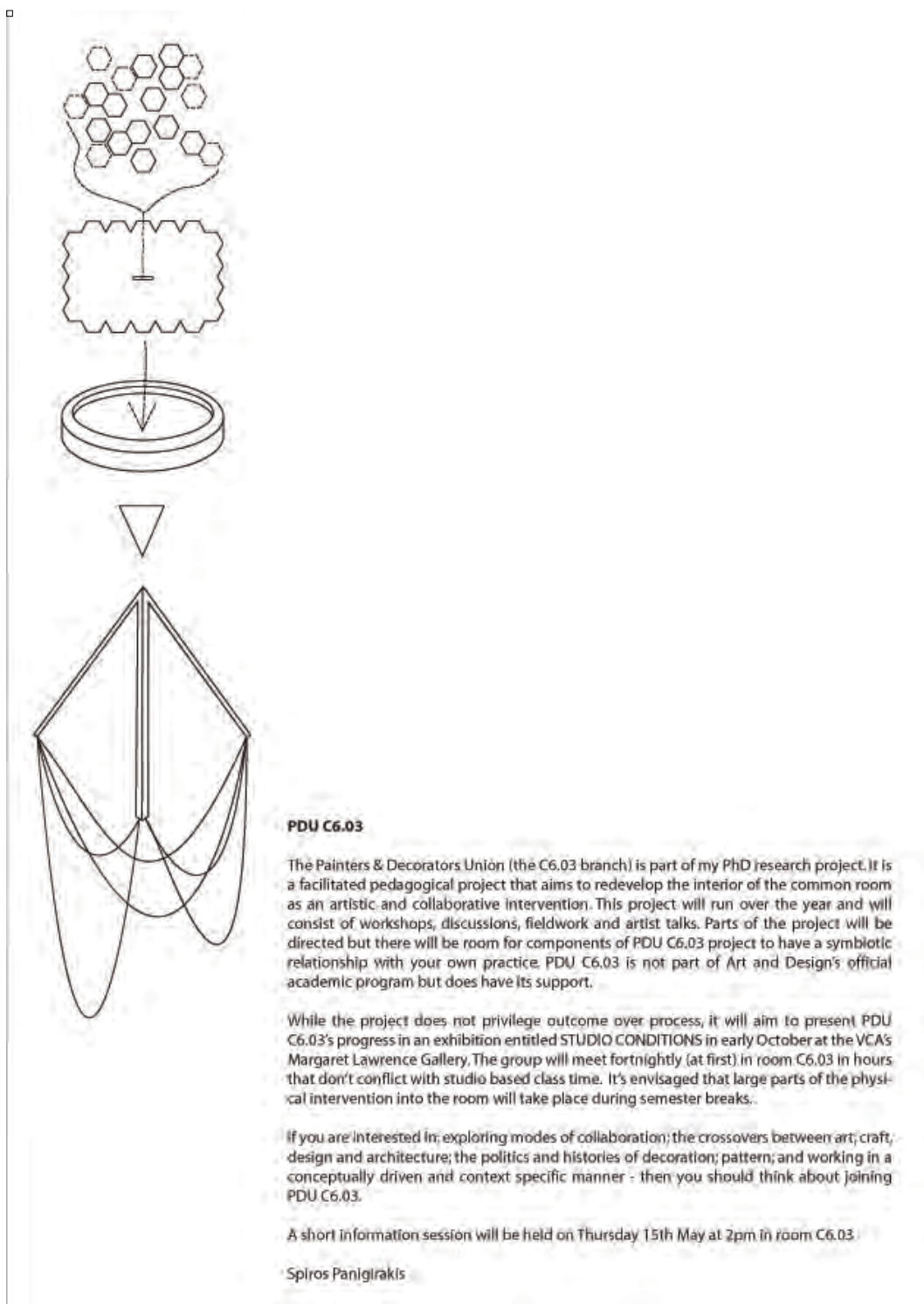
Figure 65: Spiros Panigirakis, *PDU C6.03*, 2008, laser print on paper, distributed poster, 29 x 42 cm.
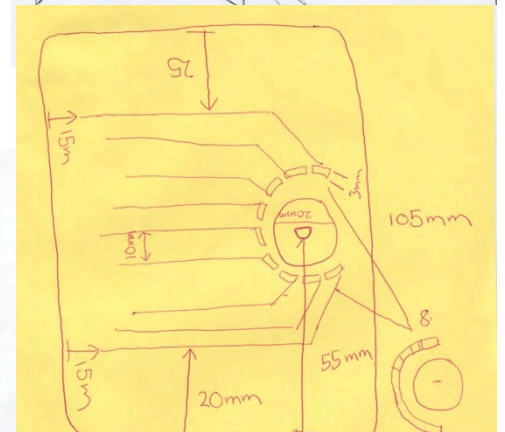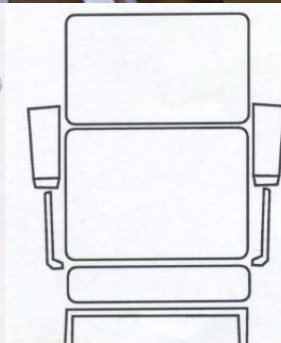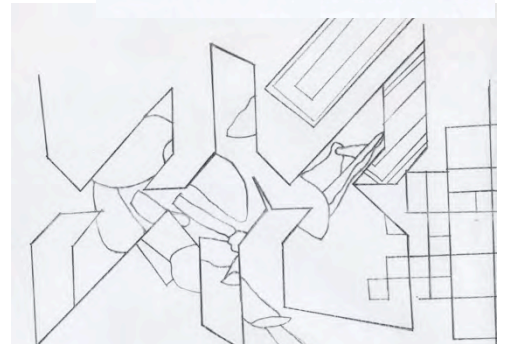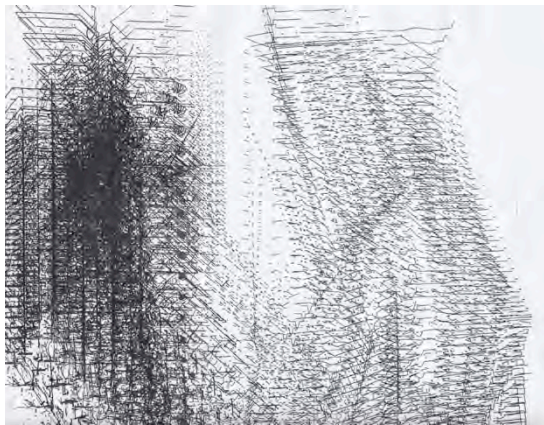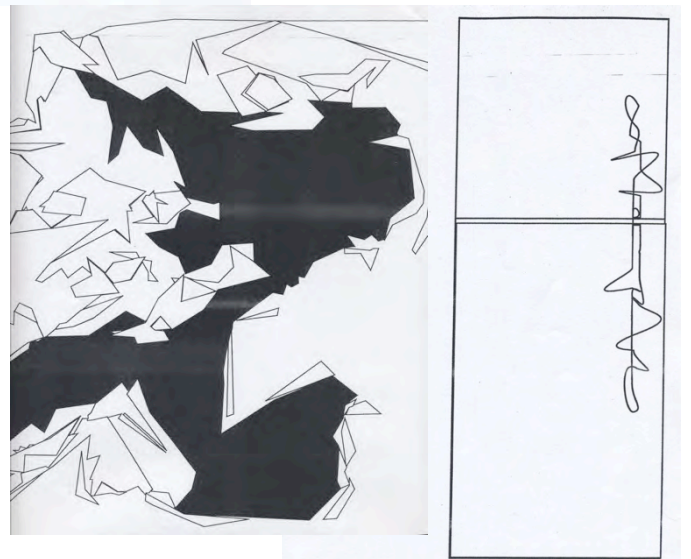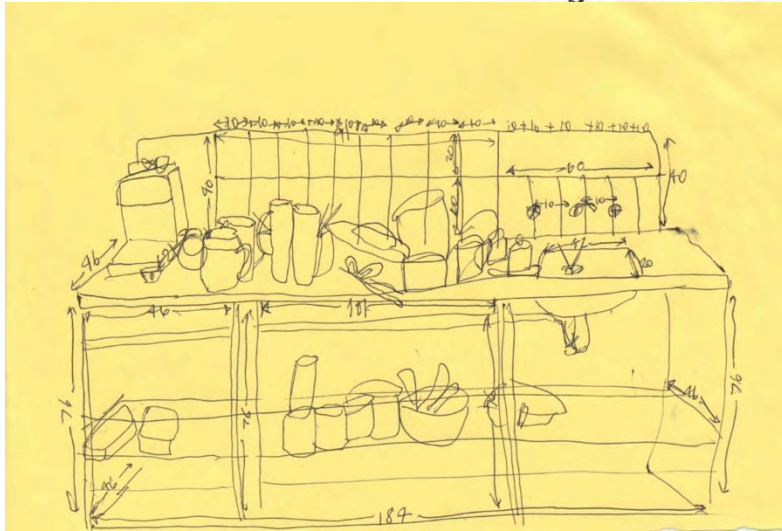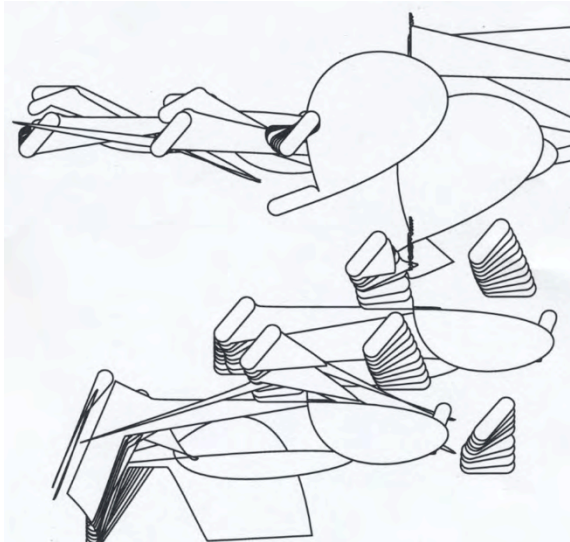
Figure 66: *PDU C6.03*, 2008, examples of generative drawing exercises, paper, cardboard, various dimensions.

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Figure 67: Justine Makdessi, Lachlan Petras and Johan
Oevergaard *Third Place*, 2010, video stills from digital video, 10
minutes, video documentation by Spiros Panigirakis.

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Figure 68: Justine Makdessi, Lachlan Petras and Johan Oevergaard *Third Place*, 2010, laser print on paper, 29 x 42 cm.; incorporating a section of large pencil drawing by Lachlan Petras that carefully documents all the machinery found in the Sculpture department—highlighting notions of the 'productive' within a zone of leisure and rest.

Figure 69: Justine Makdessi, Lachlan Petras and Johan Oevergaard *Third Place*, 2010 student common room (room C6.03) after intervention.

Figure 70: Launch celebration of *Third Place*, 2010.

THE STUDENT COMMON ROOM: From PDU C6.03 to Third Place

PDU C6.03 (Painters and Decorators Union, Building C, level 6, room 03, Monash University) was a project situated in a specific locale. The project's title explicitly referenced a room number and the histories of the political left's intersection with the design field, notions of function and aesthetics. The histories of the Art and Craft Movement and Bauhaus schools had clear ideological agendas to conflate the socially ameliorative within artistic practices.[6] I wanted to use these histories to collaborate with students. The starting point for the project was the redevelopment of the room to improve its function and aesthetic appeal.

Its starting point was the room C6.03; a student common room; a room connected to the Sculpture department; a department I teach and conduct my research within (see fig. 25). An interrogation of my role is important part of the site contextualisation and determines how the project will unfold. The site of the common room is a facility that is part of the institutional framework of the university. The facility predominantly caters for student use outside of class time—however institutional authority is still embedded within the design. My presence within this site carries some of this institutional authority.[7] As a facility it is designed to provide a service on a communal basis—thus the use of the word common. Students eating, drinking, resting and socialising is part of the utilitarian role it fulfils. It is a place that is defined by the social activity played out within its walls.[8]

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[6] Anna Rowland's notes, that the Arts and Craft Movement endeavoured to use 'applied arts and craft to engender "dignity in labour, humanity, healing and wholeness;" while Walter Gropius, the first director of the Bauhaus school used the concept of 'Gesamtkunstwerk' to articulate his vision of art, design and life, "as a plea for unity, collaboration, wholeness and reintegration;" Anna Rowland, *Bauhaus Source Book* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1990), 10-11.

[7] My identification with the common room has shifted in the time since I begun my research in 2006. Whilst I identified as a student when I first chose my sites, I have since taken on the role of staff within the department I'm a student in. This changes the power dynamic between the student occupants of the room and my intervention within this site. Unlike the other Fine Arts student common room that sits adjacent to a staff lunch-room, the Sculpture department's common room does not demarcate between its potential users—be it staff or student.

[8] Bernard Tschumi, *Architecture and Disjunction* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1994), 113-117.

The utilitarian quality of the design of the room and its proximity to the Sculpture department was part of the impetus to entitle the project from its inception.[9] *PDU C6.03* was informed by the conceptually retrograde impulse to base the project around the interior via painting and decorating—these notions being antithetical to a historical and ideological sense of Sculpture—especially within a modernist paradigm.[10] The 'union' in the title was informed by: the sociability that might develop out of the project; historical precedents that held social agendas for aesthetic practices;[11] and the broader framework of the student determination that is absent at Monash University, Caulfield campus.[12] The project delineates between the students that occupy the space and my position of authority. At the same time I incongruously intend to set up a collaborative framework that somehow resists this hierarchy.

Due to this initial framework, the project became an experimental pedagogical collective that invited students to consider the redevelopment of the common room as an open-ended question with no particular pre-determined outcome apart from a socially driven participation (see fig. 66). The group met fortnightly (at first) then weekly for one hour during the lunch period. My position within the group is as a

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[9] The well-lit room (7 x 4 metres) has floor to ceiling windows running down its long southern side that provide views of the surrounding brutalist university architecture and the suburbs of Glen Iris and Malvern. The room anticipates your arrival into a department with one entrance and one exit. It contains all the usual trappings of a common room: lounge seating; kitchenette facilities; spaces to eat; computer facilities; and a water cooler that allows you to avoid drinking the rancid Caulfield water. It's nondescript in its institutional styling.

[10] Eva Diaz notes that "ornament was long repressed" within 'the twin engines of International-Style modernism and geometric abstraction…"also in "the 1950s/1960s modernist non-representational sculpture of Anthony Caro and David Smith as well as the austere serial structures of mid-1960s Minimalism; Eva Diaz, "A Critical Glossary of Space and Sculpture" in *Unmonumental: The Object in the 21st Century*, eds., Richard Flood, Laura Hoptman, Massimiliano Gioni (New York: Phaidon), 208.

[11] Unlike the Bauhaus school and Soviet Constructivism, the work of Joseph Beuys offers a precedent for not only shifting the ideological centre of pedagogy into an artwork but of his work's potential for non-object based outcomes. He notes, "to be a teacher is my greatest work of art. The rest is the waste product, a demonstration… Objects are not very important for me any more… I am trying to reaffirm the concept of art and creativity in the face of Marxist doctrine… For me the formation of the thought is already sculpture." Beuys quoted in Lucy Lippard, "Escape Attempts." in *Six years : The Dematerialization of the Art Object From 1966 to 1972 ...*, ed. Lucy Lippard (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), xvii.

[12] Monash University Caulfield is a campus (unlike the Clayton campus) that hardly rates as a hotbed of student unionism. The student union dissolved itself before the Howard government's legislated Voluntary Student Unionism. I saw the common room as a sad vestige of student communalism at the Caulfield campus—the potential result of combining the apathy and conservatism of the Art & Design and Business Departments.

facilitator who determines the starting point for each meeting's activity but allows for the group to determine how decisions will be made. The workshop-like logic of the meetings is based on a perpetually process-driven series of exercises that is privileged over any materially based outcomes. Questions within the workshop that continually needed addressing: who is the author of this project? How do we collaborate as group when the group of students are peers but their political coherency is determined by the construction of the facilitator-artist? How do we make aesthetic decisions? How are all these abstract drawings going to contribute to the actual redesign of the interior? And why do not we just go to an 'opportunity shop' and get a few cushions to spruce up the space?

The students initially involved in the workshop phase of the project were peers without necessarily being a politically coherent community.[13] A political coherence within the student body is an idealisation that has difficulty-taking root in light of progressively worsening economic pressures placed on students. A combination of the increased cost of living and government's reduced funding in education means that the social space given to students around class time is taken up by work commitments. In some ways this art project not only romantically attempts to imagine or create a community that does not exist, but also a community in the structure of a politicised union that resists the alienating effects of capitalism. The value in creating such a community that does not have its own self-determination and allows a paternalistic role to be at the centre of the social relation could be problematic. This however is the ethical realm of pedagogy. The question is not whether there is an inequitable relationship between teacher and student; the more pertinent question is what is the quality of this inequity?

I aimed for the structure of the investigation between artist and students to differ from a classroom/studio structure. There was no minimum attendance so that the group's dynamic changed character from week-to-week. The activities conducted in the

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[13] A STUDIO CONDITION: A proposition for the refit of a common room in Caulfield developed within a pedagogical workshop that meets on some Tuesday afternoons. The group is called PDU C6.03. Constructions and shapes made with Shannon Lee, Jessica McConnell, Brigette Nelson, Johan Oevaargard, Rebecca Palejs, Thomas Rendell, Justine Rouse, Scarlett Snowden, Isabelle Stoner and Penny Tuck

workshop were process-driven and generative. This meant one exercise influenced the boundaries of the following exercise; with all points of the process being acknowledged as valid outcomes. Through out the project an ethic of an out-loud reflective process was encouraged to air thoughts on the group's social dynamic. This would hopefully make my authority more transparent. The accumulative drawing, sculpture, models and designs were products of collaboration so that any singular authorial recognition was difficult to deduce (see fig. 66). What the group eventually realised was the common room project became 'a being in common' during the workshop with some lunch, a craft activity and some critical conversation regarding the aesthetic dimensions of institutional architecture. This activity transformed the space momentarily, beyond its scope as facility to fill your water bottle and microwave your lunch in.

Another perspective on education as art project regards how private enterprise covers up—perhaps inadvertently—the shortcomings of a public education system. This allows and reinforces the continuation of the inadequate funding faced by the higher-education sector. In the last decade Art Schools' studio programs have been under pressure to reduce the contact hours held by teaching staff. A project that incorporates pedagogy as an artistic enterprise, allows the artist's project to boost the said institution's reputation not with resistance to ruthless budgetary cuts but with a progressive artistic veneer of volunteer-ism.[14]

How can a project based on the pedagogical be used in a presentation context without reverting to the sanctification of the pedagogue's role? How does the pedagogue avoid an exploitative relationship to emerge? The dynamic within a group is more complicated than idealisation that equality suggests. The pedagogue imparts knowledge and facilitates critical thinking. The clear use of student efforts was part of an exchange. The students would agree to participate in an experiment to see how a pedagogical collaborative workshop could be understood as an artistic enterprise. I would in return offer additional tuition in computer skills or additional feedback on

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[14] Claire Bishop notes that governments "use a rhetoric almost identical to that of social engaged art to steer culture towards policies of social inclusion. Reducing art to statistical information about target audiences and 'performance indicators,' the government prioritises social effect over the consideration of artistic quality." Claire Bishop, "The Social Turn: Collaboration and its Discontents," *Artforum* (February 2006): 181.

their own practices. The social and relational processes engaged in the project were not the focus of the project's fortnightly outcomes, just a by-product of activities and discussion. The workshop looked and acted like a cross between a design studio with an emphasis on concrete material experiments with the work ethic of a craft drop-in centre.

This makes for experimental teaching but how does this constitute a critical art practice? This type of exchange is a familiar recurrence in artist-in-schools programs. Their publication to a broader audience, like the activities conducted by Joseph Beuys and Tim Rollins & KOS occurs in exceptional circumstance. Within the local context a number of interesting projects have been fostered out of a pedagogical art environments. DAMP, the Pedagogical Vehicle Project, Evergreen Terrace and Sandra Bridie's composite projects being relevant examples.[15] While some like DAMP cut the chord that ties the pedagogue (Geoff Lowe) to the students—many maintain their position as an intervention into the status quo of arts education. What makes these projects interesting is that they resist the atelier system of tuition that still dominates art schools in Melbourne. They represent an open and experimental attitude to creative conceptual art education. These programs do not need to be thrown into the fray of gallery presentation as their worth lies in their educational value to students. In terms of these projects' sited conditions—their process, consumption and distribution are within the education context. Grappling with the power relations that emerge out of teacher/student collaboration and the sanctimony of the facilitator are issues that should be addressed within the projects—this is part of their challenge.

After a one year hiatus from the project, a student who was part of the original workshop decided to initiate a collaborative group to reinvigorate the common-room's interior. I was enthusiastic about the groups' relatively autonomous initiative, as it displaced my dominant voice in the project's structure and gave me an opportunity to study the activity from an arm's length. The third year BFA undergraduates, Justine Makdessi, Johan Oevergaard and Lachlan Petras entitled the new project with a

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[15] Stuart Koop explores both Damp and the Pedagogical Vehicle Project in Stuart Koop, "The Importance of Failing," *Broadsheet* 2 (Vol. 32, 2003); Stuart Koop, "Concern," *Broadsheet* 3 (Vol. 33, 2003); Sandra Bridie, The Artist as Composite, VCA Margaret Lawrence Gallery, 2009; Evergreen Terrace in *Unsheltered Workshops*, VCA Margartet Lawrence Gallery, 2008, cuartor Jeff Khan.

question: *The Third Place?* (see fig. 68). This group approached the project in a markedly different manner to my tentative pedagogical approach that ran for approximately seven months without any proposal being made. This group did not have any reservations making aesthetic decisions that would impact other students' use of the space; and explicitly wanted a finished outcome that would improve the appearance, feeling and function of the space. I decided to document the process of the redevelopment—from the production of the furniture in the workshop right through to its installation (see fig. 67).

Whilst I was coordinating the project, I did not have enough incentive to persevere with the challenges of the project, even with the understanding that it would contribute to m PhD research. The group had no problem framing their role as one that would improve the communal dynamic of the student body through the reinvigoration of the interior. The project's slippage between art, design or social amelioration was acknowledged, stating an intention to "establish a newfound sense of place for the community; an amplified sense of belonging and ownership, encouraging future social and civil interaction and interventions."[16] Therefore the improvement sought regarding the functionality of the room, also had consequences for reflexive quality of the project as an artwork. From the group's interest in Institutional Critique; the project's intention to be a platform for future interventions; and it's highlighting of industrial processes within the body of the project—the interior fit-out affirmed its ability to speak a number of languages.

The incentive for *The Third Place?* was not only the critical dialogue that emanated from their intervention but also as students they would reap the rewards of the space (see fig. 69, 70). They owned the project. So much so that after a successful launch of the interior fit-out, positive feedback that lead to a substantial increase in the common-room's usage—they took it all away. There was some discussion amongst the group that ranged from: the interior fit-out being too successful; it not being appreciated by the institution as a work of art; and that it lacked a critical value beyond the feel-good sentiment that dominated the reception of the project. The

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[16] *Third Place?* Poster; see figure 68.

solution to these issues was to revert C6.03 to the institutional status-quo—thus highlighting the conceptual basis of their critical action to 'redecorate.'

Figure 71: Spiros Panigirakis, *A Hedged Domestic Condition,* 2009, Union Street, west Brunswick Sculpture Triennial, installation view, detail of publication folder, folder content formatted and folded to 14 x 21 cm.

Figure 72: Spiros Panigirakis, *A Hedged Domestic Condition,* 2009, Union Street, west Brunswick Sculpture Triennial, installation view, invigilator reading publication.
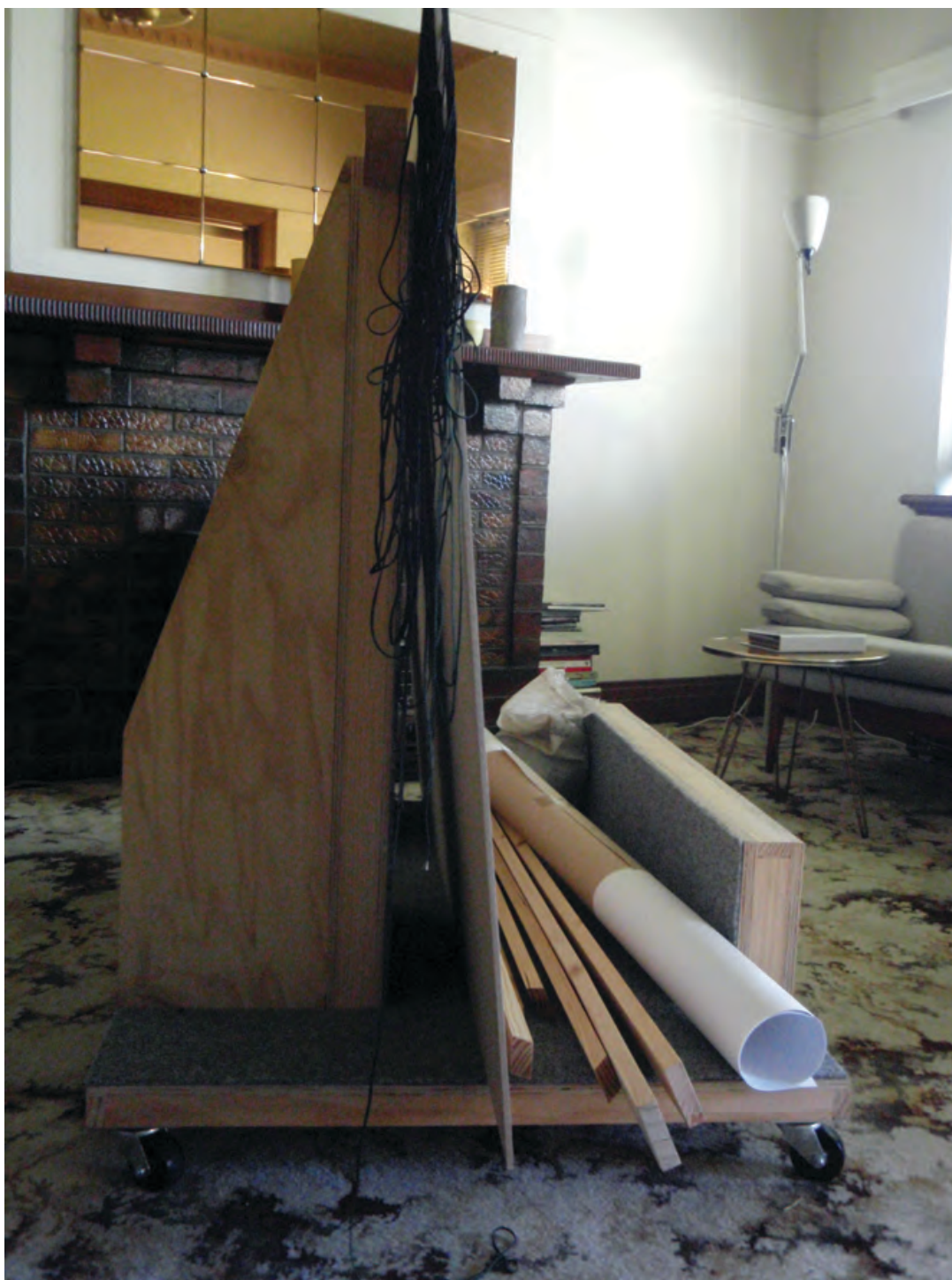
Figure 73: Spiros Panigirakis, *A Hedged Domestic Condition,* 2009, Union Street, west Brunswick Sculpture Triennial, installation view, detail view of museum trolley with paper, timber, string, pebbles from *STUDIO CONDITIONS*, 2008.
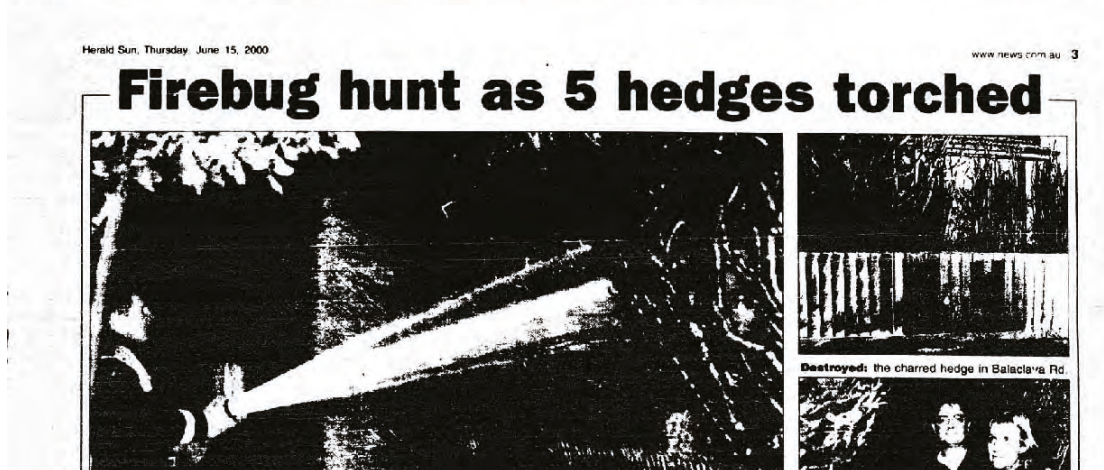
Figure 74: Spiros Panigirakis, *A Hedged Domestic Condition,* 2009, Union Street, west Brunswick Sculpture Triennial, excerpts from publication.

THE LOUNGE ROOM: A Hedged Domestic Condition

A web of social networking contributes to competing and arbitrary exhibiting opportunities offered to artists. The age-old facilitation of the social within this composite would be the impetus to choosing a friends' lounge room as a fieldwork site after a late night conversation. The conversation revolved around the commercialisation of art practices. Bianca Hester and Scott Mitchell are friends but also occasional artistic collaborators. Our views differed on the effects of gallery representation would have on our practices.[17] It was within this rambling conversation that Mitchell offered to buy my artworks that hung as a backdrop to this conversation—an example of an alternative mode of commerce one could pursue. I declined the sale offer and suggested that I would make an artwork from the context of that evening's conversation for their lounge room.

A Hedged Domestic Condition is a project that proposes the making of another artwork set out in the aforementioned conversation. The project is an exploration of how a project's propositionality can be driven by the discursive quality of a number of social domestic contexts. The backdrop to this conversation with Hester and Mitchell was a painting. The piece in question is a work that was exhibited at TCB artist-run-space in 2003 as part of the *HEDGEWORKS* project. It is a large crafted panel that outlines the silhouette of a burnt Glen Iris hedge.[18] At the time I was investigating the spate of hedge burnings in Melbourne's affluent eastern suburbs.

The project's first public presentation for the west *Brunswick Sculpture Triennial*[19] (*wBST*) would consider these different senses of the local simultaneously—as

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[17] These views ranged from: commercial galleries over-determining the artwork as a commodity to the detriment of other concerns; the commercial imperative leading to narrowed audience engagement; limiting alternative modes of exchange; the reliance state institutions have on commercial enterprise to narrate cultural histories; the importance of independent publishing ventures to offer an alternative historical lineage; and the abstracting of the artist's labour based on an arbitrary set of values.

[18] The piece is a décor piece made with pebbles and twine that resembled a typical all-over abstraction; it is not an actual 'painting' but for ease of labelling will be referred as one.

[19] The *wBST* became "a platform for experimenting with the conditions of art production and presentation exploring the potential of an interrelated sequence of 'home-scaled' or domestic sites. This sequence of sites comprises backyards, living rooms, kitchens, sheds, an artist's

displaced but at the same time at home in the Brunswick lounge room. The proposition was translated into a publication that unpacked the social, cultural, economic and historical contexts of the initial hedge painting in the aim to propose its remaking. This propositional document would mediate the social via representational techniques such as documentation and transcription. The dialogical quality was not performed in the project but represented as part of the fieldwork that contributed to the proposition of the new work.[20] Apart from the experience of reading a book on a sofa—the work was not conceived as 'relational.'[21] It was however a representation of social relations emanating from the lounge-room.

The site of the literal lounge room and the idea of the lounge room is explored via broad social, historical and fictive frameworks. James Meyer's 'functional site' is pertinent here as the siting of the lounge room is mediated across a number of 'textual filiations' that include: the historical notion of the salon as a convivial environment of constructive criticism; the commodification of art practices based on the domestic and the museological; the hedge in differing geographic and social contexts; and various cultural conditions that append themselves to the lounge room.[22] These ideas were brought together in a propositional work that had a sculptural presence in a lounge room but also suggested a future work (see fig. 72). The lounge room is a setting that can facilitate the presentation of artworks in a number of ways. The project deals with these contexts but also considers how dialogue and collaboration can facilitate an artwork's construction. The discursive is not just an interpretative framework but is folded into the material entity of an artwork.[23]

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project space, and the network of streets connecting each site of presentation across the neighbourhoods of west Brunswick.opened up a series domestic spaces for the presentation of art projects to a broad public," http://www.osw.com.au/wbst/ (accessed February 22, 2011)
[20] Grant Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art,* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004)
[21] Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics,* trans. Simon Pleasance and Fronza Woods (Dijon: Les press du reel, 2002)
[22] James Meyer, "The Functional Site: or The Transformation of Site-Specificity," in *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, ed. Erika Suderburg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 24.
[23] In *WITHOUT* (2006) I coordinated two feedback sessions for the work as part of the activities planned for the project. Transcriptions of these discussions were published on the project's blog. Transcriptions of the feedback can be found on http://withoutstraightfeedback.blogspot.com/ (accessed February 22, 2011) and http://with-out.blogspot.com/2006/11/day-9-on-day-282-queer-feedback.html (accessed February 22, 2011)

The lounge room functions as an alternative to museological display; comfortably functioning within varying modes of domestic patronage and presentation since it was wrestled out of the grip of church and state. This context for the siting of an artwork in a lounge room is euphemistically considered as a 'salon.' The salon historically in both a public and private sense is a domain of exclusive taste or exclusive social relations respectively.[24] My interest the 'salon' might reflect a dubious romanticisation of the critical dialogue that might have occurred in Gertrude Stein's front room.[25] There is a slight incongruity between the exclusive class patronage in early 20th century Paris and the contemporary Australian context of lounge-room exhibiting. The conceptual bridge between these two paradigms is found in the dialogical quality of a feedback session.[26] The feedback session not only appends itself as the reading of a work but also can contribute to the development of new work via the cross-pollination or testing of the lounge room inhabitants' ideas.

This differs from the use of the lounge room in the presentation of artworks to a 'broader' audience in recent years in Melbourne. This is where the lounge room has been used as a de facto gallery. The home is still valued as a representation of the domestic but its actual use is frozen whilst its broader display purpose is utilised. The lounge room might at first seem like it resists institutionalisation of art but it really offers the same independently driven site conditions as do the alternatives offered by artist-run-initiatives. This is the institution of art in a different guise. Spaces like *Dude Space, Apartment* and *Austral Avenue* (all in Melbourne) had some of the requisite

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[24] Martha Ward notes that with the "expansion of the art market and the liberal government policies of the early Third Republic encouraged a remarkable proliferation of 'independent' exhibitions in Paris…dealers, art societies, enterprising painters, and groups like the Impressionists sought out new venues and experimented with installations…selecting sites and décor…[where] the social connotations of a variety of spaces and audiences and …the appropriate place and role of art in relation to these" was considered. Martha Ward, 'Impressionist Installations and Private Exhibitions,' *The Art Bulletin*, 4 (December 1991): 599-622.

[25] I read Gertrude Stein's pivotal (auto)biography as a very young artist—leaving me with a terribly romantic picture of social convivialities of the early Parisian avant-garde. Gertrude Stein, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* (1933) (Harmondsworth, Mddx.: Penguin Books, 1966)

[26] A manual for a mode of feedback was produced by Terri Bird, Bianca Hester, and Andrew McQualter, "CLUBS Feedback Manual," *CLUBSproject Inc.* March 20, 2003, www.clubsproject.org.au/feedback.php (accessed August 10, 2008).

hospitable conditions that the notion of the private salon suggests.[27] Lyndal Walker's *Springthing* (2005) at the now defunct *Dude Space* hosted a backyard barbeque that infused Walker's photographic representations of growth with the sociability of a barbeque. On a more intimate level, artist Michael Graf consistently shows his canvas board projects for well over a decade in friends' lounge-rooms. Shown during afternoon tea to a small audience, his paintings cannot be separated from the social environment they are shown in. Graf's practice is dedicated to the contemplation of a singular moment that shifts across the space of a few panels in the quiet hosting social space.

These spaces replicate the space of the gallery with accompanied conversational launch niceties and make obvious allowances to their domestic infrastructure in presentation. So while the practical difference between this 'salon' (with domestic connotations of the private, exclusive and very localised audience) and the small independently run space (with its more public profile regardless of the limits of its actual audience size) are minimal, the two models may also be seen as ideologically opposed.[28] How does a person not part of the extended domestic community interact with experiential qualities set up in someone else's private domestic environment? How do the minders of the space who invigilate the work, alienate participation by those outside the community? Does the exclusive quality of the lounge-room-as-gallery 'other' the audience members not familiar with social dimension of the space? Or does its very existence consciously bypass issues of exclusion and speak of the field of art's fraught and unsolvable dilemma of access?

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[27] *Dude Space* (ceased operation in 2005) was a once a month project run by Geoff Newton (now commercial gallerist of Neon Parc) in his Brunswick share-home; *Apartment* was (ceased operation in 2008) was a once a month space run by David O'Halloran; *Austral Avenue* (ceased operation in 2007) was run by Jane O'Neil.

[28] The presentation of the work within a domestic context presents dilemmas regarding the reception and access to art. Pierre Bourdieu notion of 'symbolic violence' that is enacted unintentionally in the embodied 'habitus' of those with cultural capital—informs how comfortable an audience is within a gallery regardless of its free or costed entry. This also relates to an audience in a domestic-home-turned-gallery space; Pierre Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), 229-231; Bourdieu, Pierre, *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature,* ed. Randal Johnson (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993), 37.

Larger institutional frameworks have also used the lounge room as a site. Ranging from Jan Hoet's 1986 *Chambres d'Amis* in Ghent, David O'Halloran's 1993 *Critical City: Domestic Space Project* for the Adelaide Festival and more locally Tai Snaith's 2008 *House Proud* for the Next Wave Festival.[29] These manifestations of the domestic sit somewhere between idiosyncratic show room and social situation of the real-estate tour. Joining these large festival's use of the domesticity is OSW's ironically titled *wBST*. An event that figured the local within a context usually reserved for the international. The title of the event is therefore a critical framework that posits a resistance to the globalised machinations of institutional art.

My project would consider an interrogation of other institutions that vie in the understanding of the sites played out by the project. These institutions include: the institution of familial social networks; mainstream Australian journalism; the elite high school education of the hedge burners; and the alternative sub-cultures that are co-opted by museological institutions. These diverging community institutions do not cohabit with ease in the real world or in the propositional document. The proposition proposes that the differences found between these entities, is a productive place for the proposition of a new work.[30]

The public manifestation of the project was presented within the Union street lounge room of the *wBST*. OSW requested that the built structure installed in their lounge room be the museum trolley I made for my *STUDIO CONDITIONS* project at the VCA. Whilst the trolley was in some ways site-displaced within this domestic environment—it was understood as a potential vehicle for a painting that was commissioned during the instigating conversation.[31] The museum trolley was a

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[29] *Chambres d'Amis* was a large-scale project with 50 international artists showing work in local homes at the time between the openings of the Basel Art Fair and the Venice Biennial; *House Proud*, curator: Tai Snaith, http://www.taisnaith.com/houseProud.html (accessed February 22, 2011)

[30] Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community,* trans. Peter Connor et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), xi.

[31] From the *wBST* catalogue, *A HEDGED DOMESTIC CONDITION*: A museum trolley is constructed for a painting that hasn't been made, for a domestic situation that doesn't exist. So a propositional model is presented in a west Brunswick lounge room that explores how an artist might go about making a painting about a burnt suburban hedge. After multiple conversations and some afternoon tea in conditions that approximate some, but not all, of the qualities of a romantacised and somewhat anachronistic salon – the painting might be ready to be wheeled out; http://www.osw.com.au/wbst/?p=91

reminder that whilst displaying an artwork in a domestic space, the ideology of the museum is never far away (see fig. 73).

The presentation context required getting past the volunteer invigilator who usually sat on the couch that a potential audience member might occupy (see fig. 72). While this situation was by no means intended, it illustrated the potential insularity enacted by participatory dynamics that some 'relational' projects are accused of. Therefore a broader public beyond the intimate circle of the organising committee and volunteers did not engage the publication. The best case scenario being that the performance of the invigilator reading the publication was a representation of the potential experiential engagement that a work like this might elicit.

The proposition took the form of a small A5 folder that sat on a coffee table in the lounge room. The folder like a manual for the making of a wall work was continually updated within the duration of the exhibition (see fig. 74). Each weekend a new volume would be inserted as a result of the social and artistic activities engaged with a range of practitioners during the preceding week. This complicated web of social activity, craft collaboration, conversation, appropriation and writing was proposed as not only the content of the work, but would also inform the making of a new work. The experience of reading the folder on the couch raises a hypothetical question: how could this amount of data be synthesised in a single wall work?

The volumes inserted in the folder were organised within four categories. The first volume included newspaper clippings of the hedge burning incidents. These acts were not an act of class antagonism as I romantically first envisaged; but a critique from within by 'stoned' teenagers playing out their masculinity, or their school motto that translates to 'Act Manfully' from Latin. The second volume explored my father's aspirational hedge that fails at reproducing the monolithic purity of an eastern suburban hedge but has mongrel appeal. This exploration of social difference is linked to the notion of artistic patronage inferred to in a transcribed conversation with Scott Mitchell. The third volume explores Michael Farrell's poetry—where abstraction is informed by social and political content. The fourth volume explores the sociability embedded in eating and food preparation; from the construction of a McDonalds burger; polymorphic drawings of fungal and testicular growth completed whilst

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stoned; the alleged hashish cookie recipe by Alice B Tolkas; to the sculptural rearticulation of the Big Mac by artist Ardi Gunawan.

Above all, this accumulation of ideas was a replication of a long rambling conversation that could take place on the couch, that the audience would be sitting on while reading the folder. Between conversational eavesdropping and an "evasive or noncommittal statement"—the document does not provide a linear narrative but an amalgam of tangents that could inform the making of another work.[32]

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[32] 'Hedging' is a shrub but it is also defined as an "evasive and noncommittal statement." *OED Online*, "Oxford English Dictionary Online," http://dictionary.oed.com.ezproxy.lib.monash.edu.au/entrance.dtl (accessed April 3, 2010).

Figure 75: Spiros Panigirakis, *Garazi Project*, 2011, photo document of commission writing—texts by Tony Panigirakis (left) and Dimitra Panigirakis (right).

Figure 76: Spiros Panigirakis, *Garazi Project*, 2011, photo document of project in progress—planters in situ.

THE GARAGE: The Garazi Project

The Garage Project is sited within the notion of the term 'garazi' (a common Greek-Australian transliteration) that is incongruently driven by a commissioning process between artist and patron.[33] Incongruent as the hobby-based culture found within the garage is usually independently produced. As the patrons of the project are also my parents and the site locale is part of the home of my childhood, a commissioning process is a contrived collaborative relationship that explores how this familial relationship can be transposed into a more professional context regarding the facilitation of an art practice. The domestic home of one's childhood can be a Freudian treasure trove that configures a 'place' as the poetic conceived by Bachelard.[34] The garage's outside quality is rich in psychological allusions as it works against notions of the intimate 'inside.' The ethnological quality of the term 'garazi' and the instigating process of the commission, attempt to create a distance from the essentialism of the artist's subjectivity. First, by using a term of colloquial parlance, the social is expanded from issues of self to a much broader social history. Second, the commissioning process creates a distance by spreading intention from the realm of the artist to the prerogative of a client. Whilst not necessarily challenging authorship—the commission allows a number of voices to convene within a singular output.

This social expansion generated by these discursive and process-derived site considerations does not rid the project of the challenges posed by a very narrow audience and a potentially compromised agenda. How does an artist account for an artwork driven by the process of the commission, that sits somewhat outside their control? The project could be aligned with the transparent system of patronage that drove a significant portion of pre-modern artwork and most design practice. But it

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[33] A transliterated Greek-Australian term that uses a pigeon logic of construction. Other such terms include 'carro' for car and 'semidzoula' for sandwich.

[34] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space,* trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), xxxii, Quoted in, Edward Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 288.

could also be plagued by the compromised quality of nepotism or a sophisticated version of a gift made in craft-class. Additionally once the *Garazi Project* is transposed to a site of display outside of its literal locale it poses issues in regards to the agency and alterity of the community represented.

Questions regarding a site consumed by pseudo-psychotherapeutic baggage could potentially challenge any sense of critical rigor. How do my parents, who are not at home within the frameworks of art and the university, deal with the way these institutions are consuming their difference in a potential spectacle based on reductive forces. The initial site of research consists of a community that is politically coherent. Like most property owners my parents vet entry into their backyard area and self-identify as a family unit. This 'place' framed by an institutional art, disrupts both what my family considers as art and what might be considered as the primary site of presentation—as opposed to deriving content from—in the contemporary art field. The presentation of amateur craft practices in community settings or art that leans towards an ethnographic museum display, is a familiar context in both the museological and domestic settings respectively. The *Garazi Project* would need to grapple with the different languages of presentation simultaneously.

The suburban garage has a distinct narrative. Located in Moorabbin it was built out of brick and roofed with corrugated iron in 1999 after a fire destroyed the previous cement sheet building that had occupied the site since the late 1960s. Scaled to accommodate a large vehicle, it is occupied primarily by my father to store his tools, garden supplies, materials and machinery. It is also a place for the production of his hobbies that tend to the miniature—bonsai and model boats. My father is the consummate retiree. After years of working in oil rigging he spends a proportion of his day in this dark cramped space listening to the radio, reading prolifically and tending to his hobbies. One corner of the garage is used by my mother to store onions, potatoes, pickled olives and to ripen tomatoes. The garage has a wide awning made from a green shaded polycarbonate. The space between the house and the garage is a transitional space and is dominated by my parent's informal hosting of a small network of friends and family.

The starting point of the garage within the *Garazi Project* deals with a place-like site within two interconnecting frameworks that deal with a sense of immensity. The first, considers place as an immanent site imbued with social memory and the other considers how the artist unearths the private poetic imaginary space of the subject.[35] Feminist discourses have informed and empowered artists to engage with sites of subjectivity, reframing domestic and private narratives as socially important. Masculinity was also reduced within an oppressive patriarchal paradigm that affirms more officially sanctioned senses of public sites.

The *Garazi Project* is limited to the subjects that inhabit this literal locale. Lippard would emphasise the here-and-now of audience experience and the responsibility for the artist to confront and be informed by social histories that construct site.[36] This considers the temporal framing of site via the events that animate the architecture but also how these events can be posited within a broader social history. It is a difficult enterprise to pinpoint the social paradigm these histories belong to. Fiction writer and polemicist Christos Tsiolkas in *Loaded*, *Dead Europe* and *The Slap* disrupts an essentialised notion of self within the Australian discourse of migrant cultures and the working class by presenting multiple perspectives of his subjects' lives—the good, the bad and the very ugly.[37] This representation of the cultural dimensions of the garage avoids replacing one phenomenological essentialism for another more cultural contrived one. Tsiolkas' polytonal strategy dodges the sanctimonious and redemptive qualities of projects that Lippard favours.

Nikos' Rear Entrance is also a project that engages audience in the usually private domain of the garage. The artist Nikos Pantazis' project opens his family garage's back entrance to the inner-city lane way that sits flush with its door. Somewhere between a studio, a gallery and a lived social space that hosts bike repair sessions,

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[35] Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentered Society* (New York: New Press, 1997), 4-38.

[36] Ibid., 278

[37] The political and economic scientist, George Megalogenis explored Christos Tsiolkas's resistance in representing any fixed notion of Australian identity. George Megalogenis, "Understanding the Australian Psyche," Adelaide Festival of Ideas, 2009. Christos Tsiolkas, *Loaded* (Milson Point: Vintage Press, 1998); Dead Europe (Milsons Point: Vintage Press, 2005); The Slap (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwen, 2008)

bodybuilding, DJing, yoga and fussing over a mate's hot-rod car.[38] This is not a case of presenting a palatable ethnographic 'day in the life' of a first generation migrant 'boy from the hood' but an antagonistic performance of the private site as used by art, as social fodder.[39] Pantazis posits the self not as an obliging open book but as something that courts art's inclusion, but at the same time frustrates and antagonises it. He would do this by purposefully closing the door to the audience during publicised opening hours so that Pantazis could perform yoga; ignoring an audience whilst weight training; and fixing his bike tire whilst a writer presents a paper on his own project.

The commission allows my parents to take some ownership of how they are represented within the project. In the field of applied design the commercial exchange that is implicit in a commission is considered a publishing path full of potential. The brief that sits between the patron/client and the designer, plays an integral part in the physical manifestation of design practice. The brief for most designers is a consultative and shifting contract—it requires dialogue. By contrast, artists commonly regard contractual relationships as a hindrance to their autonomy and a source of compromise. Instead of viewing the brief as a restrictive boundary, artists could utilise it as a chance to pursue unforseen directions and the development of one's practice by engaging in a dialogue with other voices. The negative flipside of this relationship might see creativity become hostage to the commercial imperative of user-pays—a type of corporate foyer art.

Alternatively, the compromise of a commission could be seen as a space to start a conversation with someone about the role and material presence of our practices. My parent's conception of art is bound by the aesthetic and not necessarily what I would exhibit in a contemporary art context. *Thanks Mum, Paintings by Anne Kearney* (2004) was an exhibition devised by the artist Blair Trethowan and was an exhibition of his mother's paintings. The exhibition was a negotiation between the

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[38] Nikos's Rear Entrance was a short-lived site of presentation—predominantly made public for the west Brunswick Sculpture Triennial. Amidst the social activities mentioned Pantazis presented the video work of Ellen Cantor, *Pinochet Porn (The Dictator and the Maid)* (2009), a large photographic test print by Jemima Stehli, painting trials by Shaan Syed, Lewis Amar's drawings for propositional sports uniforms—all UK based.

[39] Brad Haylock and OSW, "Looking for Art in West Brunswick…," *Un Magazine*, 3.1 (June 2009): 18.

artist's conceptual framework to resist notions of professional excellence within a commercial gallery context, and his mother's sincere efforts to provide a series of decorative paintings for her son's exhibition. The difference between this collaboration and the one enacted in the *Garazi Project* is that it will have two distinct public contexts. Whilst within the domestic siting my parents control the discursive lens of the project, once it is relayed within an institutionalised context, the work shifts registers towards an emphasis on the conceptual parameters of the commission process.

My parent's decisions regarding the commission has shifted my emphasis away from the garage—as this for my parents is no site for art's presentation—to the more public space of thoroughfare between the garage and the house. In addition to this site context, my mother has insisted that I complete the framed works I promised her for the kitchen three years ago. Since I have been putting off both exercises; I thought that incorporating them into the one project would be appropriate. The lack of progress (and completion) on both fronts regards a complicated sense of procrastination (see Chapter One) and probably my parent's expectation that art be decorative and has the potential to represent form mimetically; my art often lacking these qualities. This project finds itself at the most exclusive end of the project's sense of public but at the same time instigates the making of an artwork that deals with the most accessible (or populist) conception of what an artwork might be: the decorative. The enterprise of a nepotistic pseudo-business arrangement highlights different values we might accord to an artwork. My parents required a work to decorate their home while their son, the artist, is concerned with the social theorisation and its aesthetic value within the process of negotiation. And while I pursue the brief seriously through the production of planters boxes—I can not help thinking that this farcical commission is a rarefication of a Father's/Mother's Day present.

THE LEGITIMATION OF MINOR CONCLUSIONS

According to precedent a conclusion should both recapitulate the argument of an exegesis and also explain the project's contribution to its field. I therefore was surprised to discover, when I finally read Chapter Seven of the Graduate Handbook, that the requirement to "make a significant contribution to knowledge and understanding of the field" which is standard in other fields, does not apply to my research.[1] A fine art exegesis need only include an account of how it contributes to "human culture, endeavour and knowledge."[2] In contrast, the art itself must be of "substantial cultural significance." In my ignorance of the assessment criteria, I had envisaged that my exegesis would discuss the difficulty of claiming a significant contribution to the field. The ambiguity of the phrase "human culture, endeavour and knowledge" on the other hand, protects the legitimacy of the Fine Arts exegesis. By evading mention of the field of art, this phrasing allows the exegetic text to be "verified and confirmed" by almost anything.[3] Obviously the field of art might provide this confirmation, but as the philosopher of science Karl Popper has observed of research more generally, "it is easy to obtain confirmations, or verifications, for nearly every theory—if we look for confirmations."[4] However, my reference to Popper is a red herring; artistic research is not analogous with scientific research.

My research's contribution to "human culture, endeavour and knowledge" is, self-consciously, minor. The art project reflexively responds to the sited condition of the university and how this facilitates the artist's role. The project then uses this position

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[1] Monash Reserach Graduate School, *Chapter 7.9 Criteria for the Examination of a Thesis,* http://www.mrgs.monash.edu.au/research/doctoral/chapter7i.html (accessed January 13, 2011)

[2] Ibid.

[3] Karl Popper, "Science as Falsification: 'Science: Conjectures and Refutations' 1963," in *Readings in the Philosophy of Science*, ed. Theodore Schick (Mountain View: Mayfield Publishing Company, 2000), 9-13.

[4] Popper uses the distinctions between astrology and astronomy, as an example of how the same 'research' data can be used to substantiate any claim—even a field that resembles "primitive myth"; Ibid., 10-11.

to investigate the potential (via the propositional form) for art's presentation and distribution in sited conditions that resist institutional frameworks conventionally associated with "cultural significance." Instead the project retreats to sites that are personal, small and restricted. In most of this 'fieldwork' the direct implementation of an intervention is withheld; I am content for my interventions to stay as ideas that are articulated only in the confines of the Fine Arts department. Considering that I can use any criteria to substantiate the significance of my research, I could also argue that my art makes a major contribution as well. Instead I wonder whether the research's specificity matters? What is its definition? Who values it, and how?

A small pond

This exegesis has framed my artwork so as to emphasise the social framing of sited practice. This sociological framing of site could be the criteria used to validate my research in fields encompassing "human endeavour." The three chapters respectively discuss:

 — the institutional framing of self;

 — the divergent conceptions of sociability found within the art field and;

 — a conception of site that is grounded by a subjective understanding of place, but at the same time constituted by community relations that are understood as discursive and differentiated.

The first chapter looks at how collective and personal notions of self can be conceived within institutional structures. Institutional Critique—contemporaneous to the social and cultural practices of feminism and conceptual art—is considered here as a methodology that addresses the sited condition of my research. Widespread misapprehension of Institutional Critique ignores its pervasive methodological influence on contemporary artists' practices.[5] The 'critically reflexive site specificity'

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[5] While Institutional Critique is criticised for being: reactive rather productive; futile resistance in the face of a dominant paradigm; a co-opted measure; or not radical enough; its influence on a number of practices not associated with the methodology is pervasive. These 'critical practices' use (and appropriate) formal conventions from Institutional Critique's historical precedents. These projects include: Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster's 2009 Venice Biennale project *De Novo,* reflexively describing (via a video monologue) five failed attempts at exhibiting in this international event; both the survey show models of Rirkrit Tiravanija and

that I impose on the site of research doubtless has minimal critical impact on Monash University's burgeoning Fine Arts' postgraduate programs. While I draw on a lineage including feminist political art, the radical absence of conceptualism and the calculated struggle of Institutional Critique, these discourses are used for much smaller targets: me and my place in the world. These institutions of critique and resistance have become part of contemporary art's discursive foundation. These historical struggles help me define my place as an artist within the field that I occupy.

While the first chapter takes big struggles and renders them small and particular, the second chapter argues that my art is, like everyone else's: social. I have sought to engage in the debate concerning Nicolas Bourriaud's *Relational Aesthetics.* By providing multiple models that bridge art and sociability within a broader historical and theoretical perspective—I argue that the pertinent question is not whether art is or is not social (or relational), but instead concerns the quality of sociability. My observation that art is social in its making, distribution and reception is obvious in some ways. Sociability is a lens that could be used to describe all art. I frame the sociable component of my work as a reflexive reliance on a spectrum of collaborative frameworks, community contexts and pretty much any human activity that is exposed within the representational content of the art. While this disrupts the singularity of authorship, I do not resist creating hierarchy within collaborative dynamics. Audience engagement and reception of the work is framed as part of this sociable production—I propose an expanded notion of collaboration.

Liam Gillick—*A Retrospective (tomorrow is another fine day)* (2005) and *Three Perspectives and a Short Scenario* (2008)—both toured to multiple museums and in different ways exposed the administrative machinations of the art institution within the body of the re-articulation of old work; Bianca Hester's *Fashioning Discontinuities* (2009) at the Centre for Contemporary Photography, Melbourne where during the opening she organised a sit-in to accompany the other six spatial interruptions through the space; and the collaboration between Nikos Pantazopoulos and Ardi Gunawan's *Desperate Exhibition Making Techniques* (2010) at Y3K Melbourne where the mock-totalitarian photographic portrait of one of the directors of the artist-run-space accompanied exposed processes associated with the 'making' of an exhibition.

This conclusion is not a place for answers.

At the same time as I seek to measure the sociability of art, I also seek to distinguish it from its heteronomous use by social institutions. As Adorno's conception of autonomous art reminds us, the independence of art is not absolute.[6] Moreover, art carries the historical baggage of failed avant-garde aspiration for the social valuation of aesthetic enterprise. In a contemporary artistic climate however, it is not so much that art comes up short, but that art (and specifically the artist) accumulates esteem that exceeds the limited social value the art facilitates. What are the artist's motives for collaborating with community? Why do artists present their work as belonging to a 'fine art' tradition, rather than fully embracing the community context? I do not propose a clear answer to this question. Still, the question confronts me: how to make critical art—on art's own terms—that explicitly engages social contexts without submitting to the insularity of formalism? It would be naïve to pretend that I have solved this problem in my work; I just hope the quandary is reflected in it.

In Chapter Three I explored various critical positions that privilege a social constitution of site over grounded material criteria. Emphasis on the discursive constitution of site encompasses a broadness that usually moves away from the specificity of a phenomenological locale or the centeredness of a place. Miwon Kwon's notion of a discursive site challenges the 'specific' in the now historical term 'site specificity.'[7] However, at the same time as I move away from this history I realise that the site specific quality of my research—art as situated within the university context—is structurally discursive. The university is a dynamic entity that we experience via architecture, departments, policies, methodologies, libraries, museums and so forth. The studio and the fieldwork shift within this sited matrix according to the university's ideological and spatial imperatives. The fieldwork—an institutional framing of somewhere else—is displaced by various modes of

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[6] Theodor Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory,* trans. R Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1970), 209.
[7] Miwon Kwon, *One Place After Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge, Mass. : MIT Press, 2002); James Meyer's 'functional site' offers a similar account; James Meyer, "The Functional Site: or The Transformation of Site-Specificity," in *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, ed. Erika Suderburg (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 35.

publication. So even while the fieldwork moves to 'places' that resist conventional institutional significance, this mode of working is at home within the university.

This fit (a characteristic of the site-specific) extends to the notion of the 'propositional site project.' However, between the four fieldwork sites—a student common room, my parent's backyard, a friends' lounge room, and an inner city foreshore—I affirm the unresolved quality of the proposition-as-outcome. The outcomes are either: problematic recommendations (foreshore); co-opting other artists' interventions (common-room); impossibly convoluted instructions for making a painting (lounge-room); or unfinished (parents' garage). The site research expands and retracts, simultaneously. I use the freedom found in art's appropriation of social strategies to confine art as a theoretical convention within the university. The artistic fieldwork is resolutely defined as sitting in the social field but I am also apprehensive about an intervention that extends past an artist pointing at something.

How does work become culturally significant if it is not contextualised within its own field? Most other research in the university is firstly assessed and accountable to its own field's disciplinary criteria. Do the assessors of the doctorate solely determine the arbitration of this significance? A judgment that would be made without reference to an exegesis contextualising the art in its field because it is too busy discussing its importance within the broad scope of "human endeavour" and so forth. We use the word 'research'—but to what end? This critique of the institution that determines art's significance is a strategy on my part that "speaks truth to power."[8] However as I point out the limitations of the research framework that I am inevitably co-opted within, I am also reminded that this institutional framework is enabling me to speak and welcoming critique in the first place. After all the self and structure are mutually constituting. This critique is also part of a field of cultural production that I position myself in. This process can still be accused of deriving an arbitrary and unjustified value from an association with art, but surely this conceit is no more problematic than the claim to have made a contribution to 'human knowledge' that is required by the assessment criteria.

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[8] Andrea Fraser, "'To Quote,' Say the Kabyles, 'Is to Bring Back to Life'," *October* 101 (Summer 2002): 10.

I want to point to the field.

Figure 77: Mary Kelly, *Post-Partum Document: Documentation V,Classified Specimens, Proportional Diagrams, Statistical Tables, Research and Index,* 1977, Australian National Gallery, Canberra.

Figure 78: Felix Gonzalez Torres *Untitled*,1991, Felix Gonzalez Torres [et al.], A.R.T Press, 1993, ed., William Bartman.

Figure 79: Marcel Broodthaer's, *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Section XIXème Siècle*, 1968, Antwerp.

Figure 80: Hans Haacke, *DER BEVÖLKERUNG,* 1998, German Bundestag, Berlin.

Figure 81: Michael Asher, *Santa Monica Museum of Art*, 2008.

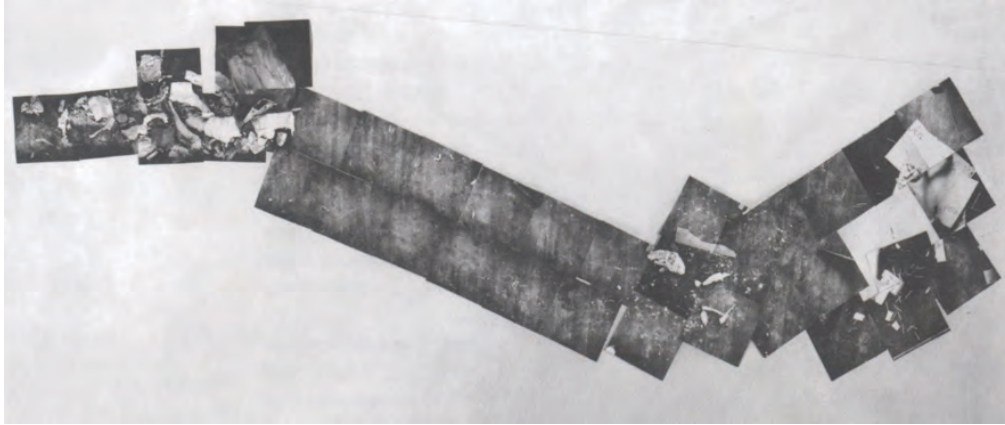Figure 82: Bruce Nauman, *Composite Photo of Two Messes on the Studio Floor*, 1967, MOMA, New York, 102 x 312 cm.
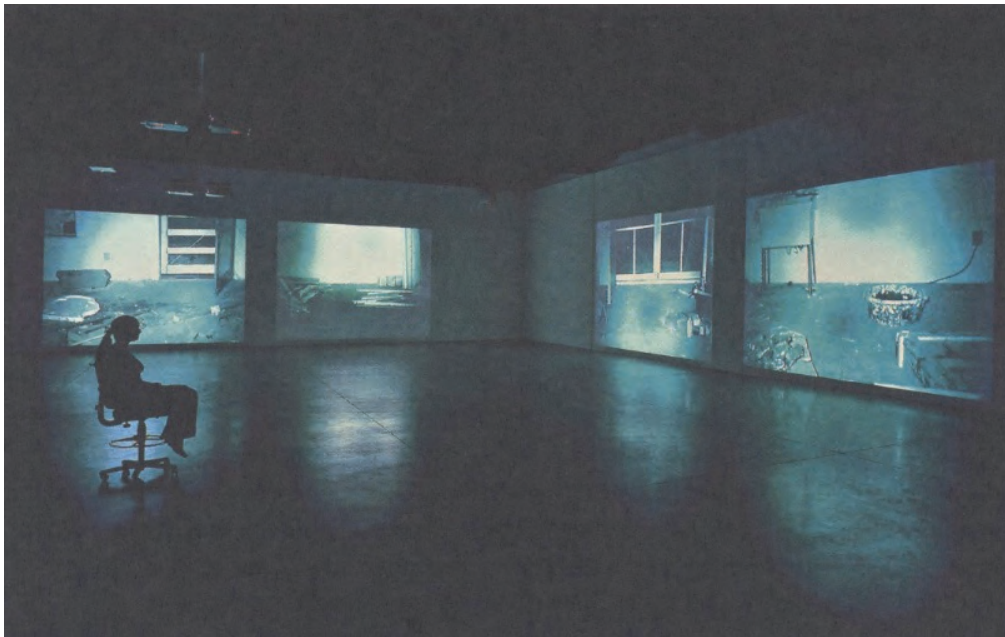

Figure 83, Bruce Nauman, *Mapping the Studio 1 (Fat Chance John Cage)*, 2002, DIA Art Foundation, New York.

Figure 84: Tom Burr, *An American Garden*, 1993, Sonsbeek 93, Arnheim, Germany.

Figure 85: Lisa Kelly, *THE LAB: The Open Residency Project,* 2009, Ocular Lab, West Brunswick.

Belatedly pegging out my minor contribution in a field of art, might begin with the critical practices that engage the politics of self, extending from Mary Kelly's *Post Partum Document* (1979) to Felix Gonzales Torres' *Untitled* (1991); a work that uses a wooden drawer as presentation device for the collection of personal ephemera. My minor contribution engages established critical conventions—as opposed to aforementioned examples that resisted dominant cultural paradigms as a matter of priority. My project's critique is directed inward, toward the embodiment of the institutionalisation of art that as is evoked by Pierre Bourdieu's notion of the "habitus" and the reflexivity of the "sociology of the sociologist's work:" Marcel Broodthaer's, *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Section XIXème Siècle* (1968) presented furniture that facilitates the production, distribution and presentation of art and can be regarded as an artistic exemplar of this tradition and an obvious influence on my work. The interrogation of artistic practice is also played out in Michael Asher's project at the *Los Angeles County Museum of Art* (2002) that facilitated the installation of the museum's collection by Fairfax High School students; and again in Asher's project at the *Santa Monica Museum of Art* (2008) that was a built compendium of the ten year history of all the stud walls used to demarcate the museum space. In these two projects, Asher allows the form and design to be dictated by a set of factors beyond his individual control. This same impulse is apparent in Hans Haacke's *DER BEVÖLKERUNG* (1998), a landscaping work in the central forecourt of Berlin's Reichstag that is formed from the request for soil from every German parliamentarian—resulting in a garden of diverse weeds. While Not associated with Institutional Critique, but with the interrogation of the artist's role within the spatial constraints of the studio, Bruce Nauman explores an artist activity and inactivity in the studio: his early video works explored the controlled body movements within his studio; and *Composite Photo of Two Messes on the Studio Floor* (1967) and more recently *Mapping The Studio 1 (Fat Chance John Cage)* (2001) have been reminded me what my studio lacks, in the excess of its production.

Andrea Fraser is the artist who has most influenced this exegesis. From her use of 'critically reflexive site specificity' to frame and critique art within the institutional boundaries of the instigating site of presentation, in *A Project in Two Phases* and *Report* (1995) for the EA-Generali Foundation, to the more personal and idiosyncratic use of theory to frame the practices of other artists, "Why Does Fred

Sandback's Work Make Me Cry?", Fraser's forensic interrogation of the institution of art is reminiscent of other contemporary practices that have influenced the project. These include: Lisa Kelly's *Ocular Lab: Open Residency Project* (2009), where the artist gradually scraped the blocked gallery windows clear; revealing in the process that this artist-run-space had turned its back on the local foot traffic that once used the space as a milk-bar; Tom Burr *An American Garden* (1993) an annotated recreation of Central Park's Rambles, a gay-cruising ground for an exhibition sited in a Dutch park in Arnhem; and finally, Fiona Macdonald's *Hidden/Modern* (1990), *Gratuitous* (2002) and *Bone* (2007) which use the strategy of sculptural pastiche to interrogate the institutional factors at play in an eighteen-year span of Melbourne artist-run-initiatives (see Appendix 3).

This is an affirmation of a field—I am not stating that my art is breaking new ground or being more important or that much different or that similar. It is understandable (in some ways) that the assessment criteria do not mention the field. Art's exponentially expanding qualities; art's reliance on a number of authorities for its legitimation, the university being one of many; art's subjective constitution and its overlapping with everyday life; art's interminable issues with originality, authorship and authority, makes it difficult to posit a contribution to the field. Putting aside what Bourdieu notes as the competitive struggles for position within any field, I just want to assert my reliance on the field of art within the field of power that encases it: society.

Next

How does this project instigate further research beyond the candidature? Whilst writing the conclusion of this exegetic text and feeling empowered to cherry-pick from sociological theory, I have envisaged future research that connects the dots between the discursive fields I employ. This is not an attempt to find more content or more methods but further potential to frame art—my own and that of my peers. The rich lineage of conceptualism's writing projects should not be confined to the university. Andrea Fraser's longstanding creative, personal and critical scholarship of Pierre Bourdieu and more recently of psychoanalytic theory and affect, offers an exceptional model of how an artist digests, and makes public, theoretical concerns. I

realise that the student's truism: of learning only how much I do not know, applies to the exegetic component of the research.

While sociological theories of art are obviously of great importance to my practice: I have neglected to discuss my burgeoning interest in the notion of the phantasy. The work of Bourdieu (via Fraser's scholarship) that seeks to unpack the field's transcendental tendencies; this leaves art as a social field of competing actors rather than an inalienable cultural pursuit. The ideas espoused by Bourdieu have liberated my thinking regarding the distribution of my work. The field's arbitrary values and tastes; the distribution of social, cultural and financial capital that informs the struggles for eminence; and the symbolic violence that underlies the decisions regarding the inclusions and exclusions we embody and reproduce (via the habitus), has given me a perspective on the way I publish my work and where. But regardless of the sometimes-cold reality in which sociology contextualises cultural production, phantasy still exists—it is just accounted for against the always shifting social and political reality it is invariably part of.

Figure 86: Spiros Panigirakis, *OPENING: an easel for Ferntree Gully,* 2010, acrylic paint on kiln dried hardwood and Pine, mild steel fasteners with A5 20 page manual, AutoCad: Sam Rhodes, Manual layout: Johan Oevergaard.

Figure 87: Spiros Panigirakis, SMOCK: After Nicholas Chevalier 1860 costume for Lady Barkly, 2010, Belgium linen, polyester liner, embroidered cotton, tarpaulin, acrylic paint hardwood and metal fasteners, made with the assistance of Dimitra Panigirakis.

Figure 88: Spiros Panigirakis, *SMOCK....,* 2010, detail.

Outside of the confines of *STUDIO CONDITIONS*—within my art practice more generally—I use the methodological strategies of my research in a mode that anticipates how 'critically reflexive site specificity' will be used in future site contexts. *FERNTREE GULLY* (2010)*,* a project presented during my candidature at Sarah Scout Gallery, melds my interest in the social siting of phantasy. FERNTREE GULLY comprised of a series of sculptures that worked with the site context of presentation (see Appendix 1.4). The commercial gallery that once was the studio of the Romantic colonial painter Eugene von Guerard was the starting point to make a series of works that elaborated on notions of the fieldwork conducted by romantic painters; 1850's craze regarding ferns; commercial décor; and the role of artist as a type of phantasy. Two particular works in the exhibition are of particular relevance to this discussion. The first: *SMOCK* (2010) is an apron as fancy dress costume and is subtitled, "After Nicholas Chevalier's 1860 costume for Lady Barkly." The second: OPENING (2O10) is an easel that has transformed into a green Caro-esque abstraction of a fern. The apron is constructed from Belgium linen, silk under-lining and embroidered fern frond on a painter's rag. It is a sculpture that critically engages in the social and economic place of an artist. Chevalier, a landscape painter and peer of von Guerard's supplemented his income through his dressmaking for social elite of Melbourne. His fancy-dress gown for the governor's wife, Lady Barkly, used a fern frond motif after von Guerard's painting *Ferntree Gully in the Dandenong Ranges* (1857) caused a popular stir in the burgeoning city of Melbourne.[9] The apron in this context becomes a fancy-dress costume; tied up in complex field of social, cultural and economic capital of art's institution. The easel on the other hand—once a useful piece of furniture—grapples with the incongruent notions of abstraction and the actual ferny sites it once facilitated the painted representation of. I have often flippantly referred to the site-less conditions of abstraction as a type of 'art magic.' Scott Mitchell writes for the project,

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[9] Tim Bonyhady, *The Colonial Earth* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Publishing, 2000), 103.

> [d]espite Spiros' aversion to the supernatural, 'magic' is a word I have heard him use. 'Magic happens', Spiros giggles, it doesn't actually happen. Magic figures its possibilities, sketching them into the world, suggesting alternatives, gesturing to a space beyond the dust, the heat…[of the actual landscape of the rural country towns he has previously referenced.][10]

Without yet foreseeing the site context of future presentation I know that I want my future work to, deal explicitly with what Mitchell regards as the tension between the phantasy (or magic in his terms) and the social "world [that] is made up of relations—complicated, contingent, often difficult and ultimately unresolvable."[11]

But I have not finished yet.

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[10] Scott Mitchell *Ferntree Gully* (catalogue text), October 2010, Sarah Scout Presents Gallery, Melbourne, http://www.sarahscoutpresents.com/past-exhibitions, (accessed January 15, 2011)
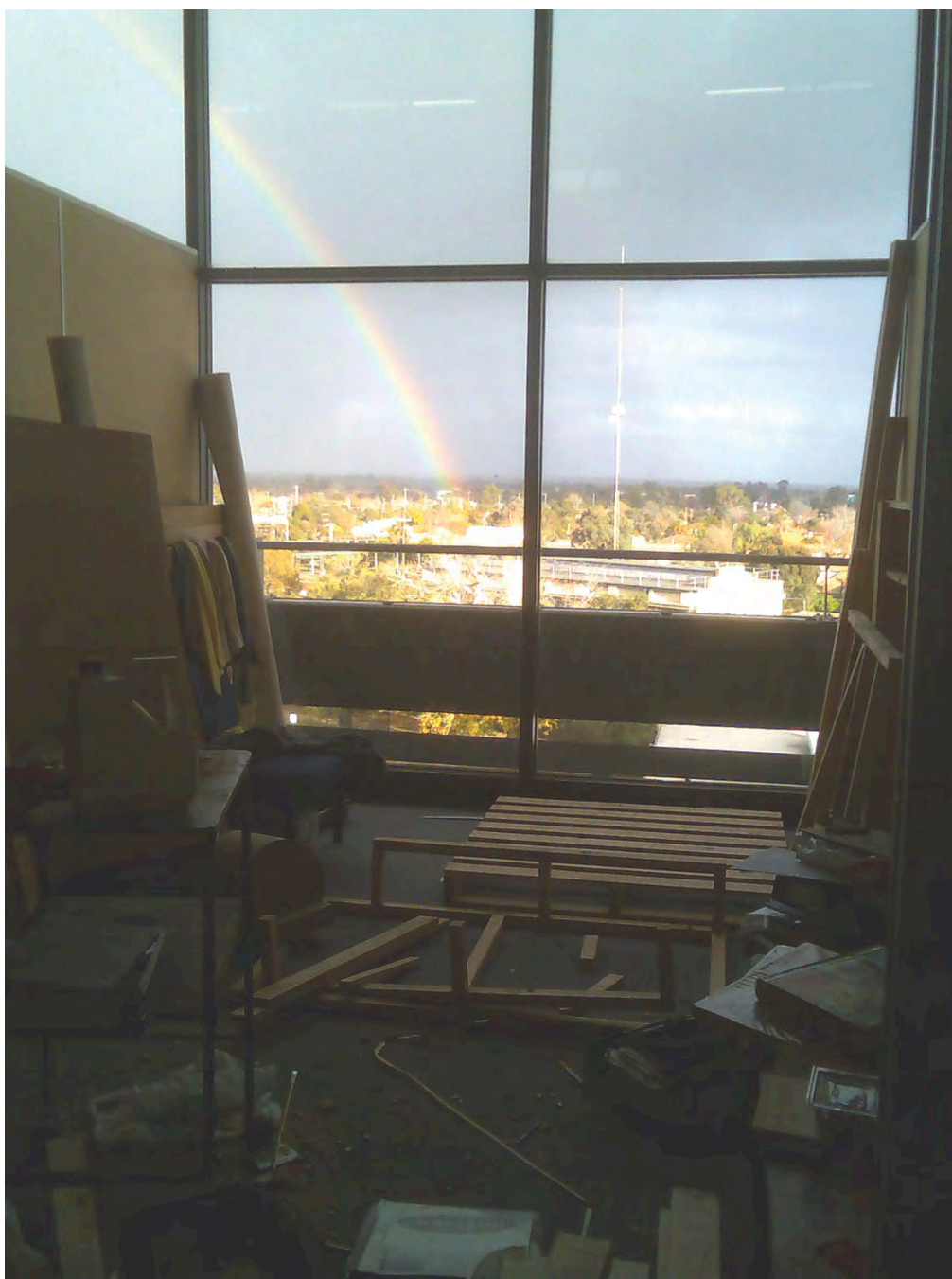[11] Ibid.

Figure 89: Spiros Panigirakis, studio with rainbow, 2009.

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APPENDIX 1

Appendix 1.1: WITHOUT

Spiros Panigirakis, *WITHOUT*, 2006, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, curated by Jeff Khan.

"Each January Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces hosts a project for the Midsumma Festival. Over summer the gallery is closed so the Midsumma show is a window display. For this year's show I've avoided the homo-as-window-dresser tradition by blocking out the window. Inside I'm creating a private space for a series of queer happenings. But in keeping with a more recent gay tradition of building our identities online, I've created this blog via which you can view the work."

From online blog *Outside 200 Gertrude Street*: http://with-out.blogspot.com

Figure A.1: Spiros Panigirakis, *WITHOUT*, 2006, Gertrude Contemporary Arts Spaces, Melbourne, primary furniture structure prior to launch of exhibition.

Monday	Tuesday Pull down blinds	Wednesday	Thursday
16 Bake cookies for reading group, finish helmets and call feedback participants	17 Launch 6-8 pm - drinks at Seventh gallery (155 Gertrude St) YARRA Launch	18 Reading group, 10am	19 Poster production day 1 - Appointments and conversations
Friday 20 Rainbow network sculpture 4-6 pm.	Saturday 21 Buy equipment materials and drinks for volunteer project	Sunday 22	Monday 23 midsumma volunteers- sculptures, drinks and streamers 6:30 pm
Tuesday 24 drop in/spare/ casual reading group 1pm - Appointments and conversations	Wednesday 25 Poster production day 2 Hand-job project	Thursday 26 Public holiday 6:30pm	Friday 27 Reading group 1pm Midsumma Visual Arts Working Group + friends CLUBS feedback
Saturday 28 CLUBSfeedback (straight and outside) 11am	Sunday 29	Monday 30 Bump out - participants collect work	

Figure A.2: Spiros Panigirakis, *WITHOUT*, 2006, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, calendar of events outlined in catalogue.

Figure A.3: Spiros Panigirakis, *WITHOUT*, 2006, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, Melbourne, launch of exhibition where furniture cube was dismantled and curtains were drawn.
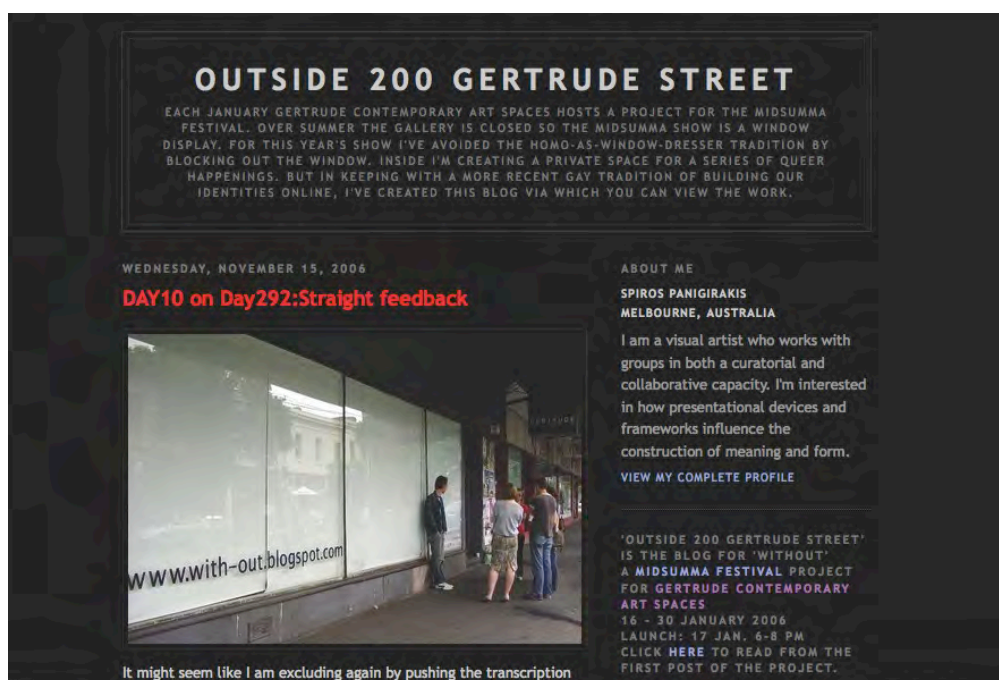

Figure A.4: Spiros Panigirakis, *Outside 200 Gertrude Street*, 2006-2008, online blog that accompanied *WITHOUT*, www.with-out.blogspot.com.

Figure A.5: Spiros Panigirakis, *WITHOUT*, 2006, digital stills from interior view, Gertrude Contemporary Art Spaces, from the blog—*Outside Gertrude Street*, www.with-out.blogspot.com.

Appendix 1.2: More Honey

Spiros Panigirakis, *More Honey*, 2007, Loose Projects, Sydney, in a group exhibition *workshop.nonstop*, curated by Lisa Kelly.

Louise Irving and Marian Patterson's video work *Smoke, Wax, Wood, Wheels, Glass, Honey* (2007) provided the departure point and visual title for *MORE HONEY*. The extended cut of this documentary observed the daily work and struggle for shelf-space of the family run business Archibald's Honey. I was unexpectedly moved by the impending (and predictable) loss of 'consumer choice' through this familiar brand's supermarket delisting, even if I recognised a vague irony in my nostalgia for a corporate icon cruelled by corporate rationalisation. Perhaps I felt a parallel between independent artist-run spaces and independent grocers that are the last refuge of the 'delisted' product. (And where does that leave the farmers' market?) It wasn't so much that I wanted to develop a marketing campaign to rescue this vanquished brand, but that this moment of emotional engagement inspired me to explore the visual language of corporate communication and commodity culture. I wanted to go commercial. Could I collaborate with practitioners I admire from allied creative fields and balance critique, celebration and acquiescence to the commercial idiom in which they work? Honey – rich with associations of collectivity, social hierarchy, familial sociality, cross cultural links and comfort food – seemed the right symbol to guide my project into the cultural forms of public relations and visual merchandising. After all it's the bees 'lifestyle' (if the word doesn't evoke overly anthropomorphised 'work-life-balance' associations) that makes the honey. The exercises that form this project are: an emblematic colouring-in project activated with local children and facilitated by Lisa Kelly; a promotional collaboration with George Calombaris a chef with a background in molecular gastronomy; and you-tube viral-videos developed with Joe Hill an advertising creative to explore communication within family contexts. These tangentially work off Irving and Patterson's videos observations of industrious bees, incremental shifting of hives, transformative manufacturing processes and marketing that utilises stuffed bees and materials found in a few art practices…

 From online blog *More Honey*: www.more-honey.blogspot.com

Figure A.6: Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE HONEY*, 2007, Loose Projects, Sydney, installation view.

Figure A.7: Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE HONEY*, 2007, Loose Projects, Sydney, incorporating monitor work by Louise Irving and Marian Patterson, *Smoke, Wax, Wood, Wheels, Glass, Honey,* 2007 (8.46 minutes).

Figure A.8: Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE HONEY*, 2007, Loose Projects, Sydney, cardboard, honey, paper.

Figure A.9: Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE HONEY*, 2007, Loose Projects, Sydney, incorporating *MORE HONEY (colouring)* with local Darling Harbour / Ultimo chid-care centres and Lisa Kelly.

Figure A.10: Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE HONEY (colouring)*, 2007, with the assistance of Lisa Kelly Darling Harbour/Ultimo chid-care centres.
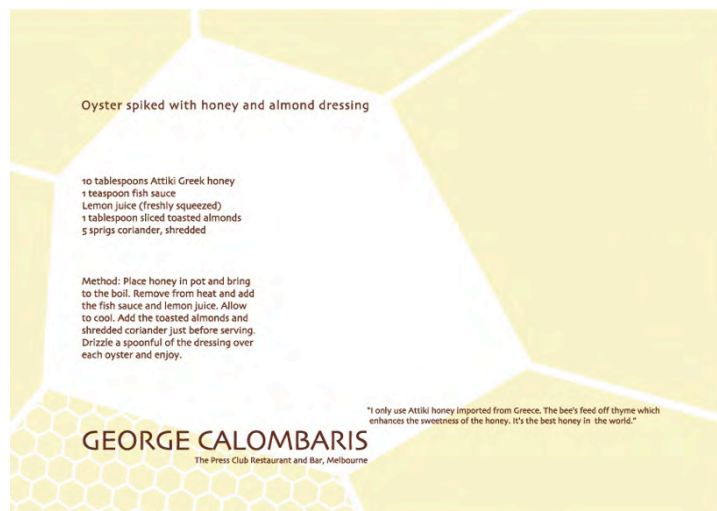
Figure A.12: Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE HONEY* with George Calombaris, *Oyster Spiked with Honey and Almond Dressing,* 2007, The Press Club Restaurant and Bar, Melbourne.
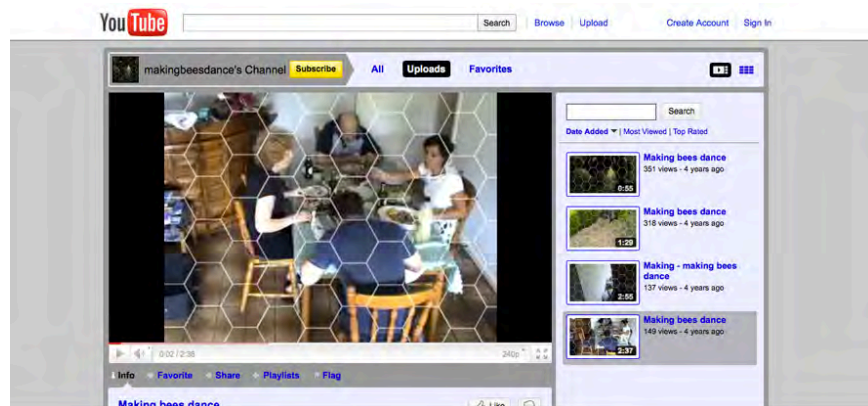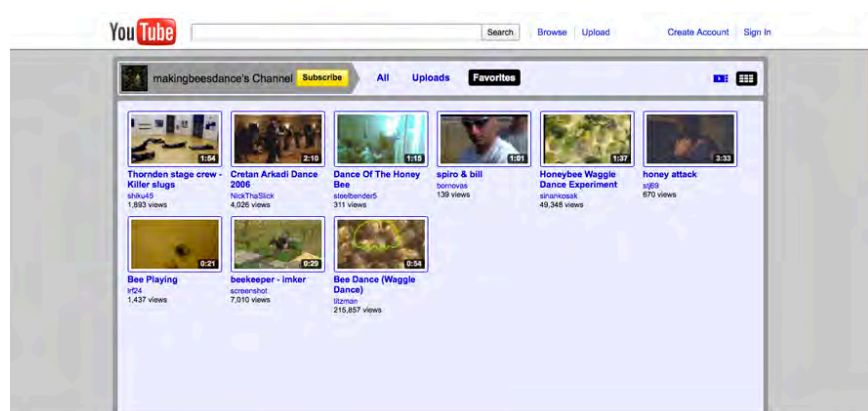
Figure A.11: Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE HONEY (colouring),* 2007, paper, 29 x 21 cm.
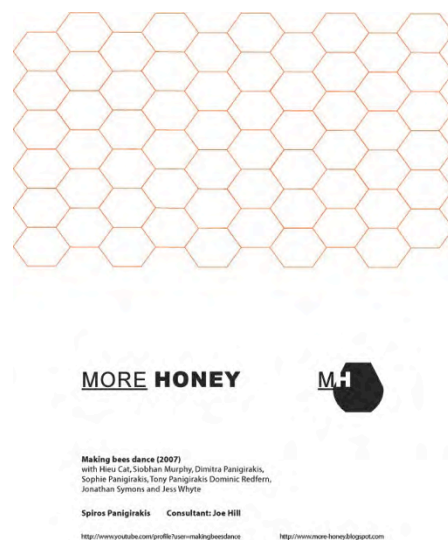

Figure A.12: Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE HONEY*, 2007, *Making Bees Dance,* 2007, business card, consultant: Joe Hill advertising creative at Singleton Ogivly & Mather with Hieu Cat, Siobhan Murphy, Dominic Redfern, Dimitra Panigirakis, Sophie Panigirakis, Tony Panigirakis, Jonathan Symons and Jess Whyte

Figure A.13; Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE HONEY*, 2007, *Making Bees Dance,* 2007, You Tube profile page: www,youtube.com/profile?user=makingbeesdance.

Appendix 1.3: MORE SILENCE

Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE SILENCE*, 2008, RMIT Project Space, Melbourne, also shown at Contemporary Art Services Tasmania, Hobart in *Redrawing,* a group exhibition curated by Fiona Macdonald.

Mathew Jones' project *Silence = Death: or the life cycle of a contemporary homosexual* exhibited at Gertrude Contemporary Arts Spaces in May 1991 was used as the starting point for a number of collaborations.

CHAIN
October 43,Winter 1987, ed. Douglas Crimp, photocopied on yellow paper

LEAFLET
Michael Farrell's *silence=death*
A3 Offset Print, Edition of 250

DRAWINGS (We rally to the slogan because they have forced us to, but keep the silence, as a place where we refuse to use their terms.)

A3 Colour Digital print after drawings by Andrew Atchison, Marcus Keating, Alex Martinis Roe, Kristin Wursthorn

BOOKS
Taking Liberties: Aids and Cultural Politics, Serpent's Tail and ICA, (London, 1989) wrapped in transcript of conversation with Dennis Altman

The Kristeva Reader, Basil Blakcwell, (Oxford, 1986)
wrapped in transcript of conversation with Sarah Curtis

Displacing Homophobia, Duke University Press, (London, 1989)
wrapped in transcript of conversation with Steven Angelidies

October 43, Winter 1987, MIT Press, (Massachusetts, 1987)
wrapped in transcript of conversation with Anthony Gardner

Figure A.14: Spiros Panigirakis, MORE SILENCE, 2008, RMIT Project Space, Melbourne.

Figure A.15: Spiros Panigirakis, MORE SILENCE, 2008, RMIT Project Space, Melbourne.

Figure A.16: Spiros Panigirakis, MORE SILENCE, 2008, RMIT Project Space, Melbourne.

Figure A.17: Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE SILENCE,* 2008, RMIT Project Space, Melbourne, detail of *DRAWINGS* with Andrew Atchison, Marcus Keating, Alex Martinis Roe, Kristin Wursthorn

Figure A.18: Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE SILENCE,* 2008, RMIT Project Space, Melbourne, detail of *BOOKS* and transcribed conversations with Steven Angelidies, Dennis Altman, Sarah Curtis and Anthony Gardner.

Figure A.19: Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE SILENCE*, 2008, RMIT Project Space, Melbourne, detail of *CHAIN* and LEAFLET, *silence=death*—a text written by Michael Farrell.

Figure A.20: Spiros Panigirakis, *MORE SILENCE*, 2008, RMIT Project Space, Melbourne, detail of timber construction, platform and chairs, acrylic on canvas and plywood.

Appendix 1.4: FERNTREE GULLY

Spiros Panigirakis, FERNTREE GULLY, 2010, Sarah Scout Presents Gallery, Melbourne.

Figure A.21: Spiros Panigirakis, *QUORUM: in preparation for a Ferntree Gully mural project*, 2010, Kiln dried hardwood, marine plywood, various fasteners, leather, canvas, canite and photograph (taken and printed on 6/10/2010–day of the opening of the exhibition), design sources for stools: Driscoll and Hibberson, Woodwork Projects, Macmillan, London, 1986; Korn, Peter. Woodworking Basics, Taunton Press, Newtown, 2003; Woodwork Teachers Guide, Research and Development -Education Department of Victoria, 1984; www.craftsmanspace.com/free-projects/wooden-fishing-folding-stool.html; www.craftsmanspace.com/free-projects/folding-stool-plan.html; and www.craftsmanspace.com/free-projects/tripod-stool-plan.html.

Figure A.22: Spiros Panigirakis, *Quorum…*2010 and *OPENING: an easel for Ferntree Gully*, 2010, acrylic paint on kiln dried hardwood and Pine, mild steel fasteners with 20 page manual, AutoCad: Sam Rhodes Manual layout: Johan Oevergaard.

Figure A.23: Spiros Panigirakis, *DRY GULLY: a drying rack for prints*, 2010, 18 mm chipboard, kiln dried hardwood, custom galvanised springs, wheels and powder coated hard-drawn wire.
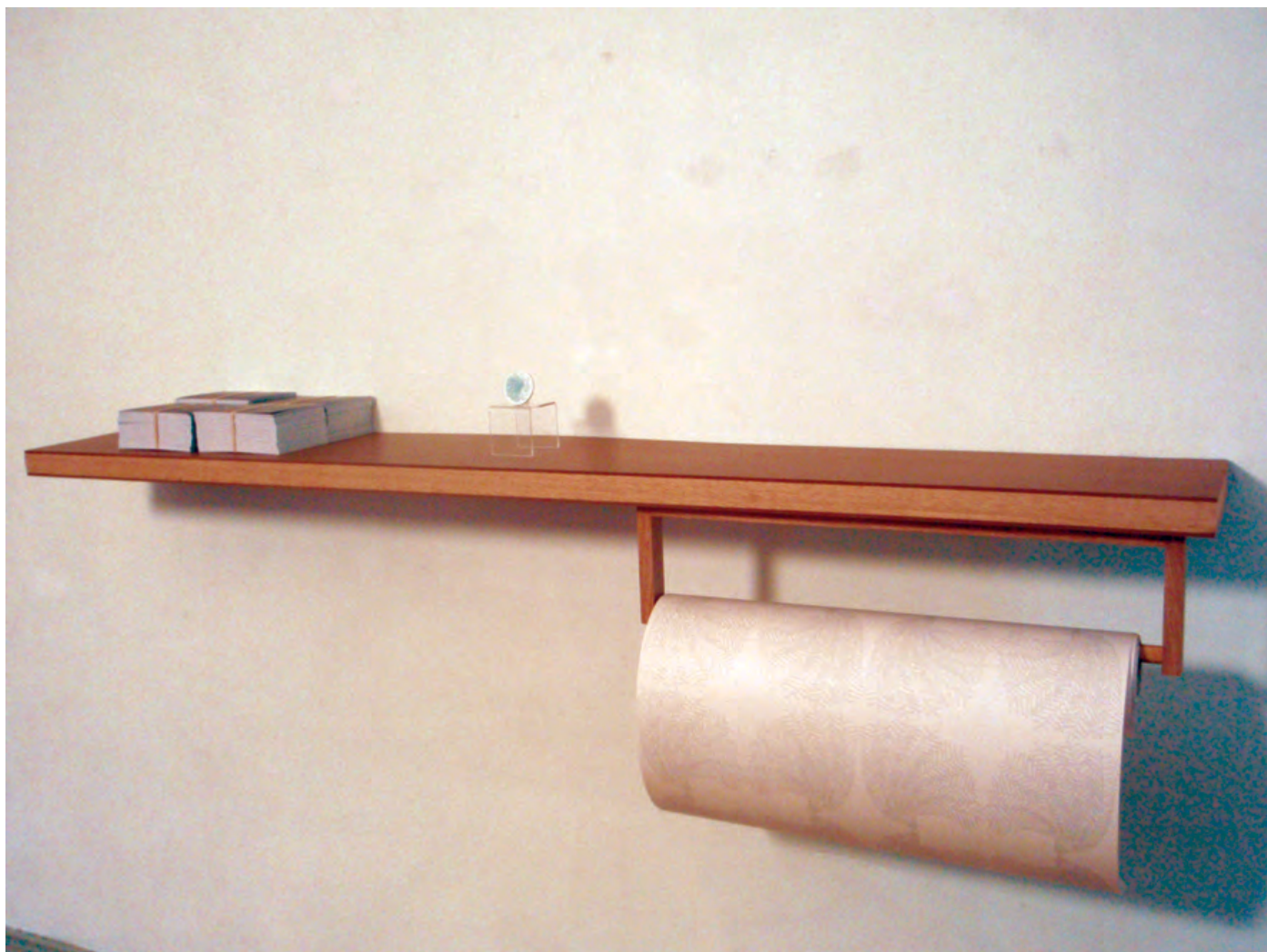
Figure A.24: Spiros Panigirakis, *VALUES*, 2010, project for Sarah Scout's stockroom.
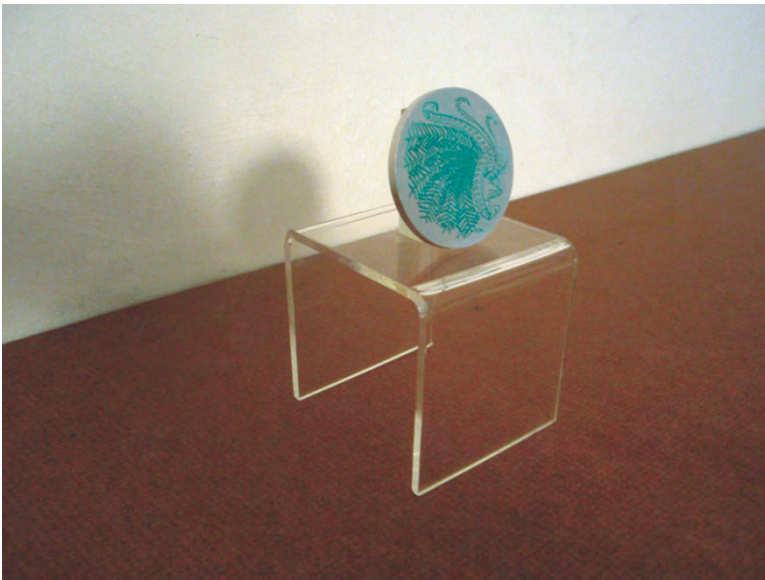
Figure A.25: Spiros Panigirakis, *Approximation*: an engraved drawing for FERNTREE GULLY after Stuart Devlin (1966), 45 mm diameter engraved aluminium.

Figure A.26: Postcard, 2010, Spiros Panigirakis, born Australia 1977. 250 cropped postcards of Ferntree Gully in the Dandenong Ranges 1857, 2010. Ink on snowboard 10.5 × 14.8 cm; courtesy of the artist and Sarah Scout Presents, Melbourne, Australia; Eugene von Guerard, born Austria 1811, arrived in Australia 1852, died 1901. Ferntree Gully in the Dandenong Ranges, 1857 oil on canvas 92.0 × 138.0 cm; gift of Dr Joseph Brown, 1975, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra, Australia

Figure A.27: Spiros Panigirakis, *Wallpaper: a proposition for bespoke wallpaper*, 2010, design available by the metre and roll.

Appendix 2.1: Outside the Front

Spiros Panigirakis, *Outside the Front*, 2007, Platform Artist Spaces, Flinders Street Station, Melbourne, in group exhibition *Shrine On*, curated by Olivia Poloni. conceptual diagrams (edition 600) are displayed in a corrugated cardboard unit; these digital drawings are distributed via the display cabinet that is open to the public.

Figure A.28: Spiros Panigirakis, *Outside the Front,* 2007, Platform Artist Spaces, Flinders Street, Melbourne.
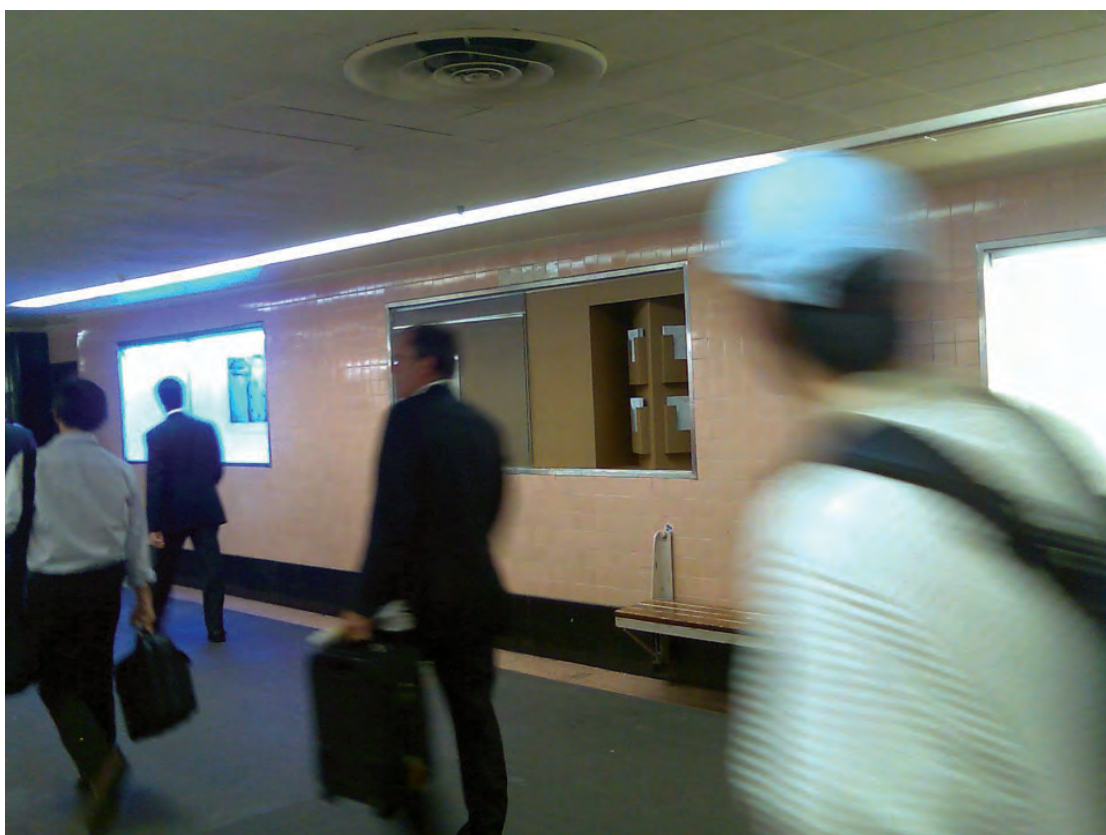

Figure A.29: Spiros Panigirakis, *Outside the Front,* 2007, Platform Artist Spaces, Flinders Street, Melbourne.

Figure A.30: Spiros Panigirakis, *OUTSIDE THE FRONT: conditional arrangements in a lounge room,* 2007, A4 photocopy, edition 600, Platform Artist Spaces, Flinders Street, Melbourne.
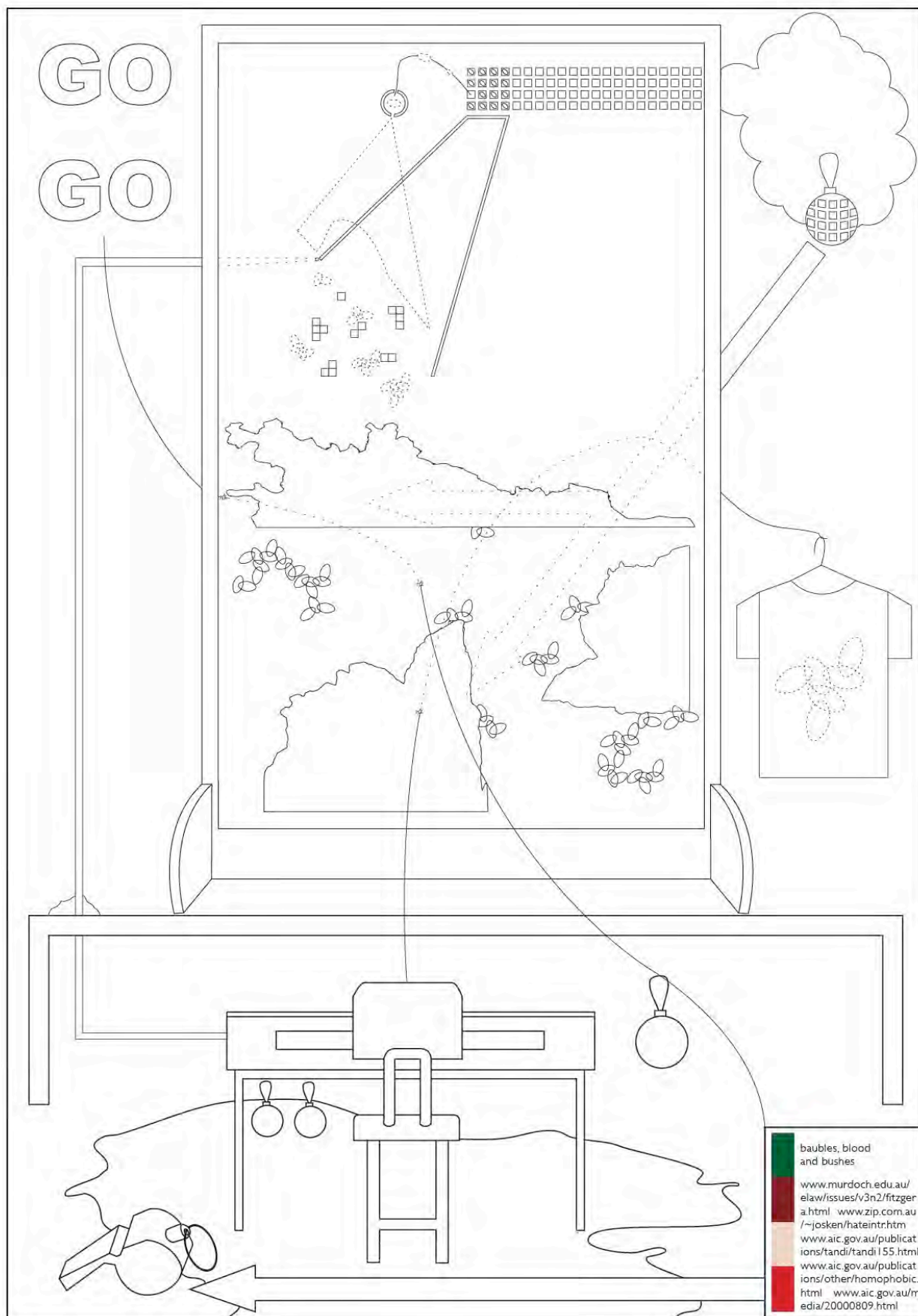
Figure A.31: Spiros Panigirakis, *OUTSIDE THE FRONT: baubles, blood and bushes,* 2007, A4 photocopy, edition 600, Platform Artist Spaces, Flinders Street, Melbourne.
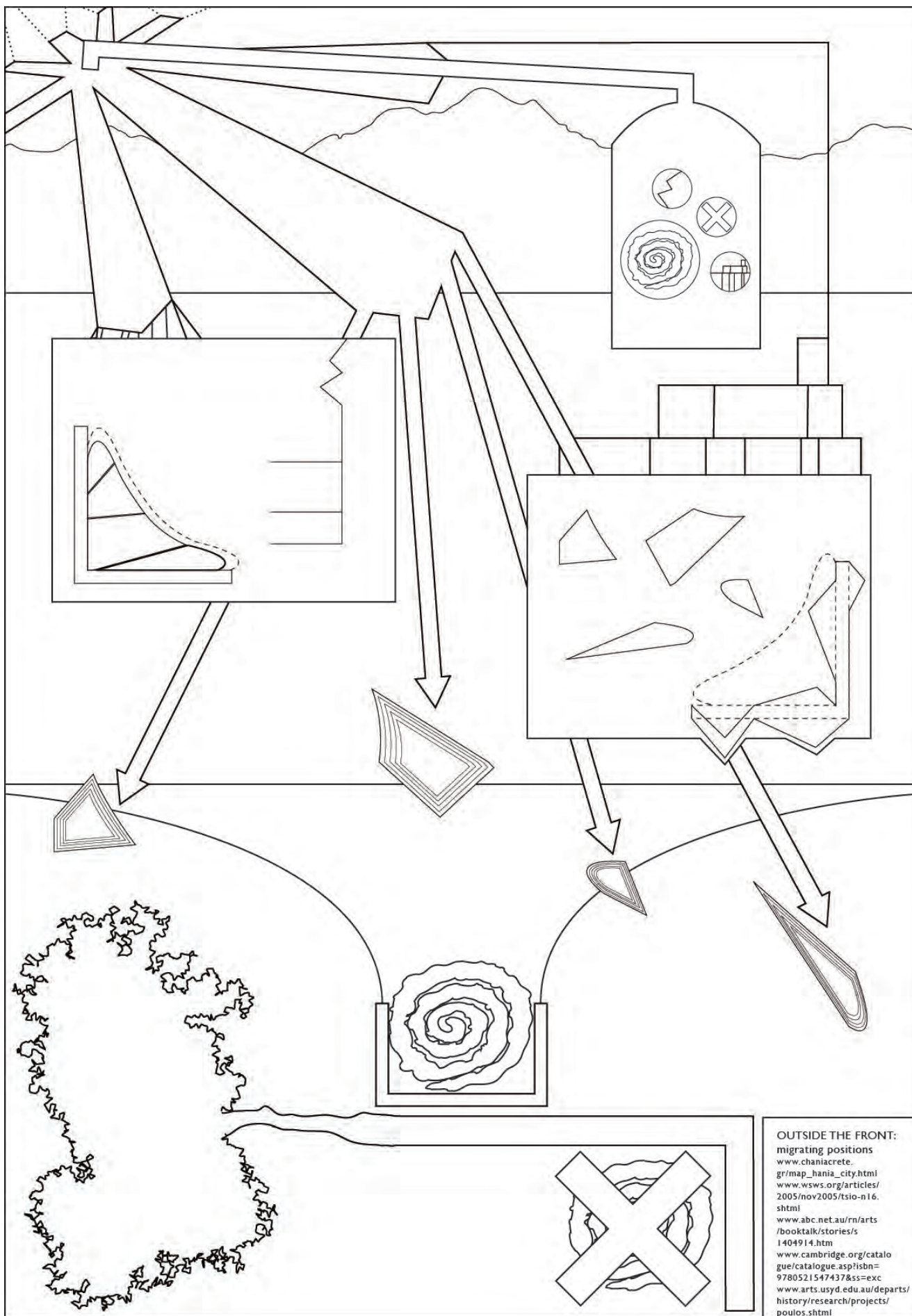
Figure A.32: Spiros Panigirakis, *OUTSIDE THE FRONT: migrating positions,* 2007, A4 photocopy, edition 600, Platform Artist Spaces, Flinders Street, Melbourne.

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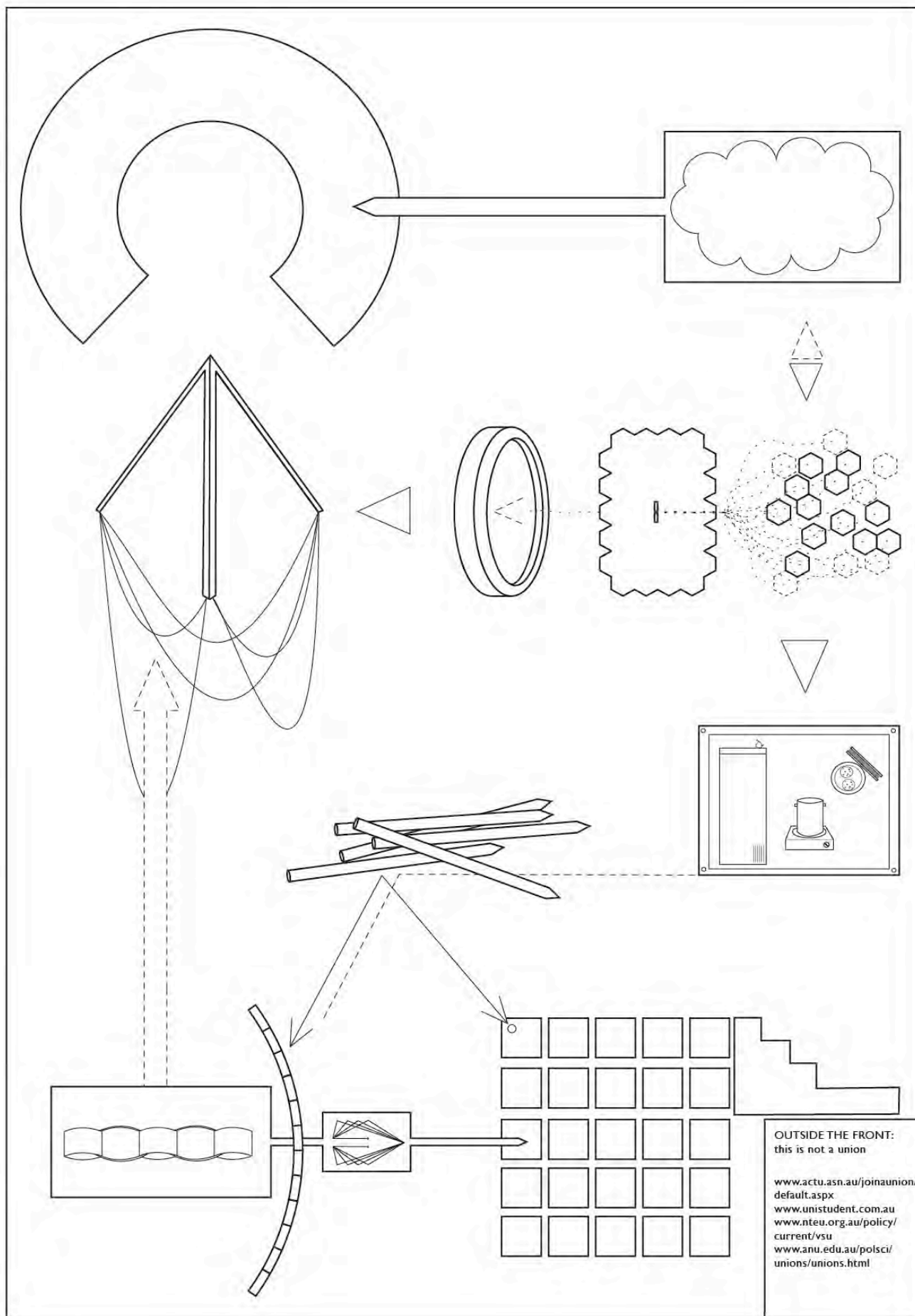Figure A.33: Spiros Panigirakis, *OUTSIDE THE FRONT: this is not a union,* 2007, A4 photocopy, edition 600, Platform Artist Spaces, Flinders Street, Melbourne.

Appendix 2.2: A Tentative Typology of Alternatives

Spiros Panigirakis, "A Tentative Typology of Alternatives," in *Public Good: Itinerant Responses to Collective Space*, eds. Paula Booker and Marnie Slater, Enjoy Public Art Gallery, Wellington, New Zealand, 2008.

A TENTATIVE TYPOLOGY OF ALTERNATIVES

Spiros Panigirakis

Sitting, minding an artist-run space and counting hours between visitors leaves time to reflect on alternative avenues of production, contextualisation and engagement. The received ladder of artistic opportunity, through a hierarchy of artist-run spaces, institutions and galleries offers missing rungs and ego-bruising disappointment to most. Though communities can not be the ideal entities that lie in our collective imaginations, it still makes sense to reflect upon the potential of alternatives modes of making our practices public….
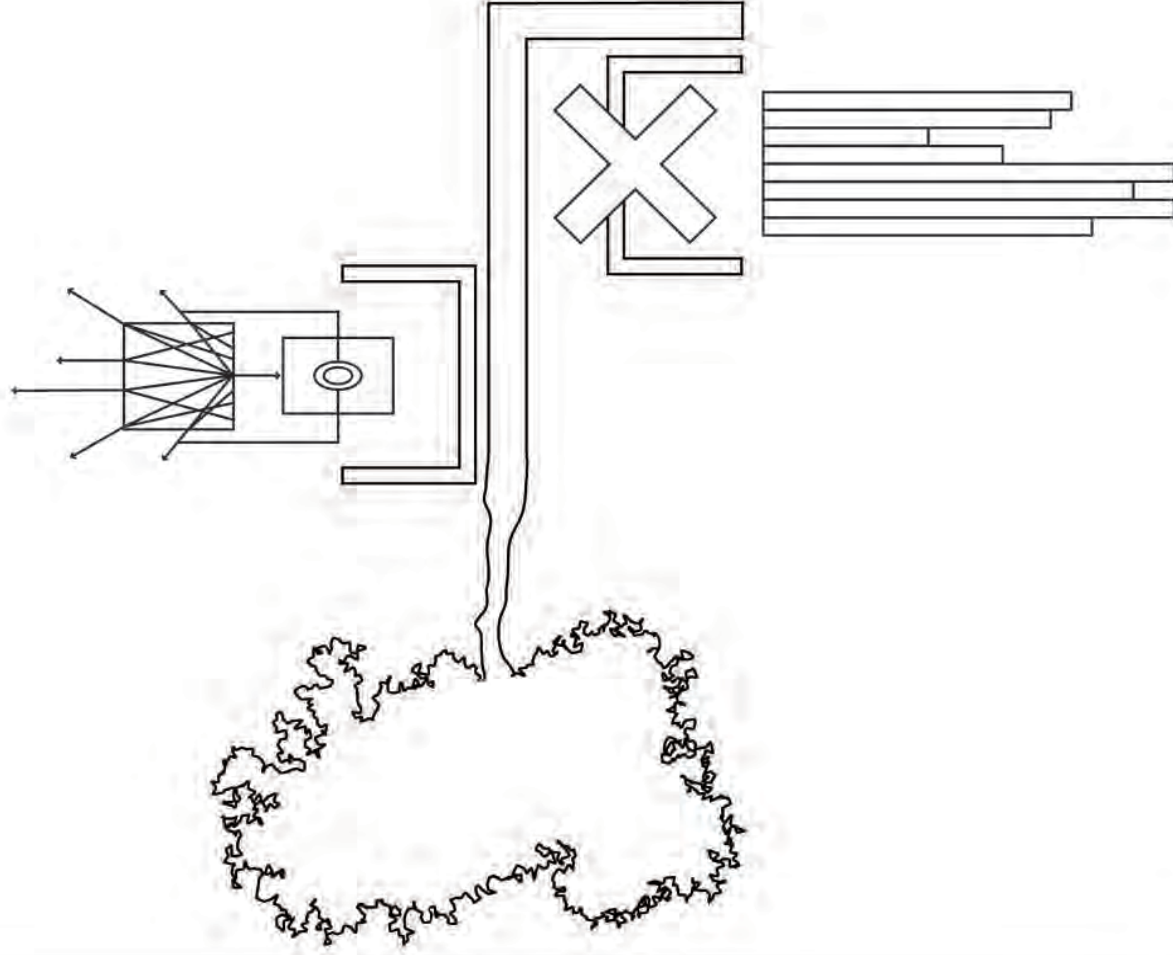
RESEARCH. The university has a stranglehold on the pathway that leads to a professional artistic career. This isn't a new or unpredictable development, as the shift from art being beholden to a market through production of craft, to it being a manifestation of a concept (which eventually proceeds to a market) is old enough to be traditional. It is also no coincidence that the proliferation of MFA programmes occurred in sync with the dematerialisation of the art object and the increase in production of artist writing in the 1960/70s. What is new (at least in this corner of the world) is the increasing academicisation of this training, which has been colonised by the language of the hosting institute – artists now quantify and qualify their experimentation via the notion of academically sanctioned research. It is now possible for a star student to enter art school at eighteen and leave with a PhD at twenty-seven. It could be argued that this prolonged university stint presents the artist with the rigour of conceptually framing their own practise, as well as an additional path to finances and audience creation. Self and peer framing offers the broader art community an alternative to the dominant framing of curatorial, historical or commercial institutional voices. The academy's alternative expertise can offer a counterbalance to the dominant market's fetishisation of cohesive and stable presentation over all other modes of public outcome. These dominant regimes follow conventions that aren't essentially exploitative but do enact an exchange in values, based upon a calculation of commercial imperative, conceptual convenience and public relations. This is not to say that the four years of a PhD art programme doesn't have the potential to be one long insular psychotherapeutic session in the guise of conceptual self-reflexivity. However, it seems as though, progressively over time, some art schools have chosen to borrow from the university's set of tools that privilege individualism, the sometimes arbitrary markers of industry experience/expertise and the pillaging of other faculties' discourses over collaborative research, peer review, and an interdisciplinarity characterised by dialogue rather than representation.
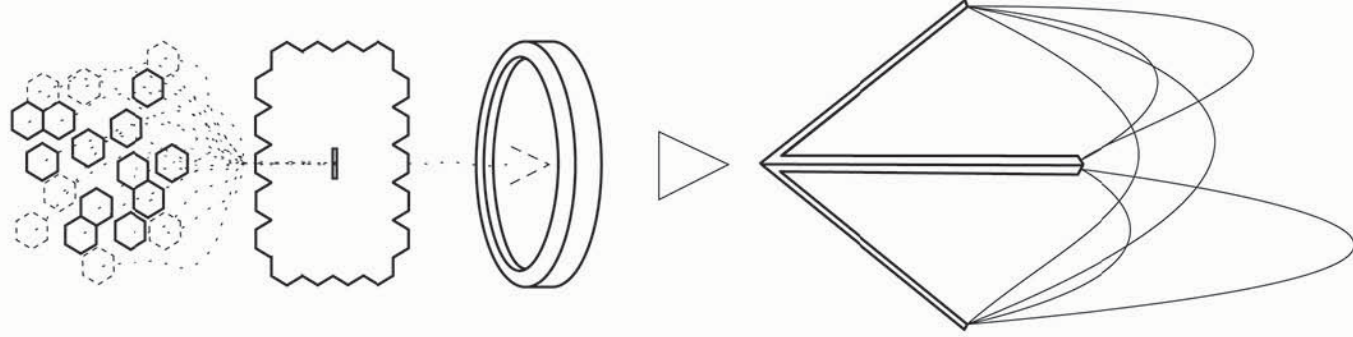
THE TAUGHT. The journalised narrative of Tim Rollins and Kids of Survival's (KOS) practice – where an artistic intervention helping disenfranchised kids rode a critical wave; firstly acquired by Saatchi, then dumped by Saatchi and since persisting as a type of artist in schools measure, disregarded by any arts community – is a testament to the fickle nature of the commercial art market. It also demonstrates how critical networks disengage with pedagogical models of art practice. The obvious exception is the graduate show; a time when notions of pedigree and influence derived from educators acquires a fresh lustre. The ritualistic harvest of fresh talent at graduate shows is the acceptable manifestation of the pedagogical within contemporary art cultures. The debutantes are embraced both for their own precocious promise, and for faithfully reflecting and affirming existing constellations of stars.

Two interesting projects that have been fostered out of a pedagogical art environment have been DAMP (having cut its umbilical chord long ago) and the Pedagogical Vehicle Project both emanating out of Melbourne's Victorian College of the Arts (VCA). This might be like comparing the proverbial chalk with cheese. Rollins's dripping wet paternalistic literacy programme, with over-determined facilitation of young teenagers' collaborative artwork has little in common with the drop in and drop out performative tendencies of the VCA projects led by Geoff Lowe, Callum Morton and Danius Kesminas respectively. What I'm barracking for here is not a particular modality of art teaching, but an open attitude to the proliferation of creative conceptual art education projects that goes beyond the perpetuation of the atelier system. These programmes don't need to be thrown into the fray of gallery presentation, as their worth lies in their educational value to students. Grappling with the power relations that emerge out of teacher-student collaboration, and the sanctimony of the facilitator are issues that should be addressed within the projects. The rhetorical claim that creativity in all fields is equally valuable is not always accepted by the arts community. We can too easily presume that if it is not a wall or trestle table then it's not worth doing.

THE SALON. Over the last few years Melbourne has seen an increase in initiatives that utilise a spare room or some space within a domestic setting for the presentation of an art practice to a 'broader' audience. Dude Space, Apartment and Austral Avenue probably don't have the requisite hospitable conditions that the notion of the salon suggests – although Lyndal Walker's Springthing (2005) at the now defunct Dude Space might be an exception. The convivial social space of the backyard barbeque in Walker's project allowed a dialogical quality to infuse the space's decorative representations of abundance, growth and garlands.

Melbourne's Michael Graf has been consistently showing his refined canvas board projects for well over a decade in lounge rooms on both sides of the Yarra River. Shown during single Saturday afternoons to small audiences, sometimes with cake and tea, his paintings can't be separated from intimate and warm environment they are shown in. Regardless of how esoteric his references are and the clinical and delicate quality of his painted surfaces, Graf's practice is dedicated to the contemplation of a singular moment that shifts imperceptibly across the space of a few panels and in the quiet social space that accompanies it. These spaces replicate the space of the white cube with accompanied conversational launch/opening niceties and make obvious allowances to their domestic infrastructure in presentation.

So while the practical difference between this nouveau salon (with domestic connotations of the private and the exclusive) and the small independently-run space (with its more public profile regardless of the limits of its actual audience size) are minimal, the two models may also be seen as ideologically opposed. The position you adopt will probably reflect where you fall on the fraught question of how accessible you want your art to be. My use of the word "salon" might reflect a dubious romanticisation of the critical dialogue that might have occurred in Gertrude Stein's front room. Not to mention the incongruity between the exclusive class patronage of early twentieth century European cultures and the contemporary Australasian context. If we imagine a domestic space with its implicit associations of nurturing and of the drawn-out supportive feedback session – isn't this the space of the cliché? Or does it offer the rich possibilities a salon might still inhabit?
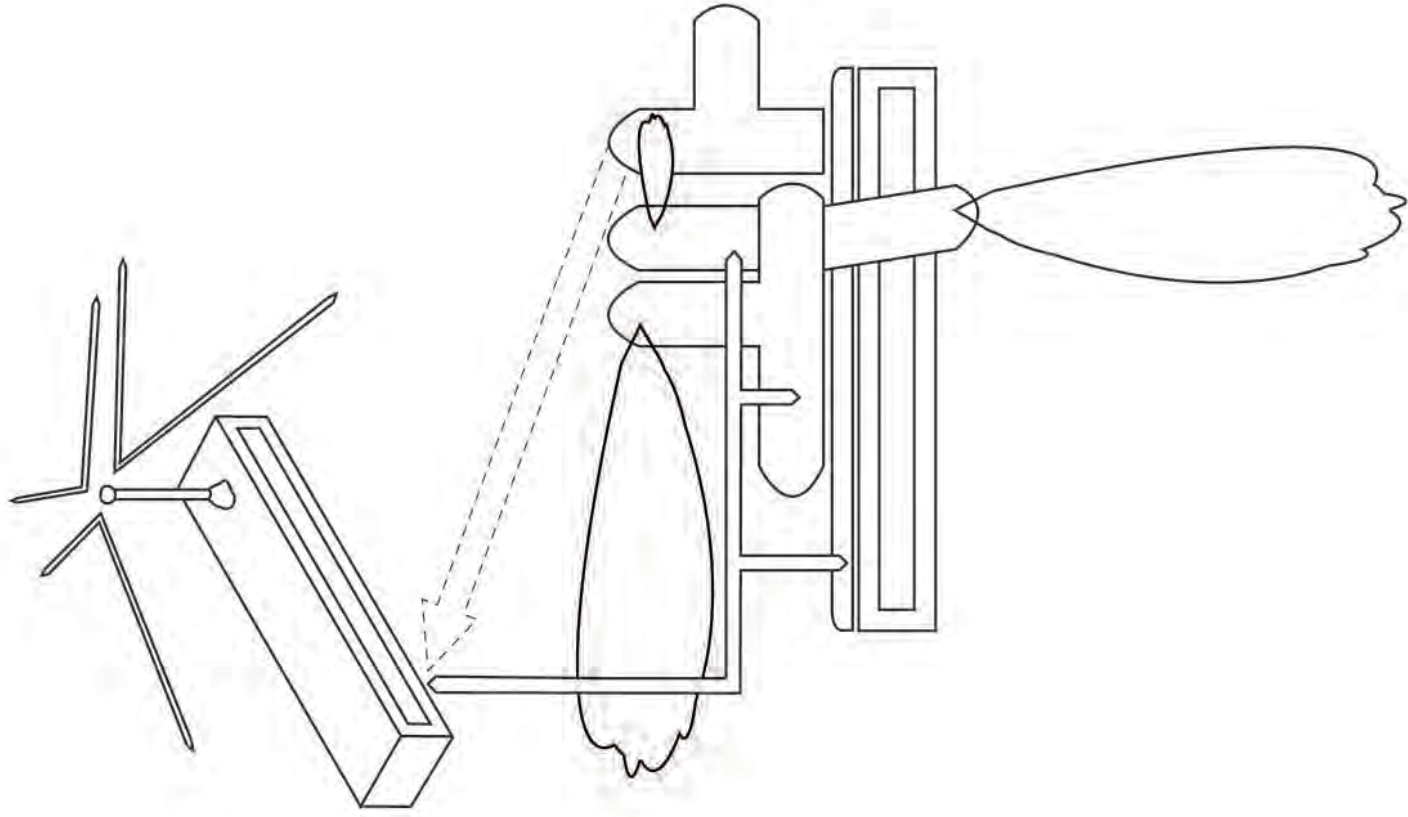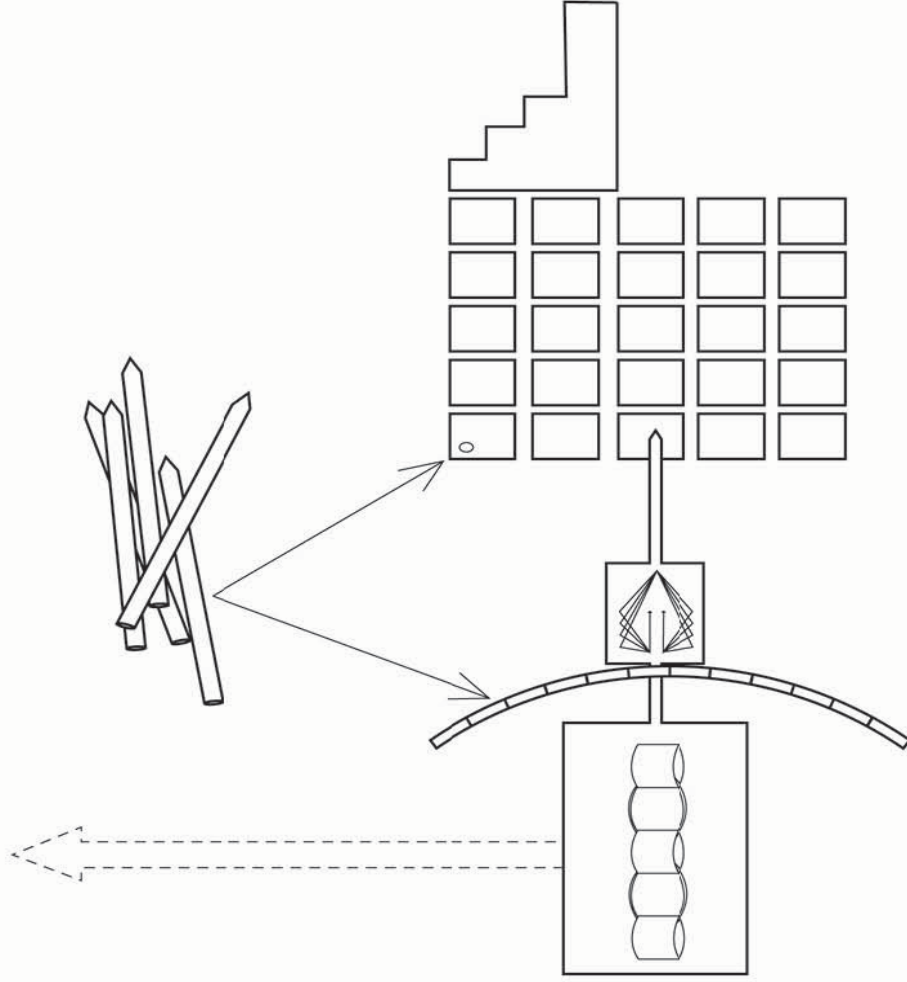
THE COMMUNITY. On the one hand an artist might engage community via the involvement of colleagues, friends and acquaintances and risk smelling of clique/cognoscenti. On the other hand, if we collaborate with a community outside of our own, there's the potential accusation of contributing to what Maria Lindt describes as a form of "social pornography".

Of course debates amongst the likes of Foster, Kester, Bishop and Lindt matter very little for practitioners that purposefully inhabit a zone between art and the social ameliorative. Scott Mitchell's iPod Social Outreach Project engages this critical zone. His practice works across communities involved with the arts, online modding and a broader public responding to ads in local papers. As a researcher in the field of industrial design, his project sought to work against and around the iPod's integrated obsolescence by "assisting" a public with their iPod woes. Mitchell performed a range of services that included modifying the iPod's use, booting alternative operating systems and incorporating small solar panels into the iPod as a power source. Mitchell used the Internet to keep his clients in touch with his service's progress but this communication also established an archive for anyone with net access. It created a point of engagement for anyone brave enough to face the circuitry, and invited the audience to get in touch with existing online communities that Mitchell frequently quoted and linked to.

The questions of what art is, and what it isn't, of whether framing the social within an art context engages in the reification of the art object, seem somewhat irrelevant to Mitchell's practice. For practitioners the issues of artistic significance and the ethical dimensions of cultural capital often aren't such a burden. After all, a community mural painter, arts therapist, social outreach worker, youth counsellor or educator is unlikely to be concerned about the public's perception of assistance given to a disenfranchised group, regardless of how conceptually aware as they might be. This dimension – along with balancing the nuanced power relations between participants – is part of these professions' core values.

THE COMMISSION

If there is a place where the commission has an unproblematic position it is in the world of applied design. In this field, the aspect of commercial exchange that is implicit in a commission is considered a publishing path full of potential. The brief, a document that sits between the patron/client and the designer, plays an integral part in the physical manifestation of design practice. It is what Brian Massumi would call an "enabling constraint".

By contrast, artists commonly regard contractual relationships as a hindrance and source of compromise. Commercial representation, on the other hand, is seen as the manifestation of an artist's practice in a different white cube. Emily Floyd's shows at Anna Schwartz Gallery adeptly circumvent these limitations, as her work self-referentially proclaims its status as décor, sold to a middle class that doesn't mind a joke at its own expense as long as it confers cultural capital. The hidden contract between dealer and artist is different from springboard of the brief. For most designers, the brief is a consultative and shifting contract, requiring dialogue. Artists might benefit from adopting this approach. Instead of viewing the brief as a restrictive boundary, we could utilise as a chance to pursue unforseen directions and development of our practice by engaging in a dialogue with other voices. Since the art world has fetishised the singular artist's intention as the fundamental interpretive and production tool, any interference with this sacrosanct convention is regarded as a compromise.

As artists, we are complicit in the conceit that generates the myopic relationship connecting the studio bubble to the gallery and back again. Would the trip to a patron, who actually wants a slice of the artist's practice, be such a compromise? The negative flipside of this – if the commission was the only publishing tool for the artist – might see creativity become hostage to the commercial imperative of user/audience pays. It is from these conditions that the compromise of the commission has been considered a negative condition for the process of art.

The very notion of compromise contradicts many of the deep values of the art world. For example, it opposes the 'my-way-or-the-highway' macho violence of some traditional site specific practices – Richard Serra, Walter de Maria and others – and counters Clare Bishop's call to representational antagonism as a more faithful and critical form of social representation. Alternatively, the compromise of a commission could be seen as a space to start a conversation with someone about the role and material presence of our practices. We should not allow the cliché of the commission – as the replication of the likeness of a patron in oil on canvas – to limit our thinking.
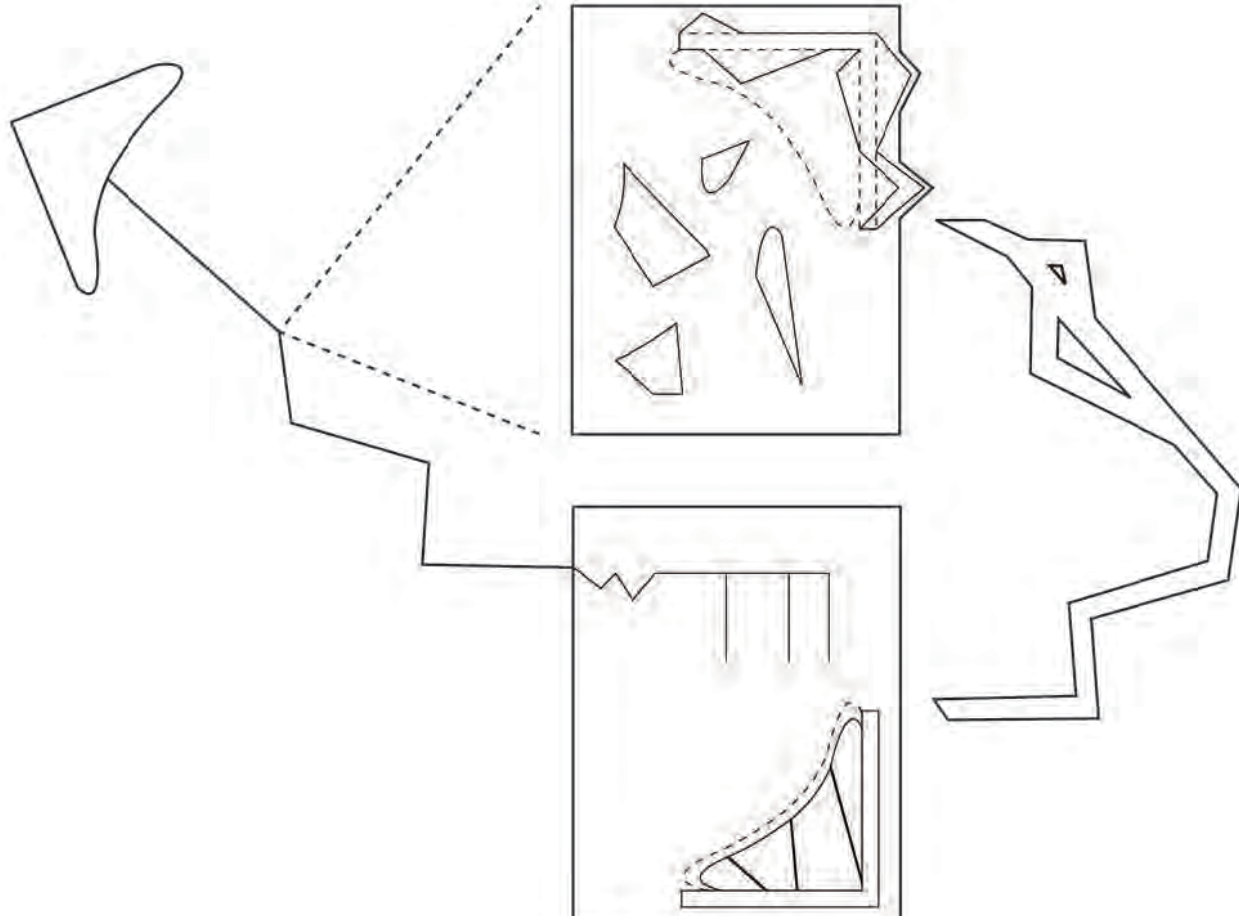
Appendix 3: IT AND THEN SOME

Spiros Panigirakis, "IT AND THEN SOME: in bits and pieces; some meandering commentary, allegorical musings and distractions on and around Fiona Macdonald's work in Melbourne's artist-run initiatives," in *Gratuitous Intent*, ed., Fiona Macdonald, CLUBSprojct Inc., Melbourne, 2009.

IT AND THEN SOME

In bits and pieces: Some meandering commentary, allegorical musing and distractions on and around Fiona Macdonald's work in Melbourne's artist-run initiatives

1. It's not my intention to rearticulate Andrea Fraser's position in From the Critique of Institutions to an Institution of Critique but re-reading this text before bed recently gave me a minor 'aha' moment. It resonated with my reading of Fiona Macdonald's practice and in particular those projects that have been hosted by artist-run initiatives (ARI) over the last 18 years. So, the aha moment: as long as I can remember my parents have had a friend (theia Pitsa) who enjoys a good argument to such a degree I'm beginning to think disputation is the condition of their friendship. This redoubtable woman has been visiting may parents all my life – 30 years – and in that time there has been hardly a polite chat or moment of diplomatic commentary. However, their fighting isn't about aggression but about creating psychological space for the development of astute ideological positions that must sit against or slightly askew from one another. It's not obstinance so much as a forceful play. Like the institution of the 'loyal opposition' that incorporates dissent into the constitution of parliamentary government, theia Pitsa plays the part of the invited provocateur. I was thinking also how the redrawing of artistic tropes could itself be an act of light critique. By now it's cuddle time and I'm sharing these thoughts with my partner who out-earnests me with the observation that art institutions' ultimate incorporation and nurturing of art-that-critiques-art-institutions is an almost farcical illustration of what Anthony Giddens termed the 'recursive character' of social life. It illustrates the inevitability that dissent can't break from structural features, but can only hope to tweak the social conditions of its creation even as it reproduces them. At this point I suggested to Jon (the partner) that from now on Giddens-like carbohydrates would be banned after 8pm. In the moments before lights-out I wanted space to familiarise myself with the evocative material fictions that Macdonald explored in ARIs - Store 5, Penthouse and Pavement and CLUBSproject. These have as much to do with how banality turns into humour, visceral body relations and seductive spatial arrangements, as they do with critique and its ramifications.

Store 5. It has ambition beyond it surface area. There is a triangle. A triangle that has narrative imbedded within it - it's as clear as day but oblique as its angularity that it predictably performs in three goes. And like anything embedded this narrative is compromised and open to exploitation. Being stuck on a page that it mostly takes for granted is part hierarchical dimension of the situation – materially and compositionally. So comfortable and self-assured is the triangle of its place in the world that its presentational context doesn't warrant a mention in this so-called hierarchy. Its surface smugness has its back to the wall – it can't even imagine what might be happening behind the plasterboard that it is pinned to. To be fair this triangle on paper is rehearsed as a propositional space that can't be realised. It acknowledges this condition not as a failure but as a part of an ongoing theoretical enquiry about the state of the world beyond the plasterboard and into the potential affect it might have on all surfaces.

2. In Melbourne in 2008, there's ample material that explores the formation, organisation and ethos of artist-run initiatives but little artistic practice or commentary that allows space for critical reflexivity. This is not to say that there aren't budding organisations ready to represent divergent perspectives; festivals highlighting their contribution to the creative (and not so creative) economies of the city, essays that explore historical lineages, lifestyles, real estate gentrifications and stories of independence as seen from a 'grass roots' arts organisation. Some would argue that site specificity embeds critical reflexivity into the form of a work. But often the rhetoric of site-specificity amounts to little more than a response to a window, the dominant floor patterning or the height of a wall – interesting sometimes, but moves that don't exactly expose the ideological foundations or socio-political contexts that are equal parts of any ARI's make-up. There are of course notable exceptions including: Lisa Kelly's Servile Youth, a contribution to Sydney based Elastic publication that explored ARIs in relation to art writing, careerism and commercial enterprise; Keith Wong's forensic accounting at Trocadero; and Anthony Gardener's somewhat psycho-analytic and regrettable account (in the mode of a tabloid) produced for Un magazine, of Mike Canole's work at CLUBSproject . These exercises variously interrogate the institution of the ARI and canvas broader social and economic interests via engagement with artists' place in a public domain. Fiona Macdonald's projects sit among, and standout from, the prevailing published accounts detailing the ethic of independent production; the rejection of the paradigm in which ARIs are viewed as rungs in the art world ladder of opportunity; the grouping of stylistic modalities that are reminiscent of the cool posturing of a reputable fashion magazines; and overviews of rent and real estate that sit somewhere between small business enterprise newsletter and a boutique's public relations. There's no questioning the sincerity of these texts, and the rich history of ARIs embracing practices that refer (aspirationally) to the avant-garde tendencies that are the core business of those other better funded institutions (think Russian Constructivism, Minimalism and Fluxus). However, in these particular projects Macdonald chooses to use the languages available to her in the sites in which she works.

3. Hidden/Modern, Gratuitous and Bone are three different projects that occupy three distinct architectural configurations. And while I'm at pains to differentiate between the three projects under discussion and their respective ARI hosting architecture – it's interesting to note that they had (and have) a similar position on open-call proposals: i.e. they don't have them. Instead they chose alternative modes of procuring projects. Not wanting to risk this textual response to the pile of ARI administrative navel-gazing, it might be worthwhile pinpointing how Fiona Macdonald reprograms the audience's experiential engagement of these spaces. Conversant with the conventions of how the respective ARI's architecture host art practices, Macdonald places obstacles that interrupt any sense that this is business as usual. Hidden/Modern signposted (with a wall panel) the existence of a probable painting in Store 5 but this feature was in fact missing – the work revealed not a physical object but an allusion to the practices Store 5's architecture supported and the historical avant-gardes that were their footnotes.

CLUBSproject. It once sat on a trestle table at a fete. There's a degree of control that is inevitable when you grow a shrub in a medium sized pot. While quite capable of living within the confines you have chosen for it – the restrictions imposed on its root system will need to be addressed at some stage. You either need to repot or risk the dull and straggly growth to the compost. Nevertheless a planter box is built for a plant that would otherwise thrive in the ground – thrive in a noxious (promiscuous) weed sense of the word. It's for this reason and its associations with institutional cyclone fencing that make this shrub an unconventional choice for a pot plant. The planter box made from treated timber hides the generic black plastic pot and is a marker of order in anybody's yard. The box is modestly constructed and is only slightly elevated from the ground. It sits in view of the home's entrance but just out of reach for it to be part of a daily habit of care. This and its grow-anywhere reputation resulted in the plant not being watered regularly. Then not at all. The potential to survive the hardiest conditions had only resulted in a forlorn grey brown death with only the most occasional budding that would be ignored while some house-guest butted out another cigarette at its base.

In Gratuitous Macdonald placed a somewhat abstract painting that related frontally to the shop window and the pavement. Reflecting the mid-90s gallery practice of mimicking a corporate foyer, this single painting was accessorised with a pot plant and a brochure dispenser. Only the plant was awkwardly placed and not situated politely in the margins of the space and the painting wasn't coolly hard edged and painted in gouache but showed signs of process that were tentative and slight. With the motto that 'you can never over-accessorise,' Macdonald accompanies the painting with lifestyle/fashion prints of the local 'scene' only to splodge them with artful and expressive gestures. What predictably would be a representation of critical conceptualism via the age-old artist's guise of disingenuity was turned into something else – something more complicated than straight critique. At CLUBS provisional objects placements and relations abounded, but these relations were faint representational echoes of hyped-up sexuality, not the (righteous, sanctimonious or pedagogical) collaborative promiscuity that Bourriaud, Obrist and co. rally behind.

Store 5, Penthouse and Pavement and CLUBSproject don't occupy the architectural spaces that Macdonald's aforementioned projects took place in. In fact Store 5 and Penthouse and Pavement don't function and CLUBS (at the time of writing) is in the process of a slow, managed dissolution. Store 5 was placed in a cryogenic chamber in 1993, and thawed recently into a series of commercial and museological exhibitions that established its historical influence and authority on Melbourne's art community. Penthouse and Pavement has been just pavement with a shop window since 2003. The window, although mostly frosted, reveals a band of domesticity that is reminiscent of Dutch residential living. CLUBSproject along with the other seven galleries on Gertrude Street contributed to the gentrification of the area. While we loved the good coffee and the designer pizza, it created a neighbourhood that could no longer sustain non-commercial activity that wasn't going to bring home the proverbial bacon for our landlords. I'm wondering whether the defunct status of all three ARIs somehow moves these buildings to some kind of 'outside.' Has letting go of the artistic burden for self-reflexivity allowed these spaces to meld back into the non-descript pockets of their localised landscapes? Would it be interesting to look at these pieces of architecture outside of their historical function as an ARI? Or not? Much has been said of the erasure of institutions' inside/outside dichotomy and the instituting of art within the very critical frameworks that Macdonald works in - the "there's no outside" talk. Macdonald, like Andrea Fraser, Tom Burr and Renee Green, continually investigates the evolving modes of 'institutional critique' outside of the historically specific period that this label connotes. Yet, I would say that it's limiting to use Institutional Critique as the dominant Art Historical discursive lens through which to view these practices. It burdens them with expectations and obscures idiosyncrasies. While ARIs, the ex-ARI-buildings, Art History and for that matter this text are well and truly stuck inside the institution – these artists' practices are functioning outside the parameters of Institutional Critique. Some would call this quality jouissance but fancy French words

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Penthouse & Pavement. It has too many choices They say it's a niche for the public but as we all know quantitative scope is not what any niche has going for it. So this notion of a niche for all is a public relations fallacy that makes its barriers invisible or at least innocuous to passers-by who have no interest in entering. There are a few of those. The others are caught by a loop of interrupted desire that makes it hard to turn around and keep walking. This space is about a continual movement and gratuitous display. The shiny seductive surface that lines the niche is only there to be recaptured onto another surface. This commemorative documentation is soon scrapped as the surface of the niche is continually revaluated. The reviews are not kind. But that's ok as the paper they're printed on is used as the basis of the next surface. The text soon becomes illegible – it's now a pattern. The reviews are not kind and so forth. So nothing is quite fulfilled, which is different from it being finished. This space is set up for the aspirations of the apsirational. As you could imagine it's pretty crammed in there with all that jostling and reproductive technology. I think I could get very thirsty.

when commenting on Macdonald's movement away from what Fraser would frame as the melancholia inherent in Institutional Critique. This melancholia resides when we realise that "we are the institutions of art: the object of our critiques, our attacks, is always also inside ourselves." But I would say that Macdonald and co. (and that includes Fraser whom I am quoting) are not "blind…to the tragedy of (their) artistic present" but are making narratives through the production of new spaces out of old. They have treated the aforementioned diagnosed depression and have got on with the job. They have created narratives that are experienced through the humour of the prank, the scowl of the piss-take and the salacious transcription of, say, amateur porn. If this type of practice is, as Fraser claims, melancholic then I would like to complicate things further by stating that these practices have had enough therapy to know that self-deprecation is a perfectly effective strategy for making new narratives. For all my cynical posturing regarding the positions of the ARI, it is Store 5, Penthouse and Pavement and CLUBSproject that have invited Fiona Macdonald to perform a stocktake on their modes of practice and present something that lifts us through that so-called "tragedy of the our artistic present." And while the ARIs get some kudos along the way, Fiona Macdonald signs no waiver.

Appendix 4: A Lecture for Another Institution

Spiros Panigirakis, *A Lecture for Another Institution,* 2010, RMIT Project Space, Melbourne, in group exhibition *Secret Files from a Working Men's College*, curated by Stephen Gallagher, performance of the lecture can be accessed via: http://schoolofartgalleries.dsc.rmit.edu.au/PSSR/exhibitions/2010/secret_files.html

LECTURE FOR ANOTHER INSTITUTION

Spiros Panigirakis

Tuesday 9th February 2010
9:30 am

The recording of this lecture can be accessed after it has been performed on
http://schoolofartgalleries.dsc.rmit.edu.au/PSSR/

Special thanks to Stephen Gallagher, Ardi Gunawan, Scott Mitchell, Dimitra Panigirakis, Tony Panigirakis, Lara Stanovic and Jonathan Symons.

We are here at Project Space which is part of the RMIT university city campus. Since site specificity, like a fluoro scrunchy, is forever fresh and practical, I thought I'd make a lectern and deliver a lecture. And while I will discuss the form of this artwork – using the parameters of site, context specificity and curatorial premise to position what I hope will be a critical narrative, my thoughts will also drift to my parents. For me, thinking about my parents is not unusual when making a piece of art, as the site of production for my woodwork is often my parent's carport in Moorabbin. I was thinking about my mother's incessant need for social appropriateness: Dimitra goes to any length to fit into the broader social milieu in which she finds herself. In some ways Dimitra, and the Adamakis clan she belongs to, had site specificity down pat long before art discourse adopted the term. The difference being that my mother's chameleon personality remains unfailingly polite – she lacks the 'my way or the highway' machismo of Richard Serra, Walter De Maria and their ilk. On the other hand – my father (Tony) burns social bridges as fast as my mother builds them. His is a type of hyper criticality that repels friendship but which on some levels I find admirable and have, inevitably, internalised. So for all the performed academic posturing that this lecture aspires to – between site discourse and institutional critique - this text has my parents written all over it…

I want this lecture to be explicit. I want the content to explicitly explore the representation of self within a broader sense of the social. The position I develop might at first seem to have a contrarian relationship to the curatorial premise alluded to in the exhibition title - *Secret Files from the Working Men's College.* Lectures are not exactly secretive. But this would be to interpret the work as a reactive gesture – a work that relies on external forces for its framing.

And while curatorial context imposes some boundaries on any work – it's not the total picture. The curatorial premise is only one frame of many. A work is framed first by its immediate structure – like the frame that hangs on a wall – that wall belongs to a building – which is geographically sited – and sits within a social world.

If I were to try to summarise my concerns for this piece, it would be to highlight the importance of frames, boxes, structures, boundaries and so on. These social mechanisms (that at this point are only vague metaphors) are not intrinsically oppressive or stifling - they could just as easily be considered enabling. And if I were to think that my practice was in some way free of a pre-existing ideology – I'd only be fooling myself. The box is there, it's just not being acknowledged. By failing to acknowledge the box we allow its insidious potential to emerge.

So much for being explicit – lets try that again. This exhibition brings together artists who once studied at RMIT and who identify as gay, or at least not exclusively heterosexual – some might call this queer. Queer is a dated term that was invented to refer to a whole bag of transgressive social practices that don't conform to heterosexual norms. The term 'queer' had the life of many discourses that are initiated by university theorists – it was short lived. The word is now most commonly used as a short-hand term to group (and homogenise) gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex groups. It's a term most commonly used by those now aging X-geners (like myself) who listened to Pansy Division, loved Greg Araki's early films and might have had a purple fringe in 1994. For the record I never listened to Pansy Division – I just was trying to make my teens and early 20s sound cooler than they actually were. So these initial prerequisites (and there are more) for inclusion in this exhibition might be seen as a set of social limitations that reduce meaning for the respective projects that are grouped together. My point amongst the many digressions that I will make during this lecture is that these boundaries are clear and enable freedom as much as they hinder. And when the social boundaries aren't transparent – a stupid type of autonomy emerges. It's like being in denial about the four walls that surround you – barely touching the sides of your formal insularity – but also having no critical effect on the world that built the structure that holds you up and that you ignore. The term four walled structure might be a misnomer as this structure has flex and is inherently complicated. I know, I know some artists might not feel they're bound by any structure – they're free, they're free, they're free…

Of course Stephen Gallagher as the curator of this exhibition is an autonomous agent. He has made choices based on a whole other set of criteria that at this stage I'm not privy to and so I can't comment on. I can only make comment on the consequences of some these choices. He

has chosen nine artists to be part of this exhibition; seven of those are male; the majority are over thirty years old; and there are of course a number of 'so called queer' artists who studied at RMIT that aren't included; including some who refuse to be named – like the anonymous artist who may or may not come to the opening; and those artists who never want to be associated with a Midsumma exhibition because of their ties to a sub-cultural art field that finds any community involvement to be at odds with their own very singular self-identification. I could also use Gallagher's curatorial premise as a lens through which to view my own work or even as a brief to work towards. Quoting from the catalogue: how "does queerism manifest" in my artistic practice? And, how does my project use "the subtle inclusion of queer content?" I cant say to what degree the aforementioned statements have influenced my project in this exhibition. Is this how I would (dare I say) 'normally' respond to a curatorial premise? The lectern can certainly be interpreted as phallic; I was going to colour-match the blue of the lectern with a decorative interior planter box; I may or may not shake a handmade snowdome that encases a buccaneering pirate; this action does seem a little masturbatory; which is a troublingly exploitative use of a snowdome that was made by an eight-year old boy. So these factors can definitely be read against Gallagher's assertions regarding my subtle queer practice. But this linking of artistic strategies with an essential sense of identity – in this case a queer identity – would be to fall into an essentialist trap. While I want to assert the structures that facilitate sociability, it does not mean that I want to reduce it to a set of characteristics that simplify meaning. I want to encourage an exploration of how the structure can be complicated and to revel in this complication.

I could articulate the production of this lectern as a masculinised assertion. This might be a masculinity typified by anything from a violence that excludes those with less social capital to a masculinity that looks towards the homoerotic. This masculinised performativity could also be regarded as 'straight acting' which for me is a characterisation that sits somewhere between the closet and internalised homophobia. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick described 'closetedness as a speech act of silence.' Could the straight-acting then be considered a form of passive aggression? On the other hand the lectern could also be an assertion that art has a use besides exploring its own form. The use would aspire to the same value as is held by furniture. There is something very satisfying with telling your Greek working-class parents that you are making a piece of furniture. This act is mutually understood. It's also satisfying to go to the hardware store seeking advice from the timber yard about your seat, table, planter box or lectern thing that you're constructing out the back. But this again is another ruse. Once this lectern is placed within this gallery context – the lectern is somewhat deadened by the abstracting process of art's presentation. The lectern becomes something between a piece of furniture, whose utility is denied by the social conventions of the gallery, and an artefact. It is a piece of sculpture performing the 'lectern' - some might call this a model – some might

call this a type of drag. But not all lecterns are the same. There are vast differences between the material, stylistic and structural variations found in lectern lexicon.

And here I turn to Susan Sontag via George Baker and their respective discussions concerning camp. Now there's a difference between notions of camp and drag. So don't go conflating the two. Although as we know – the pedestrian idea of drag can of course sometimes be camp. But lets not get entangled in Miss Candee's knickers over this. I mention camp because Nikos Pantazopoulos made a passing comment regarding the camp value of my lectern. This observation was welcome and invites further interrogation. So I thought why not do that right now since his work is directly facing my own. Sontag noted (in her *Notes on Camp* in Against Interpretation: and other essays, Octagon books, New York, 1966) that the 'essence of camp is its love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration.' It is she continues 'one way of seeing the world as an aesthetic phenomenon' – an 'emphasising [of] texture, sensuous surface and style at the expense of content.' Nikos was observing the finish and the design sensibility of the lectern. While the lectern is made in a manner that is basic and clear it also goes to some length in highlighting (some might say tizzy-ing) this clear and basic construction-turned aesthetic. Chipboard and glue/screw construction methods are usually associated with ad-hoc or temporary built form. But the varnishing, edging, highlighted screws, two-tone chipboard and the super flat matching of another university's pantone scheme (Monash's PMS 2495 to be exact) is in some ways superfluous to the content/function of the lectern. But can the campness of a work be its content, I wonder?

This camp quality only talks of the way something looks. What is interesting about Baker and Sontag's use of camp is how it becomes a strategy for critical intervention and a lens to view the world with. Sontag notes that camp involves 'extraordinary ambition and the tragic failure of such ambition; Camp thrives on transforming such losses into victories, but of a frivolous or enjoyable sort.' It is at this point that I refer back to the Pantazopoulos' work in this exhibition. The long titled work, *A material and political investigation part II – a post political event: a plywood wall and a list of objects gleaned whilst looking for other activities at Gilpin & Clifton Reserve Albert Street Bunswick to be redistributed out of the gallery space over the duration of the exhibition.* It is a shifting work that ambitiously attempts to resist subjective framing but fails only because it itself points to this incapacity. Its Rauchenberg-like collection of everyday detritus that comes and goes – a post-minimal and process-driven work in everything but its historical framework. The objects accepted and then rejected within a set of criteria that is unbeknown to an audience except that it might be post-political as is noted in the title of the work. It incorporates two sheets of dark plywood screw-mounted onto timber support. This leans against the black back wall of the gallery, activating a

considerable visual space of the gallery even though it only takes up a very shallow space of the floor. Accompanying the sheet is a collection of found objects: a cheap mass-produced plastic chair; a log; a truck tyre; pieces of melamine; a chain; and other such things that are presented in a backs-to-the-walls kind of way. They come and go.

Chantal Mouffe regards the political as an 'ever-present possibility.' The political is regarded by Mouffe as any type of relation that inherently has an antagonistic quality – what she call a friend/enemy distinction. She notes:

> 'Politics is always about the establishment, the reproduction, or the deconstruction of a hegemony, one that is always in relation to a potentially counter-hegemonic order. Since the dimension of the political is always present, you can never have a complete, absolute inclusive hegemony. In that context artistic and cultural practices are absolutely central as one of the levels where identifications and forms of identity are constituted. One cannot make a distinction between political art and non-political art, because every form of artistic practice either contributes the reproduction of the political.'

> From Chantal Mouffe *Every Form of Art has a Political Dimension*, Grey Room 02, Winter 2001, MIT press, pp. 99.

While borrowing quite clearly from a Minimalist and process-driven vocabulary, Pantazopoulos' work is doing something else. It is camping these strategies up. Pantazopoulos' almost brutal piece like my lecture/lectern – aspires, but then fails. This failure isn't about an unsuccessful piece (at least in Pantazopoulos' case) – to the contrary it is about a type of earnest absurdity that this work – like my own – flirts with… I.e. It's political, it's post-political, it's political, it's post-political, its political, its post-political - I give up – lets get the hell out of here and have some fun down at the reserve – the Gilpin & Clifton Reserve, Brunswick. And so the objects leave the RMIT Project Space. A space consumed by identity – therefore politics.

Minimalist space was much simpler. It didn't really differentiate space as a social and political construction. It was just space – *man*. Baker uses camp to eloquently explore the practice of Minimalism, in doing so he sets up a strategy for how post-minimalist practices activate space around an object. This rings true for Pantazopoulos and my own work.

'Camp might then value Minimalist surfaces as "superficial," but it also invests these surfaces in depth: Camp likes Minimalism's fakeness, revels in its extreme challenge to nature. Camp turns Minimalism into theater. Camp makes Minimalism festive. Camp turns Minimalism into objects of decor, into furniture or things to be used. And, above all else, Camp simply *adores* the fact that Minimalism, in perhaps one of its greatest failures, thought it could escape the condition of subjectivity altogether— Camp really thinks this is so *cute* (and so *sad*)—for Camp is nothing if not an extreme exacerbation of subjectivity, sensibility, taste.'

From George Baker, *The Other Side of the Wall*, OCTOBER 120, Spring 2007, pp. 106–137.

These readings of the lectern and of Pantazopoulos' intervention are of course different variations of reductions based on subjective concerns. These subjectivities are only part of a network of things. Bruno Latour defines a thing via its etymological root to mean anything from 'an assembly of matter, a concern or an inanimate object.' Therefore a context isn't made up one thing but of many things interrelating with one another. What happens when you throw into this interpretative pool: the university that underpins the existence of this gallery; the notion of student alumni; and intersecting paths and experiences of artist, site, audience and the other art that surround the lectern in this group exhibition. Well, it kinda gets too much. While I'm all for complication. I sometimes need a break from the noise….

CUE - THE HANDLING OF SNOWDOME PROP: I would like to make a work about the pirate encased in this DIY snowdome that sits on my mantelpiece. It was made by Linus – an eight year old boy in my family. The snowdome is actually a jar. This jar might have had jam or some other condiment in it. Fixed to the bottom of the jar is a plastic figurine of a pirate. One arm flexed in a fist, the other wielding a sword. He wears a red bandana and all the other costume trappings you would expect. Surrounding the base of the pirate is not glitter but big chunks of colourful plastic coated foil. What is great about these chunks is their very irregular shape and size. You need to shake the jar quite rigorously to get the chunks up and moving. And when you do they seem to dominate the internal space of the jar which is filled with water that is slowly becoming tinted from the discolouration of the foil. The pirate recedes at times when the angular chunks of foil do a type of graceful dance through the fluid. They eventually sink to base as the vigorous movement of your forearm subsides.

I guess I romanticise the simplicity of this craft practice. That it engages its audience in the explicit and simple manner that I first thought I would be replicating in this work. But that was never going happen. Convolution abounds. I haven't even got to my central premise: GAY - RMIT – ALUMNI – ART - and not necessarily in that order.

<u>ART</u>

The form of the lecture is very hot-right-now. That's a very arrogant statement but I have already alienated a swag of my potential audience by performing my lecture on a weekday morning - I guess that might be part of an affectation that I am developing. From Simon Fujiwara, Trisha Donnelly to my friend and colleague Tom Nicholson who is right now using the lecture form in collaboration with Tony Birch at Sydney's Artspace – the performative quality of the lecture is a pervasive response to the over-materialised forms of the last decade. I am not accusing Nicholson, Donnelly and Fujiwara of making faddish and cynical responses to the artistic zeitgeist. I certainly might be accused of that myself. But the barely there installation, the undocumented or badly documented performance, the didactic quality of the archive, the emphasis on sociability are all part of the shifting, competing and arbitrary norms that make up the art field.

An artist who has never been shy of the lecture form is Andrea Fraser. I have an absolute infatuation with Andrea Fraser and some would say I'm parroting her now without doing the intensive research that her performances actually require. Fraser is part of a much longer tradition of 'artist and writer' that dates back to the 1960s. I'm thinking of Robert Morris, Robert Smithson, Adrian Piper, Art & Language and Joseph Beuys who in their respective capacities used the didactic form (exegesis, classrooms, theory, philosophy and lectures) to sit alongside what might be considered their more spatial or sculptural practices. For some of these artists the didactic or text-driven form was conflated into all other formal interests. Smithson would explicitly comment on the material weight of words – highlighting the importance (but also potentially the heavy burden) associated with the artist's exegesis.

The performed lecture and the written text as the form of my project is influenced by the boundaries defined by the hosting institution. The boundaries are not merely architectural. That would be like calling my work site-specific – like the term queer it's dated and almost meaningless. But defining the site of this display is important never the less. The form of this performed lecture doesn't have an instrumental relationship to the complex intersection of social forces that it's placed in. In other words this project doesn't have a broad social use like a community mural, a workshop, a vase or a church icon might have. In some ways it would

make total sense for this lecture to be incorporated into the education program offered by RMIT Tafe or University – but that would also mean that my lecture would become privileged over the other thousand lectures found at RMIT, only because its art. I don't want to give another leg up to this reified field of ours so I decided to nick and steal from another field, namely education. The social finds its way into the form then – through the glass wall with a band of rusted coloured enamel. It's like the walls of the form are permeable. Closed in the sense that this work is about its own set of conditions but also open because these conditions are made up of the sociable concerns it has its back to. This type of autonomy really has only one effect and that's on the field of art - a micro one judging from past audience experiences of my work.

The major issue I have with the lecture form is the resolute authority that it could potentially convey. How can I perform a lecture that is explicit in its social contextualisation but at the same time embraces insecurity, ambiguity and hesitance? Probably wishful thinking… What is interesting about a statement that has a propositional quality is that it is capable of falsity as well as truth. The propositional form can only assert a possibility and put forward ideas for consideration and discussion. This contingent state is not foreign to any of the art mentioned that deals with the lecture form. In fact this is probably what the examples I have given have in common – a challenge to the idea of resolute authority. Which is interesting in terms of Andrea Fraser is that she challenges this authority within the form of her practice but at the same acknowledges the active manoeuvring within this field of power.

> 'The artistic field specifically is constituted above all else as 'a site of struggles in which what is at stake is the power to impose the dominant definition of the artist, that is the standards of criteria, the norms according to which producers and their products will be evaluated.'
>
> From Andrea Fraser, *It's Art When I Say It's Art, Or…* in Museum Highlights: the writings of Andrea Fraser, [ed] Alexander Alberro, MIT Press, Mass, 2005.

I guess I too am manoeuvring in that field of power – regardless of how consciously strategic I am being. The text of this lecture is a process of legitimation. And to the aid of this legitimation comes not only the objective power of the lectern but that of words and ideas. As an artist, I use words like any other form. But I also use a field of ideas, theory and philosophy to legitimise, translate and expand. These word and ideas: explain; add value to the field of art; build analogous bridges; make analogies clearer; make new social narrative;

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substantiate claims; translate so others can understand; make new language; and make parallel discourse. But I am also interested in how this expression of power through these words separates this work from other works. I am interested in how one might mash up, misquote, unacknowledge, misrepresented other thinkers ideas. From Pierre Bourdieu take on capital, Anthony Giddens's enabling structures, Theodor Adorno's theory on autonomy and Judith Butler's notion of performativity – I'm concerned that my 101 quotation is part of strategy to as they lift and separate… And there is segue way into the aspirations of the university.

RMIT

The university has an undisputed stranglehold on the pathway that leads to a professional artistic career. This isn't a new (or unpredictable) development as the shift from art being beholden to a market through production of craft to it being a manifestation of a concept (which eventually proceeds to a market) is old enough to be traditional. It is also no coincidence that the proliferation of MFA programs occurred in sync with the dematerialisation of the art object and the increase in production of artist writing in the 1960/70s. What is new (at least in this corner of the world) is the increasing academicisation of this training which has been colonised by the language of the hosting institute – i.e. artists now quantify and qualify their experimentation via the notion of academically sanctioned research. It is now not uncommon for a star student to enter art school at 18 and leave with a PHD at 27.

It could be argued that this prolonged university stint presents the artist with the rigour of conceptually framing their own practise as well as an additional path to finances and audience creation. This potential self and peer framing offers the broader art community an alternative to the dominant framing of curatorial, historical or commercial institutional voices. The academy's alternative expertise can offer a counterbalance to the dominant market's fetishisation of cohesive and stable presentation over all other modes of public outcome. These dominant regimes follow conventions that aren't essentially exploitative but do enact an exchange in values based upon a calculus of commercial imperative, conceptual convenience and public relations. This is not to say that the four years of a PHD art program doesn't have the potential to be one long insular psycho-therapeutic session in the guise of conceptual self-reflexivity. However it seems as though some art schools have (progressively over time) chosen to borrow from the university's set of tools that privilege individualism, the sometimes arbitrary markers of industry experience/expertise and the pillaging of other faculties' discourses over collaborative research, peer review, and an interdisciplinarity characterised by dialogue rather than representation.

So this gallery is linked to a university. So connected that in the last couple of years RMIT's Project Space moved away from model based on the ever shifting vagrancies of cultural/social capital – playing a part in Melbourne's inner-city circuit of galleries that validate and support contemporary art practices - to a space that prioritises links to officially sanctioned research outcomes. Both these models of practice might have the same virtues some expect from contemporary art. These could be independence, rigor, experimentation and/or aesthetic challenge. The difference being that the commissioning agent of this art – the gallery – has different expectations from the two respective models.

While on some levels the program doesn't seem to have changed. Going from a gallery that bestows cultural prestige onto an institution, i.e. we show edgy art, it's so now it hurts. This is a metaphor for the RMIT student experience and/or graduate without there being an explicit connection between teaching/learning/research and the art that once was displayed in this space. To making the gallery a mediating device for internal machinations of the teaching/learning/research at RMIT. These would be you'd hope the core competencies of a university - a type of in-house publishing endeavour. The public relations wing of the university would like this art to have the same effect as the last model of art practice. It probably doesn't but what does it really matter. Who is this public that PR departments of universities are trying to reach anyway?

ALUMNI

A sense of belonging is important. At its core an alumni association is about creating an ongoing sense of belonging via the establishment of a support network based on influence, a sense of prestige and the continuation of the nurture felt whilst within an educational institution. You once belonged and you continue to belong.

Of course alumni associations are derived from a masculinised sense of belonging. Not surprisingly based on the fact that education was once the exclusive domain for men. An incongruence emerges when trying to connect the educational advancement of the working class connoted in RMIT's first establishment as a Working Men's College and the exclusive terrain of an 'old-boys' association which the word alumni is tinged with. Of course art schools don't have the usual trimmings of alumni associations like newsletters and reunions. But this doesn't mean that networking based on an association with RMIT (like VCA or Monash) doesn't exist. Come to think of it most artist-run-spaces might be considered pseudo

alumni associations. CLUBSproject in particular was overwhelmingly dominated by RMIT graduates – with only one token VCA graduate – Chris LG Hill.

Since the 1990's the predominant gender of art school graduates is female. The term alumni is strictly speaking a male plural – alumnae is plural feminine. The use of this latin term is questionable as the term graduate is genderless.

Amongst other attributes like skill acquisition, knowledge transfer, control, class advancement and socialisation - educational institutions are aspirational. RMIT is no exception. And while each University has its (own projected and not) narrative of aspiration i.e. the University of Melbourne has an overwhelming intake of private school high school students, RMIT likes to think of itself as a university with a technological edge even though it nearly went bust over a bungled IT enrolment disaster. What is interesting about RMIT's historical narrative is the shift is in its naming: Working Men's College (1887): Melbourne Technical College (1934); Royal Melbourne Technical College (1954); Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (1960); and finally RMIT University in 1990.

The Australian artworld doesn't like to openly acknowledge that most of its artists have been educated in university – that the art that is part of this world is part of a pedagogical process. Unless of course its an international name university. (Cue the opening track from the TV series FAME.) The obvious exception is the graduate show. This is a time when notions of pedigree and influence derived from educators acquires a fresh lustre. The ritualistic harvest of fresh talent at graduate shows is the acceptable manifestation of the pedagogical within contemporary art cultures. The debutantes are embraced both for their own precocious promise, and for faithfully reflecting and affirming existing constellations of stars. This link (think alumnae) is only good for 3-5 years.

GAY

The problem with being pigeon-holed is that this metaphor still exists… The line "I'm not a gay artist, just an artist" is always reverberating in my ear when a Midsumma festival opportunity is on offer. I react. I invariably accept the opportunity regardless of the curatorial premise because I guess I care about what people think of me. An exhibition is if anything a public relations activity bound by a series of art conventions like ideas, forms and processes. Lets put any issue of my self-esteem aside, although that might be difficult during this lecture. Between the competing institutional contexts that frame this work: Art, RMIT University, the Midsumma Festival, Project Space et al. - you are left with me. Never-the-less, if I refuse to

be in this exhibition am I projecting a problem with being gay. Limiting yourself to one identity might be problematic as we're all a complicated matrix of social markers. I'm a Greek-Australian artist whose work rarely touches directly on ethnicity, but that doesn't make the identity inappropriate. Rejecting one marker over another is perpetuating negative associations with being gay. After all I've never had a problem with being associated with white straight middle-class artists. In some ways this isn't too far away from (from the hidden and not so hidden violence) of the playground taunt or generic insult of - that's so gay. So tell me again, what's wrong with being gay I tell my sometimes over-active internalised critic?

So Gay, hey. Besides subtlety being something that I can never do. Believe me I try. What eventuates is some bulking timber structure (lumber as my friend Russel Walsh likes to call it) with an accompanying convoluted conceptual thread. Its subtlety as sledge-hammer. There is a pattern to this sensibility and it all started just up the road, RMIT, Bowen lane in Building 2. And while the 'rigors' of the atelier program of the RMIT Painting department really only made mention of one gay artist for the whole three years I studied there. Have you looked at Ross Bleckner? I can hear the lyrical abstractionist tutors ask.

I was busy being gay. Finding freedom in that box, in that structure, in that boundary.

In 1997 I danced around in my Target y-fronts with a male mannequin as my back-up dancer. I eventually found myself in bed with this hunky bit of rented plastic. Only to be caught by my father mid-fondle. Trying to justify it as an art project and not some form of depravity in the wails and screams that followed the incident was difficult.. My mother then asked me, so then why didn't you use a female mannequin?

In 1998 I wondered around Bowen lane trying to find another hunk, this time non-plastic and animate. I had cooked him a romantic candle lit dinner in my studio and I wanted to buy an hour of his time. I suspect he would have done it for a lot less than the 150 dollars I gave him. I was one of those students that lived with his parents, got austudy and worked and had no bills. It was expendable income and indulgence as conceptualism I guess. But I want the constructed romance to be bought and for it to be alienating. I would occasionally bump into this Media Arts student around the RMIT traps. It was awkward to say the least.

In 1999 I hosted an afternoon tea and lecture to my fellow students and Andy Thompson. It consisted of a slide presentation of six paintings that aren't exactly subtle in terms of their formal qualities. The pieces were: Jackson Pollock's *Cathedral* (1949); Claude Monets *Waterlilies* (1916); Vincent Van Gogh's *Starry Night* (1889); The Edgar Degas' *Dance Class*

(1873); Georgia O'Keeffe's *Redcanna* (1930); and Edvard Munch's *The Scream* (1893). These highly saturated and canonical paintings were chosen because Jack – a character from Dawson's Creek (a 1990's TV series) used these paintings to describe his experience of sex to his friend Joey. Now Joey was a budding artist and she had begun to life draw. Clumsy Jack had spilt a drink over one of Joey's assessment tasks and because he felt guilty, volunteered to be a life model for her. (You have to also understand they're in high school – put any sense of credulity aside.) In the same episode the straight couple Andie and Pacey decide to potentially get past their heavy petting after negative HIV test results. Dawson's Creek always fucking around with dominant paradigms. I showed the clincher of the episode in edited highlights during the lecture. It was the awkward life drawing session where Jack (who is yet to 'come out' in the series) uses the Pollock, O'Keefe, Monet, Munch and Van Gogh to describe his experience of sex. He uses these paintings to describe the unnamed gay sex he has already had. He cracks a boner. He cracks a boner when mentioning what might be considered the campest paintings around. Well almost, Degas is not camp, he's just creepy. I by no means made this connection 99. I just thought it was kinda little funny. But these painting, this art that as Sontag noted 'has extraordinary ambition' to respond to emotion or subjectivity but also 'tragic[ally] fails such ambition.' Straight I guess. But exceedingly and hilariously camp.

A PROVISIONAL CONCLUSION

CUE - THE HANDLING OF SNOWDOME PROP: I would like to make a work about the pirate encased in this DIY snowdome that sits on my mantelpiece. It was made by Linus – an eight year old boy in my family. The snowdome is actually a jar. This jar might have had jam or some other condiment in it. Fixed to the bottom of the jar is a plastic figurine of a pirate. One arm flexed in a fist, the other wielding a sword. He wears a red bandana and all the other costume trappings you would expect. Surrounding the base of the pirate is not glitter but big chunks of colourful plastic coated foil. What is great about these chunks is their very irregular shape and size. You need to shake the jar quite rigorously to get the chunks up and moving. And when you do they seem to dominate the internal space of the jar which is filled with water that is slowly becoming tinted from the discolouration of the foil. The pirate recedes at times when the angular chunks of foil do a type of graceful dance through the fluid. They eventually sink to base as the vigorous movement of your forearm subsides.

Appendix 5:

ADMINISTRATION (2010)

Performance script—transcribed from *Supervision 1* (2009)

Staff is STA
Student is STU

STA   And I suppose up to this point you've thought about your project as being entirely site-specific, haven't you? In the sense that it has required this space - that's been quite important...

STU   Yeah, to build this infrastructure and these tools.

STA   It was the basis of your thinking wasn't it? So I suppose to now be moved from the space that has determined what you've made is quite significant, isn't it?

STU   Yeah. I've been looking at this studio as just a space, but ideologically I've kind of ignored dysfunctions of the university in a way, and that really at the end of the day is the space. I was kind of relying on this delusion without thinking about economic factors.

STA   It's interesting, because it's something that we've talked about previously, isn't it? Especially with regards to the VCA exhibition - do you remember - I played devil's advocate. I suggested to you that your project could actually have the kind of opposite implication to the one that you intended it to have in the sense that it sort of seems to me that what you're trying to do is sort of reveal something about the system without necessarily endorsing it, so your work is a kind of a critique. But then it has seemed to me in the past that you treaded quite a fine line, because you could read the work potentially as in fact a kind of glorification, or as a sort of a retreat from critique in a sense. And I think that's perhaps why this is quite interesting, because as you say you're coming up against this sort of harsh economic reality of the system.

STU   I've spent all my time building this stuff, and it's not going to be used in here at all.

STA   That in itself is a kind of endorsement of hermetically sealed creative process performed under the aegis of the system that is the university art school, isn't it? So I guess what I'm trying to say again playing devil's advocate I suppose, is that sort of act of your holing yourself up in the studio in that way. Because you've made all this furniture for the studio, but that could be read as a kind of unwillingness to engage critically with the reality of the system, which is what we are now coming up with. Do you understand what I'm sort of getting at?

STU   Uh-huh.

STA   I always thought there was a fine line, and when your work is successful I think it does - you know, it kind of performs that critique in quite a subtle way. But the tightrope, it's a tightrope, perhaps when it's unsuccessful it looks like endorsement rather than critique.

STU   Yeah. I mean this could be an ad for the higher degree program. You know if I could take a picture… Look at me − look at the many roles that our higher degree students take on. I mean, I just had a conversation with Terri, and she was just saying "Some of this furniture isn't grounded here, and that it might potentially have a life outside." And so the sandwich board is a tool that isn't meant for this studio space anyway, it's meant for somewhere else. And that museum trolley is a museum trolley that's meant to be used in a museum for hanging a painting or something. And so some of these things are just stored in here, and they could potentially have a life outside.

STA   No, they don't depend on this space for their meaning. That's what you mean.

STU   But the thing is I think it's a positive measure in some ways. What do I do with all this now? And that's the issue.

STA   I guess all of this has always had a built-in redundancy hasn't it?

STU   Yeah.

STA   That has simply been accelerated through the shift to another space.

STU   Because it would have happened next year at the end of this project.

STA   But it's sort of useless isn't it? I mean, most of this is useless in the sense of what you do.

STU   Well some of it is useless.

STA   It's not quite what I mean actually, I think I mean more of that idea of a built in redundancy. A lot of this is equipment for making art, isn't it?

STU   Yeah.

STA   But you're never quite made the art.

STU   No.

STA   Or rather the equipment has become the focus of your artistic process. But there's a kind of built in redundancy there I think. I mean, didn't we say - what was that phrase we used a while ago, something about procrastination? A creative procrastination or something?

STU   But an obsessive one...

STA   That was it, an obsessive procrastination. Those two things not being two kinds of categories of phenomena, or activity that you'd normally see

together, obsession and procrastination. Procrastination wouldn't on the face of it seem to be an obsessive frame of mind. So it's sort of paradoxical.

STU   And in a way I haven't put all this energy into the other sites. In fact, the other sites have hardly been touched.

STA   Yeah. You have chosen to hole yourself up the studio in actual fact. Which is interesting in it's own right given the kind of critical purpose of your work. Not quite sure how to articulate that, but there's something - I mean, there's something right about that, about how you've actually focused on this rather than on the other sites, as you say.

STU   I kind of see myself as performing the role of the artist that I feel repelled by. I feel that I want to critique the artist, the self-obsessed artist. But I am doing the self-obsessed artist, and I feel like 'oh shit.' That's why I might need to get rid of this stuff.

STA   As a sort of purging.

STU   I know it seems romantic…

STA   It's as if what you've demonstrated is that idea of the kind of romantic artist hero is unavoidable - it's built into this system. You've tried your best to escape it, but you can't.

STU   Yeah. And also I've tried to build these tools that I could potentially use outside of this space, but it seems like that is a posture. This studio space has become a set to self-consciously perform the use of the tools as opposed to doing anything in actuality. It's almost like I've done this just for this moment of this conversation.

STA   Yes, yes.

STU   Or sitting there with you, having our meetings. Or reading the newspaper there. You know? Because it's kind of funny because I was planning on us sitting there, but the thing is it just doesn't feel natural. It feels performed. I mean, this is a performance - it's stage.

STA   But there's nothing natural about any of this.

STU   No.

STA   It's the opposite of that. I think there's a very high level of artifice in all of it actually. This is an entirely artificial thing you've constructed here.

STU   And it's not that different from the VCA, but I created another type of distance, but through the museological convention of the blue line, and through a very static display.

STA   Chairs you can't sit on, or want to sit on.

STU   Everything was squared up and stuff, and just plonked in a way. So it was different. But here this is another type of fiction, another type of fictive space.

STA   But a highly artificial and premeditated one. Again I think it sits on a kind of pinhead, or tightrope of potentially precise critique, but equally potentially the opposite of that, a kind of implicit submission, or failure.

STU   And even if I - you know, like I was thinking of lending all this stuff out as part of the project to people who want to use it. I could also just disassemble everything. And leave it as a pile of timber. That would be like as a formal strategy that I'm kind of into. Like taking all the screws out and making it as compact as possible so that it doesn't use up much space.

STA   Yep, you could stack it up.

STU   Yeah. But lending it all out - I'm just kind of going well am I helping everyone out. You know that's another problem. I mean, I don't want to centre my role in other peoples' practices…My role as a facilitator….

STA   Prioritising yourself again?

STU   Yeah.

STA   Privileging the artist as an ameliorating force…

STU   Like the only way that someone could - I mean, I was thinking this could be a device for someone to hang a mobile. But they could do it much easier really. They could grab a ladder, rather than use my kind of old-fashioned climbing device.

STA   But it could also be anything that somebody else wanted it to be.

STU   Yeah. I might not have to control its use. I wanted to be part of the project, so I don't want to just give it away as this charity event, charity project. It's not what it's about.

STA   So are you still planning to exhibit these objects in the new studio space?

STU   No.

STA   You're not?

STU   I actually think that's - I mean, I think this stuff should exist.

STA   So are you going to put it all into the gallery?

STU   Yeah, I think potentially I kind of - I mean, what's the difference?

STA   Well that's a normal process, isn't it? I mean, yeah there's a...

STU   Because the thing is I've sited it for here, but I could grab this space back mid semester, because that's where I'm going next.

STA   But that seems to you to now not be important.

STU   Yeah, to do this? Like it just seems like it's just a bit of theatrical interior design in a way. No, actually I feel like I'm making the point now.

STA   But what's precipitated your change of thinking is this shift to the other studio space.

STU   Yeah.

STA   I mean, it's quite interesting isn't it? The process of your thought is quite interesting. There's a kind of failure to this, isn't there, a sort of a sense of failure to the project?

STU   Yeah.

STA   And I don't mean that you produced bad art or something ridiculous like that, but I mean that what you're coming up against is sort of an interesting part in the project, because you've quite seriously in a very engaged way tried to examine the systems that determine how art is made, where it's exhibited, ideas about the artist. But what you've discovered is that those systems perhaps aren't in fact available to critique in the way that you started - you know, by wanting to - is this making any sense?

STU   Yeah. No...

STA   What I'm trying to get at I suppose is that it's a very interesting failure in the sense that, as you started by saying actually, what you've come up against is harsh economic reality, which nothing interferes with.   I mean, harsh economic reality isn't available to critique, it's a sort of monstrous - it's monstrously immune.

STU   Yeah. To my romance...

STA   To your romantic idea of critique, and so on.   So that in itself is an interesting finding. If we're going to talk about this as research, this is an interesting research finding. I guess that's what I'm trying to get at.

STU   And I mean, I guess that's what I'm trying to write into this chapter that I'm writing at the moment, is that higher degree research in fine art shouldn't be a PR document about success, or like the significance of my findings, or my practice, but in fact it could fail, and that my exegesis is a reflection.   It could potentially be a reflection on that failure.

STA   I agree with that.

STU   Like the scientist actually does research on some cancer growth, or whatever, but the whole three years is a waste of time because some bit of the research has become obsolete, or has failed.

STA   But that doesn't mean that the project was a waste of time.

STU   No.

STA   I mean, this is kind of utopianism as well, isn't it, that idea of utopia as somewhere that's - as no place, as Thomas More said in the Renaissance. You know that's what the word actually means, 'no place'. But that's never prevented anybody from the pursuant of an ideal society, or from trying to construct an ideal society, or whatever. Again I think the fact that utopia is impossible doesn't mean that the pursuit of utopia is ridiculous. There's a kind of idealism here as well, a kind of utopic thinking somehow. I mean, what you always seem to do and maybe I am wrong, but what you always seem to me to be trying to do is perform in that semiotic sense. If you think about your artworks as utterances, I think they would be informative in that quite specific technical semiotic sense, rather than anything else. They actually kind of substantiate when they work well with their critique on some level, I think they perform the thing that's being critiqued. Would you agree with what I'm...?

STU   Yeah. That's what I'm...

STA   And that very much strikes me as the goal of your practice. You know, if you had to boil it down to one thing.

STU   That's what I feel like I've done right now with this project. Almost like the self centred, megalomaniacal artist in the studio. But at the end of the day I think I reject that, as well as performing...

STA   You do on some level, or you have an ironic attitude towards it. But that ironic attitude perhaps involves some realisation of the impossibility of avoiding the thing that you reject. You are this person, and you know it.

STU   Yes. <laughter>

STA   But it's that self-realisation that I think is - again when the work is successful, that's imbedded in the work, and that's what makes it effective critique.

STU   I mean, that's why I was saying to you I needed the space downstairs, the museum space, because the idea of having that space is about a type of status in relationship to a PhD. Do you know what I mean? And I'm not saying that's the only reason why I am doing a PhD, obviously I'm doing a PhD for a certain level of training and research otherwise I wouldn't be going through this type of hell. But the thing is, that at the same time I kind of feel repelled by that persona. I have deep issues with it, or something. But I need to deal with that from being in it. Do you know what I mean?

ADMINISTRATION is based on a transcribed conversation between Spiros Panigirakis and Luke Morgan.

Appendix 6: *STUDIO CONDITIONS* (2011)

(Inserted after the first publication and examination of this exegesis)

Spiros Panigirakis, STUDIO CONDITIONS, 2011, Faculty Gallery and surrounds, Monash University – Caulfield.

Figure A6.1: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS* (detail)*, 2008 - 2011, 594 x 873 mm, digital print on paper.

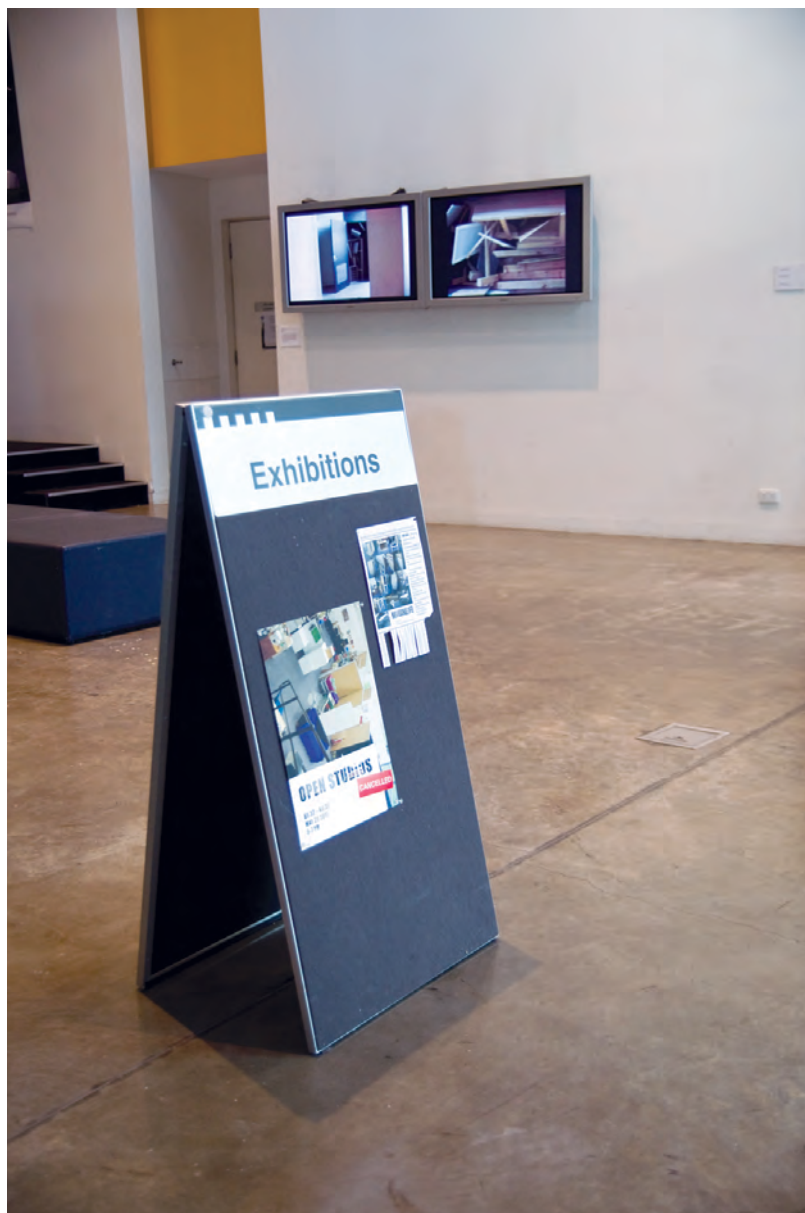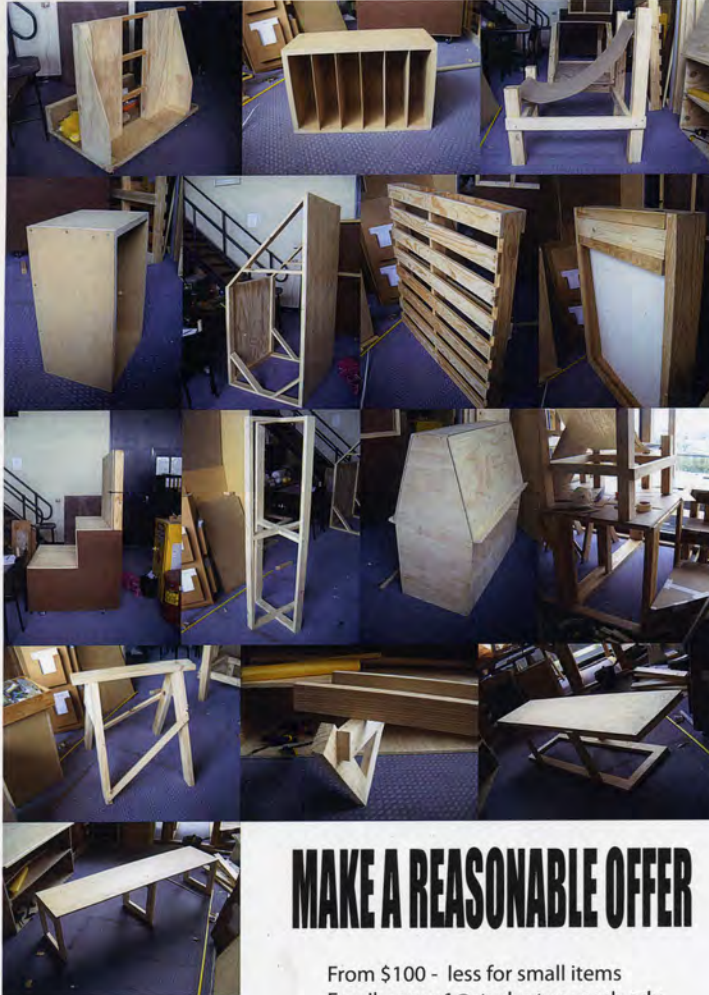Figure A6.2: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS,* 2011, vinyl signage, Faculty Gallery, Monash University - Caulfield, view from Queens Avenue.

Figure A6.3: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS,* 2011, sandwich board, posters and digital videos on screens, Faculty Gallery, Monash University - Caulfield, view from Building G corridor.

Figure A6.4: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS,* 2011, 297 x 420 mm, digital print on high-gloss paper.

Figure A6.5: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS,* 2011, 210 x 297 mm, digital print on cartridge paper.

Figure A6.6: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS in B6.35,* 2011, 45 minutes looped, digital video on screen.

Figure A6.7: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS,* 2011, dimensions variable, MDF desk/computer for administrative and invigilating volunteering – Adelle Gresle, Andrew Kershaw, Pippa Makgill, Catherine Pieper, painted wall partition with 2 light boxes and digital print mounted on MDF framing, Faculty Gallery, Monash University – Caulfield, view from entrance.

Figure A6.8: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS,* 2011, dimensions variable, painted wall partition with 2 spray-coated aluminium light boxes (each 420 x 594 mm), digital print mounted on MDF framing, painted door/wall, Faculty Gallery, Monash University – Caulfield.

Figure A6.9: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS,* 2011, dimensions variable, digital print on paper mounted on MDF framing, painted door/wall, MDF pigeon hole with 4 inserted A4 *fieldwork* folders, MDF and KD hardwood table and bench (pigeon hole: 640 x 320 x 415 mm; table: 2200 x 1200 x 680 mm; bench: 1500 x 300 x 400 mm) Faculty Gallery, Monash University – Caulfield.
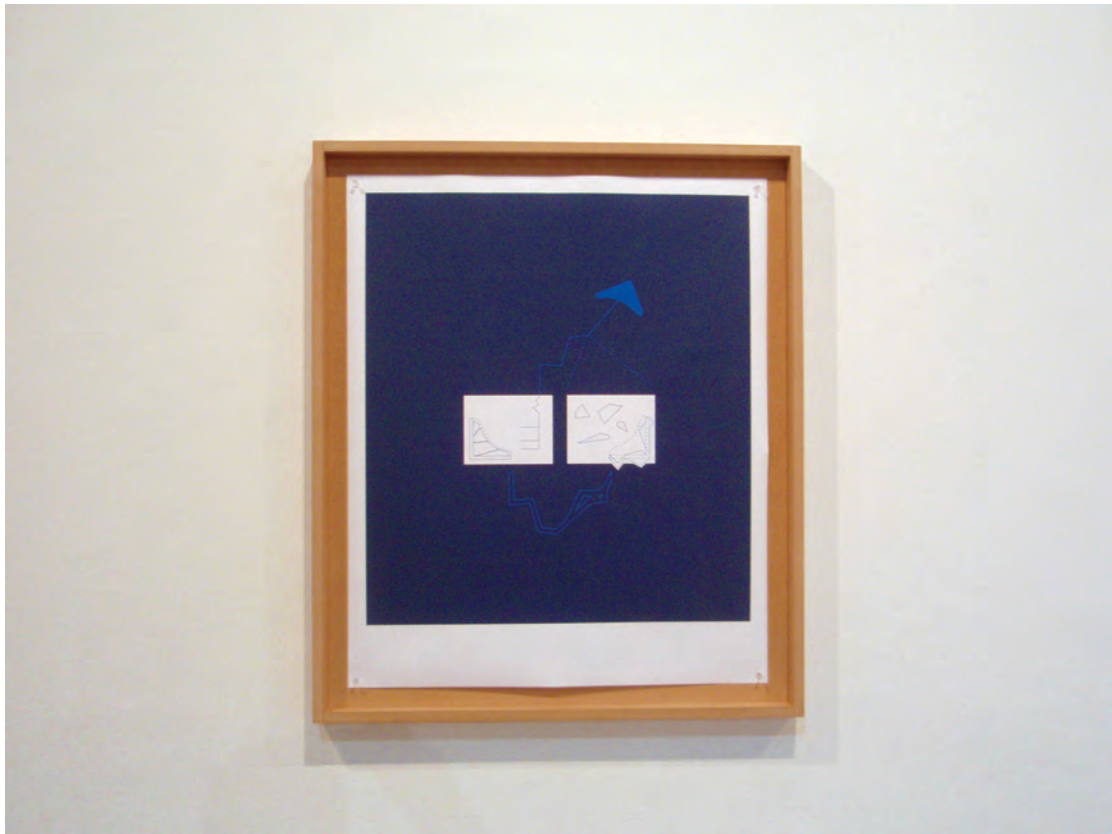
Figure A6.10: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS,* 2011, 594 x 873 mm (framed: 1041 x 826 mm) digital print on paper pinned to MDF framing, Faculty Gallery, Monash University – Caulfield.

Figure A6.11: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS,* 2011, Faculty Gallery, Monash University – Caulfield, installation view during exhibition opening hours and opening reception.

Figure A6.12: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS*, 2011, detail view of contents from 4 A4 *fieldwork* folders on MDF table.

Figure A6.13: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS,* 2011, view from table of adjoining gallery space while gallery volunteer Adelle Gresle paints partition walls, Faculty Gallery, Monash University – Caulfield, installation view during exhibition opening hours.

Figure A6.14: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS,* 2011, view from barrier of adjoining gallery space documenting the organisation of gallery collection – managed by Alicia Renew, Faculty Gallery, Monash University – Caulfield, installation view.

Figure A6.15: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS,* 2011, view from barrier of adjoining gallery space while gallery volunteer Adelle Gresle paints partition walls, Faculty Gallery, Monash University – Caulfield, installation view during exhibition opening hours.

Figure A6.16: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS,* 2011, installation view of corridor notice boards with poster relating to project (left), Monash University – Caulfield, building C, level 6.
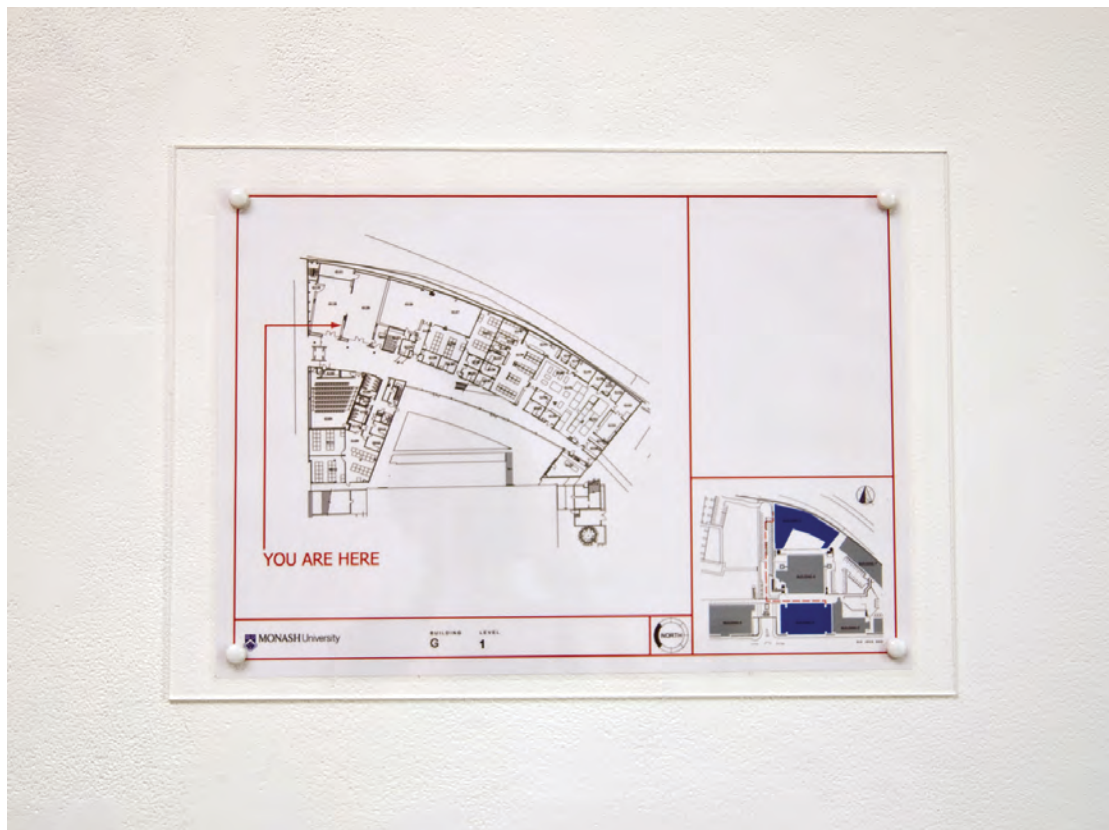
Figure A6.17: Spiros Panigirakis, *STUDIO CONDITIONS – YOU ARE HERE,* 2011, 297 X 420 mm, laminated digital print on paper behind 3 mm perspex screwed and capped to wall, Faculty Gallery, Monash University – Caulfield.