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**Caring Deception:
Community art in the suburbs of Aotearoa (New Zealand)**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
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Abstract

In Aotearoa (New Zealand), community art practice has a disadvantaged status and a poorly documented national history. This thesis reinvigorates the theory and practice of community art and cultural democracy using adaptable and context-specific analyses of the ways that aesthetics and ethics can usefully co-exist in practices of social change. The community art projects in this thesis were based in four suburbs lying on the economic and spatial fringes of Aotearoa. Over 4 years, I generated a comparative and iterative methodology challenging major binaries of the field, including: ameliorative vs. disruptive; coloniser vs. colonised; instrumental vs. instrumentalised; and long term vs. short term. This thesis asserts that these binaries create a series of *impasses* that drive the practice towards two new artistic categories, which I define as *caring deception* and *the facade*. All the projects I undertook were situated in contested space, where artists working with communities overlapped with local and national governments aiming for CBD and suburban re-vitalisation, creative city style initiatives, community development, grassroots creative projects, and curated public-art festivals. I worked within and around these structures, by practicing a methodology of *caring deception*. I applied a selection of artistic terms of engagement to vernacular structures such as public fountains, festival marquees, pop-up venues and community centres to negotiate deceit, resentment and care in the making of the art work. This thesis asserts that the methodology of *caring deception* creates a *social ethics in action* that can become embodied in the form of the art work.

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Preface: The abundance of terms:

Community Art (CA), Public Art (PA), Socially Engaged Art (SEA), Social Practice (SP) and Cultural Democracy.

Terminology in this field is often generalised and poorly defined. Terms are commonly fluid, and usage at times seems to complicate rather than clarify. *Community art* (CA) is often considered to be a separate field to *socially engaged art* (SEA). In many writings, CA is associated with a model of traditional “amateur” arts (Dickson, 1995) aimed at a healing or palliative approach to communities “in need”. Meanwhile, SEA often describes art works that use a variety of collaborative and participatory approaches with a generalised audience. Nato Thompson refers to SEA in the United States (US) as being concerned with issues of social justice (Thompson, 2012). For Thompson, SEA includes art works that engage direct political action, as well as those where the activism or social justice issue is purely symbolic, referred to or functioning as a motif. Activist art can be seen as “doing something” rather than simply “about” a political issue (Davis, 2013). The politics of representation, who is talking for whom, whose value systems are dominant and theories of reception, authorship, participation and collaboration have all become intertwined in the broader terms of SEA and *social practice* (SP).

The terminology of SP is gaining more widespread usage in the US, and is used in a variety of disciplines, including performance studies. However, in Aotearoa (New Zealand), SP can refer to social work practice in tertiary education papers. In the United Kingdom (UK) and Aotearoa, the term *public art* (PA; Doherty, 2015) is still used to refer to any art work in a public space, whether a traditional fixed sculpture or any art work in which the content specifically engages with social processes.

Perhaps there was once a simpler division between CA and PA. However, the distinction has long since morphed into a proliferation of divergent modes and practices that are now often subsumed under the generic labels SEA and SP. In recent years, it has become commonplace for art projects with entirely different intentions, ideologies, strategies, tactics and audiences to be thrown together under the SEA rubric in exhibitions, symposia and publications (Gogarty, 2014; Jackson, 2011). To confuse matters further, a plethora of other terms have emerged, such as: *new genre public art, relational aesthetics, post-public art, social aesthetics, socially co-operative*

art and *art in the public sphere*, all of which have their own supporters, but little inter-disciplinary recognition.

The strength of CA as an umbrella term is that it has a history based in the values of cultural democracy, which the other terms lack¹. Cultural democracy, as will be briefly outlined here, can also be subject to divergent theoretical, political and practice-based approaches.

The CA movement, particularly in the UK and US from the 1960s onwards, has often used a framework of cultural democracy as a guiding set of ideals and practices to apply to the means and ends of artists desiring to work with marginalised, under-represented or disenfranchised communities to address the imbalance of access to, and production of, culture (Kelly, 1984).

Cultural democracy recognises and seeks to address the imbalance of access, production and distribution of cultural resources between dominant and minority cultures (Kelly, 1984). Through a post-Marxist lens, Owen Kelly argued in 1984 that for the UK radical community arts movement, cultural democracy represented a programme for decentralisation, the development of a consciousness of material struggle, self-determination, alliance and networking between disenfranchised groups (Kelly, 1984, p. 101).

The programme of cultural democracy is closely tied to ideals of social justice, with the primary goal of self-determination for communities/groups through democratic principles. At the centre of this notion is the redistribution of cultural resources to enable self-empowerment for communities of disadvantage. Cultural democracy targets cultural practices to particular groups, encourages communities of difference to access their own cultural forms, and provides a critique of imposed “top-down” elite cultural forms, containing a vision that moves towards the elimination of social, economic and political inequalities. Sally J Morgan proposes that the most important feature of cultural democracy is its “long term cultural and political ambition” (Morgan, 1995). However, in the contemporary cultural funding model, Sophie Hope argues that the temporary project model has become commonplace, if not the norm, in

¹ However pioneering US social practice artist Jon Rubin was not happy with himself and Harrell Fletcher being labelled as “community artists” in the 1990s. He claims that the term implied artists performing an “ineffectual community service” (Rubin, 2011, para.3).

CA. Hope qualifies this with reference to Paul O'Neill and Claire Doherty's study of durational praxis (O'Neill & Doherty, 2011)².

There has been a recent resurgence in critical and artistic discourse on cultural democracy (Graves, 2005; Hope, 2011; Goldbard, 2006; Hewitt, 2012; Gattinger, 2014), possibly due to increasing levels of inequality in Western countries (OECD, 2011; Wilkinson, 2010), a return of arguments supporting art for social change (BAVO, 2007) and a worldwide proliferation of SEA and activist art practices (Thompson, 2012). Gattinger stresses the importance to cultural democracy of the term "governance" from the 1990s onwards, due to its emphasis on the complexity of societal decision-making processes in the contemporary world beyond the cultural sector (Gattinger, 2011). Artists and critics continually expand the concepts and practices of cultural democracy as older ideals become displaced or unachievable.

The divergent artistic practices arising from the ideals of cultural democracy appear to have resulted in a series of ethical orthodoxies³ around the praxis⁴ of community art. The orthodoxies can be summarised as arising from attempts to resolve the best methods for artists contributing to grassroots local creativity, the ways this creativity may be made more visible, and the conditions themselves through which those voices emerge are challenged. According to Fitzpatrick, the critical perspective of cultural democracy demands answers to two fundamental questions: "who speaks", and "under what conditions...these voices emerge" (Fitzpatrick, 2013, p.215)⁵. It is easy to see how these orthodoxies have become problematic, not just in the difficulty of defining what constitutes a community (Kwon, 2002; Nancy, 1991) and who makes the decisions for that community, but also the tendency to lead to the conclusion that it may be better to do nothing at all; why engage with any given community if it will

² This study focuses on a curated series of community engaged projects in the UK, mostly based on a 1-year time frame.

³ Some of these orthodoxies have been described as follows: 1. "The personnel (actors, directors, tech, etc) must come from the class they want to change" (Davis, 1967); 2. CA projects should aspire to long-term ambitions (Morgan 1995; Braden, 1978); 3. "Never go into a community until it has articulated its need for you" (Boal, as cited in Harding, 2004, para. 6); 4. The content of the project (aims, politics, issues) should be driven by the community itself (Goldbard, 2006, p. 148).

⁴ I define "praxis" in accord with Marx's definition of "thinking in practice", or as an action that "embodies certain qualities" (Smith, 1999)

⁵ Fitzpatrick's words echo those of Paulo Freire's in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

only be perceived as perpetuating domination, and unless the artist can confidently call that community their own?⁶

The ideals of cultural democracy create some other basic challenges for community artists. Ranginui Walker described the “structural flaw in the ideology of democracy” (Walker, 2004)⁷, arguing that there is a structural flaw in democracy in Aotearoa for Māori, because of Pākehā⁸ power and domination. Sue Braden also acknowledged the difficulty of artists addressing structural economic and political problems with “marginalised” or “vulnerable” communities in her 1978 study *Artists and People*. Braden quoted Adorno’s critique of the culture industries creation of a commodified mentality amongst “the people”(Braden, 1978). The discipline of social work has also long recognised the limits to self-determination amongst the disenfranchised: “Because true self determination requires access to resources, access to opportunity, and access to power, there are real limits to self determination” (Hartman, p.216, 1997)

There are now a proliferation of potential audiences (or types of actors) in any CA project. Krzysztof Wodzicko (2015) describes the three different publics of his community art practice, yet there are now so many potential actors and participants, including commissioning organisations and contemporary art audiences, that there is a complex interdependence amongst many “publics”. All these factors must be considered within what Rubin calls “the pre-existing context of a place” (Rubin, 2011) The “means” can no longer be considered easy to identify within the complex of interdependent and competing publics, participants, collaborators and stakeholders enmeshed in invisibilities and misrepresentations at the edges of Aotearoa’s cities.

Despite these rhetorical arguments, community-based projects based on strategies and long term ambitions have proliferated in the last couple of decades through well-known projects such as Rick Lowe’s *Project Row Houses*, Jeanne Van Heejswik’s

⁶ This is perhaps the conclusion that Steve Kurtz came to when he argued that CA was kicked to death in the 1990’s (“Who Cares”, 2006. p. 95) when arguing for “coalitions rather than communities” and for tactics rather than strategies (ibid).

⁷ Walker is a key academic and commentator on post-colonial politics and the cultural field in Aotearoa. He continues Apirana Ngata’s research and activism for the importance of Māori sovereignty through cultural justice.

⁸ The Māori term Pākehā originally referred to European or white-skinned person, but has come to mean any non-Māori person.

Homebaked-Liverpool 2010–2014, *Park Fiction*, Ian Hunter and Celia Larner's *Merzbarn*, and a host of others.

The inequalities that have increased in the contemporary world indicate the goals of the CA and cultural democracy are now more important than ever. Throughout this exegesis, I use the term *socio-political community art* to describe this practice. Whilst not wanting to further the abundance of terminology, I use this term to increase specificity in identifying the field of CA in which this thesis is located. By socio-political community art, I refer to CA that can be positioned within a cultural democracy framework that has community development goals, yet questions the wider social and political relations within which it is produced. In addition, I identify the field of socio-political community art as a specific practice within CA, as informed by a conception of cultural democracy that aims for social change within a framework of the wider social and political forces of the making of the art work. When I refer to the broader field, I use the term SEA.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.0 Caring Deception

“A true artist should put a generous deceit upon the spectators” (Burke, 1990, p.70).

The relationship of the artist with whom they engage is fundamental to current discourse⁹ in the field of social art practice. The traditional art relationship of a “disengaged” viewer has evolved into the categories Beech describes as spectators, participants or collaborators¹⁰. Earlier 20th Century theories, from Benjamin’s notion of artists as “producers”¹¹ and Davis-Dubois’ writing on “active participation” as preferable to “passive spectatorship” (Davis-Dubois, 1939, p.6) contributed to the term “engagement” becoming the key element of social art practice. Generally speaking, this has been referred to as the “social turn”¹² in art.

The specific focus on engagement has resulted in a variety of typologies that artists and critics have developed for practice and interpretation in the field. Morgan described a typology of engagement in CA, based on the artist as “enabler, facilitator or animateur”¹³ (Morgan, 1984). Lacy outlines a typology of political commitment,¹⁴

⁹ By “discourse” I also include “artists’ discourses” such as visual, haptic and affective dialogues as embodied in art works.

¹⁰ Beech extends a typology of “participants” to include the notion of “actants” in a FREEE action *Revolution Road: Rename the Streets (2009)*(Beech, 2016)

¹¹ See ‘The Author as Producer’ in (Benjamin & Arendt, 1999)

¹² Bishop has been credited with coining the term the “social turn” in art (Bishop, 2006). However, there are many earlier writings on the “social” in art, including those by Braden (Braden, 1978), Becker (Becker, 1994), Lacy (Lacy, 1995), Bourriaud (Bourriaud, 2002), Stimson and Sholette’s writing on collectives (Stimson & Sholette, 2007), and Lars Bang Larsen’s writing on “social aesthetics” (Larsen, 2000).

¹³ Peter Reynolds describes how the animateur helps a community to “create and celebrate their own culture”...Living and working in the mainstream of community life, the *animateur* comes to know the community intimately and is accepted as the community’s own” (Reynolds, 1984).

¹⁴ In Lacy’s socio-political typology “Artist as experiencer/as reporter/as analyst/as activist” (Lacy, 2010, p.175), artists inevitably shift between categories.

while Claire Bishop discusses ethical levels of community participation¹⁵. There is a temporal/experiential typology, which can be broken down into the following terms: the event¹⁶, the encounter¹⁷ and liveness¹⁸. The engagement can be considered within a spatial, formal, and distribution analysis with which Lucy Lippard creates a unique typology¹⁹. In Miwon Kwon's estimation, both the type of community with whom the artist engages and its longevity as a consequence of the art project is considered²⁰. Many critics have discussed engagement in terms of critical pedagogy, as the degree to which there is a two-way flow of power and learning between artists and communities (Bishop, 2012; Finkelparl, 2013; Goldbard, 2006; Thompson, 2015). Jackson considers a typology of "social practice" art as a series of forms that evolve from the relations between work, labour, and the "production crew". There is also much analysis²¹ of the degree to which artists' engagement has been co-opted by power; that is, by ideologies, governments, institutions and other actors (BAVO, 2013; Hewitt, 2012; Hope, 2011; Kelly, 1984; Thompson, 2015; Trowell, 2012).

This thesis situates its practice component within the ethics debate of social art, asserting that one of the common features of all the above typologies is that they appear to be ethical judgments or categories as applied from outside, whether before or after, the "making" of an art work. I have taken a different position, and this is at the heart of this creative practice PhD. Through the application of a methodology that I describe as *caring deception*, I have taken an original approach to SEA, which, to my knowledge, has not been described in any previous writing, and has not been practiced or theorised elsewhere.

¹⁵ Bishop reminds us of Sherie Arnstein's "ladder of participation" as part of her critique of participatory art's reliance on ethics (cited in Thompson, 2012, p.41)

¹⁶ See Mick Wilson (Wilson, 2009)

¹⁷ See Bourriaud (2002) and Patrick (2009)

¹⁸ Mark Harvey provides a good summary of "live art" in his thesis (Harvey, 2011 Chp. 2)

¹⁹ Lippard has defined 10 types of site-based public/social art (Lippard, 1995, p121).

²⁰ Kwon's typology includes the "mythic community, sited communities and invented communities" (Kwon, 2002). Her notions include factors such as curatorial influence and that the invented community can become a lasting community.

²¹ I am unsure if a typology of co-option has ever been created, although Trowell's artist resource *Take the money and run* seems close (Trowell, 2012)

On one level, caring deception is a clear and straightforward proposition. Artists are involved in creating illusions that are a form of deception, and this should be practiced within a context of caring. However, I suggest two rather more complex propositions:

Caring deception requires a negotiation of the terms of deception and care in the making of the art work.

Caring deception is an art practice that creates a social ethics in action that also becomes embodied in the form of the artwork.

Thus, I claim that caring deception is particularly unique in the way that it both contains a methodology *and* produces a distinctive form within the framework of the construction and enacting of the art work.

Rather than considering aesthetics and ethics as judgments made in response to specific engagements and finished forms, they become deeply intertwined within the act of making. Caring deception is informed by an understanding of the “ethics of care” and moral philosophy, therefore the artist deceives others, and potentially deceives herself, sometimes knowingly and sometimes unknowingly, because she cares about others, about herself and about the world. Caring deception creates an aesthetics in which those involved have to confront a balancing act between actions of care and deceit in any given situation. Who is deceiving whom? Thus, the notion contains a continual shifting and negotiation of the terms of engagement and an awareness of the wider political and social context within which the art work is situated. Caring deception is an aesthetic strategy that can become materialised in forms that others can sense and feel, such that the content of the artwork, its very meaning, addresses the nature of the negotiation of care and deceit. This can, in the process, help to explain how social change occurs. Deception can suggest concealment and disguise, yet I argue it also contains the potential for absurdity, humour, and fun that can lead to new critical communities and advancement of a praxis of social ethics.

Over the course of several years, I have worked on a range of community art projects in several suburban communities of Aotearoa, where I set out to test a variety of artistic criteria with which I could test the propositions of this thesis as a praxis of caring deception. I had a specific focus in mind regarding the way that material art installations might engage with top-down processes and grassroots-led local development. These various criteria, including the type of collaboration, my

relationship to the community, duration, vernacular forms common to many social art projects and the type of funding/curatorial model, served to structure the research by occupying different roles and modes. This in turn shaped the aesthetic of the forms that would emerge. Therefore, in separate projects I assumed various roles of the artist, as enabler, facilitator, animateur, and experiencer/analyst. I used a range of strategies of collaboration, participation, and spectatorship.

Over this time, I worked with multiple forms of community, both “sited” and “invented”. This work involved different durational/experiential coordinates, from the long term to the short term and brief “encounters”. The terms of engagement included a series of ethical dilemmas drawn from a series of binaries in the field, which I identify as: the ameliorative vs. disruptive, the coloniser vs. colonised, the instrumental vs. instrumentalised and the assets-based vs. deficit model. In large part, the projects remained situated in the context of the curated “event” and employed the form of temporary vernacular structures such as marquees, pop-up shops, festivals, fountains, and mobile community centres.

1.1 Caring Deception and Community Art

“Debussy said art was the greatest deception of all. Art is a deception that creates real emotions, a lie that creates the truth. And when you give yourself over to that deception, it becomes magic.” (cited by Coombs from Marco Tempest, TED Global 2011, 2014)

“As a Jewish friend put it the other day, we need to develop a feeling of insecurity if we do not share.” (Davis-Dubois, 1939, p.6).

Why is it that deception seems so unlikely a term to apply to CA? It appears a contradiction to align deception with caring, and therefore confusing and disingenuous to consider this phrase in relation to the traditional earnest goals of CA, which include empowerment, democracy, inclusiveness and self-determination.

We are so used to hearing about community artists’ attempts to transmit positive values, such as generosity, responsibility, hospitality, sympathy, empathy, listening, understanding, recognition and exchange (Barber & Léger, 2013; Lacy, 2010; Lippard, 1997; Purves, 2004) that deception seems out of place in this lexicon. This thesis is not

an attempt to negate the worthy ambition toward positive values and affects, but instead poses a series of inquiries: “How do we know that community art can replicate these positive values and affects? Why do we assume that ‘contagion’ will result? What might be techniques that artists can use to make these positive values stick?” Most importantly, this thesis explores whether there might be some aesthetic conditions from which these positive values emerge.

This thesis argues there are many reasons we should be thinking, theorising and practicing a special form of caring deception in CA practice. I argue this practice and ethic of caring deception provide a way of attending to some of the multiple impasses that artists and critics are faced with in the varying methodologies of CA practice. Caring deception starts as a recognition of the multiple and sometimes conflicting forces influencing the ideals of any given community art project, including my own intentions. The notion requires a remodelling²² of the “earnest” community art project. The problem with earnest intentions is the tendency for a denial of less serious strategies of social engagement such as humour, boasting, strangeness and even idiocy²³ (Harvey, 2011) A lack of seriousness can be advantageous or even a pre-requisite when collaborating with specific communities.

Caring deception is a recognition that there is a fundamental set of ethical dilemmas that underlie cultural practices with CA projects. For artists, there appears to be an absence of tools to deal with the ethical dilemmas. One of these missing tools is an appropriate set of protocols. Without a precedent-based practice that recalls the experiences of past efforts at cultural democracy and examines in more detail the contextual coordinates of more recent approaches, artists will suffer the “endless reinvention” that Lacy identified several decades ago.

“The tremendous recent interest in engaged, caring public art demands a context in art history and present criticism. It demands as well a guidance of predecessors who can pass on strategies that allow the wheel to move forward, not suffer endless reinvention.” (Lacy, 1995, p. 11)

²² In his study *Art and social function* (1976) Willats uses the term “remodel” to refer to participants in his *West London social resource project* (1972) being part of a dynamic model, where they could remake their own life-codes using prescriptive models. (p.30-31)

²³ Mark Harvey develops a praxis of *choreographic idiocy* and discusses Lepecki’s concepts of the “idiot” as someone “who is removed from social responsibility” (Harvey, 2011, p. 20). Harvey also examines “stupidity” as a productive performance concept.

Caring deception starts from a position of the artist caring. Yet it has been argued that good intentions are not enough (Bishop, 2006). Thus, on one level, social artists must be aware of the potential deceit they commit, whether it is for their own messianic pretensions, their Christian ethic or their own loneliness. But deceit lies at many levels, and in the contemporary cultural world the forces of deception are multiple, and the artist must be aware of their own complicity and co-option by others. Deceit also lies at the trickster's level. The deception I refer to allows notions of the trickster²⁴ into the community artist's practice. The trickster deceives to challenge the existing order. In Maui's²⁵ case, this almost always led to new and improved cultural life and living standards. Deception can be necessary to get past the status quo and the domination and negative traditions that exist within particular communities. Deception can be playful, competitive, full of absurdity and awkwardness (see Chapter 2). Finally, deceit, as Burke suggested, was a crucial tool of the artist (most likely meant as a form of illusion or mimesis) if employed in a generous fashion.

I address particular kinds of ethical dilemmas through a process of collaborative making. Thompson argues for art works that are "keenly aware of their position in relationship to existing mechanisms of power" (Thompson, 2015, p.123). Through engagement with established networks of funding, cultural planning and curated public art projects I intervened in a policy-led development model of community art. Therefore, all the projects in the thesis negotiate the contradictions that are implicit when external agents such as local councils, regulatory authorities, government policy and cultural actors determine how a community is to be "developed". I worked around, within and past these imposed systems and outside experts using caring deception and *the facade* (see pg. 18), to understand what role my own art practice has, in these contexts, in reinforcing imposed values or aiding community participation in cultural life.

Sophie Hope has rigorously explored the dilemma for the "socially engaged" artist's

²⁴ Jean Fisher and Lewis Hyde have discussed notions of the trickster in relation to artists and an "aesthetics of resistance" (Fisher, 2016; Hyde, 1999).

²⁵ Maui is the Polynesian demi-god trickster. Maui sought (and achieved) to change the sad state of the material world and to make humans what they have the potential to become, but to achieve this he used all manner of trickery, connivance, magic powers, arrogance, insult and injury. In the process, humans become permanently mortal, yet in this mortality is the license to have a good life (Tremewan, 2002; Reed, Reed, & Calman, 2004; Grey & Bird, 1956; Erlbeck, 2000).

commission to resist commodification and commercialisation within the contemporary context of the “creative industries”.

“What does it mean for a critical and committed practice that not only contests the commercialisation of creativity but also the bedrock of ownership that it relies on, to resist being defined as a creative industry?” (Hope, 2011, p.42)

I used several questions²⁶ raised by Hope in her thesis as a springboard for this research. Through a series of projects, I set out to test how to resist becoming commodified into the CA field of the “creative industries”, whether this goal is even possible or desirable, and whether the existing binaries in the field offer a pathway to this resistance.

Caring deception is embedded within a swirling complex of relations between organisations, funders, communities, political ideologies and self-questioning. The notion has a socio-political programme that goes beyond the now marketised precepts that cultural democracy once owned.

I incorporated a notion of care from the ethics of care due to the variety of subjective positions it enables. Care for others, caring with, self care and care for the world are intertwined in the ethics of care while also asking a wider socio-political question of “why is there a lack of care”.

The notion of deception also involves a complex of subjectivities, the artists self deception, being deceived by others and their deceiving of others are likewise intertwined. There is also an artistic deceit, a form that I call the façade. The notion of deception also allows practices of absurdity, humour and fun therefore less serious and less earnest practices that can be advantageous when working within particular communities.

The *social ethics in action* is what I call the fluid and dynamic ethical experience that eventuates when deception and care are negotiated during the process of the making of the art work. This can lead to adaptations and evolutions in the form of the art work during the process. Caring deception allowed me to control the concept yet also allows input and transformation by others.

²⁶ Hope also raised the question of the importance of artists and “misbehaviour” in the context of cultural democracy in her PhD thesis.

Within each project relationships were established with not only the collaborators but connections made between the form of the façade, the binary I examine and site based factors of material and social history in the suburb. For example the notion of the instrumental vs the instrumentalised is incorporated into the form of the historic Elbe's milkbar. The ethical judgements made upon teenagers in the Mazengarb enquiry is therefore connected to the manner in which I engaged them and they are treated by others in the community in the contemporary moment.

The architecture I employ as structures for the facades are therefore based in historical and vernacular forms of social and public gathering that also represent sites of conflict and resistance. These facades also represent classic forms used in community art practice in general so the thesis installations are situated within a questioning and critical role of "their own production" within the discipline. Vernacular forms such as fountains, marquees and café's were exaggerated and also made absurd.

As the projects develop I employ a notion of the multi-scalar to move beyond "limiting the frame" to local issues and therefore to avoid the criticism from development studies of reducing the local to solely addressing local issues and the enforcement of "fixed bounded identities". This has also been described in art discourse as ghettoizing the local or the tyranny of the local. My strategy includes developing multiple projects simultaneously, and becoming mobile across communities.

I argue in the exegesis that a historical legacy of socio-political community art does indeed exist in Aotearoa. This thesis asserts that notable art work in this field must contain a theory of how social change occurs. Using interpretation from the "ethics of care", I develop an ethical theory of social change in my own praxis. I locate a history of this praxis in aesthetic practices in Aotearoa, arguing that what makes the art works exemplary is the kind of playfulness between the socio-political model of the social ethics in action and the representational strategy²⁷. This sets the methodology of caring deception that I develop through the suite of projects.

I respond to the initial impasse, the ethical turn, by creating an absurd erupting geothermal fountain, examined in Chapter 2, with *The Public Fountain* (2012), for a

²⁷ Throughout the exegesis I refer to a small representative group of artists in Aotearoa and internationally whom I regard as having made this connection, including: David Mealing, Suzanne Lacy, Local Time, and Sally Morgan among others.

local festival in Tāupo²⁸. The affective²⁹ qualities, both healing and social, of geothermal water are contrasted with the corporate control of resources and the selling-off of state assets. The resulting conflicts between visiting artists, civic fountain politics and indigenous copyright set the scene for the subsequent impasses. In Chapter 3 the coloniser vs. colonised is built into *Te Ao Mārama* (2013) and *The TEZA site*, (2013) while the impasses of an assets vs. deficit based model and instrumentalism vs. instrumentality are incorporated with the *Wainuiomata Water Festival* (2015) and *Elbe's Milkbar* (2015). In Chapter 4, the long term vs. short term project and activism vs. symbolism binaries are revisited for *Just in Time (JIT) Community Centre* (2015) and the *Titahi Bay Boatshed Festival* (2015).

The final presentation exhibition, *Ministry for Vulnerable Suburbs* (2016) (MVS) was the resolution to the methodology of caring deception. I expanded the multi-scalar to move from the suburbs to the heart of the governmental, embassy and ministerial precinct in Thorndon Wellington. In the narrative that the thesis explores the MVS becomes the final façade. A grand old residence that was historically linked to parliamentarians and where the governmental façade was literally attached to a colonial suburban cottage. With MVS I brought the suburbs to occupy the centre of national politics to demonstrate how the notion of caring deception keeps allowing the terms of the collaboration to be re-negotiated.

MVS was framed within the context of community art. Neither performance art, installation art nor questions of the archive, collection or curatorship formed the methodological frameworks for the thesis propositions or presentation exhibition. The central methodology for the presentation was therefore to approach how to present documentation from the PhD projects in a way that could represent the complexity of the original events and this required a dynamic and complex site with layers of generative meanings within an understanding of cultural democracy. I resolved the complexity of presentation for the purposes of PhD examination as well as extending the trajectory of the past projects into the space of the city and centralised power. The MVS provides a container and context within which the trajectory of the thesis projects could further expand into the heart of the capital city.

²⁸ Tāupo is a central North Island township, the centre of geothermal energy production and tourism to Lake Tāupo.

²⁹ I use “affective” to refer to a generalised “relating to, arising from or influencing feelings or emotions” (www.merriam-webster.com).

Philip Auslander describes documentation as more aligned with “the ethnographic tradition of capturing events” (Auslander, 2006, p.6). I was therefore not addressing ontological questions of the archive such as the relationship of meaning of the authenticity of the original events to subsequent reinterpretation. Neither was I attempting to create work for posterity in the art world (Auslander, 2006, p.3). By selecting and occupying an abandoned salubrious residence at Parliament Street the viewers would mostly be outsiders to the suburbs where the thesis projects had been based. With the choice of site therefore I encouraged the viewer to consider their own relationship to the suburban art projects, to privilege and how they might negotiate care and deception in the production and context of this new framing.

1.2 The ethics of care.

“Educators still do not know much more about value-and-ethics education than Socrates did 2,500 years ago when he told Meno that he did not know how values were acquired or whether they could be taught at all. These questions still require answers.” (Dolgoff, 2012, p.14)

Berleant, a philosopher of aesthetics, states “relating the theory of the arts to social thought has rarely been attempted” (Berleant, 2005, p.24). Ethicist Noel Carroll also suggests that “we still understand virtually nothing about the behavioural consequences of consuming art.” (Carroll, 1998, p.133).

A discussion between Socrates and Menos about whether virtue could be taught or was innate, resulted in Socrates’ proposing the concept of “aitias logismos” as a solution. Burnyeat claims that this phrase refers to “working out the explanation to something” (Burnyeat & Barnes, 1980, p.187), which has significance for community art practices that aim for action-based results where ethics is based in a “working out” through an action or activity rather than a finished product.

Dolgoff argues that the difference between values, ethics and morals is that values are concerned with what is “good and desirable”, ethics with what is “right and correct”, while morals are “rules or standards that define acceptable behaviour” (Dolgoff, 2012, p.25). Extending Dolgoff’s analysis, it could be considered that values are also concerned with what might be bad and undesirable, ethics with what is wrong and incorrect and morals with unacceptable behaviour. Dolgoff’s definition suggests that we can sense and feel values and ethics, whereas morals are encoded

through language and institutions. This definition is useful because it places ethics between values and morals, and, as Dolgoff asserts, ethics, as in the ethics of care, is concerned with “context-sensitive deliberation that resists abstract formulations of moral problems”. (Dolgoff, 2012, p.60).

Both Hannah Arendt (Arendt, 1989) and Doug Ashford propose similar ideas, arguing that aesthetics involves the way we recognise whether our own responses to sense stimuli are similar or dissimilar to others, and is therefore the force that instigates ethics. For instance, Ashford states “we have empathy with other people when identifying with the collective effort to make our subjective selves feel different” (Time, 2006, p.68). Aesthetics and ethics are sensory and action based, changeable, and always becoming in any given social relation and situation.

John Dewey (Dewey, 2005a) like Wittgenstein in *Tractacus* (Hagberg, 2014) believed ethics and aesthetics were intrinsically bound up with one another. The contexts within which art and ethics circulated were, in Wittgenstein’s words, “huge and impossibly large” (Hagberg, 2014), while in Dewey’s (see Chp. 2) estimation, the “collective civilisation” of their production and reception opposed moral norms.

As a philosopher of the significance of everyday experience, Dewey thought of the aesthetic as an experience situated in the context of a society, relations between people, and the productive/industrial relations of a particular time and place. Due to his proposition that aesthetics was not a judgment to be drawn on a particular art work, Dewey critiqued the enlightenment fallacy that the aesthetic philosophers such as Kant and Schopenhauer had fallen into, where the individual ego became the sole arbiter of aesthetic effects and affects.

While the ethics of care is often primarily concerned with caring work and labour, it also falls into the discipline of moral philosophy. Margaret Urban Walker (M. U. Walker, 1998) has a similar theory of ethical practice as that formed from theory from Dewey and Dolgoff. Joan Tronto describes Walker’s meta-ethical theory as the “expressive-collaborative model”, concerned with the “expression, agreement and collaboration about the meaning of morality in any community” (Tronto, 2013, p.53) and how this can lead to an ethic of responsibility.

Sedgwick makes a crucial connection between aesthetics and care, addressing the affects of texture as follows: “textural perception always explores two other questions as well: How did it get that way? and what could I do with it?” (Sedgwick, 2003, p.13).

This relatively simple statement holds the most radical productivity for the social artist, and can be extended to other modes of art practice. The materials used, the form of the object, the *way* of making things, the environment of exhibition all require questions to be asked: “How did it get that way? What could I do with it?”. This suggests a social ethics in action as artists produce an aesthetic relationship to materials, forms and relationships, to people and non-human things³⁰, that can be recognised by others.

Carol Gilligan and Joan Tronto also ask wide-ranging questions, such as “how do we come not to care, [and] how do we come to lose the capacity for empathy and mutual understanding” (Gilligan, 2011). They consider alternative frameworks for care, such as Tronto’s long interest in the way that care should be central to democracy (Tronto, 2013), formulating approaches for altering asymmetrical power relations in care. This notion also has relevance for the perceived low status of art works that involve care (Lloyd, 2015). Tronto’s typology of a “democracy of care” includes a complex of self care, care for others and care for the world. Tronto criticises what she describes as the conventional understanding of “care” understood as a “care-giver” (Tronto, 2011). In her definition, as well as Fisher’s, “care” can be a “caring about, a caring for, care giving and care receiving” (Tronto, 2011, p.36).

An important strength of ideas drawn from “care ethicists” is that they extend the ethics debate beyond where the arts praxis for CA often begins and ends: that of human rights and social justice based on an assumed social transmission of positive affects. Care ethicists are concerned with where and how particular values arise, and how these are embodied in nuanced interpretations of a broad range of affective states and responses that guide the ethical relations of any given relationship in a community. I extend notions of the care ethicists to imagine how these values are embodied in the relations of making of an art work with any given community, which includes an aesthetics of the materials used and an embodied facade.

Tronto considers a broad spectrum of care relationships that brings us back to the myth of care, and its wider implications for artists other than simply “care giving”.

³⁰ There may be similarities drawn between theorists such as Jane Bennett and Bruno Latour’s philosophy of the “non-human” and their dissolving of philosophical boundaries; for instance, between “humans and nature”. However this thesis establishes different binaries to dissolve as mentioned above. Any dynamic agency between materials and humans is considered within an ethical rather than philosophical framework.

Wilhelm Reich describes the ancient Graeco-Roman “Myth of Care” as an origin myth that underlies the field of the ethics of care (Reich, 1995). While Care (Cura) was crossing a river, she fashioned a human being from the mud. Life was breathed into the figure by Jupiter, then a debate ensued between the gods about who the figure should be named after. Eventually it was decided by Saturn that Care should have and hold the being forever, which would be named after the humus from which it came. The uniqueness of the “Myth of Care” is that, rather than an adversarial struggle to define humanity, it conveys an understanding of the way that care is central to what it means to be human and to live out a human life (Reich, 1995, para.6). Thus, care is the defining quality of what it is to be human.

Yet, even in the gentle and positive “Myth of Care” there is an element of complexity of the ethics of care and its related power struggles. Reich describes the ambiguity of care as the struggle between “care as burden and care as solicitude” (Reich, 1995, para. 4). Cares can refer to the worries and anxieties that can drag us down while also referring to attending to the welfare of others and self. It is both because we worry that we can care and because we care that we worry, while it is also a human desire to be care-free. This ambiguity, which can be seen to define what it is to be human, between the struggle for survival and recognition, caring for others, the earth and oneself, represents the ethical dilemma at the heart of CA practice. I take the approach throughout this exegesis that care is a site of conflicting values, so my own worries and struggles with care, power relationships and survival are interwoven with a caring for others and the environment.

The fields of the “ethics of care” and moral philosophy allow more nuanced understandings of the ways that values and ethics are negotiated through SEA practices. In this thesis, I move beyond the generalised values of cultural democracy and the positive values and affects in which they are often framed. Deception is considered to generate potentially positive facades, such as deceit and resentment, that can initiate a dynamic social ethics in action.

1.3 Methodology

“Freedom and expression are not opposed to obligation and care” (Jackson, 2011, p.14),

“However, much of the debate is predicated on binarisms of evaluation. Jackson outlines some polarizations that have informed the debates that the art world has constructed around this type of work: “1) social celebration versus social antagonism; 2) legibility versus illegibility; 3) radical functionality versus radical unfunctionality; and 4) artistic heteronomy versus artistic autonomy.”³¹ Such constructs overshadow the complexity, the uniqueness, of each art-work. The binarisms hold steady a particular ontological view, reinforcing certain subjectivities and limiting capacities.” (Coombs, 2014, para.12)

In the above quote, Gretchen Coombs refers to how the polarisations of evaluation are restrictive, and can in fact limit new “subjectivities and capacities”. Throughout this text, I suggest that the contested ideals and values of cultural democracy have contributed to what critics have discussed as the emergence of a series of emergent binaries in the discourse (Coombs, 2014; Jackson, 2011; Thompson, 2015). I use versions of these binaries, specifically ameliorative vs. disruptive, coloniser vs. colonised, instrumental vs. instrumentalised, ambiguous vs. didactic, long term vs. short term and assets vs. deficits as frameworks within which to shape a series of art works. I treat these binaries as *impasses*. I refer to *impasses* as positive obstacles; they are territories, generative in the sense that I want to move through them, and traverse them physically and bodily. They are affective, as they must be experienced to become known³¹.

This thesis takes the binaries of evaluation as a challenge, and sets off through a series of art projects to “remodel” them. I created projects that would inevitably rub up against the cyclical debates occurring in the art world. While working on the projects described in this thesis, artist friends often asked me “so apart from the community art, what art work of your own are you making?”. Or, they would wryly inquire “so what earnest project are you working on this time?”. Similarly fixed attitudes could be found coming from leaders in community organisations, stating “there’s so much hardship, we just need some art to make everyone feel good” or “you’re the artist, you’ve got all the great ideas, we just have boring ideas”. Other times I would hear from Māori groups “but why are you here; are you studying us?” or,

³¹ The Māori word *rongōna*, suggests the meaning that what is felt is what becomes known known, is the best term I can find to describe this.

“we don’t need outside artists telling us how to organise community art projects, we’ve been doing it this way forever”. I believe statements such as these indicate that the tensions surrounding CA practice exist in the wider world of thought, alongside the binaries within art world discourse.

James Elkins³² discusses doubt as a fundamental scientific paradigm, arguing that through falsifiability, art practice can examine some inherent problems in the field. Elkins talks of having to define art practice as a series of acts rather than something inherent in the art work itself (Elkins, 2009, p.124). Artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles describes her methodology in contrast to a scientific paradigm, since “the artist can question and re-define anything at any step and the scientist won’t do that” (cited by Spaid, 2002, p.4). Yet, Elkins, via the employment of Karl Popper’s “falsifiability” paradigm, suggests parallels with scientific methodology. The continual setting up and challenging of the binaries within community art practice constitutes a theoretical methodology for this thesis. This process is considered as creatively generative and it can challenge and question who is producing aesthetics, examining ethics and democracy beyond the University and into the community and its constituent organisations.

Suzanne Lacy’s art works were a key influence on the development of this thesis. Lacy describes how, in her artistic methodology, a caring response develops after an intuitive and affective image surfaces. Therefore, rather than Lacy’s art works representing a “do-gooder” or “healing and spiritual” approach as Maria Lind claimed³³, Lacy pursues complex intertwined aesthetic processes of her own and others’ deception. For example, with a work like *Whisper the waves, the wind* (1984) Lacy describes how the idea “began as an image of older women dressed in white... but as work on it progressed I’ve delved deeper into my own experience, and fear, of approaching death” (Lacy, 2010, p.154). Lacy therefore describes how her methodology³⁴ does not begin with a desire to create an art work on the oppression of

³² James Elkins (see www.jameselkins.com/4fourteenreasons...) has been important for “rethinking” approaches to methodology in practice-based PhD’s (e.g., art). For instance, in place of “research” and “knowledge” he proposes other concepts, such as “understanding”, “meaning”, “expression” and “affect”.

³³ Lind makes these claims in her article “Actualisation of Space”(Lind, 2004).

³⁴ Mary Jane Jacob discusses a similar methodology for working with artists for the *Culture in Action* (1991-1993) public art project: “Instead what happened came about in a real, organic

older women, but rather an “an urge to respond to a situation and the inspiration of an image sort of float around together and shape each other” (Lacy, 2010, p.153). Thus, there is a complex of caring and deception from her own deceit of death, an imaginary image in the caring engagement with older women, resulting in a final visual and conversational performance. Lacy was also pivotal in analysing her own processes and relationships, and the conflict between the artist and a non-art audience.

“As we deepen our critical and political perspective, we are less likely to find acceptance or understanding from an elaborately conditioned mass audience...we risk becoming co-opted or trivialized by the value system that controls information allowed into the mass arena” (Lacy, 2010, p. 113)

“One asks that we continually challenge our own concerns, understanding how they fit into an involved, sophisticated, and highly manipulated social order; the other, that we learn how to effectively communicate with audiences outside the art world” (Lacy, 2010, p.113).

The discourse in the field of SEA practice has been dominated by a pragmatic and theoretical politics and ethics typified by the circulation of ideas represented by Grant Kester, Gregory Sholette, Claire Bishop and Sophie Hope. This *mélange* of arguments tends to pull the discourse in three directions: towards practical solutions through activism; the abstract subjective responses of an imaginary spectator (or participant); and the overlap of CA with the realpolitik of community development and social policy. Therefore most ethical discussions in community art practice centre on the ethical involvement of the artist with their participants or collaborators (Bishop, 2004; Kester, 2004), a political theory analysis (Charnley, 2011; Mouffe, 2007; Rancière, 2006) or the ethics of labour and cultural policy and practice (Breitbart, 2013; Dimitrakaki & Lloyd, 2015; Hope & Richards, 2015).

However, a nuanced concept of the function of aesthetics has been left out of this discourse. Although Bishop has always argued to retain artistic merit as a vital method for evaluating the success of SEA projects, she has failed to account for the way that aesthetic qualities inform ethical values. With Kester’s concept of “dialogical aesthetics” he likewise admits that he fails to account for the visual and haptic qualities of art works (Kester, 2004, p.189). Hope’s interest in cultural democracy

way. But “organic” was taboo then, as was intuition, because these were not valid business-like words.” (in interview with Tucker, 2011).

seems to have increasingly propelled her away from aesthetics towards the role of social-work researcher. Claire Doherty refers to socially engaged artists maintaining a “creative illusion”, enabling them “to operate between a state of embeddedness and critical distance” (Doherty, 2015, p.15). However, Doherty’s argument has parallels with Bishop’s reliance on several assumed oppositional strategies, such as disorientation, displacement, or disruption (Doherty, 2015, p.15), as supporting an aesthetic regime.

While not ignoring these methods, my specific intention is to unravel the ethics in action, as an aesthetic practice. With each new project a new impasse is created, based on one of the key binaries in the discourse. Therefore, as the thesis moves forward, I overcome one impasse only to incorporate the next. I regard the impasse not as static and textual, but as dynamic and textural, as both a social ethics in action and an aesthetic. The impasse can become embodied in the facade. The facade is the form of the impasse, and can be felt before it is known. Therefore the facade can become a physical form, yet may also include other peoples’ actions, responses, creations or even refusals. I use caring deception as a way to breathe life back into the field of CA practice. I recuperate a sensory-based aesthetics back into a socio-political discourse because this is how many artists work, and because there have been few attempts at this recuperation³⁵. Caring deception includes a responsibility of the artist to understanding the community they are working with, the support structures and people who enable that relationship to develop, as well as accounting for the power of emotional relationships. In the context of socio-political community art I practice this doing of aesthetics, as an experience which takes place socially between the artist and the community they work with.

Grant Kester has suggested there is little understanding in collaborative art practices of how cognitive movement actually occurs, or the mechanisms of social change. This argument has been repeated by others concerned with ethics and values education (Berleant, 2012; Carroll, 2010; Sholette, 2016)³⁶. Ethics and aesthetics are inherently

³⁵ Shannon Jackson (Jackson, 2011,) critiques Bourriaud for oversimplifying “relational art” by claiming the art works he focuses on in his book *Relational Aesthetics* (2002) are based in a materiality of forms (such as dinners). I try to avoid this tendency to aestheticise social relations into forms.

³⁶ Sholette’s position is very different from the more traditional aestheticians. In questioning the oft-stated separation between aesthetics and activism, he claims the power of affective

bound together in Berleant's discussion of what might constitute a social aesthetics, yet he still bases his theory in a traditional philosophical enlightenment position. There is another possibility for the transmission of "values" that is not restricted to philosophical discourse on the impossibility of virtue education and knowledge: ethics can be practiced through aesthetics. John Dewey recognised this notion (Dewey, 2005), which can also be found in the ethics and origins of care in the Myth of Care, a highly tactile and emotional founding myth.

I use the notion of caring deception and apply it to constructions (both real and imagined) of the art installation facade in the suburbs of Aotearoa. The facade is a rich and nuanced form (and language) that suggests both the idea of "keeping a facade" as a bodily-sited performative mode, as well as the facade of an architectural form. As both these modes of the facade are simultaneously aesthetic and ethical, they can encompass practices and responses that might probe a social ethics where it is already ambiguous, between protection and care, yet also make manifest the fake and controlling.

I conceive of an installational art practice as a series of constructions of facades. With each ethical dilemma and binary, a facade is constructed that embodies these contradictions in a material form.

When confronted with a facade, (if it can be recognised) the first questions we might ask are "what is behind the facade?", "is there something to hide or protect?", "am I allowed here?" or "do I belong with what lies beyond?". The facade, like caring deception, is not necessarily a negative aesthetic category and affective state. It is bound up in notions of recognition, understanding, representation, knowledge and how what is felt can become what is known. In being a physical form or thing, the facade can be touched, felt, and experienced, and its origins in the word "face" suggests its importance as a mechanism for interpreting the world via aesthetics, through sensing and touching. We might touch an exterior surface (i.e., a building) to determine whether it is real, wait at the entranceway (front) to gain permission to enter a space, or read a person's face to determine whether they are genuine. Bourriaud discusses how relational interactions invoke Emmanuel Levinas' ethics of

social change does not lie in documentation or conceptualisations "but rather is embedded deep within the structure of the event itself."

the face, defined by Levinas as “the bond with others only made as responsibility”. In Levinas’ conception, the face is usually thought of as the human face, and the face-to-face encounter is a key moment in which responsibility to the “other” is born. Yet, some theorists (Martin, 2016, p.421) have extended Levinas’ notion of face-to-face encounter to animals and even non-living objects.

This thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach informed by multiple fields of research, including art history and critical theory, aesthetics, cultural geography, development studies and the ethics of care and moral philosophy.

1.4 The contextual co-ordinates: The suburb, development and community in Aotearoa

There has been much debate in Aotearoa on class and inequality in recent years, and Max Rashbrooke has edited and published several books highlighting the alarming rise in income inequality in this country (Rashbrooke, 2013). A highly publicised OECD report highlighted the rising gap between the rich and poor in Aotearoa (OECD, 2013), which was also addressed in *The Spirit Level*, (Wilkinson, 2010). Rashbrooke presents statistics demonstrating that the widening gap between rich and poor in Aotearoa has been among the fastest growing in the OECD, warning of the “long running consequences of inequality” (Rashbrooke, 2016).

Like many post-colonial countries with high levels of inequality, Aotearoa has emergent extremes of poverty and social problems in the outer suburbs. The suburbs that were developed post WW2 in response to industrialisation and regional migration to the cities are particularly prone to marginalisation, and several of these suburbs form the specific geographic context informing my practice.

I live in the suburb of Wainuiomata. Many local people distrust the external image that has been created of the suburb, the negative stereotypes that were created from mass media representations such as the TV programme *Heartland* in the early 1990s (O’Neil, 2015)³⁷. These stereotypes were examined in an academic essay on “rural

³⁷ The *Heartland* episode on Wainuiomata in 1994 turned local Chloe Reeves into a minor media celebrity overnight. Her name is still mentioned with disdain at local meetings that I have attended.

masculinities” in Wainuiomata (Longhurst & Wilson, 1999). In 2013–2014, at a time when a local government rebranding of the suburb was gathering momentum, I sought to initiate a creative research practice that could test and challenge the way that grassroots creative practices could intervene and affect official processes of cultural planning and public art curatorial programmes.

One of the recurring tendencies in the discourse is the discussion of the same group of art projects that are increasingly becoming canonical in the field. Thus, even Thompson’s book *Seeing Power* (2015) considers a mostly familiar group of social art projects. Throughout this exegesis I searched for relevant literature about practicing artists in Aotearoa. Seeking to contextualise a history of CA in Aotearoa using a cultural democracy framework, I examined the extent to which CA practice was influenced by the softer US tradition of Jane Addams and ameliorative care, by Rachel Davis-DuBois’ “sharing of cultural values”, or by the radical UK arts approach.

In the US, there is a history linking social democratic aims with the arts, going back at least to the 1930s New Deal projects. Comments from artists such as Stuart Davis 1936 indicate this connection:

“Increasing expression of social problems of the day in the new American art makes it clear that in times such as we are living in, few artists can honestly remain aloof, wrapped up in studio problems” (cited in Adams & Goldbard, 2005, p.44).

David Mealing is an exemplary early Pākehā socio-political artist In Aotearoa. Many of Mealing’s projects from the early 1970s to the present remain under-acknowledged in the history of SEA practice, and form a key legacy for this thesis. In *Blood the River of Life* (BTROL) (1973) Mealing collaborated with the Auckland Blood Transfusion Unit to create a unique SEA project, while also publicising the social service. Installed in the Auckland Building Centre in Auckland’s CBD, the public were invited into a ritual of blood giving. Mealing’s project operated in multiple registers, including social, symbolic and donative, as participants went through the transfusion process whilst in conversation with Mealing and observing themselves being videotaped.

Mealing used very early video technology to create a video resource with the intention that the transfusion service “use it for educational and publicity purposes in-house and in their mobile van when visiting different neighbourhoods, soliciting blood

donations from people in local communities around Auckland”³⁸. The project also worked as an institutional critique, staged in a downtown Auckland commercial premise that might now be called an “expo” centre, containing a variety of display-based retailers. BTROL intervened not only in the sphere of the display commodity architecture but also put forward what was then a radical idea in Aotearoa, that art did not need to be legitimated by an institution, and giving blood could be considered a creative act. Mealing states the only concessions to art practice were a booklet³⁹ outlining the project and the ways in which he conversed with participants while they were having the transfusion.



(Fig. 1) *Blood the river of life* (1973). Video still courtesy of David Mealing.

“Blood the River of Life (1973) echoed Joseph Beuys's famous slogan that “everyone is an artist”, and incorporated Beuys's theory of “social sculpture—the belief that creative thinking can cross disciplines in order to shape the environment, political systems, the economy or the classroom from a chaotic state into a state of form or structure” (Hay, 2001, p. 38).

Geoffrey Chappell's booklet *Blood the river of life: a collective art and life study* also discusses contemporaneous art practice from international artists such as Hans Haacke, Hermann Nitsch and Jean-Jacques Lebel to extend Mealing's ideas on

³⁸ Private correspondence with Mealing (Oct.2016)

³⁹ (Chappell, 1973)

political and social revolution through art, life and the body. In Mealing's aesthetic, the symbolic flows and networks of blood within and between bodies and social groupings are likened to rivers (Chappell, 1973, p.9). The material associations enacted in the "making" of the work (the blood transfusions) therefore could link to social flows of exchange that contained the potential for revolutionary shifts in society. The real social service intertwined with Mealing's ritualistic and symbolic structuring of the event. These ideas echo Marcuse's reinterpretation of Marx's "sensual revolution"⁴⁰ and Henri Lefebvre's notion of the body's relationship to space through a network of modalities⁴¹. Both Marcuse and Lefebvre were key theorists for the 1968 student-led Paris Commune from which slogans are also included in Chappell's booklet. In Mealing's BTROL, confrontation and disturbance⁴² are equally mixed up with social conscience, responsibility, ritual and the potential for change. The complexity is refreshing amongst the binaries perpetuated in today's discourse and practice.

Mealing was familiar with international socio-political community art practice. Familiar with artists such as Stephen Willats, Conrad Atkinson and David Medalla and living for a time in the late 1970s in Dartington and attending talks at Dartington College⁴³. Indeed, Mealing's praxis is something like a cross between Lebel and Atkinson. Mealing stated in the media at the time⁴⁴ that BTROL was a success because it connected people with the community. Describing her concept of *Arte Util* (useful art), Tania Bruguera states "Arte Útil is not used to make society work better but for society to work differently" (Kershaw & Bruguera, 2015), arguing that it is

⁴⁰ Marcuse, 2000, pp. 257-267. Marcuse, Herbert, *Nature and Revolution*, in *The Continental Aesthetics Reader*, ed Clive Cazeau, London, Routledge p.259, 2000.

⁴¹ Therefore also echoing Lefebvre's notion that particular "modalities" such as festivals and leisure had the potential to disrupt the body's networks and create revolutionary shifts (Lefebvre, 1991, p.189)

⁴² *Blood the river of life* was labelled a "bloodbath" in a news report at the time (unreferenced news clipping)

⁴³ Dartington College's contextual practice diploma was established by Paul Oliver with lecturers David Harding and Chris Crickmay (in 1978) and continued by Sally J. Morgan in the 1980s. The Art and Contextual Practice course was a unique arts practice course aiming to bring art "closer to real life", stressing the importance of artist's relationships to "community, group work, environmental work etc." The course structure was influenced by the SEA practice of groups such as A.P.G (Artists Placement Group) and artist's Harding and Morgan. see (Crickmay, 2002)

⁴⁴ Unreferenced news clipping.

still important for art to have a symbolic or metaphoric function. This thesis establishes a different methodology to the binary of “usefulness” and “symbolic” functions. The negotiation of care and deception and how it can lead to a social ethics in action that becomes embodied in the art work places a different emphasis on the process and outcomes. Rather than the art vs. life and the individual vs. society binaries that Mealing referred to, the co-ordinates become elements of the engagement itself. Therefore, the criteria of engagement can be established, the way the engagement is negotiated can be followed, and its final form can be observed.

In Aotearoa the radical UK CA movement generally seemed to have a late impact on Pākehā culture. In the 1990s, one of Aotearoa’s longest serving community theatre practitioners Paul Maunder (Maunder, 2010) shifted his praxis to telling other peoples stories through his productions. As Maunder and Barrowman (Barrowman, 1991) claim, in Aotearoa, community theatre coming from a 1930s Left tradition mostly followed a “taking high art to the people” approach. There is a history of Community Cultural Development (CCD) in Aotearoa, particularly from the Artwork project in Auckland in the early 1980s, which continued in a set of principles adopted by Artwork². However, a radical socio-political context is more relevant to this research, and this can be located from the association between artists and the Workers Education Authority (WEA) formed in the 1930s, as examined in section 3.3.

The art projects examined in this thesis were based in Taupo/Turangi, New Brighton/Christchurch, Wainuiomata/Lower Hutt, Titahi Bay/Porirua and Thorndon/Wellington, at a time during which a variety of interdependent organisations were seeking to undertake community development.

Chapter 2: The ethical impasse: The facade of the fountain

2.0 Art as disruption vs. art as ameliorative.

“The theories that attribute direct moral effect and intent to art fail because they do not take account of the collective civilization that is the context in which works of art are produced and enjoyed” (Dewey, 2005, p.360).

The ethical turn impasse is typified by Claire Bishop’s critique that CA projects tend to be evaluated solely on the ethical engagement of the artist with their participants. Bishop claims that the success of CA projects is usually judged principally on a hierarchy of ethical participation, and on an assumption that the type of participation will lead to community empowerment. She claims this deprives CA of the opportunity to be evaluated using more traditional artistic criteria. Bishop’s alternative evaluative criteria is based on an aesthetics of antagonism particularly deriving from theorists Chantal Mouffe and Jacques Rancière (Bishop, 2004; Hewitt, 2012; Hope, 2011; Kester, 2011, Miller, 2016)⁴⁵. Kester’s “dialogical aesthetics” employs a range of context-sensitive criteria: the significance of place, conversational relationships, and building consensus with communities for social justice aims. Thus, Kester has created distance between a more ameliorative art practice and a critical practice. The “social turn” in art has been described as leading to an ethical impasse in the discourse (Bishop, 2004; Lloyd, 2015).

My PhD research began with the polemic between art as disruption vs. art as ameliorative. Kirsten Lloyd suggests this is a persistent divide in art discourse which she names the “shock vs. salve” debate (Lloyd, 2015, p.142). This divide appears to have resulted in the ethical impasse by which aesthetic and ethical considerations are split between an “abstracted” and “discursive” understanding of ethics (Lloyd, 2015, p.142).

⁴⁵ Recent criticism from Jason Miller claims Mouffe has sought to distance her theory of agonism from a simplistic co-option into aesthetics that would claim negative and cynical gestures can in themselves bring about “new forms of subjectivity” (Mouffe cited by Miller, 2016, para 21).

2.1 The Public Fountain (2012, Tāupo)

I created the project *The Public Fountain* (2012) around the “shock vs. salve” debate. The project was commissioned by Letting Space⁴⁶, a public art commissioning organisation, in collaboration with the 5-day Tāupo Erupt Festival. (2012). This was the first of three projects commissioned by Letting Space over the following four years. Letting Space directors Sophie Jerram and Mark Amery travelled with myself on three prior research visits to Tāupo, and were actively engaged in communications with the festival director, local council, and festival administrators, and provided technical and facilitation help with workshops and meetings.



(Fig. 2) *The Public Fountain* (2012). The apparatus.

I submitted multiple proposals, and through an informal process of talking to local people, the festival organisers and commissioners decided on a proposal to create an interactive, erupting geothermal fountain to be based in the main shopping street of the CBD. The intention was an intervention in the geothermal politics of the Tāupo

⁴⁶ Letting Space have been a key public art commissioning organisation in Aotearoa since 2009, commissioning artists' projects in numerous public spaces, including vacant retail shops, festivals, parks and even advertising agency offices (JWT, Auckland), www.lettingspace.org.nz.

region⁴⁷, through a mechanism that combined both shock and salve. The public were invited to jump up and down on a dance platform connected to the geyser fountain till enough pressure had been built up in a pressure cylinder for the erupting geyser to be manually released. This work was intended to provide an absurd yet engaging sideshow spectacle that, through explosive noises and splashes, disrupted the everyday high street activities. The fountain was built with local ingenuity, incorporating expertise from local engineers while the geothermal water was tankered in from a private bore.



(Fig. 3) *The Public Fountain*. At Turaneï mall.

⁴⁷ Tāupo and Turangi are located in the central North Island's geothermally active zone. During 2011, the issue of asset sales became a major part of the National government's re-election campaign which included the sale of nationalised power companies, including Mighty River Power, which owned and operated a geothermal electric generation facility. The private power generation company Contact energy also operated multiple geothermal plants and had been for a number of years at the centre of litigation from local organisations led by Tāupo District Council for causing land subsidence (collapsing ground), noise and river pollution. Contact was also moving ahead under new fast track resource consent rules to establish more wells and generation plants.

Contrasted with this “delegated performance” (Bishop, 2012) was a programme of more traditional CA activities. These included daily “story-telling”⁴⁸ workshops in which a range of scientists, business people, activists, iwi representatives, writers, youths and others were invited to share their own perspectives on the impact of geothermal development. A set of blank page books were also dispersed into the community, in which people were encouraged to write their own stories then pass the book on. The forums were open to the public and based on general themes such as “development”, “creativity” etc. On the fifth day, *The Public Fountain* became mobile and travelled to the township of Turangi on the southern shores of Lake Tāupo. This ameliorative approach I related to the materiality of geothermal water itself. The historic hot pools were, and still are, sites of healing, bathing, cooking, socialising, relaxing, and cleansing. I thought this site should function as hot-pools had functioned for hundreds of years in Aotearoa, as a site of public assembly, conviviality and salve.



(Fig. 4) *The Public Fountain*. Public forum “Geothermal power and development”.

⁴⁸ The idea of creating a story-telling platform near the fountain was influenced by the “meetings and workshops” style that was often a feature of Letting Space projects.

On the first trip to Taupo as a fact-finding mission, a Ngāti Tūwharetoa⁴⁹ representative informed me there was already some ill-feeling amongst the Tūwharetoa iwi related to the previous use of the Erupt motif (the erupting geyser) for the Taupo Erupt festival without consultation and without being informed by Tūwharetoa beliefs. This created a dynamic of tension around the project, facing potential criticism, and rekindling previous historical failings of the festival organisers. As a social project, this begged the question of whether we were aiming to right previous wrongs, and I considered seeking official iwi approval.

This became my first real connection with the idea (mentioned in much greater depth in Chapter 4) of how local cultural beliefs and practices co-habit or can be colonised by contemporary roaming festival artists (Kwon, 2002). I was advised by the iwi representative (as I would be on a number of other occasions in the future projects discussed here), that it can be more trouble than it is worth to go through an official consultation process with the iwi council for a temporary art project that will only last a week.

Another issue that became evident was a long-running history of public fountain politics that already existed in Tāupo. The generic public fountain is still considered a major representation of civic and community pride and sophistication. Various community, council and local sculpture trust people in Tāupo had been lobbying for a major permanent public fountain, yet over time the project had mostly been abandoned. Turangi had also been developing the potential construction of a public fountain, but plans for this fountain had also been exponentially growing in extravagance and cost, to the point of losing community traction. It was thought *The Public Fountain* might revive enthusiasm for past costly and divisive fountain proposals. *The Public Fountain* project therefore tapped into civic efforts and politics I had initially been unaware of. It became clear that public fountains are still considered a signifier of a community's cultural coming of age, being seen as a potential tourist attraction and gathering place.

Beyond the local politics of geothermal development, asset sales and the detrimental effects of the energy industry, I created *The Public Fountain* as a strange civic re-

⁴⁹ Tūwharetoa are the Māori tribal (iwi) authority who have ownership/guardianship over tracts of land of the central North Island and business interests including forestry and energy production.

creation of what had been lost from the Tāupo region: the geyser. The once world-famous Wairakei Geyser Park (nearby to Tāupo township) had lost its geysers since geothermal energy production began in Wairakei in the 1960s, because mining the geothermal aquifers depletes the pressure and field over time⁵⁰. Moreover, the private energy company Contact Energy put resources into mitigation of the destruction they caused, including the creation of artificial silica terraces and study scholarships for local Māori. There is a deep paradox here that what has been taken away is seen to be given back. The etymology of the word “mitigation” itself means to render less violent, or to alleviate a disease or evil. It would seem the erupting geyser fountain could have succeeded as a mitigation offering, and the owner of one of the “fake” geothermal attraction parks was interested in acquiring the device after the festival.

I intended *The Public Fountain* to sit in this uneasy position as a reminder of what had been lost in the name of the public good (energy production) yet also its complicity as a potentially healing “attraction” for a civic event. The public genuinely seemed to enjoy energetically pogo-ing up and down on the platform attempting to inflate the impossibly large pressure barrel. This project embraced the conflicting value judgements occurring at this site between aesthetic values and economic ones, between private and public goods and how they are activated in public space⁵¹. Sholette uses Marcuse’s description of *unfreedom* in this statement:

“Which is to say, perhaps the most unsettling aspect of artistic activism may not be the viral video or spectacular photograph but the moment participants and bystanders are temporarily disengaged from familiar social narratives and forced to confront their own tacit state of *un-freedom*”. (Sholette, 2016).

Attendance at many of the “story-telling” forums was often around only eight to ten people. Although interesting and productive exchanges between a range of different fields, the activity did not seem to have broad appeal. Perhaps there was a lack of

⁵⁰ A GNS scientist used a Powerpoint presentation at the story-telling forums to explain this process to large groups of students.

⁵¹ Contact Energy had also been lobbying for controls and regulations of local use of the geothermal resource. Many locals with private bores for their own hot-pools or home heating systems would not publicly discuss how many bores or to what uses they were put. Private bores seemed to form a site of resistance to corporate control.

focus for the conversations. As one woman told me, “we have been debating this for 10 years and we’re sick of it”. It appeared to be a demanding expectation at a local public art festival that people would be expected to engage in politically charged conversations. Tāupo had a long and polemical history of community debate and protest about the detrimental effects of geothermal development. Some comments were made that “we” were radicals and stirrers from “Wellington”. We found it difficult to get a Geological and Nuclear Sciences (GNS) scientist to come and discuss the lifecycles of the geothermal aquifers, but eventually a water scientist ran a well-attended session for high school and primary students on the loss of pressure of the aquifers over time. One member of the local Concerned Citizens who described himself as the local “pain in the butt” became very engaged in the entire project. He set out to record the stories of a passing generation who had clashed against the power of the power generation companies. He aimed to reveal a history of industrial sickness and how any small-scale local attempts of using the geothermal resource for industrial purposes had been litigated by the large power companies. He turned out to be too late in two cases, which upset him that a generation was passing with stories to tell. However, he did begin to compile a history. One of the most popular days of the fountain was in its one day at Turangi Mall. There, dance music from the mobile radio station run by the D.A.N.C.E Art Club accompanied participants on *The Public Fountain* interspersed with conversations and political talk on the state of the local waterways.

2.2 Local Time and For the Love of the People.

Maria Lind discusses two well-documented social art projects, Thomas Hirschhorn’s *Bataille Monument* (2002) and *Oda Projesi* (Lind, 2004) as both engaged in producing new kinds of public monuments. Lind contrasts *Oda Projesi*’s “monument composed of gestures from everyday life and layers of memories of the community” (Lind, 2004, para.10), with Hirschhorn’s self-consciously “art” monument constructed “using 'low' and perishable materials...typically dedicated to 'great' men like Spinoza and Deleuze” (Lind, 2004, para.11). Lind argues that both projects differ in their own ways from Suzanne Lacy’s *new genre public art*, which she claims was involved in “healing and spiritual practice” that is about “reform” and “do-gooder rhetoric” in relation to “the other”. In contrast, Lind argues that “*Oda Projesi* are not out to campaign in order to

improve the world”⁵² (Lind, 2004, para.9). Lind’s argument centres on the ethics of “being with others” (Lloyd, 2015, p.141). The shock vs. salve debate, and the ethical impasse is based on this simplification of ethics to a “being with others”⁵³. I agree with Kirsten Lloyd that the disruptive and ameliorative are intertwined in the pre-occupation with analysing this “being with others”, such that one is the flipside of the other.



(Fig. 5) Paula Atatagi at the commercial cleaners picket. 1999. *For the love of the people*. Photographer; Lynette Shum. Courtesy Anne Noble.

In Aotearoa, a similar distinction can be drawn between Anne Noble’s collaborative project *For the love of the people* (1999) and the collective Local Time⁵⁴ projects *Waiariki* and *500m Wai-te-mata* (2013 Auckland Triennial). Considered in Lind’s

⁵² Lind’s use of language contains the critical antipathy to the “healing” approach to CA. Grant Kester (Kester, 2004), Eve Sedgwick (Sedgwick, 2003) and Shannon Jackson (Jackson, 2011) have unpacked this antipathy as originating in post structural “troubling” and modernist art discourses (such as the writings of Adorno).

⁵³ Pablo Helguera’s recent handbook *Education for socially engaged art* continues this distinction between ‘disruptive’ vs. ameliorative’ art projects, and he furthers the emphasis on “being with others” by emphasising an interpersonal taxonomy which he breaks down into: “1. Corresponding vs. conflicting interests, 2. Exchange problems, 3. Information conditions” (Helguera, 2011, pp.31-33).

⁵⁴ See; <http://www.local-time.net>

framework, these art works would be reduced to Noble's interest in collaborative documentary practice as a form of participatory action research (PAR)⁵⁵, while Local Time's actions might be considered grand aestheticised gestures of protest on Auckland Harbour. However if considered in a framework of affective processes of social change, a more fruitful analysis is possible. In such a framework, *For the love of the people* can be understood as a response to the resentment (discussed further in 5.2) of service workers to labour conditions in the late 1990's, including the lack of redundancy pay, the absence of guaranteed work, and very low minimum wage rates. Noble worked in a role she describes as like an "architect"⁵⁶ in a wide-ranging collaboration that included the SFWU (Service and Food Workers Union), local service workers in the Hutt Valley (Wellington), HVCA (Hutt Valley Community Arts organisation) and photographers to produce an exhibition that championed group decision-making and the everyday culture of the workers. What resulted, rather than simply becoming a "do-gooder" social service, was an exhibition space that the community came to own (described by Noble as a dynamic social space populated by families and friends) along with considerable national media coverage, such that by the end of the year, legislation had been passed for minimum wages, redundancy and contracts for food and service workers (The new Employment Relations Act, 2000).



(Fig. 6) *Water Action 500m Law - Waitemata* - July 28 2013 – 1200-1600 (+1200). Courtesy Local Time.

⁵⁵ Noble mentions that she was interested in overturning traditional power relationships between the artist and participants, in part influenced by Martha Rosler's practice. (Conversation with the artist, 2016).

⁵⁶ Private conversation with Artist. (2016).

Local Time often implemented an aesthetics of protest in their actions that includes “continuing our interest in the protocols of hosting and the practices of customary authority over land”⁵⁷. Customary authority, hosting and protest are intertwined in the actions Waiariki and 500m Wai-te-mata (two actions of three for the 2013 Auckland Triennial⁵⁸). Thus water from a CBD stream “Waiariki” was served to visitors of the Triennial. Meanwhile, the 500m action engaged multiple inflatable rescue boats (IRBs) and a historical protest vessel, Vega, on Auckland harbour, to publicise new anti-protest at sea legislation⁵⁹. The resource of the mostly buried waterway of Waiariki is a treasured resource of local mana whenua⁶⁰, it has been used by Ngāti Whatua⁶¹ for centuries before European arrival. Because the water is distributed after consultation with mana whenua, there has been an appropriate tikanga. In contrast, the new legislation makes it easier for foreign (especially oil exploration) companies to prospect without disruption from protestors. In this work, the public were asked to consume the Waiariki waters and its questioning of ownership, extraction of resources and the selling off of Aotearoa’s resources, including its water supplies.

In both of these projects, an ethical concern to engage respectfully with “the protocols of others” can be observed, yet they also contain strong political critiques of the ways resources are managed by the current and past National Government, whether natural or human. Affective processes of resentment are revealed not just as motivational responses (for example the mobilisation of workers) but also in the

⁵⁷ See; (“Local Time—Footscray (5-Feb-2014 +1000) « Local Time,” n.d.).

⁵⁸ See; (“Local Time – 5th Auckland Triennial (10-May-2013 +1200) « Local Time,” n.d.).

⁵⁹ Ranginui Walker is quoted by Sophie Barclay on the new legislation amendments in 2012–13;

“And yet, recent amendments to legislation now outlaw protest in the deep sea, undermining the rights of individuals to express their dissatisfaction. “This is an example of the Government’s continued response. It is completely committed to smoothing the pathway for corporates to make money.” (Barclay cites Walker, 2013)

⁶⁰ Mana whenua is defined as “power associated with possession and occupation of tribal land” (www.maoridictionary.co.nz).

⁶¹ Ngāti Whātua are an Auckland iwi whose lands are based on some of Auckland’s prime real estate.

materials and processes of the events, including the workers' stories⁶² or repressed histories of water⁶³ and active protest action. Resentment enables positive action, of negotiation, protest and the making of social spaces. The cultural democratic process aims to question the terms under which democracy is being formed, or eroded.

The Public Fountain was a temporal public monument, but not based on a politics of identity of specific social groups. Neither was it attempting a politics of salvation, or an attempt to pay tribute to famous male philosophers (as in Hirschhorn's case). In my own artistic process, this work emerged as an intuitive image, and, in the way that Lacy describes her own process, it floated around with thoughts about how an erupting fountain might be negotiated by others in a public space. However, the absurdity of the resulting public fountain is a very different response from the ways that Noble, Local Time or Lacy develop their social interactions. I suggest that absurdity can be both a method to engage others' resentment regarding the loss of the geysers in a lighthearted spectacle, raising the question of how we might negotiate social ethics with fun. This work intervened in the local values of corporate development vs. local control of resources, how this debate was being denied a public space in which to be *felt* and how these relationships negotiated civic pride.

The Public Fountain sought an ethics of materials as resources, questioning who gets access to these materials, and who gets to control them. In this sense, I propose that caring deception is a negotiation of *caring for* and *caring about* intertwined material and social relations. I presented an interactive experience that encouraged participation while simultaneously causing minor disruption and casting doubt on its own mitigation offering to the loss of the geysers. This is not to exclude interpersonal relations, but to suggest that human relations are bound up in our care for materials and resources. The *The Public Fountain* also managed to create an aesthetic event and form based on the "shock vs. salve" binary itself. By establishing a sensual connection with geothermal water and moving beyond a simple conflict between "being with others" and more antagonistic assumptions, *The Public Fountain* offered the possibility that a community may come together around a caring and deception of the geothermal resource.

⁶² A cleaner involved in Noble's project states how they were putting their shyness behind them "to stand up for my future" (Promotional brochure, 1999).

⁶³ The Waiariki is described as one of many buried or "hiding" waterways in the CBD.

Chapter 3: The Postcolonial impasse: The facade of the occupation

3.0 The coloniser vs. the colonised

“One of the most significant questions raised by collaborative art practice concerns the pragmatic interrelationship between solidarity, violence and resistance.” (Kester, 2004, p.83)

Kester summarised a critical approach to a “field based approach” to SEA where “a range of social forces, actors, systems and physical conditions operate(ing) at a given site”. This approach includes “the accumulation of subtle experiences of “interaction and negotiation, conflict and reconciliation” (Kester, 2013, footnotes). This field-based approach to criticism influenced how I developed, practiced and now summarise my involvement in the *TEZA New Brighton (2013)* (TEZA) public art event.

The experience of the overly generalised conversation platform, the awareness of the conflict over Tūwharetoa ownership of the erupting motif, and the dilemma of the visiting outside artist encountered during *The Public Fountain* propelled me to develop different collaborative strategies for the next Letting Space project, *Te Ao Mārama* and *The TEZA site* (New Brighton, Christchurch, 2013).

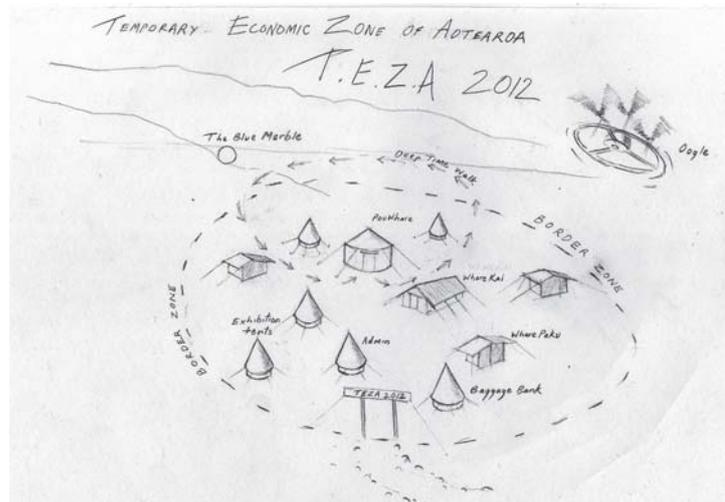
3.1 TEZA (Transitional Economic Zone of Aotearoa) New Brighton, Christchurch, 2013.

Letting Space proposed the idea of a collective of artists colonising a foreign land in an encampment named TEZA. Initially floated as a curated project for ISEA New Mexico (2012), with its awkward, tongue-in-cheek acronym, caught between referencing the free market special economic zone (SEZ)⁶⁴ and Hakim Bey’s anarchistic temporary autonomous zone (TAZ)⁶⁵, TEZA was conceived as a benign occupation where art practices and technologies exploring alternative economies radiated out from a

⁶⁴ SEZs that have been created around the world to circumvent trade restrictions and regulations.

⁶⁵ TAZs such as communes (“In Conversation with Hakim Bey | e-flux,” n.d.)

campsite gathering of “parachute artists”⁶⁶. The New Mexico encampment did not eventuate, but funding was received through Creative New Zealand (CNZ) for a Christchurch-based iteration in 2013.



(Fig. 7) TEZA New Mexico. Site concept sketch. Tim Barlow.

The curators described two of the objectives as follows:

“By creating a zone, we are suggesting a lifting of the old rules of value so that we can imagine a different set of principles based on the commons of social good” and “How a travelling group might work culturally with those who hold mana whenua (customary power) where the temporary encampment rests” (TEZA Brief).

From the outset, the TEZA project sought to tackle, up front, the problem of the “parachute artist as coloniser”. The most pressing questions seemed to include: “what forms of interaction would be suitable?”; “what might be a way to build more meaningful relationships and systems of exchange?”; “what right does this group of artists have to be there and talk on behalf of others?”; “what kind of relationship

⁶⁶ Sally Morgan discusses the term “parachute art”, describing how “Cork talks about it as an established convention in 1991 (Cork, 1991) Art in the city, in: Fisher, M. and Owen, U. *Whose Cities* pp. 131-141. London: Penguin Books. It was later adapted to apply to any artist who appears, unbidden, to put uncontextualised work in any given community.” (Private correspondence with Morgan 2016).

should be developed with mana whenua⁶⁷?”; and “who obtains the requisite cultural capital⁶⁸ out of these new forms of values?”

In Aotearoa, CA and its values are inevitably bound up in colonialism and post-colonialism. CA projects that focus on issues of cultural democracy cannot help but become aware of, and connected to, Māori self-determination, historical grievances and race-relations. How could I not fall into the trap of being the coloniser with my own involvement in this iteration of TEZA? This question propelled me into the post-colonial impasse, which has been well articulated in art discourse by Benjamin (Benjamin, 1970), Freire (Freire, 2005), Owens (Owens & Bryson, 1992) and Foster (Foster, 1996). I refer to this impasse as the coloniser vs. the colonised. Foster extended Owens’ essay *The indignity of speaking for others* to claim that there was a flaw in many artists’ assumption that they can represent an ideological construction of a “cultural other”, because this ignores difference (Foster, p. 178). Conversely, this notion also resulted in the assumption that an artist had to possess alterity themselves to speak for others, and consequently in the 1970’s and 1980’s the “cultural left” in the US had effectively shut down the post-colonial art debate (Foster, p.275–276).

Reflecting on his time in Aotearoa in the 1970s and 1980s, Ian Hunter⁶⁹ claimed in 2000 that the 1970s “was the time of the long (white) silence” and that there was little attempt to engage with Māori artists due to contemporary artists’ preoccupations with the international art scene (McDougall Art Annex, 2000, p.24). Hunter did confront

⁶⁷ *Mana whenua* is defined as “power associated with possession and occupation of tribal land” (www.maoridictionary.co.nz). It is also used to refer to the Māori grouping, often a subtribe (or hapu), who possess this power.

⁶⁸ Pierre Bourdieu refers to cultural capital in general as the way that power can be maintained through symbolic forms. A society’s “symbolic resources” (art, religion etc) can be “accumulated” using “instruments” such as “writing, reading and other decoding techniques” (Bourdieu, 1990, p.125). This simple summary is intended only to indicate that the level with which it was discussed in this situation was that predominantly white middle-class artists who were coming into lower socio-economic and ethnically diverse suburbs would be accumulating the local culture for their own benefit (i.e., for cultural prestige in the art world).

⁶⁹ Ian Hunter was key in organising early public art projects in Aotearoa, such as the alternative artist-run performance venue the Artists Co-Op in Wellington in the late 1970s, organising a major contingent of NZ artists for the 1979 Sydney Biennale, and another major exchange between Australian and NZ artists in Christchurch called ANZART in 1981. Subsequently, in the mid-1980s, he moved to the UK, establishing the Littoral Arts Trust and creating well-known “Littoral art” (see <http://www.littoral.org.uk/>) projects such as Merzbarn, as discussed by Kester (2004).

post-colonialism head-on with his art work *Hot-spots* (1983), an installation created in the office of the director of the National Art Gallery in Wellington. The installational presentation includes “ciba-chrome photographs which appear as central portions of the piece” (Mackie, 1983). The photographs depict the well-known Queen Victoria monument in Wellington splattered in blood-coloured paint, as a result of a protest action on Waitangi Day⁷⁰. Hunter’s interest in social justice for Māori is combined with a culturally democratic value of bringing activist art actions into the highest office of the art establishment, which forms another early example, after Mealing, of institutional critique in Aotearoa⁷¹. However, this early political artwork by Hunter lacks either the social service, or “live” engagement aspects of Mealing’s BTROL. There may be elements of care and deception in *Hot-spots* but the social ethics in action, demonstrated through negotiation with another group or community, is not embodied in the final art work.



(Fig. 8) *The TEZA site* (2013). Built on the Creative Quarter site, seaview road.

TEZA was a 7-day publicly funded art event produced by Wellington-based public art curators Letting Space. The event was based in New Brighton, Christchurch, a seaside Eastern suburb in November 2013. I was one of a group of artists funded by a CNZ

⁷⁰ In Aotearoa, Waitangi Day is an annual holiday commemorating the signing of the foundational treaty signed in 1840 between the British colonists and indigenous Māori. Māori and Pākehā activists use the day to publicise past and current grievances.

⁷¹ Several critics (Jackson, 2011; Kester, 2004; Sholette, 2016) have drawn connections between early conceptualist practices that critique art institutions (institutional critique) as foundational platforms for “socially engaged art”, “social practice art” and activist practices.

grant, while a number of other artists sourced their own funds, principally through their association with universities. Some were involved for no payment, entirely self-funding their involvement. Letting Space also received funds from a number of other organisations including the Canterbury Trust. This event was planned to be a generous and benign autonomous zone where artworks of conviviality and understanding could be undertaken in direct collaboration with local communities.

My proposal for TEZA was based on the design/project management of the campsite. I had produced an initial concept drawing for New Mexico based on the Bell tents, the 19th Century tent of choice for colonial troops in Aotearoa, reportedly invented in the Southern United States during the Civil War (and subsequently exported along with troops for New Zealand's land war campaigns). To add to the ambiguity, the bell tent has become fashionable more recently in the world of "glamping", a far cry from its military origins. I saw my role as similar to that of a cinematic art director or production designer, as someone who produced a visual realisation of a complex of collaborations that brought different perspectives together, facilitating a variety of spaces at the site for the artists and public to use. I planned to design a campsite space that could be used adaptably, flexibly, and dynamically by the local community.

Letting Space partnered my project with artist Te Urutahi Waikerepuru from the iwi⁷² Te Ati Awa⁷³ at Parihaka⁷⁴. We became co-creators of the site, to combine both Māori and Pākehā perspectives for the tikanga⁷⁵, concepts, visuals and materials of this occupation. Te Urutahi conceived of the form of the central unifying spiritual space, the pou⁷⁶, as reflecting Taranaki, the mountain, and a spiritual centre-point of the Te Ati Awa tribe. Te Urutahi named this space a "pouwhare", meaning a house that was also a post or symbolic pillar of support. I was concerned that the pou might reflect the

⁷² Iwi is the larger Māori tribe which often contains smaller tribal groups known as hapu.

⁷³ Te Ati Awa is a Māori tribe associated with lands particularly on the East Coast of the North Island of New Zealand.

⁷⁴ In 1866 The Māori leaders Tohu Kākahi and Te Whiti o Rongomai established Parihaka as a community based on "non-violence, equality and collective action" ("Parihaka" n.d.) in the Taranaki area.

⁷⁵ Tikanga is defined at maoridictionary.co.nz as "correct procedure, custom,... protocol - the customary system of values"

⁷⁶ Pou translates as "a symbol of support, metaphoric post, pillar, sustenance" (maoridictionary.co.nz)

form of the tepee, which the Apache invaders had originally used in their battles with the Pueblo peoples in New Mexico and yet also as the form adopted by the countercultural invaders of New Mexico during the 1960s, who sought to “colonise” the landscape with their temporary communitarian structures. The overall design concept therefore incorporated the temporary occupation camp of military and protest forms with the temporary marae⁷⁷. This was a conscious attempt by the producers at a bi-cultural design/creative process.



(Fig. 9) *Te Ao Mārama*. The spiritual hub.

The TEZA site was the culmination of an 18-month long collaboration between myself and Te Urutahi, Letting Space and two local New Brighton organisations: Renew New Brighton (RNB) and Positive Directions Trust (PDT). The resulting campsite included a central meeting room tent with entranceway and gateway, a hospitality tent, a revamped pavilion/art gallery and a central spiritual space named *Te Ao Mārama*⁷⁸ in

⁷⁷ The marae can refer to the “village” as a whole, but more specifically refers to the meeting ground in front of the meeting house

⁷⁸ “Te Ao Mārama in the Māori world depicts the tangible and intangible, the spiritual and earthly realms. At another level, it can also be described as the world of insight, experience and

the form of a 6-metre-high conical tent fabricated from a material I invented, bi-plastic woven with muka (flax) fibre. Over the course of a week, we held a twice-daily programme of talks from local and visiting artists, administrators, critics, community organisers, facilitators and social entrepreneurs (entitled the *Creative Summit*), and it was designed to be the central gathering point for the commissioned and other artists. In the following section, I describe perceptions, values and the intentions of bi-culturalism associated with the construction and function of the campsite itself. Thus, I focus on the negotiation of the bi-cultural space and form.

In Aotearoa, there is considerable debate about what precisely bi-culturalism refers to, and whether the concept has any contemporary relevance (O’Sullivan, 2007). Whatarangi Winiata outlines a three “house” concept where he describes the existence of a tikanga Maori house, tikanga Pakeha house and a treaty house (cited by Campbell, 2011). The treaty house “symbolizes an unyielding commitment to engage together in dignity and respect” (Campbell, 2011, p.59). As Bronwyn Campbell suggests, “Pakeha have considerable work to do (autonomously) in their tikanga pakeha house” (Campbell, 2011, p.60) and this involves Pākehā becoming more aware, in order to “critically appreciate colonisation, recognise cultural privilege/marginalisation and thereby become better prepared to engage in producing a different future” (Campbell, 2011, p.60).

At the beginning of 2013, Christchurch was 2 years post-earthquake⁷⁹ and there had been an abundance of highly popular temporary and longer term SEA projects developed by local cultural organisations such as Gap Filler, Greening the Rubble, Life in Vacant Spaces, and Festa, which also intersected with many locally-driven

enlightenment.

The pou (post) structure normally located as the central point in the wharehenui (traditional meeting house) symbolises the intangible, interconnecting space that houses the physical and spiritual realms created between Rāngī (Sun Father) and Papatūānuku (Earth Mother) following their separation from each other by Tāne Tokorāngī (deity of humanity).

Tim and I propose that Te Ao Mārama is installed in the TEZA hub area linking Te Ao Mārama within a space where facilitated gatherings of people will be welcomed and embraced and encouraged to share, contribute and participate in an array of activities for the duration of TEZA. Te Urutahi Waikarepuru”, (Amery, 2014). The TEZA catalogue 2014..

⁷⁹ Christchurch suffered a major earthquake in September 2010, then another in February 2011 that resulted in some 185 deaths, 10,000 houses being demolished, and the loss of much of the CBD and heritage buildings. As of 2016, the city is still being rebuilt.

suburban organisations aiming for self determination in post earthquake revitalisation. The prospect of a group of predominantly outside artists flying into the city offering cultural aid created multiple contestatory dynamics around purpose, funding and intent.

There was a multi-platform approach initiated by the TEZA producers (Mark Amery, Sophie Jerram), to debate where TEZA might be specifically located in Christchurch, and other related issues, including what function it might serve. The producers presented the idea at public fora in Wellington and Christchurch. Subsequently, an open call for proposals was distributed in 2012, from which a small group of proposals was selected, including my own. Seven months before the event, an online LOOMIO⁸⁰ group was established, which functioned as a key group to establish “the creative core” of people who could invite others to join, and therefore functioned on an invitation basis. LOOMIO is an open source collaborative decision-making platform created by a collaboration between organisers of the Wellington Occupy movement of 2011 and the Enspiral social enterprise network⁸¹. It served as a significant conversational and decision-making tool for the TEZA group, where general issues for TEZA could be created as new subgroups. Writer Sally Blundell described the TEZA event as demonstrating the “hypermedial” (Blundell, 2014). Indeed, LOOMIO was only one of the media formats utilised, alongside an ongoing website with daily updates and essays, an active Facebook page⁸², an online still-shot live CCTV, radio broadcasts and interviews, as well as the main programming of face-to-face discussions and the artists’ projects.

It becomes relevant here to outline some of the key ideas discussed on the LOOMIO platform. In terms of where the TEZA event should be located, I argued from the start that it should not be in the CBD where most of the previous post-earthquake SEA

⁸⁰ LOOMIO was developed and trialed as an online non-hierarchical and horizontal tool to manage the 17 Tory Street open source/commons space in Wellington CBD, and has since been gaining traction as an open source decision-making tool around the world

⁸¹ Enspiral state their mission goal in a collaborative environment as “Social enterprise ventures and social entrepreneurs working together with shared vision and value”, see; <http://enspiral.com/>

⁸² The digital social media era has on one level created another medium to communication networks, but on the other the very nature of Lacy’s “elaborately conditioned mass audience” has been altered. There is the question of if indeed the democracy of the internet can create more active “producers” of culture as opposed to creating more consumers of conditioning.

projects had taken place. I rather, supported the aims of suburban organisations at self determination, so felt (rightly or wrongly) that we (TEZA, as I am a member of the “creative core”) should base the campsite in a suburban area. The conversation ranged over many of the concerns of the coloniser vs. colonised debate. There was a general agreement on the LOOMIO platform that the CBD had previously experienced an abundance of SEA projects. My position was that these CBD projects supported institutional authorities (local government, Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority (CERA)⁸³, retail organisations, land-owners etc.) for activity in the abandoned CBD. Several of us proposed to base the campsite in Aranui, one of the economically poorest Eastern suburbs and one of the areas hardest hit by the quakes. Some felt that it was dangerous to work in places that had been subjected to repeated “social engineering” attempts in the past⁸⁴

Questions discussed over dozens of pages of online conversation included: “would TEZA be appropriating marginalisation for its own enhancement?”; and “would TEZA be victimising through association and naming?”. The discussion also outlined various conflicts between high art (“capital A art”) and community-based practices. Some artists could not see any connection with an art audience in Aranui, or felt that any presence there should be simply to provide basic needs and services, such as tree planting or donated computers. The spectre of artists temporarily working with under-represented local groups was raised: “were the artists attempting the evangelical mission?”; “were we performing the mythical artist as shaman?”; and “were we potentially being ignorant of local political/social realities?”⁸⁵. Another conversation revolved around the desire to avoid coming into a community as outsiders with the idea of helping them, but finding ways to learn from the resilience and resourcefulness of local communities post-earthquake (i.e., a kind of denial of the politics of privilege and embracing the co-option of local ingenuity). After 2 years of temporary projects in Christchurch, there was a perception of widespread volunteer burnout, so some participants argued that permanent projects and infrastructure were most needed,

⁸³ Canterbury Earthquake Recovery Authority, the overseeing Government authority.

⁸⁴ Although I would argue very successful and unique organisations, for example ACTIS (a community trust that had focused on housing issues) was created in Aranui, admittedly by and for locals.

⁸⁵ Kester describes an example of this with the artist Rirkrit Tiravanja’s *Tomorrow is another day* (1996) in Köln, Germany. The nearby local homeless were being simultaneously evicted while his convivial dinner exhibition had policed admittance at a nearby gallery.

and there was a risk of TEZA being a typical example of an ameliorative post-earthquake gesture. As debate continued and moved away from Aranui, there was a kind of aestheticising of space and place, and talk became focused on an urban corridor to connect the isolation of particular communities. Some locals claimed that the earthquake enhanced the “isolation and fragmentation of particular communities”, so it was suggested TEZA might be connected to the waterways to escape the tyranny of the local. Focus soon settled on New Brighton after the producers made a connection with the organisation Renew New Brighton (RNB). Many locals in New Brighton considered the place as separate from the rest of Christchurch, on its own, or perceived from outside as a “terminal destination with no particular reason to go there” (after its heyday as a shopping mecca in the 1970s) or “the further you go west the more they dislike us”. New Brighton also represented a gateway from the sea to the city and as a place with a strong array of community initiatives underway; there was already a strong alternative economy functioning, and alternative cultural initiatives, among them community gardens, time banks and men’s sheds, were already well-established.



(Fig. 10) Construction work on *Te Ao Mārama*.

I sought conversations with key community organisations to discover whether a project like TEZA would be welcome. I encountered a general sense of volunteer fatigue amongst many community workers involved in established programmes. New Brighton was now more than 2 years post-earthquake, and many considered the place as abandoned by central services. Rubbish bins overflowed in the street and petty

youth crime was rising, with police paying little interest. I talked to someone involved in the original development of structures for the Creative Quarter (a vacant site on the main street run by RNB), and I learned that five structures had been planned in 2012 for the project (in a vacant site on the main shopping mall road where RNB had been running activities) yet only three of the projects received funding and were completed. I discussed the potential remaking of the TEZA site as a finishing off the grander vision that had been unrealised for the Creative Quarter. This would include the re-walling of a pavilion, a main communal/information centre and a sheltered stage. There had been a sail over a now empty stage under which events had taken place for 2 months until it was stolen in broad daylight by a group of people in high-visibility vests.

Positive Directions Trust (PDT)⁸⁶ created a radical work scheme, involving their workers as a daytime security patrol who also assisted with any local needs, and subsequently daytime crime dropped dramatically in the main street area. This initially created a lot of conflict in the community, as there was considerable distrust that they could act as a responsible force. PDT worked with TEZA to build the site, provide security and creative input into some features such as the Gateway design and the murals on the Pavilion.

Te Ao Mārama gradually took shape over the course of the first five days and was finally erected on the Thursday when we located a generous Hi-ab crane operator willing to hoist the structure for free. Many people wandering past stopped by to help work on the project. Although this had not been expressly envisioned, the raising of Te Ao Mārama became a community event with many locals helping in what could be termed a “barn raising” event. The PDT workers expressed pride in the structure they had helped create, and many brought their friends, partners and families to see it.

⁸⁶ Local social development organisation with a focus on work programmes for disadvantaged and disenfranchised Māori and Pasifika.



(Fig. 11) PDT workers and Tim Barlow constructing the entranceway.

When the PDT organisation was promoted in an article by TEZA curator Sophie Jerram (Jerram, 2013), New Zealand artist Barry Thomas accused the group of promoting “free labour as social value” (Thomas, 2013). Tao Wells, another New Zealand artist, commented: “you’re seriously arguing if sweatshop labour is performance art”? (Wells, 2013) asking whether the project might be demonstrating “good gentrification with a round of faux radicality” (Wells, 2013). PDT workers themselves did not appear to be overtly concerned about this, and, according to what they told me, they enjoyed the responsibility as they liked to be seen by the community to be doing useful work. Moreover, earning money with extra hours was making it quite lucrative. However, the comments from Thomas and Wells held some validity. In some cases, PDT workers were verging on becoming indentured labourers, and I discovered the Department of Labour had removed several of their unemployment benefits for reasons like failing to turn up for a job interview. In the ensuing stand-down period, workers were being driven toward poverty or petty crime.

The PDT workers were paid just above a New Zealand hourly minimum wage via contributions from the Department of Labour, PDT, and TEZA. I consider the process of the building and construction a crucial part of the art work, not in the sense of “performance art”, but in terms of identifying the labour context of we “parachute

artists”. We *were* on show on the main shopping street every day labouring at building the TEZA site for two weeks. The ethical dilemma of using local labour gave voice to a significant issue in Christchurch, particularly in the immediate post-earthquake period: the use and abuse of volunteer labour. The larger the number of volunteers engaged in post-earthquake cultural projects seemed to have paradoxically become a badge of honour, a vital signifier of that project’s success⁸⁷. There was a volunteer dilemma at play here, with much research on both sides of the fence⁸⁸.

Shannon Jackson has examined a new typology for social practice art, which she names “supporting structures”, with a recognition of production workers as integral to the form of these art works. With *Te Ao Mārama* and the *Teza Site* the ownership of who produced and made this place was distributed between myself, Te Urutahi, RNB, the PDT workers and the TEZA producers and artists, and became embodied in the shape of the work.

Once we had lifted *Te Ao Mārama* into place, one of the PDT workers told me “Now that’s what I call art”. Later I mentioned to this worker that there was a debate going on amongst the local community about whether we should leave *Te Ao Mārama* standing when TEZA is finished. I told him about the usual doubters claiming that glue sniffers would burn it down, or that it would blow down, or that it would become a liability with no one to take responsibility, and so on. The worker assured me he knew everyone locally and would ensure the safety of *Te Ao Mārama*. He was true to his word; the cloak of the structure did blow off after several months, but when I returned to relocate her to the community gardens 6 months later (the site was up for sale), *Te Ao Mārama* was still standing proud.

⁸⁷ For instance Barnaby Bennett’s book *Christchurch: transitional city, Pt.IV* uses volunteer numbers in its project descriptions.

⁸⁸ There is recent social psychology research supporting the argument that non-materialistic work and generosity increases people’s well-being (Kasser et al., 2014; Kraus et al, 2012), and conversely, the ways that cultural workers and the under-employed feel exploited into volunteer or “work-fare” programmes (Hope & Richards, 2015).



(Fig. 12) *Te Ao Mārama* located to New Brighton community gardens in 2014(1metre shorter). Hilary Wilson (left) and Catherine O’Neil.

The bi-cultural negotiations proved complex. Te Urutahi was TEZA’s official Māori liaison and assigned the duties of undertaking iwi negotiations. However, it appeared to me that she was not given the opportunity to travel prior to the event to meet with local iwi and mana whenua, contravening basic tikanga. Some local Ngāi Tahu⁸⁹ artists thought it should have been the leaders, the producers of TEZA, undertaking these negotiations, while others felt that seeking permission or legitimacy from mana whenua Ngāi Tūāhuriri⁹⁰ would overly complicate the situation for a 1-week long event.

At one stage, I felt so frustrated that communications were not proceeding with Ngāi Tūāhuriri that I drove the half hour north to Ngāi Tūāhuriri marae and barged into the marae office, waving the plans for the site around, seeing if I could interest any of the elders. I felt embarrassed when one of the elders walked away from the conversation, making a parting comment to the effect of “well, it’s art isn’t it? you can do what you like”. I was unsure whether this meant the *TEZA site* gained his approval or his criticism. However, after these initial obstacles, TEZA eventually had two powhiri’s

⁸⁹ Ngāi Tahu are the iwi who represent many of the hapu.

⁹⁰ Ngā Tūāhuriri are a hapu (or subtribe) of the iwi Ngāi Tahu. Ngāi Tūāhuriri have customary ownership over the New Brighton suburban area.

(traditional welcoming ceremonies), one at the Rapaki Marae in the Lyttleton Basin, where connections and histories were established with Te Ati Awa, and a second at the *TEZA site* itself.

I consider the *TEZA site* as a multi-party collaboration, with my contribution to the design evoking visual motifs of two conflicting historical “occupation” campsites. The bell tent form of *Te Ao Mārama* suggested the British military encampments that occupied the landscape of Aotearoa during the New Zealand wars of the 19th century⁹¹. The Māori protest site of occupation was also re-created, with layout protocols such as the gateway entranceway (kūaha) leading to a passageway before the main meeting house. Well-known historical Māori sites of occupation such as Bastion Point, Lake Waikaremoana, and Motua Gardens had all established fully functioning temporary marae that operated according to correct tikanga. In the *TEZA site*, the gateway was formed with two large pieces of driftwood found on the nearby New Brighton beach.

The campsite was deceptive in this sense of being an occupation. TEZA after all had permission to use the Creative Quarter site that RNB administrated. However, many connections were made during the 7 days of TEZA, with local moves towards self-determination and control. Particular communities in New Brighton were organising their own plans for post earthquake redevelopment, groups such as New Brighton Project, New Brighton Business and Landowners Association (and the soon-to-be-launched Strategic Urban Regeneration Force, SURF) became engaged in meetings, floortalks and activities. In addition, I situated the materiality of the bio-plastic ‘cloak of Te Ao Mārama’ within the colonising vs. colonisation binary. The bio-plastic itself was manufactured from monocultural and genetically engineered corn from the United States, so there was an ethical dilemma present in the actual material: “was it better to have a plastic produced from fossil fuels or part of the contemporary American agricultural industry?”⁹². This question embodied the types of contradictions that were embedded in the aims and visions of the week-long arts project of TEZA.

⁹¹ The “New Zealand wars” occurred c.1860-1872. War between British colonial forces and indigenous Māori over control of Māori lands, resulted in illegal land confiscations, imprisonment of Māori, many deaths, and reparations are still being made today by the New Zealand Government.

⁹² Dr Sharon MacGuiver is a waste management expert in Christchurch who discussed this dilemma in regards to Te Ao Mārama and other issues such as the poor waste recovery for bio-plastics in NZ in an article on waste and bio-plastic recovery for artist Kim Paton’s online project for TEZA entitled *Dead Weight Loss*. (ourdailywasteltd, 2014).

A group of Ngāi Tahu artists led by Simon Kaan and Ron Bull consulted with Ngāi Tūāhuriri, and the decision was made for their commissioned TEZA art work to stage a mahinga kai (traditional food gathering feast) in the CBD. Thus, after their own consultations, the decision was made to stage their own occupation alongside Ōtākaro (River Avon), which was the historic site of local Māori food markets. I saw this as a true occupation, a refusal of the terms of the TEZA site colonisers (including myself). In addition, it was claimed to be the first self-determined Ngāi Tahu art event in the post-earthquake CBD (and they did not ask for permission).

So, in one sense, TEZA stayed true to the separateness of the tikanga Māori and tikanga Pākehā house, suggesting that perhaps we have not reached a bi-cultural or treaty house in cultural practice, and that perhaps we do not need to. In my opinion, the deception of TEZA provided a stimulus for Ngāi Tahu artists to drive towards a genuine self-determination and occupation.

3.2 The Palisade of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei⁹³

Every intelligent, non-hierarchical approach that believes in an ethics of co-operation and simultaneously accepts the criteria or principles of the curatorial regime as given, tends to further consolidate and co-manage it. It is then mainly “motifs” that are created, offered, and gratefully picked up on, a favourite occupation of many actors in the art world. (Friedl, 2011, p.62).

Fiona Jack and Ngarimu Blair collaborated with Ngāti Whātua (Auckland) and community volunteers to rebuild a palisade fence that was constructed in 1943 by Ngāti Whātua as a symbol of community resilience, and to maintain privacy, against an encroaching urbanisation roadway that bisected the village from its foreshore frontage (Jack, 2008). The original Palisade was a collaboration between Ngāti Whātua and the Auckland branch of the WEA. Forced land evictions followed the construction of the original fence. Made as part of a New Artland commission⁹⁴ Jack and Blair’s 70 m fence was placed on its original location adjacent to the land, which now exists as a public park. The process of building the fence is described by Jack as an important part of the materialism of the project with many collaborations forming a collective experience.

Palisade was described as part of a trend towards “inter-personal activity and social exchange” in a Melbourne exhibition *Collective Conscience 2008*⁹⁵ (“Collective Conscience,” 2008). The project was positioned as important for the social exchange that takes place during its making, the research behind the making, and it being an “interventionist” art project. There are significant contrasts between *Palisade* and *Te Ao Mārama* and the *TEZA site*. According to war historian Vincent O’Malley, the colonial history of land confiscations and war is under-acknowledged in Aotearoa, in favour of WW1 and WW2 histories (O’Malley, 2015). The *Palisade* project does contain an affective theory of social change, based on the affects of memory. The re-enacting of a repressed history materially in a public park is promoted as empowering members of

⁹³ Ngāti Whātua are an Auckland iwi whose lands are based on some of Auckland’s prime real estate. During the 20th century they fought continual land confiscations, evictions, and even village burnings.

⁹⁴ Publicly-funded TV arts series where artists were commissioned to make temporary public art works. Series 1 was filmed in 2008, and aired on TVNZ.

⁹⁵ *Collective Conscience (2008)* was curated by Romy Sedman and Andrea Bell.

the iwi community, "about the recovery and re-creation of social memory and historical systems of thought and knowledge within contemporary conditions." (McCaughan, 2006).



(Illus.13). *Palisade*, Fiona Jack, Ngarimu Blair. 2008.

In Miwon Kwon's typology of community art projects, *Palisade* might represent a "sited community" (Kwon, 2002, p.120) project (a clearly identifiable community, and a specific issue). In such projects, a problem often exists, in that the project may essentially be driven by an artist or curator, with unclear lines being drawn about collaboration over the labour or the concept (Kwon, 2002, p.125).

Not only were the "community volunteers" essentially labour for the *Palisade* project but during construction of *Palisade* Jack describes how, as time starts to run out, she negotiates for a periodic detention (PD) gang to help with the labour. Again, the spectre of abuse of free labour reared its head. Thus, a question remains about whether the collaboration and the fence ended up being, in Friedl's terms, purely a motif.

The methodology of caring deception asserts, rather, that the terms are considered in the negotiation of the social ethics in action. Therefore, care should be considered in a broader context than merely the issue (the "issue" in *Palisade* is also possibly a public reminder of the ongoing unresolved Ngāti Whātua land and resource claims) but a "caring for" who controls the concept.

With the *TEZA site*, there were clear conceptual and creative decisions made by the collaborators. From Te Urutahi's design of *Te Ao Mārama*, to the New Brighton community's vision of the Creative Quarter site, to the Ngāi Tahu artists' decision to create their own occupation, for which the community decided the most appropriate site.



(Fig. 14). *Te Ao Mārama*. Lit by Te Urutahi Waikerepuru, Stuart Foster and Kura Puke. Photograph Kalya Ward.

The *TEZA site* also encouraged other individuals and groups to take control of the concept ; *Te Matahiapo*⁹⁶ turned *Te Ao Mārama* into a light sculpture on one evening, which embodied a form of indigenous knowledge known as *Io*⁹⁷. PDT workers constructed the gateway that included such beach detritus as a rusty steel bed base and salt-encrusted jandals⁹⁸ and painted murals on the pavilion walls. Other artists

⁹⁶ *Te Matahiapo Indigenous Research Organisation* engage in areas of “...visual, performative and oral culture to enhance thinking and experiencing around key issues of mātauranga (knowledge) Māori (<http://www.tematahiapo.org/our-research/>). Artists Te Urutahi and Kura Puke belong to the organisation.

⁹⁷ *Io* in the broadest interpretation means supreme being (<http://maoridictionary.co.nz>).

⁹⁸ Jandals are the standard New Zealand “beach sandals”.

turned up and showed projections of their artworks, a drumming group occupied *Te Ao Mārama*, and so on. The construction on-site over the week of TEZA allowed for not just collaboration and participation but an alteration of the terms of engagement. The *TEZA site* became a form that contained social ethics in action.

TEZA could potentially be critiqued as serving up “motifs” of non-hierarchical structures, tikanga, inclusion and self-determination within a “top-down” or produced-from-above structure. However TEZA operated on several significant critical levels. For example, rather than relying on an unexamined notion of “community” and the coloniser vs. the colonised, the TEZA producers actively sought to question these relationships. The negotiation of care and deception within multiple relationships to construct the site allowed for dissent, local ideas, spontaneous artists’ projects, and sudden u-turns by commissioned artists.

“Is the *Transitional Economic Zone of Aotearoa*’s call for action and community engagement an agenda a little too closely aligned with the attitudes of seventies counter-culture protest? *TEZA* appears to demarcate much of its position from an historical cultural framework” (Feeney, 2014)

The connection Warren Feeney makes with older forms of protest action⁹⁹ seems to have resonance with Thomas Finkelpearl’s claim to trace a history of “socially co-operative art” within a history of US community organising, radical democracy and critical pedagogy (Finkelpearl, 2013).

Feeney suggests that there is a disconnect between art as “object making” and SEA based in an “historical cultural framework”. Yet, during the SCAPE 7 and FESTA¹⁰⁰ festivals of 2013, the intersection between community art and traditional fixed sculptures in public spaces was clearly one of the curatorial strategies. The two public art programmes integrated over the week of the FESTA workshops and activities, and

⁹⁹ Although seeming to be dismissive of TEZA’s allegiance to older forms of protest, Feeney seems to contradict this by also being dismissive of the Occupy Movement, claiming it disappeared because of unclear strategies. Yet Occupy is a recent social movement (2011-) and it has not disappeared, rather more moved into other tactical and strategic goals. Nato Thompson comments of Occupy that “the movement refused to be named” (Thompson, 2015, p. 126), which is an alternative re-positioning of the movement rather than the standard mass-media argument that the movement failed or disappeared.

¹⁰⁰ SCAPE is the biennial Christchurch-based public art series more commonly associated with fixed public sculptures while FESTA (Festival of Transitional Architecture) with collaborative and participatory cultural forms and sustainable technologies.

some of the SCAPE artists projects adopted forms usually associated with CA, such as Fiona Connor and Dan Arps' *Common Coop Co-op* (2013). *Common Coop Co-op* (CCC) created recycled, reproduction and invented street furniture with relation to a nearby functioning community garden. Curator Blair French describes the works as informed by the artists "site visits" (of the destroyed CBD), as forms of "play" and how Arps "reference(s) the history of sculptural practice" ("*SCAPE 7 - Common Co-op Coop*," n.d.).

I suggest that caring deception encourages a locating of the socio-political relations of public spaces. It locates a social ethics of negotiation beyond simply an interrogation of art discourses. With CCC, the deception is clear, but where is the care? Rather than simply suggesting that caring requires multiple collaborative authors of the artwork it asks "how did it come to be this way?"; and, "at who's expense?". For instance, it is unclear whether CCC laughs at the nearby community garden initiative. I would suggest Wayne Youle's SCAPE 7 project *Flauntatiousness* (2013) does have a methodology of caring deception. Youle covers a high-performance street-car with logo's of the sponsors of the event and his own designed logo brands for all the artists involved. The slyness of his artists' brands mixed with the thrill of a speeding car as representing the event creates a humorous *respect* for the artists and *critique of the terms of the sponsored engagement*.



(Fig. 15) *Flauntatiousness*, Wayne Youle, 2013 © SCAPE Public Art & Wayne Youle.

It can be difficult to locate the artistic legacy in Aotearoa where the representational strategy (deception) intersects with a social ethics in action with a community and a socio-political programme. The *Palisade* project does unearth a unique history in Aotearoa in 1943 of a rare connection between Left politics, iwi and Pākehā artists. In

1943, the Auckland WEA (AWEA) collaborated with Ngāti Whātua to build the original Palisade.

3.3 Socialism and community art of the 1930s

Rachel Barrowman has chronicled the history of left politics and theatre in Aotearoa. Her memoir on R.A.K. Mason (Barrowman, 2003) details the operations of the WEA drama group and the People's Theatre, based in Auckland from 1935–1940. Based on a global model of People's Theatres, this was a highly politicised, social change agent provocateur. The circle of the People's Theatre included many on the left and involved in the arts, including the radical head of Elam School of Fine Arts Archie Fisher and other lecturers, including Lois White and James Turkington. We can assume that the visual artists involved, like White and Turkington, were involved in painting scenery and creating props. The People's Theatre combined the radical arts community with the WEA, via a theatre that would spread socialist propaganda and would be worker run. From 1935, Arnold Goodwin was head of design at Elam, (an English commercial and set designer) and was also a producer of theatre at the WEA (Barrowman, 1991, Chp.6).

The People's Theatre ceased operating in 1940, partially because by early 1940, “communists and pacifists were regularly arrested as they got up to speak on street corners, and given fines or prison sentences of up to twelve months” (Barrowman, 2003, p.269). However, the WEA drama group continued (Barrowman, 2003, p.278). Mason continued to edit a new communist magazine *In Print* from 1941–1944, by which workers were trying to forge new relationships with Māori workers, with part of its manifesto arguing for “better wages, better housing and working conditions, equal pay for women”, and “full recognition of the rights of the Māori people” (Barrowman, 2003, p.279).¹⁰¹ It seems highly likely therefore that members of the Auckland radical art community, through their connection with the WEA, were associated with the Palisade of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei.

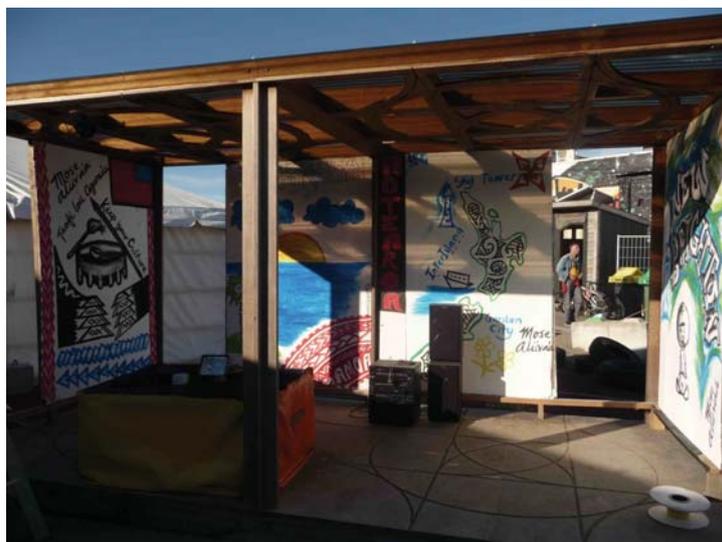
Similar arguments regarding “artistic autonomy” and “artistic heteronomy” (Jackson, 2011) circulated in the 1930s, just as today. Well-known writer and communist sympathiser Frank Sargeson, was unconvinced, on “political and aesthetic” grounds, of

¹⁰¹ Barrowman cites Mason from the article *Forward to victory* from *In Print* in 1943.

the quality of the People's Theatre productions (Barrowman, 2003, p.253). The People's Theatre was a genuine attempt to be part of an international alliance, and to be worker-run, although its productions, as Barrowman's research shows, were not always successful in taking their "democratisation of culture" approach to working class communities. At times during their productions, audience members mistook the monologues for genuine workers meetings (Barrowman, 1991, Chp.6); but, in general, what "the people" really seemed to want to see was more "romantic comedies, farce and melodrama" (Barrowman, 2003, p.271).

There were also attempts made to engage with Māori communities, and the alliance between the AWEA and Ngāti Whātua on the palisade building that Fiona Jack recreated in 2008 was perhaps the most successful. White's *The War-makers (1945–46)* produced at the WEA buildings illustrates this alliance (Green & White, 1993)¹⁰².

The People's Theatre and WEA drama group from the mid-1930s onwards attempted to address the problems of taking culture to the people, by addressing the key questions of cultural democracy such as how could an alliance be built between working people, the unions, small towns, socialist aims and art? The original productions of working class-inspired narratives from British plays, oscillated with the first efforts to put on locally-written plays and treatises, newspaper style bulletin shows and marionette productions.



(Fig. 16) The TEZA pavilion with painted murals.

¹⁰² Art historians have drawn connections between Lois White's connection to WEA theatre productions and the theatrical poses of figures in her compositions, but White herself did not acknowledge this (anon, 2008).

The production of *Te Ao Mārama* and the *TEZA site* included embracing the “everyday aesthetics” of the CA site to avoid the “democratisation of culture” approach. The construction process embraced the “farce and melodrama” involved in creating with multiple collaborators. The final form included a representation of the voices of a variety of individuals and organisations who were all concerned with issues of social justice. The issue of aesthetics vs. politics seemed to be similar, even in 2013, when one might think the horizons of art practice would have broadened to be inclusive of the everyday cultural practices of community groups. I had to argue the case for the blank-walled pavilion on the *TEZA site* to be painted with the art works of PDT workers and “anyone else in the community who wanted to” rather than it display documentation of “official TEZA artists”.

The idea of “educating the masses” to socialist and communist ideals has given way to a more complex approach. The “negotiations and conflicts” (that Kester referred to above) of the coloniser vs. colonised binary has become thematic material in itself, rather than the exposition of a particular ideology. The CA site itself has become a rich material experience that contains, bound in the materials and forms the representation of many contemporary community ideals, concerning local autonomy. The stage open for anyone to perform upon, the sandpit for children to play surrounded in a garden of sweet-smelling lavender bushes, a solar powered cabin as an office and uniquely a large section of the running track from the destroyed QE2 stadium¹⁰³. Perhaps most importantly, the Creative Quarter site displayed an incredible gallery of local mural projects, many of which mocked the National Government ministers regarded by many locals as destroying Christchurch communities post-earthquake.¹⁰⁴

Pākehā artist and educator Gordon Tovey was appointed the first National Supervisor of Arts and Crafts for the Department of Education in 1946 (ed. Barr, 1992, p.203) and rather than a “democratisation of culture” approach, he developed a bicultural

¹⁰³ Many Christchurch residents had fond memories of the QE2 stadium, from its construction for the Commonwealth games in 1974, to past school pool and track meetings, to recreational use.

¹⁰⁴ Notable examples include a satirical mural of Gerry Brownlee, Minister for the Christchurch rebuild and Hekia Parata, Minister for Education, depicted as an all-consuming worm.

programme of Māori and European values included in Primary school art education, including in remote North Auckland communities. Tovey's influence extended to the "Tovey Generation", the Māori Arts and Crafts Advisors of the late 1950s and 1960s, who produced what Deidre Brown has referred to as "community-based architectural projects" (Brown, 2009, p.133). These marae-based schemes in the late 1960s and 1970s included genuinely working with the local people, rather than simply being the visiting experts or observing, documenting, or "picturing" the "people".

Athol McCredie discusses "Picturing the working classes" for the Art and Organised Labour exhibition at Wellington City Art Gallery in 1991. Artists such as Dennis Knight Turner's various murals for unions "generally depict members at work" (Burke et al, 1990, p.17), while Judy Evans and Guy Harding's ten part mural displayed in the unity Centre Wellington (c.1944) promoted communism and Marxist slogans such as "from each according to his ability to each according to his need" (Burke et al, 1990, p.18).

3.4 Cultural democracy and TEZA

The idea raised by Barrowman as a flaw in the WEA drama productions that what "the people" really want is "romantic comedies, farce and melodrama" (Barrowman, 2003, p.271) informs the type of caring deception I was developing through the successive projects included in this thesis. With the *TEZA site* I found that as the number of collaborators increased, perhaps following the famous dictum the "greatest good for the greatest number"¹⁰⁵, the project was pushed away from caring deception towards more earnest and serious ambitions. The ambitions for TEZA seemed to be based on unquestioned assumptions of the positive values and forms of cultural democracy, including local democracy, inclusiveness, hospitality and exchange, without an understanding of how they were formed.

This dynamic combined with a manifestation of Friedl's critique that curatorial regimes inevitably lead to co-management and to a form of a "regulated playground" (Friedl, 2011, p.63). Yet, the question of "what TEZA was about" remained open; there was not a specific issue being addressed. Rather, the event was framed in wider CD values, which Owen Kelly claimed several decades ago had been co-opted by the state

¹⁰⁵ Jeremy Bentham's famous dictum, claimed as the basis for political morals.

in the UK (Kelly, 1984). Although TEZA had many genuine moments of local input, and exchange between the visiting artists and locals, much of what I regard as the most successful moments could be regarded as *reactive to* rather than *constitutive of* the event. With the next art work, I wanted to test a project that was led by the community itself, where there would be the opportunity for a local community to control the “framing”, and for anyone to contribute their cultural work.

Chapter 4: The impasse of development: The facade of the festival.

4.0 Assets vs. deficits.

“Who is art for, whose interest does it serve?” (Mealing cited by Spill, 1978)

“the life of an empty stomach and a sick and naked body waiting to be fed, clothed, healed or housed. It is structurally embedded in ‘development’ ideology and practice [...] This kind of metaphysical and ontological violence has long been a fundamental aspect of the fiction of development the West seeks to impose on those it has colonized” (Mbembe cited by Stupples, 2011, p.1)

Polly Stupples’ PhD thesis¹⁰⁶ explores the possibilities of art to generate alternative cultural imaginaries in the Global South that “counter the [reductionism of] development discourse” (Stupples 2011, p.25). She points out how “development’s ‘cultural turn’ was primarily concerned with the local” (Stupples cites Pierterse, 2011, p.216), thus limiting the framing of development “subjects” to local issues and denying any agency beyond the local scale. Stupples argues that development discourse can be shown to perpetuate a framing based on “lack, passivity, inferiority and deficiency”, and that this can be seen as a form of “discursive violence”. Through a politics of possibility, she argues, research can be re-oriented towards a more “complex engagement with lived experience” (Stupples, 2011, p.216) that is understood to be multi-scalar. Stupples makes the connection between this discursive violence and “externally determined solutions” (Stupples, 2011, p.29) in development practice.

The focus on a community’s “lacks”, rather than strengths perpetuates what has become an artificially created representation of the community. This supports Achille Mbembe’s argument that the reduction to utilitarian and basic needs development goals is “keeping the South in chains” (Stupples, 2011, p.18). Stupples’ claim that the development discourse can act to further colonise or ghettoise (my terminology) local groups into “fixed bounded identities” rather than a complex of “intertwined histories”

¹⁰⁶ Breaking the frame: art in international development (2011)

can be countered by art work that critiques local hierarchies and activates more diverse subjectivities and identities (Stupples, 2011, p.219).



(Fig.17) Video still youth video production. Wainuiomata. 2013.

The arguments of Stupples and Mbembe concerning the politics of development discourse in the South can be applied to community development discourse and practice as it applies to misrepresentations in suburbs such as Wainuiomata (Wellington). The local authorities (rather than the international donors) tend to be interested in targeting funds for local development to the communities or suburbs in “need”. Moreover this local politics of development can become intertwined with local cultural funding. Therefore, the maintenance of “developing” vs. “developed” countries in development discourse can also be applied to the construction of “poor and marginalised” vs. higher socio-economic suburbs.

It was this binary that I was casting my next artwork into. Poverty and marginalisation in the suburbs is also measured by quantitative “indexes” and to add to the “discursive violence” are those perpetuated by media discourses and local power imbalances. In Aotearoa, there are a range (typically five) of indexes used to measure the poverty line, including the “deprivation index”¹⁰⁷, of which approximately three zones in Wainuiomata fall below¹⁰⁸. I suggest that when the focus is on deprived communities, the deficit model also asks some deeper questions around structural inequality such as:

¹⁰⁷ Refer to (Atkinson, Salmond, & Crampton, 2014)

¹⁰⁸ The deprivation index determines a suburban areas socio-economic status. Large suburbs such as Wainuiomata are broken down into wards to apply this index. Wainuiomata is divided into six wards, three of which fall below the ‘average’ poverty line (Boffa Miskell, 2015)

“is such an unequal society worth repairing, is it to make government or middle-class people safer?, does it merely support the ruling elite? and why should a community worker be trying to make poor people feel happier when a focus on real power and inequality is required? Why is it that people lack social capital? and why is there a lack of social cohesion, networks, and linkages? Again, the key factor is paying attention to the processes through which problems or deficits have come about”. (Eketone & Shannon, 2006, p.213).

Bond and Thompson-Fawcett discuss the significance of participatory democracy and the ways that decision-makers and planning practitioners have integrated this notion for the “planning and design of urban space” (Bond & Thompson-Fawcett, 2006, p.171), raising a series of questions: “What account is taken of various power relations evident in the structure of the process and between participants?”; “How inclusive is the process?”; “Who participates, and in what way?”; “How effectively are all voices heard?” (Bond & Thompson-Fawcett, 2006).

4.1 Wainuiomata Water Festival 2015



(Fig.18) *Wainuiomata Water Festival 2015.*

The *Wainuiomata Water Festival (WWF) (2015)* was based in a suburb I had lived in on-and-off for 10 years. Yet, in 2012, I knew very few locals. Wainuiomata is essentially a dormitory suburb, and I questioned whether I could even confidently claim to be a member of this community. I thought I could move beyond the binary of

the coloniser vs. colonised as an outside artist by engaging with my own community. The development discourse seemed a way to broaden this argument. This would lead to me facilitating a festival where I wanted the community to be the creators and curators, and I would undertake the role of finding funding through a range of sources. Although essentially based in the local with these projects, I found Stupple's "multi-scalar"¹⁰⁹ framing useful for thinking beyond just the geographical boundaries of the suburb, by undertaking multiple projects as well as a water festival.

I decided to organise a secondary project simultaneously with Wainuiomata youth, based in the Lower Hutt CBD, called *Elbe's Milkbar*¹¹⁰ (2015). For 2 years before the WWF, I explored active engagement in the arts in the community. I ran regular film screenings during 2013 at the community centre, filmed video productions of local events and from 2013–2015 worked on film, drama and training programmes with high school students in an alternative school, as well as establishing a group of locals to run the new community festival. For the WWF, I invited experimental street theatre groups into the community to challenge an overly prescribed notion of the local, and for *Elbe's Milkbar* I mixed a range of cohorts who did not usually cohabit public space; from recent art-school graduates, high school and alternative high school students, and the older Elbe's generation clientele and workers. Rather than a notion of multi-scalar based on the outputs (products) of artistic production, I sought to challenge the assets vs. deficit model through creative intermingling of socialities.

By bringing together a wide array of groups connected with water from not just Wainuiomata but beyond its geographical borders I sought to claim that the community had the right to determine an annual water festival under its own terms and invite all other groups in to share their own perspective. Overall, I was testing whether a longer-term project could be conceived through many smaller inter-related projects in the context of the suburban community within which I lived. The mode of social ethics in action I adopted challenged the idea that the public need to be "educated" about the control of water resources. I proposed that a community water fight could re-shape the regulatory environment. The impasses I sought to overcome can be described in development discourse as the asset vs. deficit models and the long

¹⁰⁹ Stupple's "multi-scalar" framing is based on moving beyond restrictive concepts of "the local" into regional and global networks of art interventions initiated in Central America.

¹¹⁰ Elbe's milkbar was an iconic Lower Hutt milk-bar that traded for at least 25 years from the 1940s to the late 1960s.

term vs. short term, yet what evolved was being wrapped up within the instrumental vs. instrumentalised dilemma.

As a suburb of Wellington Wainuiomata is more like small-town Aotearoa. Nestled in a plateau above the Hutt Valley with one road in and no road out, it is ringed by the Pukeatua mountain hills and forms a gateway to the rugged southern coast and Rimutaka forest park. Essentially a working class town, Wainuiomata was engineered to provide affordable housing for the industrial workers of the post-war baby boomers from the 1950s to the 1970s, where any kiwi family could own their own home. Workers could capitalise on their government family benefit through the State Advances Corporation and raise a few thousand dollars to get a mortgage, leading to its colloquial name in the 1970s: *nappy valley*.

Wainuiomata has been characterised in different media representations as embodying suburban kitsch, small-mindedness, and suburban depression. An article by Longhurst and Wilson (1999) claimed that a 1994 heartland TV documentary broke with the usual masculinist representation of the rural in that series by depicting a soap opera version of femininity, with friendly housewives chatting over the fence and attending Tupperware parties, naughty lingerie, and male striptease parties. The Heartland programme led to one of the featured housewives, Chloe, experiencing media fame in her tiger slippers and purply-pink velour fashion and pink scooter. Later, in an infamous event turned into a feature film in 2015, a local family killed their ill daughter in a water ritual. Most recently, journalist Steve Braunias' book *Civilisation (2014)* characterises Wainuiomata as being on the edge of the world, peopled by oddballs, eccentrics, teen parents, weirdos, and where the main employer is Work and Income (the New Zealand unemployment office).

During the 2013 local Mayoral elections, one contender based his campaign on a proposal for an artificial winter ski slope on the side of a hill where it never got cold enough to even be able to make snow (Boyack, 2013). Local MP Trevor Mallard came up with a ridiculous development plan to repopulate Rimutaka Forest park with the extinct Moa¹¹¹ ("MP's Jurassic Park dream," 2014). This is the kind of negative press people in Wainuiomata feel they are represented by. Needless to say, Wainuiomata residents often object to their representation in the media, and with good reason,

¹¹¹ Giant flightless bird that ranged in size up to 3 metres. Mallard did qualify his suggestion by saying it would only be possible when the genetic technology becomes available.

while local discussion about development in the suburb has been rife and bitter ever since the failed 1937 traffic tunnel attempted to open the valley up for quick commuting and further housing development.

The projects I undertook in Wainuiomata also coincided with a local council-led multimillion dollar development plan for the suburb. A local group mainly consisting of council, local board members and businesspeople formed a development group to assist with the development plans. One of the goals of this group was to re-brand Wainuiomata, and to seek community engagement on issues of development, based on council plans to build 1500 new homes, retirement villages, retail development, a sports hub, a new bridge, and central shopping landscaping. The community consultation process consisted, to my knowledge, of a single event: an expensive design-led “charrette”¹¹² session run by Boffa Miskell¹¹³ that was facilitated “after the fact” of development decisions, as the 2014 25-year Council Plan already outlined the major expenditures for development in the suburb. Overall, this was a policy-led development programme. This programme employed a participatory planning process that largely operated on a superficial level, and did not include multiple intensive workshops. The results were displayed in the local library.

Discourse and practice in development studies has long recognised this form of superficial participation¹¹⁴ and worked to critique and find solutions to the tendency for tokenistic gestures towards local democracy when governments, local authorities, consultants and international organisations become involved in the process. The language of the assets vs. deficit debate seems to originate in an economic development model. Publications such as *Creative Communities; Art works in economic development* (Rushton (ed), 2013) continue to perpetuate the ideology of artworks as commodities to be consumed, and the notion that the arts sector is composed of entrepreneurs and arts-based businesses, perpetuating the connection of

¹¹² The “design-led charrette session” (Bond & Thompson-Fawcett, 2006) in this case was a speedy intensive community participatory workshop to gain community input into future planning ideas for Wainuiomata.

¹¹³ Boffa Miskell are an urban design, landscape architecture, planning and design consultancy based in NZ.

¹¹⁴ The study edited by Cooke and Kothari *Participation. The new tyranny?* is perhaps the best known critique of participatory development. (Cooke & Kothari, 2001)

the “creative class” with high-tech entrepreneurship¹¹⁵. Moreover, some of the world’s largest development organisations, including the World Bank and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) have long been focusing on “local decentralisation” and “community-based development”¹¹⁶ (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Mansuri and Rao’s World Bank study uses the sinister term “induced participation”. They outline a history of World Bank aid that has see-sawed since the 1950s between donor aid investing in large scale infrastructure projects and supporting community development.



(Fig. 19) *Wainuiomata Water Festival. View to main-stage.*

Using terms like “participatory development”, “harnessing the power of communities” and “civil society failure” (Mansuri & Rao, 2014, p.4) another kind of “discursive violence”, in Stupples’ terms, is perpetuated. Rather than being framed in negative stereotypes the “local” and the “community” have become instruments of development discourse, and the community’s organisations (civil society) are seen as failures. Some of their conclusions, such as “the poor often benefit less from participatory activities than do the better off because resource allocation preferences typically reflect the preferences of elite groups” (Mansuri & Rao, 2014, p.5), suggest that only when explicit links are made between community-based organisations and markets and skill-based training programmes do they lead to greater community cohesiveness and collectivity “beyond the life of the project” (Mansuri & Rao, 2014, p.5).

¹¹⁵ Richard Florida’s books *Rise of the creative class* (2002) and *Cities and the creative class* (2004) have also been criticised for ignoring the negative impacts of “creative city style” driven development and gentrification.

¹¹⁶ Between 2003–2013 the World Bank contributed USD\$85 Billion to global local participatory development projects (Mansuri & Rao, 2013, p. 15).

Interestingly even Kester's language seems to have been co-opted, when the Chief Economist for the World Bank states that with their brand of participatory development what is required is "long term, context sensitive, committed to a culture of learning by doing through honest monitoring and evaluation systems, and that has the capacity to learn from failure" (Mansuri & Rao, foreword x). All of this reinforces that the incorporation of cultural democracy values into development discourse and practice serves the ideology of economic development. Cultural justice has simply become an economic outcome.

I devised the idea of the Water Festival as a way to challenge the re-branding of Wainuiomata. Wainuiomata means "the tears of Mata" (a woman crying for her tribe at war) or large water on the headland¹¹⁷. Wainuiomata is built on an old wetland, and the Rimutaka ranges adjacent to the suburb supply 15–20% of Wellington's potable water supply (including the CBD). The provision of water is one of Wainuiomata's defining historical legacies going back to the late 19th century construction of dams and pipelines, some of which are now open to public as beautiful heritage sites and wetland areas.

The development group were not so impressed with the idea of water being the Wainuiomata "brand", because in addition to the ritual drowning, some of Wainuiomata's waterways regularly become polluted and un-swimmable during summer months, an unresolved issue related to leaking septic tanks from the semi-rural areas, which the Hutt Council seems unwilling to solve¹¹⁸. The development group proposed a re-branded slogan: "Breathe Easy Wainuiomata" (Boffa Miskell, 2015), supposedly to reflect the fresh air and feeling of relief as one returns "over the hill" from a day's work. In my opinion, this is an absurd slogan, and "Breathe Easy" is already the name of a network of advocacy organisations for respiratory illnesses in New Zealand. Considering the high child asthma levels in Wainuiomata due to cheap rental stock housing in the suburb, it would seem to be another laughable representation formed by those in power administering a top-down uninformed "branding".

¹¹⁷ There is therefore disagreement locally as to the precise meaning of "Wainuiomata".

¹¹⁸ A local councillor did form a local water group in 2014 to consider the waterway pollution issue, but the group did not last long.

Water is not a deficit but an asset in Wainuiomata; it is in abundance. This appeared to me to have the potential to challenge any “discursive violence” that constructions of lack or deficits as defining the suburb might engender. The water resource itself I see as physically embodying this asset-based and deficit-based binary. I constructed the over-arching theme of the Water Festival as a straightforward community water fight. A swimming pool of water would be placed in the centre of the village green to encourage a community water fight. There was abundance, and the water would be squandered in outright sheer fun and excitement.

As opposed to Asian water festivals that occur during monsoon times when water resources are ample, the WWF would be timed during water restrictions, in active defiance of council restrictions, so as to position the festival in relation to national debates on water quality and control. Wainuiomata’s waterways had long experienced unresolved pollution problems during summer months and the Hutt Valley¹¹⁹ was the major aquifer and reservoir supply of Wellington city’s potable water. During 2012 to 2016 a national debate was emerging in Aotearoa over water quality and ownership with increasing publicity causing public concern on how international corporations were being granted 30 year cheap consent rights to export fresh aquifer water¹²⁰.

I proposed that a relatively small quantity of water (5,000 litres at the most) would be provided at the festival in the central swimming pool, with a number of water drums spread around the village green. Once the water had been used up, the festival would end. Considering that the average person in the Hutt Valley uses 240 litres of water per day¹²¹, I argued that if 500 people spent the day at the festival, it could potentially create water savings.

Beyond this overall vision, I planned to facilitate the event as a showcase for any key community groups and organisations, arts or crafts people who were even remotely connected to water (always stressing in promotions and meetings that “everything” is related to water and waterways), who would be provided with a marquee or stall. The community would be brought together with numerous local and regional organisations including the Bush Fire Force, Volunteer Fire Brigade, Forest Park Trust, swimming

¹¹⁹ The Hutt Valley is the wider metropolitan area of which Wainuiomata is a suburb.

¹²⁰ There has been much recent media attention on this issue. For example, see (“We’re giving away that water for nothing’,” 2016)

¹²¹ Statistics from a GWRC report (Greater Wellington Regional Council, 2014).

pool, historic society, schools, Bearing Head Preservation Society, social development organisations, Wellington Water and many others participating. The project took approximately 8 months to organise, and was a success in terms of numbers of people who turned up (upwards of 1000), packed out marquees and stalls, a full line-up of musicians on a truck stage, a creative swimwear competition judged by the Mayor and Mayoress, and a spectacular display of water science by Gavin Wallace of the Bush Fire Force, including the star attraction: the lifting of a firefighter *Rocketwoman* into the air using fire hose pressure alone.



(Fig. 20) Gavin Wallace and the Bush Fire Force lift *Rocketwoman* using water pressure. Photograph Dan Taylor

My own role was as a “facilitator with ulterior motives”. Rather than a “regular” community festival, the event was promoted as “free for all” to encourage a breaking of the bonds of control that a festival of “excess” has been theorised as producing. Roger Caillois, following Mikhail Bakhtin, positioned the festival as a site of transgression, and a sign of renewal, where life is rejuvenated (Caillois & Barash, 2001, p.101). However Jeremy Gilbert questions the festival as a site of transgression by claiming that the myth of the carnival is often framed (for instance at festivals like Burning Man) as “counter-hegemonic” through an assumption that it challenges “neoliberal individualism” (Gilbert, 2014, p. 198).

I framed the WWF, perhaps mostly in my own mind, as an affirmation of the identity of Wainuiomata within the top-down development processes of the re-branding of the suburb. The negotiation of care and deception was therefore situated within the

politics of the local development plan rather than purely as an emancipatory “communal” cleansing. This was a festival of “interjection” in a one-sided participatory planning process.

The facilitation of the WWF brought me into close contact with many organisations and individuals planning for development in Wainuiomata and the Hutt Valley. Councillors and council staff, Water Board media, health board, and local community groups. This led to conflict with various organisations, starting with a conversation with the first funders of this project, the Creative Communities scheme, who questioned how this would be perceived in the “community”.

To keep the media staff at Wellington Water and the Hutt Council happy, I had to purchase 5000 litres of water for the swimming pool and drums, and get it delivered by tanker. This was a ridiculous request, as the tanker driver filled his tanker up from a street fire hydrant in the Hutt Valley then drove it over the hill to Wainuiomata, the source of much of Wellington’s water supply. Wallace applied for a special water use permit from the council. The idea was difficult for media staff at Wellington Water to deal with, particularly because of the ambiguity about how was this going to teach water conservation practices to the people. At the same time, consent had been given to the touring musical “Singing in the Rain”, with large billboard posters around town boasting “20,000 litres of water dumped in every show!”. Simultaneously, there was a monster water slide in the middle of the city that also used vast amounts of water (and soon shut down because of injuries). The contradictions that underlie so-called education campaigns make these efforts seem ridiculous.

There were successful moments of misbehaviour and excess from the street performers Patacake¹²² and The Life Guards¹²³. When the local kids discovered taps in the toilets in the local hall, they flooded out the place, while the Wellington Water and Council reps were kept busy trying to chase the youth away from the taps once the paid-for water pistol supply had run out. Patacake are a Wellington-based collective of

¹²² *Patacake Productions* are a Wellington based physical theatre collective who they state are influenced by Moises Kaufman’s “moment work”. See (“Pat-A-Cake Productions,” n.d.). The “moment” is interesting to compare with the purported anti-monumentality of the “event” as discussed below.

¹²³ *The Lifeguards* are a Wellington based street performing duo Jenny McArthur and Ian Harcourt whose act is based on performing around (and in) public fountains.

street/theatre performers who practiced a form of what they called “invisible theatre”. This even caught me by surprise, as a wedding proposal was announced over the PA,

and two gay men bounded towards each other to embrace and agree to marry before a dumbstruck Mayor attempting to judge the creative swimwear competition. No-one was aware this was a staged action, constituting a challenging proposal for those of a conservative persuasion present at the event. The Life Guards appeared from nowhere to patrol the swimming pool. Bumbling through the crowd dressed in official life-guard like costumes and carrying ladders on-top of which they would sit and try to control public swimming behaviour. They arrived unannounced and attempted to establish order by issuing adult-like commands to the groups of increasingly excitable youth and children armed with water pistols, and ordered the younger generation to take over—which they did. Water supplies in drums were ransacked, and the local hall toilets were discovered to be a great alternative water supply. The Life Guards encouraged chaos amongst the youth.



(Fig. 21) Jenny MacArthur of street performers *The Life Guards*. Photograph. Dan Taylor.

4.2 Greasy Pole and a Vacant lot of cabbages

Jeremy Deller and Alan Kane wrote of their interest in “misbehaviour” and “naughtiness” in relation to their public art project *The Greasy Pole* (2008)¹²⁴. The pair worked with the local arts organisation Grizedale Arts¹²⁵ to reinstate an historic greasy pole event as a permanent piece of public art and for the annual Egremont Crab Fair. The climbing of the greasy pole had been removed from the fair in 2003 due to the difficulty in acquiring public liability insurance for the event.

The re-instatement therefore became a tangible example of a local community triumph over control of their own cultural traditions. The return of the pole as a permanent “sculpture” became a symbol of resistance to the bureaucratisation of local events with all the associated risk assessments and insurance company compliance. *The Greasy Pole* is an example where “misbehaviour” is shared by the artists with the community, not just an example of the artists being “naughty”. This kind of misbehaviour is about resisting the over-regulation of everyday life, and small acts of resistance might indicate pockets of hope for local empowerment. Sophie Hope also discusses misbehaviour as a strategy in her workshops. As one participant commented: “if the misbehaviour is something that can be shared amongst the participants, then that’s fine” (Hope, 2011, p. 106).

Perhaps the best-known early example in Aotearoa where the public or a community is encouraged or motivated to misbehave with and in public space is Barry Thomas’ *Vacant lot of Cabbages* (1978). Based on an already contested site in the Wellington CBD this “eyesore” of a site and its un-development had already been the site of media attention and activism by the Values Party¹²⁶ who planted trees and suggested building a public park and inner city “sanctuary” (Davidson, 2011, p.37). Thomas, who shared an environmental politics with the Values Party, anonymously planted a patch

¹²⁴ For instance “Jeremy Deller & Alan Kane on the greasy pole” (2008).

¹²⁵ Grizedale Arts has been running under different models for over 35 years in the Lakes District of the UK. It now operates as a “research and development agency for contemporary artists” where “the use value of art is always encouraged, with resident artists, architects, designers, crafts people and critics often working directly with the location and its inhabitants” (“Grizedale Arts,” n.d.).

¹²⁶ The Values Party, formed in 1973, are purported to be the first national green party in the world.

of cabbages that spelt the word cabbage, which re-captured media attention. He then came forward publicly and stated that it was up to the public what to do with the cabbages (and site). The following months saw a flurry of additions from members of the public, such as “a line of IBM magnetic tape machines ‘plugged’ into the cabbage patch; a scarecrow; a picket gate and an open-air living room consisting of armchairs, a sofa, a television and a crate of ‘empties.’” (ibid,p.38)



(Fig. 22) *Vacant lot of cabbages*. 1978. Barry Thomas. Wellington. Thomas and collaborators cut the perimeter wire fence and dump soil. Photograph Justin Keen. Courtesy Barry Thomas

Davidson uses the term “event-specific” to characterise this type of art practice as a form of “experience” and to anchor it in an art historical narrative. Mick Wilson describes “the event” as “the contingent, coming-into-being of a temporary public, clustered around the event of the artwork” (Wilson, 2009, p. 24). The event and “its duration, transience, contingent availability to a public” (ibid) can become the content of the work, escaping some of the critiques that are directed at CA, with its “identity-based” notions of the public. The event in this sense escapes the problems of “fixed bounded identities” that a deficit model of community development can enforce. Wilson does warn that “the event”, with its “modesty in the ambitions of art and publicness” (Wilson, 2009, p.26), may lose the possibility of mobilisation. Indeed the “event”, with its gentle-sounding harmless spontaneous emergence and dissipation of publics sounds like it has lost its politics. Thus, it seems particularly appropriate for

the roaming “parachute artists”, rather than challenging the notion of the coloniser vs. the colonised.

Giovanni Tiso uses the term “misdirection” (“Bat, Bean, Beam,” n.d.) as opposed to misbehaviour to apply to Thomas’ media strategy for Vacant lot of Cabbages. Thomas described his cabbage patch at the time in the press as a “harmless, non-radical” act, and Tiso suggests this was precisely what seemed to encourage other citizens to improvise random acts of sculpture and assemblage at the site. Tiso’s terminology is more useful for unpacking the idea of caring deception, as he is locating the way that a social ethics in action may motivate people to act. In a pop psychological sense, Thomas used a reverse psychology, suggesting a part-truth. There is a genuine desire from Thomas for local participatory democracy, yet he performs a humorous and wry act that is neither didactic nor ambiguous.

Equally important must be the aesthetics of the “act”. Rather than Thomas’ statement in the press, I suggest it is the sensual act itself that asks “who is the cabbage¹²⁷ in this situation?”; the property developer, the City council or the citizens themselves? This suggests that the ethics of the cabbage planting action can be judged in relation to the ethics of the property developer, the local City Council *and* the publics inaction¹²⁸. Thomas literally and metaphorically plants a seed for guerrilla gardening, showing by doing and issuing a challenge to the public over the fate of the cabbages. Rather than Thomas’ clever media deception for Vacant Lot of Cabbages, I began the WWF with a challenge over water control that invited intervention from the council and water authorities. Using the terms of deception, Thomas’ tactic can be defined as the method with which he artfully disguised the politics. Rather than a cultural democracy notion of emancipating the “people” to action, the tactic for the WWF was to direct the disguise towards the local governing institutions.

The WWF planning began to be determined by the ideology of the local authorities. The local meetings were often populated by a majority of the key players who

¹²⁷ “Cabbage” is a colloquial term for dumb, unmotivated or inactive.

¹²⁸ Thomas has replied “the lonely little cabbage seedlings in an overwhelming sea of concrete meant very, very simply how constrained and controlled and weak nature had become. I deliberately chose to only leave my ego with the initial act... the fate of the cabbages and the site was not only going to be the mirror/ work of art - of the culture - as evidenced by the cabbages, the Values party native trees - all the myriad of household and art interventions... In other words not being central, not trying to 'own' and be seen to own the work allowed space for others to contribute. (personal correspondence with the artist Jan 2017)

represented local organisations and authorities. Even the first funding from the Creative Communities scheme came with a concern that the festival should be promoted in the “right way” so as not to promote water wastage. However, the local councillors and development group members largely stayed at arms length, probably due to its gently subversive character that did not fit with the branding plans of “Breathe Easy Wainuiomata”. The Facebook page became more and more popular, yet this was also controlled to a degree by council monitoring. Council staff attempted to remove the slogan “Free for All” from advertising, and threatened to withdraw their logistical support on several occasions because of perceived negative Facebook comments. Although some of this can be put down to personality clashes, it amounted to coercion and control. I had stated from the beginning that this should be run for and by the community (not the Council), and for this reason it did retain some genuine grassroots integrity.

4.3 Co-option of community art.

Owen Kelly outlined some of the problems with funding for CA that was already becoming apparent in 1984 in the UK. This contributed to a strong ideological critique of CA and cultural democracy that will be briefly outlined here.

While Kelly considers that by the 1980’s the community arts had become a system of grants dependency (Kelly, 1984), Morgan takes a more complex view of how the funders “search for standards” and the competition for funds between community arts organisations eventually split the UK CA movement (Morgan, 1995).

The claim of co-option by either the state or neo-liberalism forms a key critique of cultural democracy and CA. This argument states that cultural policy for the decentralisation of the arts has in the process been co-opted by neo-liberalism’s quest for decentralisation (Graves, 2005). The forces keep shifting in this analysis, from Kelly’s description of the co-option of community arts funding by the state in the late 1970s in the UK, to New Labour’s co-option of cultural funding in their 1990s cultural policy (Hope, 2011), to artist group BAVO’s critique of the co-option of artists by property developers to ameliorate the social housing crisis in the 2000s in the Netherlands (Vanhaesebrouck, 2011). Bishop argues that CA maintained an ethical rather than a political position so as to not jeopardise funding, and consequently became a branch of state social welfare (Bishop, 2012, pp. 188–190). Whelan and

Ryan (Field 4, 2016) recently discussed the transformation in CA in Dublin, Ireland from the 1970s to the 1980s, where its shift to a “sector”, with the associated professionalisation and bureaucratisation, inevitably created an impasse between trained artists and non-artists, and changed its hopes for radical and unruly potential.

There are at least three forms of co-option. First, the theoretical and ideological co-option is represented by the “post structural paranoid consensus”¹²⁹. Second, there is an observable co-option that may be seen to take place (e.g., if other actors blatantly appropriate an artist’s or community’s projects). Third, there is what I call Heejswik’s *knowing co-option*¹³⁰, where rather than suspicion and paranoia prevailing, the forces of instrumentalisation are seen as a positive, perhaps inevitable, function of collective processes and the transmission of ideas.

I initiated the WWF festival in a genuine attempt to facilitate an inclusive asset-based model of community development. As the planning progressed it became increasingly clear how difficult it can be to initiate small acts of resistance and misbehaviour in the public sphere when there is no deception. By encouraging open community meetings and widely broadcasting the intentions of the festival I had in effect laid my cards on the table, and in the process was to a degree co-opted by the educative strategies of local authorities. However, I was not naïve to the potential of this occurring, and this *knowing co-option* formed part of the methodology of the event. I developed the strategy of a public shaping of water through water play as a social ethics in action, as not just an “event” but an “interjection” into the politics of local development. In fact, I found that it was very difficult to get such a basic piece of misbehaviour off the ground. Sean Cubitt’s comment, that “arts promise of a different relationship between people is constantly broken by the intervention of an

¹²⁹ Kester evokes Eve Sedgwick’s critique of the prevalence of the “paranoid consensus” in post structural theory. In this reading of post structural discourse, the function of art is to reveal these “hidden structures” and “deeper truths” (Kester, 2004, p.51) that control our lives. There is an assumption that some revelation of our existence as pawns in a network of controlling forces, whether disciplinary institutions, neo-liberalism, corporate conglomerates or property developers will somehow force us to act for change.

¹³⁰ At the *Engaging Public’s 2014* symposium at ACAG (Auckland City Art Gallery) Heejswik stated “I am an instrument”. I interpret this as a counter to the criticism she has received as being co-opted by property developers in the Netherlands (BAVO, 2013). Instrumentality can be considered an artist’s and community’s awareness and desire to be engaged with the political and economic processes within which they are enmeshed.

institutional organization...” (Sardar, Araeen & Cubitt, 2002, p.5) had never seemed so pertinent.

4.4 Elbe’s Milkbar



(Fig. 23) *Elbe’s Milkbar* 2015 . Exterior nostalgia evening. Photograph Dionne Ward.

As the planning progressed in 2014 for the WWF and I faced the increasing frustrations of micro-management and co-option by the local council and other local and regional authorities, I developed another project designed to work with a variety of Wainuiomata, Lower Hutt and Wellington youth. This project moved outside the geographic boundaries of the suburb and attempted a more “multi-scalar” approach than simply bringing in a range of people and groups not familiar with the Wainuiomata community.

In researching Lower Hutt’s social history, I had come across an article about an exhibition and series of talks on youth culture in the Hutt Valley titled *Youthquake* (1999). The series included photographs and oral history recordings from Hutt Valley residents’ memories of Elbe’s Milkbar that had been curated by David Mealing in his capacity as director of the Petone Early Settlers Museum. During his time as director, Mealing curated exhibitions that were inclusive of immigrant communities such as *Living in two worlds: the Polish immigrant community of Wellington* (1992), (Ducat, Mealing, & Sawicka, 1992) and an exhibition based on an historical analysis of the

environmental impacts of European settlement on Hutt Valley waterways¹³¹. In characteristic fashion, Mealing had in fact been challenging the very construction of a “settler”-focused history. Mealing was continuing a radical art practice as curatorial practice by establishing affective connections with alternative subjectivities and imaginaries and questioning the environmental impacts of Lower Hutt development and industrialisation. This suggested to me that perhaps, after all, public art curated programmes could offer some shelter from the impacts of co-option, if the terms are legitimated by a radical curatorial regime, rather than originating in over-regulated community development discourses and processes.

I planned to thematise a milk-bar to the infamous Elbe’s Milkbar, which was a key focal point in Lower Hutt’s cultural history, the birthplace of the milkbar cowboy, the bike rider and petrol head, the bodgie and the widgie and the Lower Hutt bogan. So-called teenage delinquent behaviour at the milkbar had been a catalyst for the Mazengarb inquiry of 1954. A moral panic erupted in Aotearoa about teenage sex, which led to an all-out moral panic about the negative impact of mass culture on the youth of the day. American films, books, movie trailers, fashion, and comics were all seen as leading to teenage delinquency in the conservative suburbs of 1950s Aotearoa.

However, the Mazengarb enquiry rather indicated the birth of youth culture in Aotearoa, the ways that youth were practicing their own values of what was good and desirable irrespective of the conservative moral climate. Contemporary culture could be seen as offering a more complex suggestion of possibilities. Moreover, it can be argued that the same criticisms are levelled at youth today, albeit with the blame being placed on some additional cultural artefacts and technologies¹³².

The following proposal was accepted by the inaugural Common Ground 2015 public art festival:

Elbe’s Milk bar will create a working milk-bar in the old souvenir shop on the corner of Laings Road and High Street close to where the original Elbe’s milk bar traded from the early 1940s to the late 1960s. The milk bar will be open to the public for the

¹³¹ This exhibition was titled the *Heretaunga/Waiwhetu rivermouth:an historical narrative* (Bayly, 1988)

¹³² It is common to hear of the so-called negative impacts today of online computer games, screens, social media, and inane television programming, as well as the favourites of the Mazengarb enquiry that included single-parent (and multi-parent) families, lack of activities for youth, working (and non-working) parents, and a host of other contradictory social realities.

purpose of drinking milkshakes, eating classic Elbe's icecream parfaits and sundaes, listening to music, playing games, reminiscing and even talking about ethical issues.

Teenagers' behaviour at Elbe's in the 1950s was a catalyst for the Mazengarb moral panic inquiry of 1954, a time when New Zealanders were awoken to the birth of youth culture.

There will also be a café on revitalized street furniture outside 98 High Street, where the milk-bar cowboys motorbikes were once lined up. A programme of displays and exhibitions organised by a range of youth, students and original Elbe's patrons will accompany the milk-bar. Outside Elbe's Milk Bar aims to reinvigorate street culture and ice-cream sundaes in lower High street, Lower Hutt!

Artist Tim Barlow will build and manage the milk bar with the help of a range of students and recent graduates and Brian, Kevin and Lox Lummis, the sons of one of Elbe's original managers.



(Fig. 24) *Elbe's milkbar. Classic British bikes arrive.*

A group of youth from an alternative high school in Wainuiomata whom I had been working with for 2 years were trained to prepare the original sundaes, parfaits, sodas and milkshakes by the Lummis brothers, who were three of the original milk bar waiters. In the month before the event, I taught construction skills to another group of students as we built the furniture for the milk-bar in a vacant space in a Wainuiomata church. Other students designed menus, art work and promotional material while also learning basic budgeting and accounting techniques for the milkbar.

High school students from another high school contributed an exhibition of their innovative furniture designs, whilst old milkbar cowboys provided an exhibition of photographs from the 1950s and 1960s. Several recent university fine art graduates contributed artworks. The milkbar ran for the 5 days of the Common Ground festival, with a schedule of events including an opening event, a nostalgia evening, and a young vs. old debate. There were several subsequent re-openings of the milk bar over the following 2 months, including for Ministry of Education officials, an electronic dance music (EDM) evening for teens, and for regular service.

The milkbar was very popular with young and old alike. It served as a popular meeting spot for the older generation reminiscences of the milk bar days, but also for groups of mid-teenaged youth, and parents with teen children.



(Fig. 25) Construction of the milkbar booths.

The ethical dilemma is embodied not only in the Mazengarb inquiry, popular culture vs. censorship and control, or in the politics of domination, but in the material itself: the rich chocolate peanut parfaits or the sickly sweet ice cream sodas. The sundaes and parfaits were served in meal-like portions (that ultimately meant we lost money). The decadence of sugar and cream, with its sensuality and smoothness, is a powerful counter-materialism to the dry and crusty Mazengarb inquiry. Sugar and cream can be a delicious deception behind which lust lurks. Bachelard talked of how the material

imagination operates in a pre-language form of reverie¹³³ and that there exists an inherent aesthetics and ethics of water. Bachelard's poetics of water revealed that when analysing reverie, water was always “pure” or “impure”. I wanted to examine the material imagination of the moral panic of ice-cream.

There were a number of ethical conflicts involved in Elbe’s Milkbar. The public being served by those who could be considered vulnerable raises the possibility of turning the youth into “motifs” of the “vulnerable” on display, which legitimates myself and the Common Ground Festival, along with its supporting art institution the Dowse Museum. There is the danger of merely “ticking the boxes” for council policy for CA, bringing people into the CBD, some broad notion of diversity and the arts reaching communities who are not engaged with the gallery programme. This can come to stand in for any real politics, either a genuine participatory process, or addressing structural flaws, such as a lack of effective education and training programmes. Rather, there should be a careful balancing of perceived benefits and costs through discussion. Indeed during one debate, a member of the youth team argued the motion that youth were better off in the 1950s, stating “at least they got paid to work in milkbars back in the 50s, nowadays you call it art and get the youth to work for nothing”.

However, in this situation these conflicts were carefully negotiated; the students were involved by choice, and they had carefully considered the benefits for themselves. The entire course structure of the school had been re-engineered around the milkbar project with the potential for students to gain credits in multiple NCEA¹³⁴ courses (including English, maths, food service and technology). This turned into an experimental educational programme, using an intensive 3–4-week programme of building/designing and operating the milkbar as a hands on programme to get multiple credits for youth who were in-between mainstream schools. The head teacher remarked that this was a transformative experience for many of the youth involved. We entertained senior Ministry of Education (MOE) officials for an ice cream lunch as a head teacher discussed her vision for coal-face alternative education for the future,

¹³³ Gaston Bachelard examined a highly original aesthetics of water as inherent in the water itself and analysed this through a poetics of literary reverie. He attributed an inherent morality to water in his poetics (Bachelard, 1983)

¹³⁴ NCEA is the National Certificate for Educational Achievement, and is the standard high school accreditation system in Aotearoa.

while the MOE was going through a major alternative education review. Thus, the project became a small part of this wider conversation.

I planned this project to cross the borders of a straightforward training programme, a community development programme, a nostalgic revival, and a challenge to fixed attitudes of youth to function across multiple communities. Nato Thompson uses Mikhail Bakunin's term "transversality" to refer to a spread of ideas and social change that can arise when crossing disciplines, groups and social borders, or to "move across categories of identity" (Thompson, 2015, p.143).



(Illus. 26) Interior of the milkbar.

Hans Haacke and Pierre Bourdieu published a pertinent conversation regarding the multiple texts that an artwork can possess (Bourdieu & Haacke, 1995), including the ability for it to be read in an art historical sense, and by the non-art public. At the same time, Elbe's Milkbar probed into some deeper questions around vilifying the youth of today. In the art historical sense, there are some canonical SEA projects that involve food and service. I also sought to address an art historical practice that has continued at least since Carol Goodden, Tina Girouard and Gordon Matta-Clark's restaurant in Soho (NY) Food (1971–73) to Rirkrit Tiravanija's art gallery posed dinners from the early 1990s to the present, with the well-known restaurant in Pittsburgh conceived by Jon Rubin and Dawn Waleski: *Conflict Kitchen*¹³⁵.

¹³⁵In an interesting connection to bio-plastic, the current (2016) iteration of *Conflict Kitchen*, ("which serves food from countries the US is in conflict with") has an Iroquois menu and a

While the WWF was about creating a festival of water in the middle of a drought, the milkbar was about a re-examination of the ethics that operate between the older generation and youth. Both are based on a material substance, about viewing a particular construction of identity. Perhaps there will inevitably be a confrontation with official local development policy and a degree of instrumentalisation into these policies. Part of the intention of these projects was not only the particular strand of farcical humour, but the direction of the farce towards the aesthetics of CA itself. Lacy argues that one of art's functions is that it "reflects the questioning that took place during its production" (Lacy, 2010, p. 261). Caring deception therefore allows a negotiation and revealing of the terms of the artists engagement and its positioning as a comedic routine. In both the WWF and Elbe's Milkbar the impasse of assets vs. deficits becomes embodied in the form of the artwork as an absurd or farcical event.

With the experience of facilitating co-option during the WWF, I sought to regain some control over the care and deception of the milkbar project. With *Elbe's Milkbar*, I thought it would be difficult for the project to be instrumentalised; why would anyone want to be associated with teen sex? After the project, I was invited to create large-scale model ice creams as Christmas decorations on lampposts, in celebration of the history of the milkbar in the Hutt Valley, which I declined. I realised that the Mazengarb inquiry was now widely regarded as a moral panic oddity, which, combined with the fondness and nostalgia with which the milkbar was remembered, possibly over-ran the critical potential I could see in raising questions over contemporary moral panic and highlighting inequality in vulnerable groups from suburbs like Wainuiomata. I was particularly struck by a number of comments from the original milkbar patrons, commenting on the "sad state" of the youth of today! The same arguments were now being rolled out by the older generation. However, the students working in the milkbar were widely complimented for their exemplary service.

Although the criticism from the youth debate that I was appropriating free student labour "in the name of art" was not altogether true (they were paid a small fee each day and consumed a reasonable quantity of sundaes and parfaits themselves), it does bring back the question of free labour, artists being outsourced as forms of social welfare (i.e., myself), and the responsibility for social welfare being shifted away from

programme that raises questions about the negative effects of Monsanto GM corn on the Iroquois heirloom corn growing practices.

centralised agencies to affective labour. Simultaneous with calls for a permanent milkbar to train Hutt youth, the youth space Secret Level¹³⁶ was defunded, requiring it to transform into a mobile organisation. Consequently, I have had repeated calls to re-create the recreation of Elbe's Milkbar, because people recognise that new techniques are required to engage youth into training. However, this begs several questions regarding the many issues around these kinds of events as potential "art-washing" of real sustained efforts to provide opportunities for youth.

By avoiding the "discursive violence" of the language of lacks and deficits, the conversation can also become an enforced kind of positivity, leading to resentment where those who want to express dissent are excluded. I noticed this with the language used for the 7-day makeover of the Wainuiomata high street¹³⁷. "No room for negativity here"; "No nay-sayers allowed!". This kind of inverse discursive violence appears to be the preferred mode of "positive spin" when regulating authorities are involved in the processes of engagement. Although the Boffa Miskell charette process allowed for expression of "what we did not like about Wainuiomata", the brevity of the participatory process excluded any opportunity to unpack these dissatisfactions further, into possible origins or serious flaws in political structures, such as the process of participation itself. However, the methodology of caring deception can instigate the negotiation of these ethical conflicts. It is less about offering the solutions, than drawing them into the form of the art work.

The facade of Elbe's Milkbar included the aesthetics of the look and "tone" of the original. The pastel tones of pinks and mint greens, the milkbar booths, white and black formal uniforms and the outdoor signage were all created to resemble the original milkbar design as closely as possible. This was an interesting negotiation of memory in itself, as no colour photographs existed and the original patrons had entirely different recollections, particularly of colours. However, I was not interested so much in an accurate recreation of Elbe's milkbar (which would have been extremely expensive), but rather in the aesthetics of the pop-up architecture that characterises much CA and SEA. The "plywood platforms", amateur hand-drawn

¹³⁶ See ("Lower Hutt youth centre to close its doors | Stuff.co.nz," n.d.)

¹³⁷ As part of the development groups development plan for Wainuiomata an outside "expert" was brought in from Australia for a 7-day makeover of the High street in Sept 2016.

signs and the garish colour palettes have a unique aesthetic quality. This was the facade that could be exaggerated to further interrogate the term of caring deception.

Elbe's Milkbar was clearer about its goals than the *Wainuiomata Water Festival*; it functioned as an advocacy platform for youth who not only served and gained transformative training opportunities but gained vital NCEA credits in a doing and making environment. The milkbar brought together the retiring generation and the emerging generation with exchanges based on skill, history, myth and moral panic.

Chapter 5: The impasse of instrumentalism: The facade of the community centre.

5.0 Old McDonald's

“It is an act of oppression, therefore, to attempt to ‘work with’ a community as part of a directive, professionalised role, since this will impose an externally manufactured shape and direction upon community which people will be invited to accept as their own... Community in this sense is obviously not available for ‘development’, in the sense that funding agencies and government departments use the term” (Kelly, 1984, p.50)

I created the fifth project for the second iteration of TEZA (Transitional Economic Zone Aotearoa, Porirua) based in Porirua, Wellington, in 2015¹³⁸. This time, TEZA was to be based in the wider city within which I lived, but would be again engaging with a community with which I was unfamiliar. The artistic methodology of engagement was to both facilitate a particular community to form and drive an idea themselves relating to an issue of local significance, and to initiate an original critique of the aesthetics and ethics of council-initiated curated events of this nature.

The impasse of the community centre propelled me towards Margaret Urban Walker’s detailed unpacking of the ethics of resentment. I consider resentment as a form of care and deception that Walker suggests can have positive effects for negotiating social ethics in action. The community centre that I helped to establish at the Old McDonald’s became a facade through which to challenge the CBD revitalisation that I perceived as taking place in Porirua at the expense of local suburban development. I challenged the instrumental vs. instrumentalised dilemma by performing the artist’s role of being a cultural worker who has been “outsourced care”.

Letting Space made the decision to site this iteration of TEZA in Porirua, a city to the north of Wellington. Rather than a suburban location, the decision was made by the

¹³⁸ Refer to; <https://teza.org.nz/>

producers of Letting Space to combine TEZA with their other long-running project, the Urban Dream Brokerage (UDB), an organisation that brokered empty retail spaces in CBD locations for artists' projects. UDB was modelled on Sophie Jerram and Mark Amery's 1994 visionary incarnation of "Letting Space", in which they acted as "brokers"¹³⁹ to find vacant retail spaces for arts-based projects in Auckland during an earlier period of economic downturn that had resulted in many empty shops and showrooms.



(Fig.27) The vacant Trash Palace. 2015

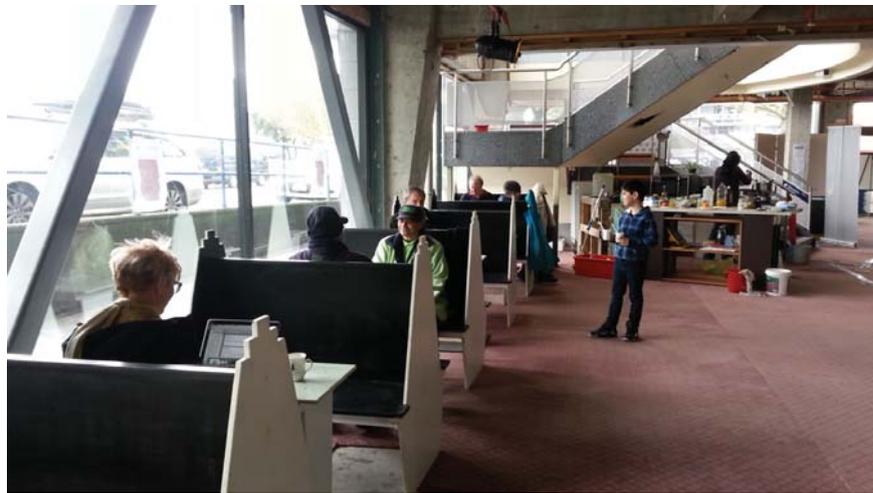
My initial proposal was to establish a relationship with the site I was most familiar with in Porirua. I had been visiting Trash Palace for years to shop for second-hand treasures. Trash Palace is known in Aotearoa as a tip-shop, attached to the local council-managed waste management land fill, recycling and selling second hand goods. Trash Palace had gone into voluntary liquidation early in 2015 due to several factors, including the loss of funding from the local District Health Board (DHB), which had subsidised approximately 35 workers, many of whom were mental health clients¹⁴⁰.

The proposal included the idea that I could engage with the Trash Palace site and redundant workers from the Mana Recovery Trust-operated recycling business to build a site for TEZA from leftover Trash Palace goods and equipment. After approaching some of the previous workers to gauge interest in working on an art-

¹³⁹ UDB describe their role as "brokers" as an interface between property owners and artists.

¹⁴⁰ See; ("Jobs lost in recycling depot closure," n.d.)

related project I decided not to overtly work with mental health clients. Common reactions I received were “what I really need is a job” or “I’m too busy looking for work”, and expressions of a general distrust in what might be an ameliorative temporary “fix”. There was much hurt about the shutting down of the Trash Palace facility. My proposal shifted when the concept for TEZA became fused with the UDB project and a large vacant space was found in Cobham court. The site contained many empty retail spaces, and it was proposed that this would be an ideal space for TEZA to be based. Setting up the Old McDonald’s (OMD’s) as a community centre run by local people (as an UDB project) but also as the base for TEZA, created some local confusion over the difference between UDB and TEZA. There was a sense of acronym overload.



(Fig. 28) Milkbar booths set up in the *Old McDonald's* café

The space that was the site of the first McDonald’s restaurant in Aotearoa was established by UDB as a community centre after connections were forged with a number of community organisations and a large community meeting held in the space. There was enough local interest for the space to be trialled as a community-run arts/event space. To some, there seemed some kind of perverse irony in the community managing a space fondly remembered by many people who enjoyed the early McDonald’s model of an industrial-scale family restaurant, and others who critiqued McDonald’s original strategic placement near to the industrial sites of Todd motors and low-income workers. The first McDonald’s was perceived to have been targeted towards the working class Māori and Pacific Island populations of Porirua.

I established a workshop in the OMD’s using redundant equipment from Trash Palace that would question and challenge what appeared to me to be a problematic version of

TEZA that was evolving. I saw the setting up of this workshop more as a form of social laboratory that questioned whether community artists were not only being incorporated into the flaws of “official” community development but becoming an alternative form of care themselves. Friedli and Stearn’s research examines the way that shifts in UK neo-liberal welfare policy included strategies to modify the behaviour and values of workfare¹⁴¹ recipients and the unemployed (Friedli & Stearn, 2015). Thus, “positive psychology” techniques were designed to create the “right attitude(s)” of “optimism, aspiration, self-efficacy, conscientiousness, sense of coherence” (Friedli & Stearn, p.42) to modify the under-employed to the values of work in the labour market. This also undermines alternative discourses of “solidarity, collectivity and interdependence”. In summary, the researchers state a preference to talk about a discourse of the politics of rights and justice, rather than positive psychology (Friedli & Stearn, p. 45). Mary Anne Francis also examines how the cultural worker is increasingly bound up in the politics of care; as care is being shifted from the State, it is being outsourced to artists (Francis, 2014). Recent research from Sophie Hope and Jenny Richards examines the positive and negative consequences associated with the cultural worker’s (artists), “immaterial labour”. Through the entanglement in the worker’s body of the affects of work, non-work and enjoyment, they look at work as a personal experience and how it is connected to feelings of well-being (Hope & Richards, 2015).

The observation was made by a Porirua resident that TEZA and the UDB seemed to be a form of “social experiment”, echoing discussions from the 2013 iteration of TEZA. These ideas informed the projects *Just in Time Community Centre* (2015) (JIT) and the *Titahi Bay Boatshed Festival* (2015) (TBFF), that I developed for this iteration of TEZA. The complex relations of my negotiation of being a “caring worker” in Porirua became embodied in the artworks.

5.1 Mementos and resentment

Lynne Tirrell refers to the influence of earlier feminist positions of “context, content and point of view” (Tirrell, 1998, p.298) that have influenced debate on aesthetics and

¹⁴¹ Workfare: A form of welfare in which capable adults are required to perform work, often in public-service jobs, as a condition of receiving aid (freeonline dictionary)..

public morality¹⁴². Sally J. Morgan has described these as “context-specific discourses” (Morgan, 1999). I regard proto US/UK feminist social artists such as Mary Kelly, Adrian Piper, Judy Chicago and Suzanne Lacy as the innovators of SEA practice, who made the connections examined in this thesis between the ethics of care, moral philosophy and a practice of social ethics.

Margaret Urban Walker discusses the importance of the social affects of resentment and disgust for activating ethical responses in situations of domination and power. Walker discusses resentment as a broad-ranging and potentially positive affect, and that “resentment responds to perceived threats to expectations based on norms that are presumed shared in or justly authoritative for common life” (Walker, 2004, p. 146). Walker states the field across which resentment applies is broad and encompasses such things as table manners through to matters of “justice and basic decency”, making the connection to everyday material relations. Thus, resentment does not just target anger at others actions, but invites a response from others “that they can be... trusted to respect and reaffirm the boundaries that norms define” (Walker, 2004, p. 146). She discusses various degrees and manifestations of resentment, for instance, that can lead to disgust, either at those who perpetuate the harm, or at oneself for not being able to do anything about it. Although it may turn away from “active resistance”, disgust can engender “less costly” or “defensive” feelings (Walker, 2004, p p. 153–155), where resentment turns inward into a survival mode.

Resentment has the potential to “activate protective, reassuring, or defensive responses in some individuals or community that can affirm the victim’s being within the scope of that communities protective responsibility” (Walker, 2004, p.157). Walker does not deny the potential destructiveness that resentment and disgust can cause, but rather indicates the significance these affects may have in CA practice for not only resistance and action, but also community well-being and inclusiveness.

¹⁴² Tirrells analysis specifically refers to pornography and the uses of language.



(Fig. 29) *Travails of the bomb-aimer's daughter* (Chp.3). Sally J. Morgan. *Performance Arcade*, Wellington, New Zealand.) 2013

In Sally J. Morgan's recent project *The Travails of the Bomb-Aimer's Daughter* (2013)¹⁴³, the complexity of the affects of resentment and disgust can be regarded as being embodied and performed with a passing public of visitors in close proximity to the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa)¹⁴⁴, where a future large-scale war exhibition would take place in 2015¹⁴⁵. In this "act" (or Chapter 3, as Morgan describes it; Morgan, 2016, p.73), a community was established that could be defined in critic Martin Patrick's elaboration of "the encounter" in recent art practice. Patrick regards this encounter as representing aspects of "chance" and "varying degrees of hostility, immediacy and spontaneity" (Patrick, 2009, p.39). Morgan describes how her initial intentions to control the smashing of a rack of delicate small porcelain war planes shifted under public pressure: "Before I knew it, they (members

¹⁴³ *Travails of the Bomb Aimer's Daughter* (2013) was installed and performed in a shipping container in 2014 as part of an annual independently curated pop-up village of "live art" called *Performance Arcade*, situated on the Wellington waterfront in shipping containers alongside Te Papa, see; <https://theplaygroundnz.com/the-performance-arcade-2/>

¹⁴⁴ The Museum of New Zealand te Papa Tongarewa (Te Papa) is the national cultural museum/institution in Aotearoa.

¹⁴⁵ *Gallipoli: the scale of our war* (2015-2019) is a major exhibition, a collaboration between Weta Workshop and Te Papa, with displays and models based on the NZ involvement in the WW1 Gallipoli campaign. It is part of ongoing centenary commemorations of WW1 that include significant public funding.

of the public) were clamouring and grabbing and had broken the rack, and plane after plane was crashing into the container” (Morgan, 2016, p.73).

Where did this urge to destroy originate? Why would anyone desire to smash a beautiful porcelain plane, even if Morgan had been demonstrating or even encouraging this act of destruction? I argue that rather than seeing this solely as an inevitable outcome of the interactivity encouraged at *Performance Arcade*, it can be understood within Walker’s morals of resentment and disgust. Resentment includes such ethical responses as “why am I not allowed to do this like others are?”, and disgust, rather than purely a response of anger, can re-direct resentment to resolvable social solutions, such as “if I can also participate then I will not be resentful, I will be included, I can become a part of the group” and within the materiality of the porcelain itself, “this porcelain invites breaking as it is so delicate’ (hence returning us to Sedwick’s ideas about texture). There may also be the response “this object, this plane, represents war, with which I am disgusted, so I can destroy it”.

In my own experience in this performance, I encountered another response; I did indeed smash a plane, but felt compelled to be a “good participant” and resented having to smash what I would have rather taken home as a memento. The consequence was the creation of a questioning ethical community around complicity in the destruction of war, and asking whether we are inherently violent. Moreover, this work raised questions about how this can translate to the ethics of war commemoration, and, importantly, how our resentment and disgust can be embodied in material objects, (statues or mementos) and assist to either form or undo a community.

I could not align the goals of the previous TEZA event (New Brighton 2013), which had supported the suburban community of New Brighton and its strong sense of self-identity and community-led development, with the goals of TEZA Porirua. The CBD of Porirua was undergoing a multimillion-dollar local council-led development of Cobham Court (the CBD shopping precinct), while there were visible signs of neglect in suburban areas such as Titahi Bay, Witangirua, and Cannons Creek.

In short, TEZA had in my mind become a branch of the UDB project which was funded by the Porirua Council and the local Chamber of Commerce, and was expected to reflect the values of these regulating and controlling bodies, particularly CBD revitalisation. There were other possibilities of fulfilling council policy goals to receive

more funding, such as targeting projects to children. There existed not only my own resentment at the feeling of co-option by authorities for the WWF, but also resentment from past workers at Trash Palace.

I supported the UDB plan along with a key group of keen locals to get the space up and running with physical help building a kitchen area, bringing in booths from the milkbar project, cleaning, working bees, and laying carpet. Despite setup issues with only a small group of locals and myself dedicated to the day-to-day organisation of the space, the space was rapidly embraced and utilised by many community groups. It felt like the community was owning this space; at times, multiple workshops were running, such as a childcare advocacy group, simultaneously with workshops for a TEZA project that worked with recent refugees and repurposed clothing, to an exhibition by Hyunbae Lee, a resident artist from Korea at Whitireia (a Porirua-based tertiary training institute).

I felt resistance to basing a project at OMD's for TEZA, as my focus has always been on "vulnerable" suburban areas. From informal discussions and an initial meeting I held with Titahi Bay residents, it emerged that the lack of a community centre accessible to all was an important issue for the Titahi Bay suburb. At present, there is an old golf club/library building in the central shopping precinct of Titahi Bay that functions as a community centre, but I encountered a widespread perception that it was dominated by one or two community groups. I facilitated a meeting with interested locals and we formulated a plan to re-establish a beach fair that could be based in the Titahi Bay boatsheds. I was determined that I would not be the sole person to facilitate the project, and a key group of three Titahi Bay locals, Alicia Rich, Amanda Joe and Dave Brett, became the joint directors of the festival. This would be called *The Titahi Bay Boatshed Festival*¹⁴⁶.

¹⁴⁶ Spokesman for organising committee Dave Brett comments "We have no real community hub down here so we thought we'd create one," ("Festival takes Titahi Bay back in time," n.d.).



(Fig. 30) *The Titahi Bay Boatshed Festival*. Porirua. New Zealand. 2015.

Simultaneously, I would structure my TEZA project around creating a mobile community centre. This would be in the form of the classic Todd Motors Hillman Hunter, an iconic NZ family car (considered to be very ordinary) towing a handmade camp-o-matic¹⁴⁷ trailer that unpacked a tent with a fully-equipped community centre. I promoted the *Just in Time (JIT) Community Centre* as a dial-up service for any community group that were lacking a meeting or social venue.

Much like the original Elbe's milkbar in Lower Hutt, Todd Motors was remembered by many in Porirua as an iconic institution; virtually everyone in the area had friends or family who had worked at the plant between the 1970s and 1990s. Todd Motors had been influential in re-shaping the CBD during the early 1970s. Todd Motors moved out in 1988, and the last kitset Mitsubishi vehicles were assembled in 1998. From that point on, Aotearoa had fully moved to imported vehicles. The Just In Time (JIT) production line system was adopted by Todd Motors in the 1970s as the most advanced computer-assisted method for building imported kitset (knocked-down) cars and ordering spare parts. It was called "Just in Time" because few spare parts were kept in the factory, meaning that all parts were "dialled-in" to order (Penman, 2005). The Todd Motors facility even had its own fleet of JIT mini vehicles that transported the spare parts around the vast production line. The JIT Community Centre was therefore an embodied form of the development of labour systems at the Todd motors plant. A memento to the production line labour that was so fondly remembered by

¹⁴⁷ Colloquial New Zealand term for a camper trailer (i.e., a tent that folds out of a trailer).

locals. Economist Max Rashbrooke reviewed TEZA, and drew attention to the relation between the labour systems of Todd Motors and the values of TEZA¹⁴⁸.



(Fig. 31) *Just In Time Community Centre (JIT)*. Cannons Creek. New Zealand. 2015

As the local community came to really own the OMD's space, the landlord was not so enthusiastic about the uses to which it was being put. The landlord had commented that our first set-up efforts looked a bit "hippy", saying that it looked like someone was living there and that there was a lot of clutter around. He also commented that it looked like a drop-in centre because he had seen volunteer helpers sitting and having lunch! There was clearly a conflict of interest between the way that OMD's was evolving as an active community space organised by community groups, and the

¹⁴⁸ "Tim Barlow's mobile community centre sparked even bigger questions, thanks to the fact it was towed by, and paid homage to, a Hillman Hunter from the old Todd Motors factory. Todd Motors used to be an essential part of Porirua life, employing thousands of people, and its disappearance still reverberates harshly through the community. But it disappeared because New Zealand simply couldn't produce cars that were as cheap and reliable as Japanese imports, and the country overall chose – and benefited from – those imports, even if Porirua suffered.

Barlow isn't suggesting that we revert to protecting a car industry (not that we could anyway, given the free trade agreements we have signed). But then what *do* we do? Again, do we try to concretely measure the benefits of having local industries – the spillover effects, the savings from not having people unemployed, and so on – in a way that allows us to better make the case for them? Or do we say that we, the people, acting through government, have a better view of how the economy could work than when we, the people, act as consumers, buying and selling things? If so, how would we have that knowledge, and how could we articulate it?" (Rashbrooke, 2015)

official imagining of CBD revitalisation. The Council, in conjunction with property owners, appeared to be trying to generate a particular kind of aesthetics of revitalisation. OMD's was shut down as a community centre after its brief 6 weeks of operation and the large windows were used as a projection screen during the week of TEZA for Dave Cook and Leala Falesuega's project *Young Visionaries* (2015)¹⁴⁹.

With the eviction from OMD's came an interesting rumour, that we were thrown out due to the official perception that the space was functioning as a critique of how the first McDonald's in Aotearoa had been situated in close proximity to the ideal customers; industrial workers and Māori and Pacific Islanders.

The first McDonald's restaurant in Aotearoa was rumoured to have been located close to the Todd motors assembly plant (now closed) to provide cheap fast food for the workers and those on lower incomes. Todd Motors had an influential history in the development of Porirua as a suburban location for homes for industrial workers. The industrial workplace of Todd Motors, a revered space of community and communication, built on pride in the collective effort to assemble motor cars.

Many locals had a fond nostalgia for the company, which seemed to genuinely care for their workers. The complex was commonly referred to as "The University on the Hill" referring to the company's commitment to ongoing education, training and support of their workers. Todd Motors supported many new migrant workers, including Maori, shifting from rural to the urban centres (or peripheries), as well as recent immigrants from the Pacific Islands and refugees from Kampuchea and Myanmar in the 1970s and 1980s.

The concepts of the TBBF and JIT originated from a response of resentment. I was struck by the bittersweet memories with which many Porirua residents maintained for Todd Motors. This was a resentment that resulted in resignation, about the inevitability of change, that Todd Motors had simply been victims of the deregulation of the vehicle manufacturing industry in the 1980s. I considered how Walker's ethics of resentment and disgust could lead to resignation and acceptance that shifts in free market economics were just "the way things were".

¹⁴⁹ *Young Visionaries* was a photographic collaboration between two Primary schools with opposite decile ratings (socio-economic status).

5.2 Boatsheds and car assembly

The aesthetics of McDonald's takeaways, motor car assembly and craft, and the beach festivals and boatsheds informed the textures of care that I wove into these projects. The boatsheds were a unique space that bridged the private and public space of Titahi Bay. They are privately owned, and many had been converted into hang-out zones or little living rooms where the owners and their friends could relax in some easy chairs and survey the beautiful scenery of the bay and life passing by on the sands. I conceived the idea of gaining permission from several boatshed owners to use their sheds for a celebration of spaces as an alternative kind of community centre, based on the public space of the beach and distinct from council "approval".

I was against getting official approval for this festival; after my experience with the WWF, I had a distrust of council over-regulation. The issue of control was important for me, that local communities take back some control over public space. Not everyone agreed to this stance, and the organising group did approach the council and the local community board to inform them of the intentions for the festival. This legitimating function of the council was important for other participants in the festival, including some of the stall-holders who would not commit to running a stall unless the council had been notified.



(Fig. 32) *JIT Community Centre*. Te Rito Gardens. Old Porirua Hospital grounds.

There were some other interesting "contextual co-ordinates" for the Boatshed festival project. Titahi Bay was said to be the last public access beach in Wellington where cars were allowed on the beach sand. This again caused some conflict in the

community, and amongst boatshed owners. Many local residents enjoyed this privilege, parking up and having fish and chips on the foreshore, or listening to music and having a beer. There was the usual minority group who abused the beach as car access way, “drifting and pulling figure 8’s” through the preserved forest embedded in the beach sand, or causing parents to worry that their children would be run over. Thus, there was an independent and unique culture already existed at the beach, with the driving and negotiating of appropriate car use on the beach as part of rights to the beach and use of leisure time. After meeting close to 20 of the boatshed owners I became aware of the extent of the diversity and complexity of this community of boatshed owners. There was a North end and a South end, divided not only by geography but also friendly rivalry based on class and climate. There was even an unofficial Mayor of the boatsheds.

The last Titahi Bay beach festival was reportedly 8 years earlier, with some claiming it was as long ago as the late 1990s. The revival of such an event was generally well-received, and the the majority of boatshed owners I spoke to were favourable towards the idea. One of the fondest remembered events of the old beach festival was the tug of war between the Northend and Southend shed owners.

In comparison to the WWF festival, which occurred at the same time as the local council was developing an elaborate development plan for the suburb, there were no major development plans for Titahi Bay. The boatsheds already operated as a place where people managed their own norms and spaces, as a diverse mixture of communities in one location. The boatsheds functioned in unique modes, as quiet facades of everyday resistance, exhibiting elements of disguise and deception. Many had been converted into comfortable living spaces, once the weathered exterior doors were rolled open some contained pristine white walled apartments, others dingy convivial social spaces. Behind their cute vernacular facade, one can imagine the boatsheds are sites of freedom where occupiers could create their own norms, free from the over-regulated world beyond.

However, for these very reasons, there did turn out to be a core of resistance to the idea of a boatshed festival. One group stated that they had not been consulted before flyers were posted around the sheds, and two other groups did not want to draw attention to the privilege of privacy that made the sheds so attractive to their use. These groups also suspected that the festival was a council initiative, and there was a general mistrust of council intentions and regulation, as well as a perception that the

council did not support Titahi Bay and had abandoned the suburb. This echoed a general impression I had gathered over previous projects; the resistance of the suburbs, by which the places that appear to have a lack of council resources have a more resistant attitude and an associated perception of victimisation, voicing sentiments like “the council don’t do anything for us, then they come and give my car a ticket at 5pm on a Friday afternoon while I’m parked in an empty alleyway”.

The TBBF committee was responsible for the organisation of the Boatshed festival. I offered assistance and left the production entirely in their hands. The festival grew its support base, and eventually many local groups and organisations got on board, from the surf life-saving club performing IRB demo’s and a line-up of musicians performing, to multiple sheds opening up and an array of community organisations becoming involved. There was discussion amongst the committee about whether the project should be considered a TEZA project or not. The committee eventually decided to remain under the TEZA “umbrella”.

My involvement in the festival was helping conceive the idea with local people, then assisting with the provision of resources, such as a PA from Massey University, set-up of the JIT as the performance space, and facilitating the involvement of Nga Taonga (NZ Film Archive) and Jane Paul, who provided a programme of early Titahi Bay films in one of the sheds.

I worked alongside Simon Gray’s TEZA project *Breadmakers of Porirua Unite!* (2015), during the festival day. While Simon provided his free bread-tasting and sourdough starters, I was passing out free freshly cooked deep fried fish. We became an embodiment of the Christ loaves and fishes miracle as well as (in my mind) a representation of the missionary zeal of outsider artists; hail the evangelising artist! I meanwhile asked questions of the recipients of the free fish for their opinion on the ethics of giving away free food, and quoted a favourite proverb of Steve Wilson from the local organic Te Rito Gardens: “it’s better to give a man a fishing rod and teach him how to fish than to give him fish”.

Porirua is a post-industrial city. The myth of progress that had existed in Porirua referred to a previous epoch where government and industry worked together to “care for” the people, albeit in an industrial-era paradigm; an era where the government committed to massive state building programmes, where government worked with industry as a vast central planning exercise for progress and growth, where even Todd Motors established its own University. The new myths are based on economic

imperatives and individualism, combined with a distorted idea of community responsibility. The State would withdraw from responsibilities of care, and communities would take over. The DHB had withdrawn its funding for Trash Palace mental health clients, the government was withdrawing from social housing, while the local council proclaimed its success at encouraging devolution to local communities (“Leggett’s \$27m devolution plan,” 2016).

In an analysis of some of the community engagement projects of the Liverpool’s Capital of Culture Biennial, 2008, Susan Fitzpatrick states it is better to ask “why is a temporary event being framed as a way to address deep seated inequalities in a locality”. (Fitzpatrick, 2013, p.213). Fitzpatrick reveals as what she interprets as underlying neo-liberal ideology of urban development and how this can be “obscured beneath layers of art-as-empowerment discourse”. There is the “neo-lib” ethos that “everyone is able to thrive without the welfare state” and the “rightness of neo-liberal forms of governance” (ibid, p.221). Fitzpatrick is interested in SEA projects that might initiate “a critical dialogue in the city around the ethics of representation and power”



(Fig. 33) *JIT Community Centre as the main stage at Titahi Bay Boatshed Festival.*

JIT was thematising its own contradictions; it was a piece of caring deception that I installed in various suburban locations to escape the CBD. Yet, it also had real use value; it functioned as the main music tent at the TBBF, it displayed graphics promoting a local community centre for Titahi Bay at another local fair, it travelled to other suburban locations and one day at Te Rito organic gardens surrounded by the old Porirua Hospital buildings I taught the age-old craft of lime rendering to Te Rito workers. With the JIT Community Centre I had literally become the new “immaterial

labourer”, rushing from one temporary engagement to the next precarious job. This project was framed as “live art”, more “encounter” than “event”, where I embodied the refusal of the official terms of engagement. I demonstrated that resentment is a form of deception, which can transform resignation into a positive social ethics in action.

Mark Harvey’s TEZA performance *Volunteer refinery* (2015) embodied volunteering and caring approaches in his own body. He invited passers-by to build cardboard structures on his body while he engaged them in conversation about volunteer work. He became increasingly “laboured” and often ended up laboriously crawling, having been transformed into a bizarre manifestation of how care was being “outsourced” to his “immaterial labour”. With my TEZA projects, I was locating my labour in the complex of material relations to past labour forms and the local groups with which I was working.

I had been the initial impetus for an idea that a group in the community took ownership of, adapted for their own purposes and produced themselves. After the exhausting organisation and partial co-option of the WWF, I took an approach to care that evolved beyond care giving. This involved care of myself, caring for local self-determination, and caring with. I could also introduce my own underlying symbolics that could create a critical dimension to care through relating the “affective” labourer to a social history of the labour of the production line. Hope and Richard's study had revealed the cultural worker as the exemplary neo-liberal worker, yet these workers also “loved” their work. I positioned my cultural work in relation to the leisure and pleasure zones of escapist beach festivals, sheds of relaxation, and deep-fried fish.

In Morgan’s *Travails of the Bomb Aimer’s Daughter* (2013) the affects of resentment and disgust are experienced by a relations of “encounter”, where surprising and chance events are activated. The TBBF and JIT projects worked with “sited communities” through processes of negotiation to realise moments of “encounter” and resist co-option.

The encounters that were activated involved the TEZA processes, property owners and local council efforts at CBD revitalisation. The resulting TBBF shifted its site away from the CBD to the beach where I thought, perhaps romantically, there existed communities of resistance. However, the dominant affect of many local citizens in relation to a material history of progress seemed to be one of a resignation to fate, a resignation to the withdrawal of the State and local governments from care.

As critics such as Francis have argued, the withdrawal of the State, industry and local councils from *caring* responsibilities has been accompanied by an increase in an “outsourcing” of care to funded (or volunteer) programmes for community-based or social artists’ projects. Yet, rather than be resigned to this fate, I packed the Hillman Hunter and travelled to the beach to enjoy fish and chips with my new friends.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.0 Ministry for Vulnerable Suburbs (MVS)

The MVS is situated in a large Thorndon residence in the Wellington CBD. Nestled amongst diplomatic embassies, parliamentary buildings and ministerial apartments, the MVS exhibits documentation of the projects examined in this thesis; *The Public Fountain* (2012), *Te Ao Mārama* and *The TEZA site* (both 2013), *The Wainuiomata Water Festival* and *Elbe's Milkbar* (both 2015), *Just in Time (JIT) Community Centre* and *Titahi Bay Boatshed Festival* (both 2015). The documentation was presented to demonstrate caring deception as a practice of social ethics in action.



Fig.34 Exterior view, Ministry for Vulnerable Suburbs. 2016. Photograph Tim Barlow.

A multi-media assortment of materials, objects photographs, moving image recordings, sound recordings, reproductions, notes, quotes, props and so on were placed together in the MVS to evoke a multi sensual, multi textural experience which the thesis proposes is appropriate to negotiate care and deceit. The proposition with the final thesis presentation is that care and deceit require an ongoing negotiation, a movement that crosses reduction of community art to singular projects or aesthetic artifacts to a multiplicity of projects and a multi-scalar continual shifting and updating of the terms of engagement. All the thesis projects are positioned in relation to the space of the community centre and its relationship to privilege and the suburb. Each room or space documenting a particular project became an environment that could be experienced in real time.

Bishop has discussed some of the challenges of the documentation of community art projects through a comparison of the differing methodologies of artists such as Tania Bruguera, Paul Chan, Jeremy Deller and Pawel Althamer (Bishop, chp.9, 2012). I proposed a different methodology than either Chan or Dellers carefully constructed documentation for art world audiences and institutions, Althamers 'taking the people' to the source of display (art-fairs etc) or Brugueras display of work of her students at various Biennials. For the MVS documentation of 'before the event' is intermingled with 'after' and 'during' the projects and I intended to blur the boundary between symbolic and utilitarian functions. It is unclear if the MVS is an event, project or functioning community centre.

The documentation was presented as appearing to be in the process of being arranged and assembled to make some sense. This is not simply to reify 'the process' and reclaim the process as central to community art work. The viewers were being invited to construct a narrative from one project to the next and acknowledge the legitimacy of a community art aesthetics. MVS proposed that there is a valid aesthetic category of pinboards and white boards, of dining room tables strewn with post it notes and stories of workers stories, or piles of bills on the artists desk and retro op-shop furniture. These were not just representations, but real operations.

The various distinct projects could be linked through viewer movement through a home/community centre where different spaces evoked an experience of the original events. The social history of architecture such as the milk-bar, the Hillman Hunter and the bell tent was revealed as the spaces of the home as a community centre, a place for social gathering. The kitchen was established as the milkbar café, the living/dining room set up as the meeting area with whiteboards and pin boards, a reception area became a catalogue of pictures and objects from the WWF. Water and critters from the Wainuiomata river sat festering in a fish tank while upstairs the main bedroom was setup as the community artists office. Bedrooms had TV monitors playing videos documenting the various projects while monitors also played the relevant documentary videos in the milkbar and meeting room.

Again, as in the earlier projects, my own role became that of an art director or production designer employing the aesthetics of the community centre itself, exaggerating and making subtle absurdities such as the hand washing basin (a repurposed industrial hand washing basin where multiple users could gather to wash

hands) at the entranceway to follow Maori protocol, which became the new incarnation of the Public Fountain.

With MVS I brought the suburbs to occupy the centre right amongst the seat of National power to demonstrate how the notion of caring deception keeps allowing the terms of the collaboration to be re-negotiated. The notion of the multi-scalar was expanded further, so the thesis projects moved beyond being geographically mobile across multiple suburbs, or the inclusion of a cross section of communities and social groups. The negotiation of care and deceit became centered on the experience of the central city viewer, in their viewing experience in the space, and also on the suggested relationship between the occupation, function and purpose of MVS to the owner of the property. The subjectivities engaged therefore expanded to rather reveal the complexity of the community artists relationship to power, privilege and disenfranchised communities that lies at the heart of the program of cultural democracy.

In 2016 the National government created a new ministry titled Ministry for Vulnerable Children MVC (Oranga Tamariki). This continued the incumbent governments program to ameliorate poverty and generational social malaise at the level of the 'child' as an autonomous unit. This ideological approach to separate the child from their family and community relationships and networks provided the context for the MVS. During 2016 the new Ministry for Vulnerable Children was publicly criticised as using stigmatising language¹⁵⁰.

The house at 12a Parliament Street Thorndon was linked to William Massey the 14th Prime Minister of New Zealand. It was renovated in the 1920s to accommodate the family of a daughter of Massey and Masseys widow Dame Christina Massey Massey passed away in 1923. Massey remains a contested figure in the social politics of Aotearoa, perhaps still most remembered for his breaking of the early 20th century Union and workers movements and the great strike of 1912, (Masseys cossacks). In an oral history I discovered from a grand daughter she describes how the home was also remembered for being named (Matairoa) by Maori Parliamentarians who would have lunches and dinners in the spacious dining room overlooking the old Parliament. This gave the exhibition a social historical context within which I had been situating the

¹⁵⁰ Rosanna Price "New Ministry for Vulnerable children boss to lead culture change, Tolley says". Aug 18 2016. Stuff.

other projects albeit with a different emphasis on direct connection to the privilege of power and politics at the centre of Aotearoa's capital city..



Fig.35 Interior view, Ministry for Vulnerable Suburbs. Meeting room. 2016. Photograph Tim Barlow.

6.1 Conclusion

At the beginning of this thesis I determined the field of socio-political community art as a specific practice within community arts, informed by a notion of cultural democracy that aims for social change within a framework of the wider social and political forces of the making of the artwork. Further, I have established two central propositions with which to produce an original contribution to the field of a socio-political community art practice through a methodology described as caring deception.

Caring deception requires a negotiation of the terms of deception and care in the making of the art work.

Caring deception is an art practice that creates a social ethics in action that also becomes embodied in the form of the art work.

I have demonstrated the propositions by creating a suite of projects that I documented in a presentation exhibition, and analyse in this exegesis. Through the discourse in the field being focused on terminologies and binaries framed as impasses, the

methodology of caring deception can be situated in the art work. Using theory from the “ethics of care” and moral philosophy, care and deceit were shown to be nested in the social ethics of the making of an art work. The varying collaborative roles and co-ordinates with which the projects were established enabled others to negotiate the terms of deception and care in the making of the artwork. This could be observed in the shifts of the form of the artwork in each project based on notions of caring deception as a facade through which social ethics are enacted. The thesis exhibition demonstrated these propositions by presenting caring deception as manifest in all of the projects included in the thesis, and located in the form of the *Ministry of Vulnerable Suburbs* (MVS) presentation.

I have argued that art practice in this field can be summarised in a variety of typologies and binaries that I sought to challenge through an original practice demonstrating a new methodology. In Chapter 1.1, I briefly reviewed some of the existing key typologies and found a common feature, that they appear to lack the potential for ethical shifts, changes and responses within the “making” of the work, through relations established with the materials and processes. This lack of consideration of how ethics can become embodied in the form of the art work became evident through the case studies I examined. While artists such as Tania Bruguera¹⁵¹ and Suzanne Lacy have described that there will often be shifting artistic roles and ethical positions within the creation of a social art work, they do not describe a methodology to allow this process to evolve, and how it might manifest in the form of the art work. Moreover, there appears to be a lack of theory in the literature regarding the ways that social change occurs. I developed a series of CA projects in the suburbs of Aotearoa to prove that caring deception can indeed provide such a methodology.

The various thesis projects were structured using a variety of more traditional artistic “typologies” to initiate the engagements (1.1), such as prescribed ethical stances of the artist, spatial co-ordinates, my relationship to the community, duration and vernacular forms common to many SEA projects. This has enabled the projects to test

¹⁵¹ For instance Bruguera states of her long term art projects; “They are constantly changing, constantly ongoing—their beauty is the way in which you can perceive how it dialogues with and places a force on social reality. Long-term projects are an ethical journey” (Kershaw & Bruguera, 2015).

the thesis propositions under a variety of conditions in the field. The typologies have contributed to a series of binaries in the field (examined in Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5). The ameliorative vs. disruptive binary is positioned as the foundational binary. Shannon Jackson, Gretchen Coombs, Nato Thompson and others have described these binaries as leading to impasses in art discourse. I take my own interpretation of these binaries namely; shock vs. salve, coloniser vs. colonised, long term vs. short term, assets vs. deficits, and instrumental vs. instrumentalised and use the methodology of caring deception to question the validity of maintaining such distinctions. To review the practice-based component I use what Grant Kester has described as a field-based method for the exegesis, which includes subtle descriptions of “conflicts, negotiations, and resolutions”, site-related social and political factors, and personal responses and observations.

As I have shown (1.2), much of the current discourse is centred on what can be described as “positive” values, including responsibility, empathy, generosity, inclusivity, hospitality and exchange. While not disputing the significance or desire for the spread of these values, the question of how, where and under whose terms these are negotiated, is central to the field of the “ethics of care” and its related discipline, moral philosophy¹⁵². Some of the key theory from this field, particularly by Gilligan, Tronto and Walker, informed the thesis (1.3) proposition of caring deception. The “ethics of care” positions human relationships within a complex of care that the ancient Myth of Care (1.3) embeds in power struggles over who gets access to, who is providing and who is naming care. Therefore, when caring is a methodology, the making of the artwork becomes open to the complexity of a care for oneself, a care for others, and a care for the world. I define social ethics in action using concepts from the “ethics of care”. Therefore, ethics is understood in Dolgoff’s understanding of “context sensitive deliberation” (1.3) over what is “right and correct”. Tronto and Fisher’s expanded definitions of, “caring about, a caring for, care giving and care receiving” (Tronto, 2011, p.36) inform my notion of social ethics. I claim this complex of caring can be negotiated through the terms, materials and relations involved in making the artwork.

¹⁵² For instance Carol Gilligan is a Professor in moral psychology, Margaret Urban Walker is a moral philosopher active in the ethics of care, and Joan Tronto a political ethicist.

Deception is based on a nuanced idea on the ethics of deceit. I see deceit as a gentle and positive ethic that is articulated through aesthetics, through haptic, visual and material relationships and forms. Deception creates a facade a material form through which the terms of the deceit is revealed and negotiated. In this way, the deception can be a form of protection and a signpost for the feelings and emotions that underlie it.

With the first project in Chapter 2 *The Public Fountain* (2012) I presented the facade of the fountain as a way to combine an ameliorative yet disruptive erupting fountain on the main street of Tāupo's shopping precinct. I established the terms of engagement as a "delegated performance" as an example of interactivity. I positioned the sensuality of these contradictions, the water, the fun, the explosions and the public talks as a way to mobilise the public to a "caring about" the geothermal politics of the region, as a public reminder of the disappearance of the geysers and the increasing privatisation of energy resources. Although many local people did not want to re-engage with what had been a long-running acrimonious battle with energy companies, a form of what I term social ethics in action emerged in stories of local control of private geothermal bores, publicised information on the life-cycle of wells and local activists' efforts. The materiality of geothermal water also re-ignited public debate on local civic fountain politics and the Erupt Festival appropriation of indigenous copyright.

I compared this project to Anne Noble's *For the Love of the People* (1999) and Local Times' *Waiariki* and *500m Wai-te-mata 500m* (both 2013). These projects used more careful and considered processes of negotiation with participants and mana whenua but were similarly concerned with initiating processes of social ethics through material forms. Deception was materialised in both of these projects; union militancy in the workers' stories and "pictured" lives, and activism for the rights of access to resources, protest and ownership in the stream water of the Waiariki. With *The Public Fountain* I promoted a form of deception of the loss of the geysers using absurd humour. The deception of "working together" to activate the fountain was contradicted by my own controlling the eruptions with an air compressor that compelled the public to negotiate an ethics with others in relation to the facade of the fountain itself.

The role of engagement that I assumed for the subsequent project *The TEZA site* (New Brighton, 2013) and *Te Ao Mārama* was partly established by the producers of

the event who “partnered” my proposal with Te Ati Awa artist Te Urutahi Waikerepuru. I extended this form of curated collaboration further to become a multi-party collaborator/facilitator, which I liken to the role of a film production designer. I adopted the impasse of the coloniser vs. colonised to further structure the social ethics around bi-culturalism and the visiting artist “speaking on behalf of others”. The initial ethical debates amongst the visiting artists and locals centred on whether TEZA would be perceived as an ameliorative gesture in post-earthquake Christchurch, or as appropriating “vulnerable communities” for cultural capital. These tensions became embodied in the processes and materials of the site itself, and the finished structure. The TEZA site was not just a representation of the site of “occupation”, adopting motifs of the 19th century bell tent and features of a temporary marae, but also became a site of negotiation of the terms of the colonisation by artists of local communities, colonisers and the colonised, between Pākehā and Māori. This was evidenced through the shifting social ethics in action, the rejection of the site by the Ngāi Tahu group, the changing curatorial premises, and the ongoing conflict over whose vision would be realised. This was possible through a re-working of the materials of the Creative Quarter site. The TEZA site was situated in close proximity to other institutions, the art establishment, other local urban renewal groups, and Māori artists.

The site was already positioned within the action and politics of local empowerment and “volunteer fatigue”, so the half-finished structures could be completed and present a facade of unity and revival. Yet the “care of” the builders of the site was shown to contain deception. There were therefore multiple deceptions operating that were being revealed and negotiated through the process of building the site. The TEZA site was packed up after 7 days, but it was not just a “temporary fix”. There were months of discussions that caused ethical shifts in why, where and how it should be located. The materials/structures of the site were claimed by different organisations following the event. I compared the methodology of the TEZA site with Jack and Blair’s *Palisade* (2008) and raised the question of the potential confusion that can arise between who controls the concept and who is providing the labour in socio-political community art projects. The caring deception methodology created a process through the negotiation of the materials of the site for other unplanned and self-organised cultural forms to emerge, such as multiple collaborations contained in the form itself, the Ngāi Tahu artists’ occupation of the CBD and non-commissioned artists’ works.

For the *Wainuiomata Water Festival* (WWF) (2015) and *Elbe's Milkbar* (EM) (2015) the terms of engagement were the result of a long-term strategy of “working in the place where I live”, and a commitment that it would not be promoted as a specific “arts”-focused celebration. I facilitated the WWF event with a local committee as a facade of water play and fun, through which the ethics of local authority control of public behaviour and a policy-led re-branding and development plan could become materialised. I framed the engagement within an assets vs. deficit model of development discourse and aimed to shift the “discursive violence” that is perpetuated on Wainuiomata through representations in the mass media, and “top-down” development processes. The festival promoted Wainuiomata as the source of the abundance of water and scheduled the festival during annual water restrictions. The lack of care or “bad care” of water is therefore situated in the festival as an embodiment of misbehaviour. I compare the deception of misbehaviour of the WWF with Barry Thomas’ media strategy for *A Vacant Lot of Cabbages* (1978). The open promotion of the WWF soon encouraged local regulatory authorities to try to instrumentalise the event for public education on home water usage. Therefore, a social ethics was put into action between the governing authorities’ values of the bad care of water with the local community’s goal to determine the event under their own terms. The absurdity of the local authorities’ concerns over water control encouraged the local community to “control” and manage the ethos of the water’s materiality.

The *Elbe's Milkbar* (2015) terms of engagement included a “transversal” and “multi-scalar” strategy to transcend the perceived instrumentalisation that had occurred with the WWF. Therefore, differing communities and groups of identification from across the wider Hutt Valley and Wellington City were brought together. EM incorporated the very concept of social ethics in action into the form of the project through re-creating an infamous milkbar that had ignited a moral panic in 1950s Aotearoa due to perceived teenage delinquent behaviour. The project embodied the complex of care through multiple service relationships, and explored the ethical issues of who was caring for whom. As an alternative high school training programme for teenagers, the social ethics in action included whether there was a lack of care in mainstream education as evidenced by the attendance of Ministry of Education policy officials and the repeated requests for an ongoing EM.

The final two thesis projects, the *Just in Time Community Centre* (JIT) and *Titahi Bay Boatshed Festival* (TBBF), were produced as commissioned works for the second

iteration of TEZA (Porirua 2015). These further explored the nuances of the terms of engagement within the temporary “public art” festival. I established a dual role where I was both the “enabler” in assisting a local community’s plans for a local beach festival, and simultaneously I would develop a project as an “observer” to explore caring deception as embedded in the making of temporary events such as TEZA. As Susan Fitzpatrick asks, “why is a temporary event being framed as a way to address deep-seated social inequalities in a locality?” (Fitzpatrick, 2013, p.213). Therefore the deception of the temporary public art event, when contained within CBD revitalisation narratives, became materialised in the form of a dial-up mobile community centre. Seemingly useful, yet also awkward and absurd, JIT would appear as a series of random “encounters” in suburban locations where I would be on show, labouring to “make” the structure. I challenge the instrumental vs. instrumentalisised impasse by performing the artist’s role as a cultural worker who has been “outsourced care”. The redundant workers who had been cared for by Todd Motors were embodied in the Hillman Hunter, as evidenced by the conversations provoked in the presence of the vehicle. The care and deceit of the terms of engagement that were negotiated in the forms of the previous projects here became fully thematised as a response to the “social inequalities” of the “framing of the event”. The resentment that I theorised as a form of deception in Sally J Morgan’s *Travails of the Bomb Aimer’s Daughter* (2013) became a productive social ethics in action that formed the TBBF. I became an impostor to TEZA, through forming an alliance with the group in Titahi Bay to encouraging the formation of their own self-determined local event.

The MVS became the final resolution to caring deception. Rather than a straight forward exhibition of documentation from the thesis projects, the MVS was positioned as a framework and architecture to demonstrate caring deception as a form of social ethics in action. The abandoned residence is occupied and turned into a temporary community centre to demonstrate the potential for community art projects to transcend the binaries discussed throughout the thesis. MVS is driven not by the agenda’s of local councils, governments, public art curators or even local committees but through a negotiation of care and deception enacted during the making of all the previous projects. With the MVS I moved the location of the projects from the suburbs to the centre of national politics to escape the “tyranny of the local” that methodologies of cultural democracy have to continually negotiate. Rather than basing the methodology on simplistic binaries, on positive spin, faith based belief in positive affects, on theories of co-option or on assumptions of the “paranoid consensus”

the space between the impasses is demonstrated to be where aesthetics and ethics fruitfully intermingle and generate new cultural democracies. The form that is produced is a façade that reveals how care and deceit have been negotiated in the making of the art work.

These projects are not just temporary “events”, but are situated in long-term and ongoing negotiations between local communities and varying forms of governance, artists, critics, members of the public and other public events. Caring deception is shown as an original methodology in which a praxis of the art work is framed and enacted. When the art work is framed using an impasse, care and deceit must be negotiated by the artist and others involved in the making of the work. This enacts a social ethics in action, in which an ethical discourse becomes embodied in the form and materials of the art work.

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Appendix 1: Māori words and terms

Io: in the broadest interpretation means supreme being. (<http://maoridictionary.co.nz>).

Iwi: is a larger Māori tribal grouping.

Hapu: a smaller tribal grouping a subtribe.

Mana whenua: is defined as “power associated with possession and occupation of tribal land” (www.maoridictionary.co.nz). It is also used to refer to the maori grouping, often a subtribe (or hapu), who possesses this power.

Marae: can refer to the ‘village’ as a whole but more specifically refers to the meeting ground in front of the meeting house.

Muka: the fibre of the flax plant.

Ngāi Tahu: are the iwi who represent many of the hapu.

Ngāi Tūāhuriri: are a hapu (or subtribe) of the iwi Ngāi Tahu. Ngāi Tūāhuriri have customary ownership over the New Brighton suburban area.

Ngāti Whātua: are an Auckland iwi whose lands are based on some of Auckland’s prime real estate. During the 20th century they fought continual land confiscations, evictions, and even village burnings.

Pākehā: originally referred to European or white skinned person but has come to mean any non-Māori.

Parihaka: in 1866 Māori leaders Tohu Kākahi and Te Whiti o Rongomai established Parihaka a community based on “non-violence, equality and collective action” (“Parihaka,” n.d.) in the Taranaki area.

Pou: translates as a symbol of support, metaphoric post, pillar, sustenance (maoridictionary.co.nz).

Te Ao Mārama: “In the Māori world depicts the tangible and intangible, the spiritual and earthly realms. At another level it can also be described as the world of insight, experience and enlightenment”. (Te Urutahi Waikerepuru), (Amery, 2014).

Te Ati Awa: is a Māori tribe that has lands particularly on the East coast of the North Island of New Zealand.

Tikanga: is defined as “correct procedure, custom... protocol - the customary system of values” (www.maoridictionary.co.nz)

Waitangi Day: is an annual holiday commemorating the signing of the foundational treaty signed in 1840 between the British colonists and indigenous Māori. Māori and Pākehā activists use the day to publicise past and current grievances.

Appendix 2: *The Public Fountain*



(Fig.34) Promotion at the Big Day Art. (early 2012)



(Fig.35) Construction at farm engineering company.



(Fig.36) Close-up of the pressure cylinder.



(Fig.37) Bathers in the warm geothermal waters



(Fig.38) *Vapours of the Oracle (2012)*. Hot geothermal face towel refreshment street stall

Appendix 3: *The TEZA Site*



(Fig.39) The Creative Quarter site. Early 2013 pre TEZA.



(Fig.40) *Te Ao Mārama* lit at night.



(Fig.41) The TEZA entranceway.



(Fig.42) Barbecue for New Brighton volunteer crew post TEZA



(Fig.43) TEZA noticeboard displaying “What does occupation look like” theme of the day



(Fig.44) TEZA entranceway travelling to become santa’s grotto for xmas

Appendix 4: *Elbe's Milkbar*



(Fig. 45) Radio interview while training students to prepare classic Elbe's sundaes and parfait. With Brian Lummis.



(Fig. 46) Nostalgia evening.



(Fig. 47) *Elbe's Milkbar*. Teen electronic dance music (EDM) night

Appendix 5. *Just In Time Community Centre*



(Fig. 48) Tim Barlow showing lime render technique in *JIT*.
Photograph Gabrielle McKone.



(Fig. 49) Set-up of *JIT* with hell-mouth in Cannons Creek.



(Fig. 50) Amanda Joe of “Food is Free Titahi Bay” use *JIT* to promote a new community centre at the Titahi Bay Fair.

Appendix 6. Ministry for Vulnerable Suburbs (MVS)



(Fig. 51) MVS view to the library and WWF presentation



(Fig. 52) MVS view to milkbar and Elbe's Milkbar presentation



(Fig. 53) MVS view to the Community Artists Office.