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Making Space: Speleology

**An exegesis presented with exhibition as fulfillment
of the requirements for thesis:**

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Abstract:

This essay documents a year of exploring how to continue to be creative, experimental and intuitive within an art institution. It provides a context and thus academic shelter for a non-linear, experimental process of making drawings, sculpture and site-specific work. The essay has three layers; the contextual document, images which show the process of making, as well as a narrative written in experimental poetry which describes the embodied process of making through collaged journal writing. The images are interspersed through the essay, while the poetry provides an alternative narrative and is printed on the back pages of the essay.

‘Building’ is used as an active metaphor for the creative process, as well as buildings as sites for research and installation of adaptive sculptures. Building as a metaphor for unchanging narratives will be contrasted with artists whose work challenges the unitary nature of a functional building through their interventions. Using the body to make meaning is discussed in a feminist context, as an alternative this model to linear, rational thinking. This also questions and problematizes the heroic male artist body. Performing the making through a female body will be discussed and issues of privacy and proximity covered. A potential solution to these issues will be explored in using abstraction to create active meaning, thus implicating the body of the audience as well as the artist.

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(unison:)

A person is only a case

A holder for all manner of things

A random arrangement of idiocy and glory

Sometimes a barrage of artistic light

Sometimes an embarrassment,

a dismaying puddle of slush

Sometimes a nobody,

Fading into the crowd or the distance

the welfare office

the supermarket

the laundromat, the library

and sometimes

marvelous as a god,

all in one

all in one lifetime

all in one life.

(Emily XYZ, 2004, p.65).

Introduction

That which is excluded, left out, is not really excluded but repressed; repression neither excludes nor repels an exterior force, for it contains within itself an interior of representation, a space of repression...that interior representation in the system of architecture that determines an outside (of repression) is woman and woman's body.

(Agregt, 1991, p.173).

I have spent my year defending something incomplete; something in the process of being made. Like Emily XYZ's description of a person through a lifetime, it has been glorious and shoddy, filled with success and failure and the energy of trying. Working within a masters programme in an institution has shown me how problematic this is for the existing, pseudo scientific structure of posing a research question and then answering it through research. Like protecting a space for something while it grows, I have practiced my work and kept faith in building through doing rather than understanding it from the outset. How much easier it would have been to leave it until complete, whole, less fragile and open. How much more like a defensible tower. But there is no way over, only through. It has become clear to me that going through and revealing the 'process' is dirty and difficult and even frightening for some in an academic context, as is emotional engagement and expression in the work. This essay therefore provides context, as a shelter for doing so.



If buildings sing Beauty a priority

Sprouts let roots

run riot,

crack the kerb

Assume you hold nothing

can we ride together?

Fig 1: Wairarapa farmhouse
Sept 09

Because my process has not been linear, I have presented the ideas in this thesis as interconnected themes in the work rather than one leading to the next. I am not able to represent or discuss all of the works and experiments I have made during the year so I have chosen to represent this mass in bursts of photography through the thesis.

I have used physical making, engaging with the limits of my body and materials to discover my own language of feeling through forms. This importance of the body was underpinned by the ideas of Helene Cixous and Luce Irigaray and their writings on developing a female language. I will discuss some difficulties I had in performing through a female body in terms of proximity and privacy, and the solutions I developed.

Much has been written about the categorizing and compartmentalizing effects of art history, of its desire to write a coherent story of what and why. It is outside the remit of this essay to explore these arguments, but let it suffice to say postmodernist thought has opened up the field of official discourses and authority to legitimate other voices and perspectives, many of which are rewriting and disrupting those discourses. Amelia Jones' reading of Jackson Pollock's work will be discussed in this essay. She describes how he has been positioned as an heroic artist who transmits expressive truths through his work, as interpreted by critics. She problematizes this by raising the repressed particular, active body describing subjective, embodied experience. Positioning the body as a meaning maker thus questions mind body dualism.

This section will be followed by a brief discussion of the effects on artists of this modernist role of being used as the 'mouthpiece' for the collective expressive

unconscious of the masses. I will look at Gertrude Stein as a model of how one's physicality and sexuality might be used to create an abstract language of expression. This will lead into a section concerning the importance of making as a private space, a personal space, and the metaphors of shelter, which have emerged in my work. I will look subsequently at these ideas of shelter and the photographic research I did into abandoned buildings, and how they affected my three dimensional structures. I will look at the work of Marjetica Potrc in relation to this research.

In relation to process, I will discuss Gordon Matta-Clark and Jessica Stockholder. These artists work with architecture in a very different way but both challenge the solidity and unitary illusion of buildings, returning them to states of becoming; contingent and in process. Their work begins not from rules or parameters but from materials, space and the action of making. These artists also connect with my research into building as a metaphor for solid, unchangeable narratives, and how art actions on those structures can alter that perception.

In conclusion, I will look at Emery Blagdon in relation to emotional engagement and expression. An artist who made his work as a healing system of components, he is an example of a maker whose works are not supposed to speak for all but to a desire of an individual to physically create their own vision and interpretation.

I will begin however, with an explanation of the architecture of this essay.

Method; Excavation of metaphor, the role of writing

(Finding a way in. Begin by making an action.)

To cover the world, to cross it in every direction, will only ever be to know a few square metres of it, a few acres, tiny incursions into disembodied vestiges, small, incidental excitements, improbable quest...a few details of which will remain in our memory...And with these, the sense of the world's concreteness, irreducible, immediate, tangible, of something clear and closer to us... as the rediscovery of a meaning, the perceiving that the earth is a form of writing, a *geography* of which we had forgotten that we ourselves are the authors.

(Perec, 2008, p.78-79).

Before embarking on the MFA, I enrolled in the Iowa Poetry Workshop at Victoria University. It emerged that my main writing subject was the creative process itself; trying to describe it as a place, a room of its own. The limits of this place were not only those of materials and space but also of energy, of imagination and strength of the maker herself. The visual metaphors described active creation, a space built, destroyed, erected, discovered and excavated. The writing attempted to situate the reader right in the middle of that space as it was being made, describing tips to keep going, charms and methods;

Being and making

The world is encouragement.

Can you write it down?

*Ripping tearing building a building collecting everything I need to
work all day I ripped my thumb the nail bit me I didn't feel it feeling
playing in the break breathe letting it be sitting standing stretching up
making a place finding ways of being here trying to keep letting it rub
against me cleaning once a month trying to find an order without
losing it all I have to see what is on the wall otherwise I forget I need
reminders placing it all on the wall*

playing making

*let it breathe read something else write it down how it comes walk
away look at the sea*

pin lay layer put it to the test get trusting press

pinning sparks seeing making making making making

*a place where I could easily get up. Cornered in any way limited
supreme display*

every day, worth preserving.

*There is certainly a poetic way of working; it is the same every time
the more you rub the more it shines.*

Do not think I won't keep going, for you there be watching

I don't want to be my object

I can find my own way out a tent with what I have to hand.

It seems to me that instead of trying to replicate experience to convey meaning in writing, you are exploring the poet's relationship with the creative impulse itself, and trying to penetrate into a mode of truer expression than a reductive linearity allows..... The reader has to make a paradigm shift in this poem, from the usual stance of expecting a poem to tell us a story, which forces the reader to seek another way of understanding....In this poem I see bravery, that 'push' into unmapped territory, unsanctioned and alone. And the reader follows because you tell the reader what you are doing ("I will just write directly") in a way that neither alienates nor compromises; in an unambiguous, certain way that inspires confidence and trust.

Wilson, D. (2009)

I wanted to describe being in the thick of making, but avoid simplifying it or writing a linear explanation; to make a present, alive, in construction space. By 'in construction' I mean that it is not fixed. I am not the expert and this is not the final version; rather a kind of instruction manual which tells as it thinks. This telling is describing making the work while making it. The material I used was the journals I kept throughout the making process, which I cut and pasted into new pieces of writing. By removing the descriptions from proper

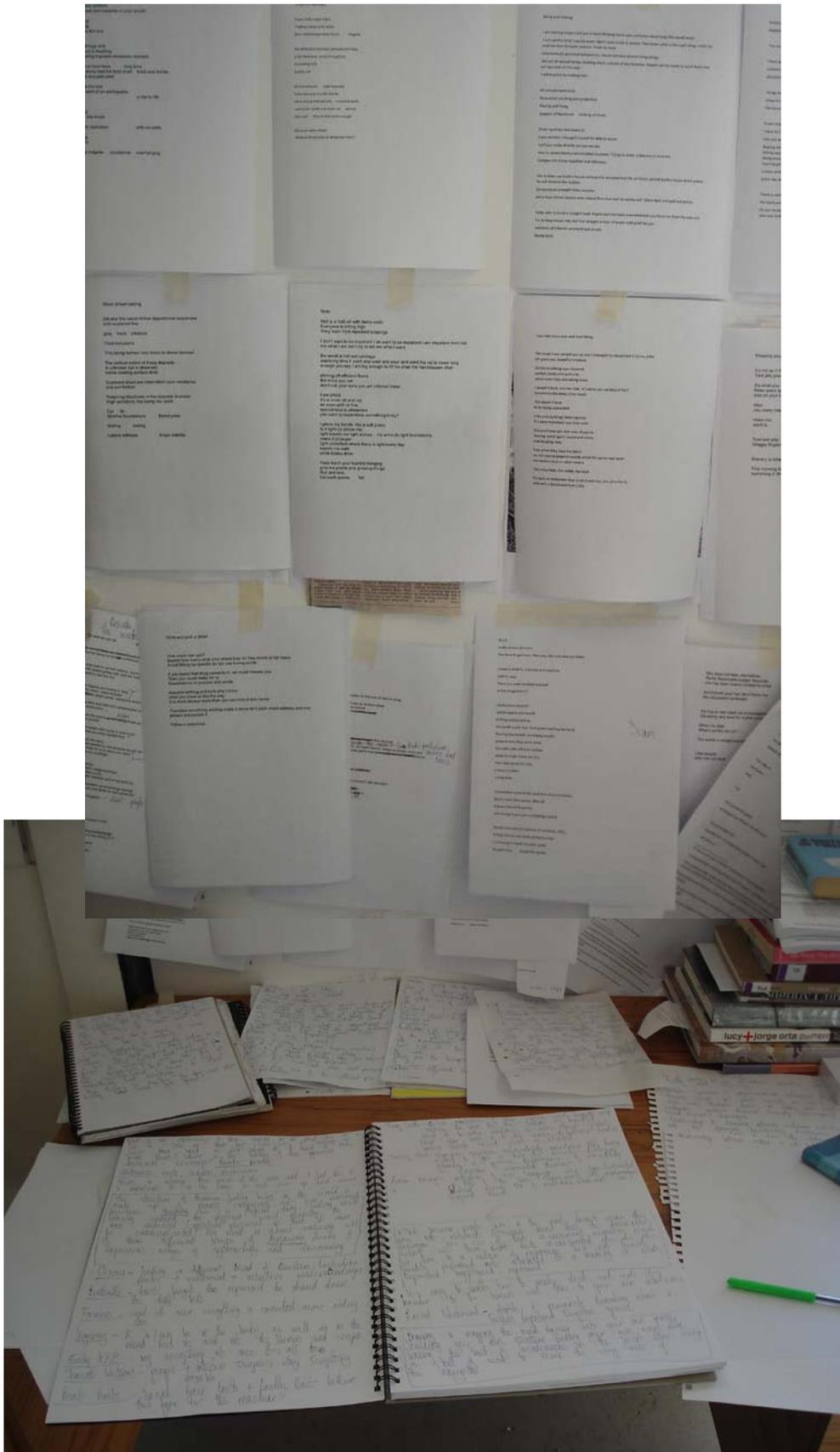


Fig 2: Studio desk shots

sentences and functional descriptions the language was narrowed to focus on the active making and doing, as well as the feelings and uncertainties of the decision making involved. This gave it the sense of being an instruction manual as it was no longer a first person description of a specific venture but a treatise on the creative process in general. My aim is to reveal the process of making as demonstrable and governed by certain provisions that allow it to flourish. Using a collage technique makes the writing active because it could have been different depending on how it was cut up. There is a democracy in this approach;

Cut-ups are for everyone. Anybody can make cut ups. It is experimental in the sense of being something to do. Right here write now. Not something to talk and argue about. Greek philosophers assumed logically that an object twice as heavy as another object would fall twice as fast. It did not occur to them to push the two objects off the table and see how they fall. Cut the words and see how they fall.

(Burroughs)

This way of writing is democratic in method; anyone can cut something up to make a new meaning according to where they see the sense. And the sense is made by the action of doing rather than expressing a specific truth. The attraction to different words or phrases would shift at different times.

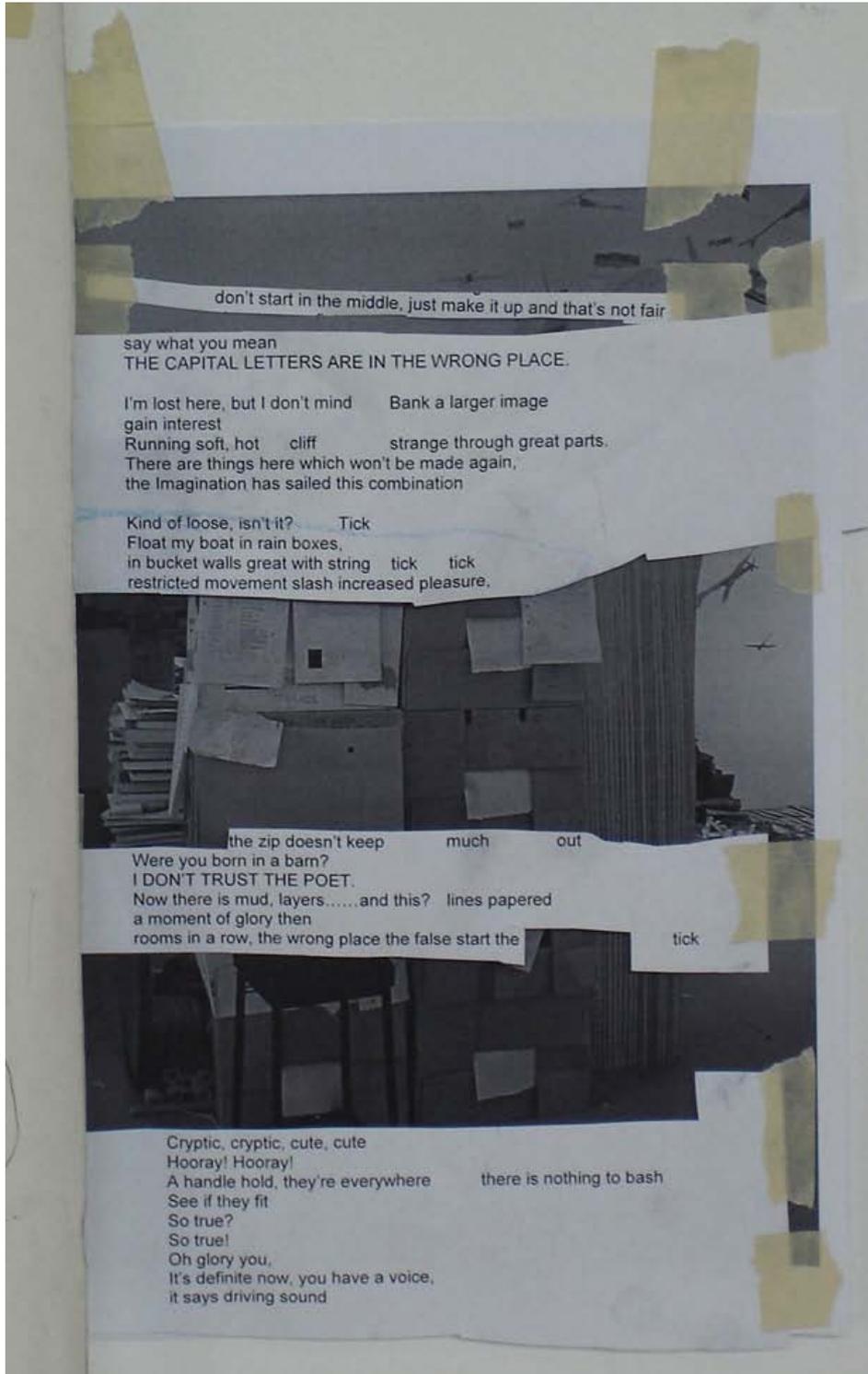


Fig 3: *Studio collage 1*

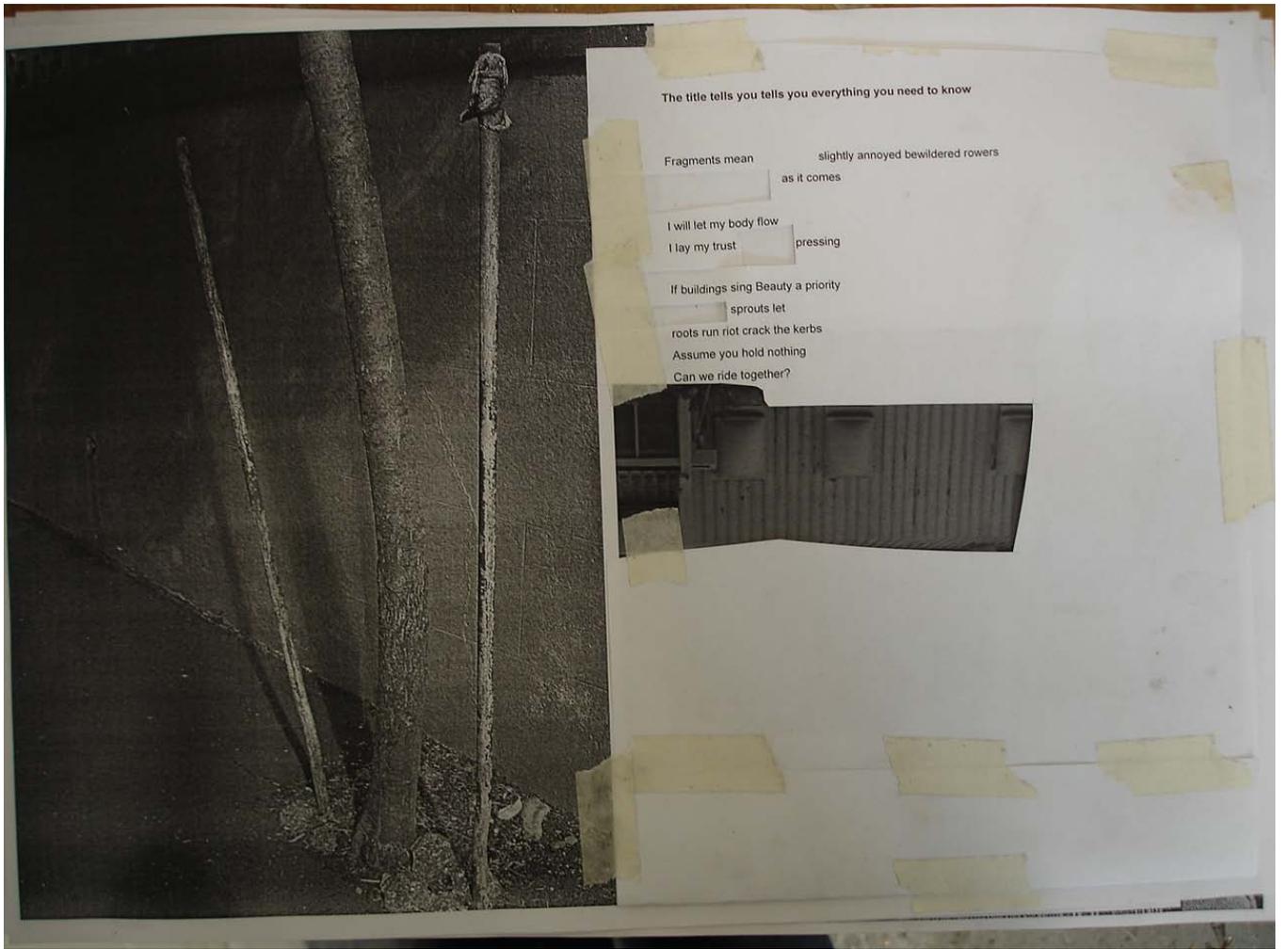


Fig 4: *Studio collage 2*



Fig 5: *Studio collage 3*

I encountered an array of problems during the masters in attempting to integrate this experimentation with the required academic writing. One stated position was that the extended essay should provide a distanced and authoritative voice on the making process. In order to do this it needed to be objective; removed from the first person process of making. My aim however was to question this distance, both in terms of ability of the artist to achieve this, and the value of doing so. My interest lies in the embodied and the engaged reading of works rather than a distanced or objective stance, and I wanted to incorporate this not only in what I wrote about but in how I wrote it. How is it honestly possible to stand outside who you are, and what use is such a view? How can a person's advice be trusted if they don't declare their bias or perspective? I found writers from a feminist perspective who supported that viewpoint;

speaking (as) woman (parler-femme)

Not so much a definitive method as an experimental process or a discovery of the potential connections between female sexuality and writing, "speaking (as) woman" would try to disrupt or alter the syntax of discursive logic, based on the requirements of univocality and masculine sameness, in order to express the plurality and mutuality of feminine difference and mime the relations of "self-affection."

(Irigaray, 1985, p.222).

To include the process writing in the thesis disrupts the authority of the distanced voice. Instead of a singular judgment on what was made and the linear process of its development, I choose to represent my practice as an active engagement with materials which could have turned out differently. It turns out as it does because of me the maker, my body, my sensibility and my choices.

My resolution to the issues of clarity is to run my writing on the back pages of the thesis. You may choose to read it alongside this document, to flick between the two or read it as one document, but I have chosen not to relegate it to the back. It is part of my reading of my work and my context, so it is present. Where pieces of the poetry need to be inserted into the main body of the text, they are in italics. Also, as mentioned in the introduction, there are many images of my work in progress included. This visual narrative forms another layer to the representation of process in this document.

Speleology

Spe-le-ol-o-gy

noun

The exploration and study of caves

Scientific discipline that is concerned with all aspects of caves and cave systems. Exploration and description of caves and their features are the principal focus....Speleology requires, essentially, the application of geological and hydrological knowledge to problems associated with underground cave systems, Amateur exploration of caves, as a hobby, is called spelunking.

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/Speleology>

Retrieved 12.12pm 21.01.10

Using the body; definition of terms

The works I have made explore an experimental and changeable form of identity and meaning, understood experientially. I have used a phenomenological framework for understanding the term ‘body’;

The lived body, Merleau-Ponty observed in his 1945, *Phenomenology Of Perception*, is not discrete from the mind as vessel but is, in fact, the ‘expressive space’ by which we experience the world.

(Merleau-Ponty, cited in Jones, 1998, p.39).

I have explored this through making gestural drawings where mark making represents action and movement. These drawings are made in response to a word related to space, thus creating a visual language of metaphor for a bodily expressive space. I have also represented this active space of the creative process through writing and the body of works produced.

I have explored the action that Jones describes in her discussion of Body artists who;

perform rather than *suppress* the dislocation of the subject, and this, indeed, could be said to be what constitutes “postmodernism”: the awareness of the impossibility of determining meaning or identity in any final way

(Jones, 1998, p.58).

The narrative produced is not final or determined; it is made in process and is ongoing. This represents an identity which is also in process; I use my body; a queer,

If we admit that language has power over us, not only through what it says but also through what it is, we will be tolerant of literary experiment just as we are tolerant of scientific experiment. A writer must resist the pressure of old formulae and work towards new combinations of language.

(Winterson, 1997, p.76).

“Gentlemen, that is why your daughters are dumb.”...interpreting them where they exhibit only their muteness means subjecting them to a language that exiles them at an ever increasing distance from what perhaps they would have said to you, were already whispering to you. If only your ears were not so formless, so clogged with meaning(s), that they are closed to what does not in some way echo the already heard.

(Irigaray, 1985, pp.112-113).

female body which needs lots of sleep, swimming, walking, experiences stress physically in the shoulders and neck, is strong, travelled, changeable, bruises easily, experiences depression as a physical numbness, and so on. A body which needs active maintenance; a particular body with particular experiences. It has strengths and weaknesses, boundaries of ability and a language of physical interpretation of experience. The use of my body to make the work through the year has not been an effort to find an essential 'truth', but to explore it as expressive space and an inscribed space. It is a biography of movement and experience in the world, and the way it is socially and emotively inscribed is explored by making that biography external in the works. The inscription of experienced events and interpretation emerges in the metaphors, images and terms produced through making the work. I have thought of the making process as a form of excavation, to discover the expressive space Merleau-Ponty describes. I use the metaphor of buildings both as structures to house the body and as an active making process. But rather than being unresponsive to a body subjects' expressive space, I consider what forms and places would that body subject take if it were build and draw it's own space? We each build ourselves with what we have and according to our needs, just like a shed.

Finding out through the process of making
making structures which reinterpret structures.

Active interaction

Attraction as a sign

Stuffed like a journal

Searching for a wonkiness

Lots of things happening once

the trying is important

One of many instances.

Identifying a method which can be furthered

Objects as a trace of process

Needing to make a drawing of wanting

Make those big beautiful marks make them

Make them the act of drawing

The irrationality of desire

You are spreading out again

Upset manners and carefully constructed

Drawing as akin to writing

A map of thinking

Provide the different voices

Move a lot to make it clear

Make a soft wall



Fig. 6: *The shed, Wairarapa*

Just letting loose

No up or down

Partiality of what is covered

Illogic and glorious creation;

Something magical against the odds

Method of making; only mass makes magic

My aim for the year was to use an experimental process of making drawings, sculptures and installations to build a visual language of forms. These forms were initiated by the use of a word culled from repeated use in my poetry and selected as a kind of signpost to myself. This signpost or marker of space was used to initiate a number of drawings and then sculptures. The word acts as a marker because it is a jumping off point from the language we share into a subjective language of forms. The word becomes the work by literally drawing it out, finding out through use of the body what that word means in space, drawn and made space. This plurality of forms across media explores what is described above as;

an experimental process or a discovery of the potential connection between female sexuality and writing....to disrupt or alter the syntax of discursive logic, based on the requirements of univocality and masculine sameness (Irigaray, 1985, p.222).

The meaning of the word and the drawings of it is *in relation* to other pieces. Nothing stands alone, and this creates an alternative logic to that of univocality and the implication of a self-sufficient logic able to exist apart from physicality. The drawings and structures are ongoing, and by using drawing; a form which can be seen as an incomplete form of making, I choose to emphasize this eternally incomplete creation of meaning and narrative.

Holding something gently and firmly enough so it can be born and held together. Let the experiments happen so there is enough to choose from and enough to allow all of the mistakes to happen and at the same time preserving a sense of motivation and a space in order to work in the studio and not letting it completely grow everywhere even though it wants to or letting it then pulling it in. Pulling it in and sweeping the floor and washing the floor and collecting the dust and knowing what to collect and what to discard and what to let free and what to curb.

The way is something cyclical. Let it all spread and grow and be and then decide. Clean, gather in, discard. The display is important, what to look at and what to remember. Often things need to be left. Seeds sleep for a long time before they grow. Who knows what happened but when I look again I see there are obviously sequins needed here, layers and softs.

So obvious.

Mindy Schapero is an artist who uses her writing to inspire and navigate her visual language. She uses automatic writing to generate stories, describing a world full of colour; engaging, frightening and full of adventure.

All of Schapero's works are interconnected and rely on each other in a cumulative process that gradually reveals the many nuances of her narrative...Her story has an internal logic, even if it is one that builds gradually and without adherence to a linear narrative

(Horowitz, 2006, p.99).

Titles such as *Distorted Circletrap Monsterheads, (all colours) these are the empty shells of the heads of the circletrap monsters that were never able to discover the silence and slowness in order to escape. They now become the ways out of the circletrap for those that do find peace, where everything slows so that you can actually see what is happening around you. The floating monsterheads are now the first key, when you see one that faces you, if you are able to, simply slide your head inside the hollowed monsterhead, 2005 – 06* (pictured below) emphasize that this is a narrative which the audience is part of. The writing instructs the audience how they might interact with the sculptural objects, how they might help the viewer navigate. The body of the audience becomes a player in the narrative through the interaction of viewing the writing and the artwork.

I can find my own way out a tent with what I have to hand.

(it is escape it is making a place even with you there watching, asking it is
escape it is the liberation of making it is the faith that everything is remarkable
it is the idea that we made these structures everything is remarkable there are
always gaps there are always spaces and what makes those space those who
work in small but tireless ways with humour and not trusting what you are told
completely think of colouring don't be too obedient)

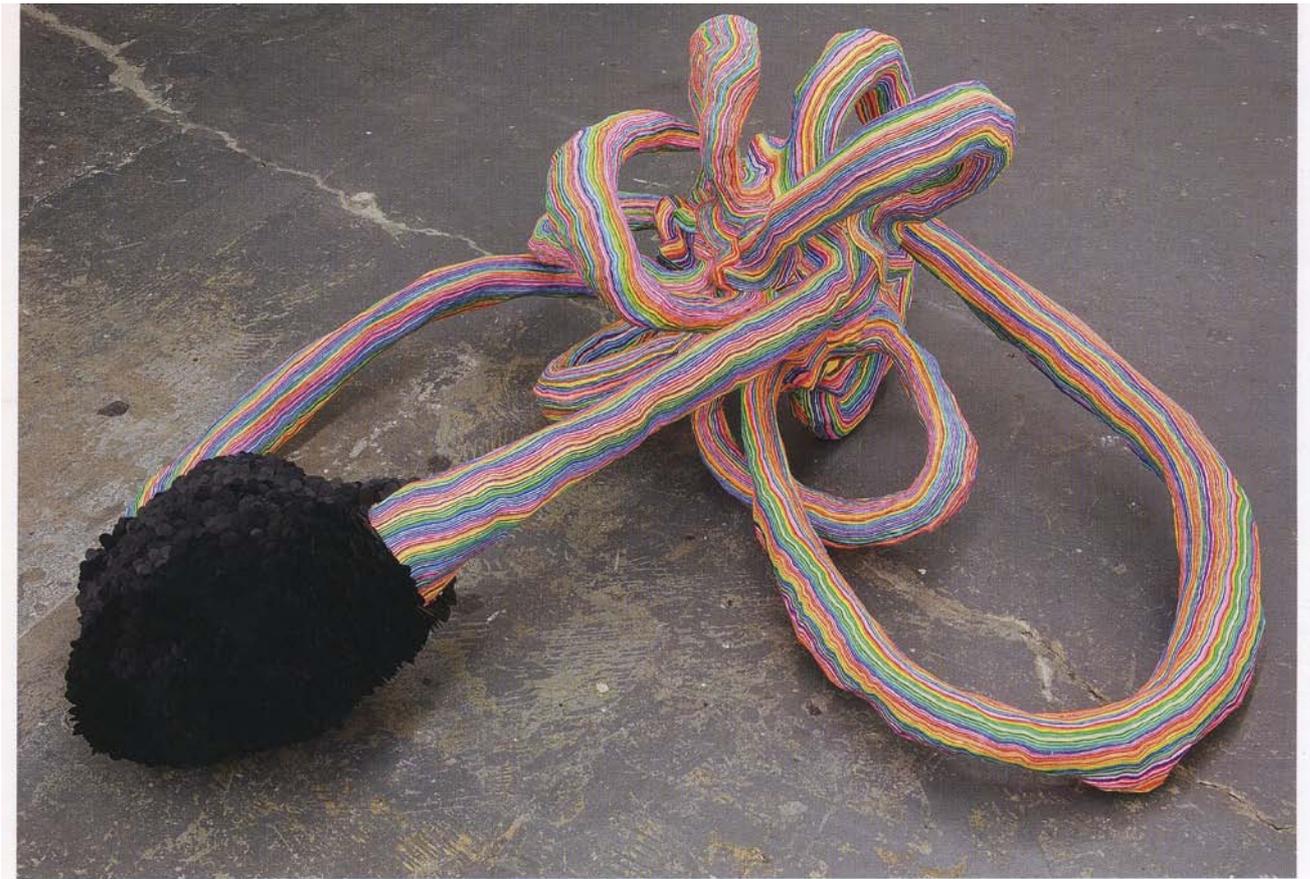


Fig.7: Distorted Circletrap Monsterheads, (all colours) these are the empty shells of the heads of the circletrap monsters that were never able to discover the silence and slowness in order to escape. They now become the ways out of the circletrap for those that do find peace, where everything slows so that you can actually see what is happening around you. The floating monsterheads are now the first key, when you see one that faces you, if you are able to, simply slide your head inside the hollowed monsterhead.

An accumulation of feelings means an accumulation of materials.

Studio

Stacks.

I want to be democratic.

Wood pile

Bookcase

Stand up / Fall down

Although her narrative describes an alternative world while mine is focused on the process of making, her focus on the visual as well as the dangers and adventure of navigating the work may be likened to my exploration of the creative process;

The journey she gradually unfolds is full of potential risks and hurdles (getting stuck, going temporarily blind, moving from light to dark, falling asleep and being eaten alive)...it is as if Schapero is in constant dialogue with herself about the immense responsibility of truly seeing the world and strives to makes visible what it feels like to see... (Horowitz, 2006, p.100).

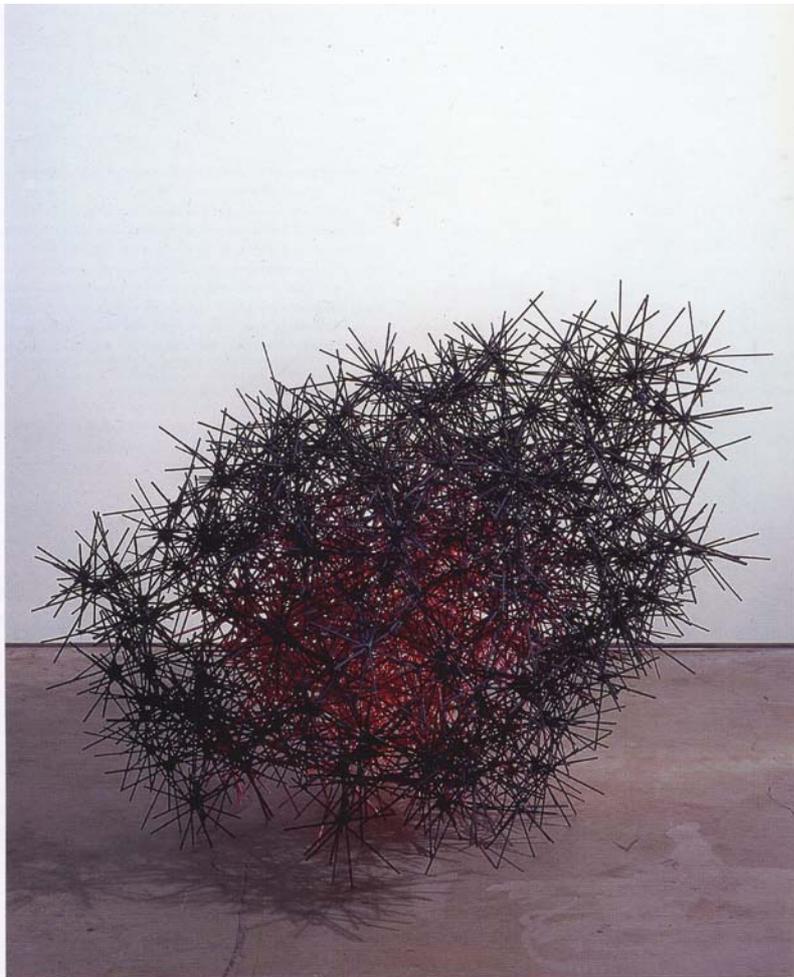


Fig. 8: Almost the exact feeling on has when staring at the blinded by the light for too long just before anything is about to happen, similar to the images that you see when closing your eyes and pressing into your eyeballs

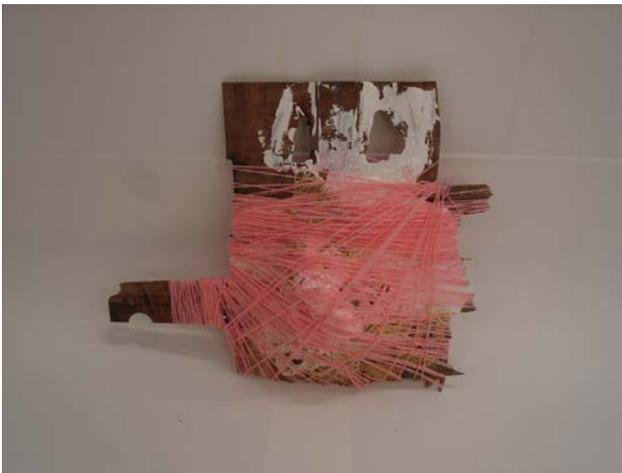
There is always more than one way in. I photograph and photocopy. I draw blind, one two handed. I walk on a limb. I keep it all; who knows what I will need. I don't know the way before I start. I allow diversions; the editing comes later. Only mass makes magic. There is temporary blindness. I have to trust what I do not know. I stretch and touch the ground.

Forehead to earth

Practice builds bedrock

As Schapero begins with an automatic stream of writing, a subconscious experimental narrative that builds a world of connections, I started with attractions to certain materials and objects, and how I instinctively played with them and put them together.

Fig. 9: *Gestural Sculptures, Studio shot*



Don't be afraid
Walk don't run
Remember the past
Remember your people
Look to the hills
Let it all run through you
Listen
Move
Breathe
Keep moving
Take stock
Ask for help
Find ways to expand
Be light on your feet
Be poised for change
You know best
Trust the routine
Be present and aware
Break stuck energy
Wear something blue and sparkly.



Kind of loose, isn't it? Tick /

Float my boat in rain boxes / bucket walls great with string

tick tick / restricted movement

slash increased pleasure

Say what you mean

THE CAPITAL LETTERS ARE IN THE WRONG

PLACE

I'm lost here, but I don't mind Bank a larger image

Gain interest

Running soft, hot cliff strange through great parts.

There are things here that won't be made again.

Structures of meaning built experiment.

(It all became a big occasion.)

No easy exit from here to there no story no culling

No windows or doors no fences no signs

It's kit there's no map and too many screws

I have legs I will

Make to measure

If Schapero's world is about what it is like to see, mine is visual but describes what it is to feel. The miniature structures, mostly no bigger than 300mm x 500mm, reference anthropomorphic body or building shapes. They describe the body subject metaphorically; how it is held together, decorated, dressed, relates to other bodies, or physically negotiates structures. There are tents, slides, fences and caves, fists, bellies, heads, tails, jewellery, appendages and feathers as well as the way one material reaches for another. Words like leaning, falling, holding and reaching describe the points of connection. The diverse materials built an aesthetic of addition; the works seemed to be growing, having a life of their own; rolling along picking up materials as they traversed through space.

In thinking about these miniature structures, I considered what these might be if they were relative to a human sized environment. Many of the small sculptures related to birds and I thought of nests as a small-scale structure. I experimented with how these might exist in a space. I hung them in a test space, where the holds they found determined their form.

The accretion of meaning.

It's quite usual. If there is someone writing outside the comfort zone of the group, it generally takes a month of them listening and then they stop resisting.

(Berhardt, 2009)

human beings can be taught to love what they do not love already....Letting art is the paradox of active surrender. I have to work for art if I want art to work on me.

(Winterson, 1997,p.6).



Fig. 10: *Movable nests and birds*

Fragments mean slightly annoyed

bewildered rowers

as it comes

I will let my body flow

I lay my trust pressing blue

These works are made from fabric and haberdashery; materials used to adorn the body in decoration. Here, they are used not to cover the body but to reveal their own structure; to hold things together in an open and contingent manner. Some materials are used for their functional nature; for example cardboard holds the structure outward, while its tone provides a foil for the riot of colour. Wool holds things together, knitting needles the same. Materials are allowed to drape and fall; to be expressive in themselves. This use of materials can be related to the work of Sarah Sze, who takes materials from everyday life and builds them into a physical poem. Jean Louis Schefer writes;

The modern art of portraiture has already shown us that we are a species unknown to ourselves, whose pictorial assessment is a caricature. This left us with the idea of space, where the imagination constructs profiles, sets down lines, creates nests of sorts. What, then, has literature achieved? Its material, reality, has always been taken up, dressed, and instilled with life by a series of bodies which are unlikely, incomplete, schematic, ill-drawn. Yet these are the things which work, these timepieces without springs or motors which measure our time

(Sans and Schefer, 2000, p.26).

Objects can relate to the body in abstract ways; a language of abstraction can depict through the relationship between elements and our own bodies. They hold each other up, lean against each other and grip one another.

An obsession with meaning, at the expense of the ordinary shape of life, might be understood as psychosis, yes.'

'I do not accept that life has an ordinary shape, or that there is anything ordinary about life at all. We make it ordinary, but it is not'.....

Psychosis: out of touch with reality.

Since then, I have been trying to find out what reality is, so that I can touch it.

(Winterson,2004,pp.195-196).

If something is repeatable with the same result then it is science, except science also takes faith, and paradigms change, and it is what we believe at the time, and when it shifts everything shifts. So it is a machine, except machines also break, change, evolve. So it is money, hard cold cash worth this many gold bars, this many, and this many until paper notes overflow into supermarket trolleys. If something is repeatable with the same result then it is lying. If something is uncontainable and more than you can hold in two hands and ready to bust and wriggling moving changing ready to be born spilt gifted then it is alive and that is real.

Real is good, tangible and tricky.



Fig. 11: *Second means of Egress*

**If the goal is to
find the authentic**

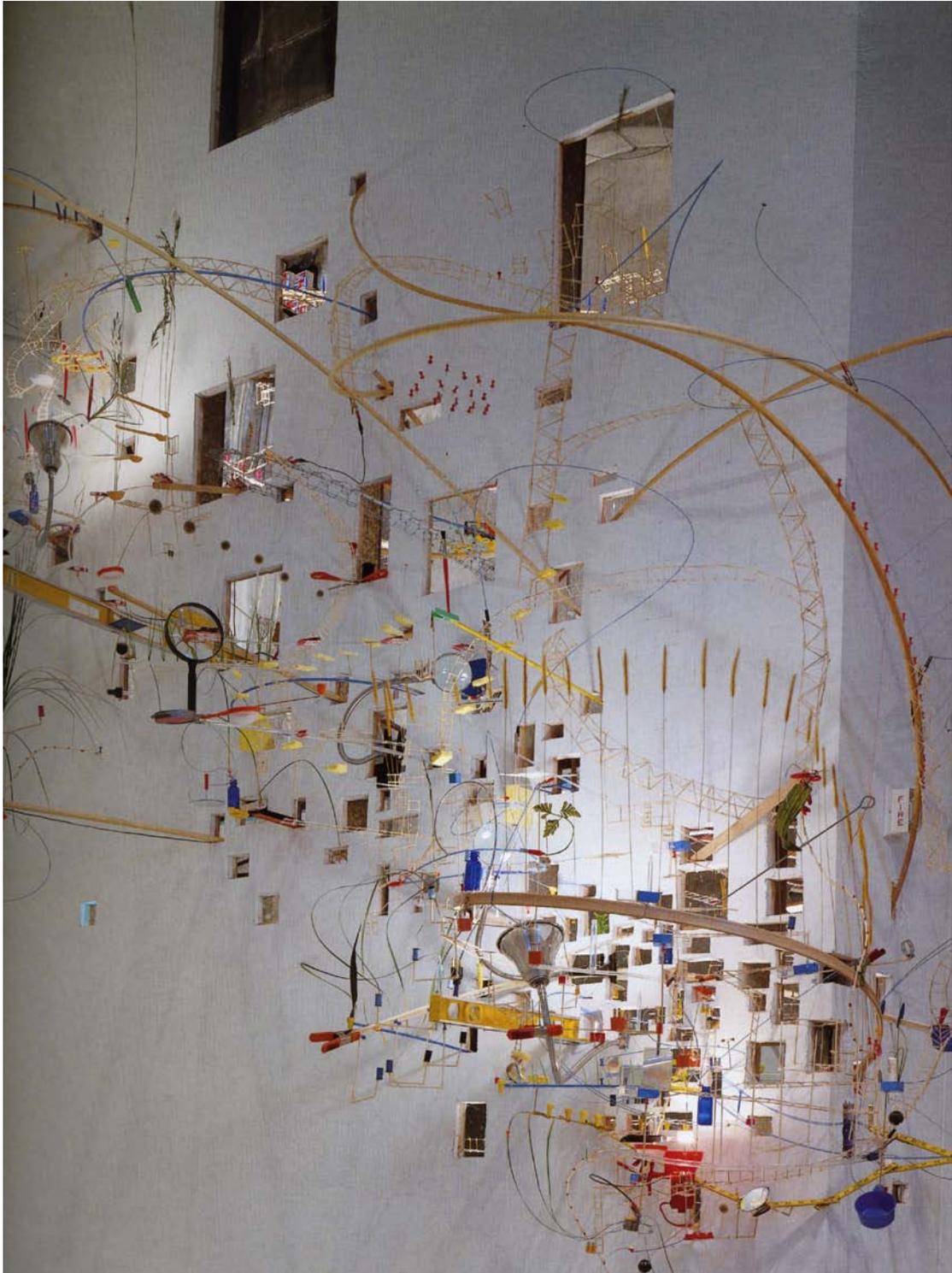


Fig. 12: *Seamless*

I am thinking of instruction manuals.

Maintaining sense and order,

an active process.

Questions. Instructions.

Meaning. Narrative.

I find it moving.

Drawing brings me closer,

a mapping of responses,

Large and unwieldy

the history which hangs.

Sifting through providing force fed healing

admitting but sorting and finding

I know my perspective and my affections.

Maintenance is coming back,

just take yourself along.

End up making something neither linear or narrative but speaking and thriving

still chance and magic think about process of organization and speak stories

made from them.

What are the reasons for making?

Letting go of trying to think all the way through

The stealth of finding

The body making meaning – feeling language

The words that emerged from the poetry and the gestural sculptures; ‘tent’ and ‘cave’ described places of shelter; either temporary, self built, found or altered places. Often a space for one, for me they symbolized the potential liberty inherent in creative, experimental practice. The structures would be built or adapted to suit an individual need, perhaps to shelter the experiments carried out within. A space that is found or made because there is not such a free space in the existing symbolic order;

Woman's desire would not be expected to speak the same language as man's; woman's desire has doubtless been submerged by the logic that has dominated the West since the time of the Greeks.

(Irigaray, 1985, p25).

The repressed space I was exploring was not only that of the female body within architecture but also that of process, experimentation, risk and play within an academic context, so shelter seemed an appropriate metaphor.

*I can build my own way out
A tent with what I have to hand*

*I don't trust the poet
Were you born in a barn?*

YOU

KNOW

BEST



Fig. 13: *Caves, studio shot*

I drew these words, using blind drawing first on a small scale and then large, body sized.

Were you born in a barn?

What is the tone?

Are you writing to communicate?

Who is talking?

Is there more than one voice?

Who is saying what?

Are the voices consistent?

Are you working something out?

I remember being on my dad's back when we bent down to get under an electric fence and the current ran all the way through both of us and my sister, holding his hand.



Fig. 14: *Cave (1)*

I place my hands like a soft piano

Is it light up above me and light below

There is light every day

worth preserving

All the pressure making power

Party eyes pop mouths barely

close on gumdrops jelly crunched teeth

nasturtium seeds you must not spread

take over they've had quite enough



Fig. 15, *Cave (2)*

Is the evidence fact

Is the evidence accurate

Is the evidence relevant

Is the theory appropriate

Is the reading base

Fuck Fuck Fuck

If the reading is base

Is the research repeatable

Is the research

Method

Are terms more

Does logic more

Are flaws more

Do you have questions?

What is the limit of theory?

How does this relate more

Are there competing theories more

Is there more finding improve

We are building a problem.

The process of drawing blind entrusts the body as generative of meaning; repetitive instinctual gestures produce the forms. I have theorized this research through the writings of Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous, both of whom argue that a feminine language describes the experience of a body that is made and remade. They also suggest that in order to write from a different, feminine perspective means to write outside of accepted structures, rules and accepted methods, and that this is achieved from one's inhabitation of the body and emotional understanding;

it's a sort of "position", of activity- passive, as if I were inciting myself: "Let yourself go, let the writing flow, let yourself steep; bathe, relax, become the river, let everything go, open up, unwind, open the floodgates, let yourself roll.... You, in your turn, want to affect.... you want to remind people that they once wept for love, and trembled with desires, and that they were then very close to the life that they claim they've been seeking while constantly moving further away ever since.

(Cixous, 1991, p57).

This is a knowledge built through close engagement with the process, not distant observation. There is not one way but many, each one found by a different subjective engagement;

Keep on going, without getting out of breath. Your body is not the same as yesterday. Your body remembers.... Your body expresses yesterday in what it wants today.... Never settle. Let's leave definitiveness to the undecided; we don't need it. Our body, right here, right now, gives us a very different

Desire is not a democratic country

But repression is an autocrat

Built through blood

I DON'T TRUST THE POET

Now there is mud, layers...and this? Lines papered

a moment of glory then

Rooms in a row, the wrong place the false start the tick

A handle hold, they're everywhere, there is nothing to bash

Oh glory you It's definite now

You have a voice

It says Driving Sound

certainty. Truth is necessary for those who are so distanced from their body that they have forgotten it. But their “truth” immobilizes us...if we can't lose its hold on us. If we can't defuse its power by trying to say, right here and now, how we are moved. (Irigaray, 1985, p214).

To privilege one 'truth' represses the female bodily experience of truths that are always changing. Irigaray argues that we understand the world through our bodily experiences, and we construct our structures of truth and understanding to mirror these. The male phallic model is based on 'oneness', and she builds a model based on an alternative female experience of multiplicity. This refers to the shifting sexual experience of a female body, which is not located in one place. She also highlights the way that in rationalist, logocentric thinking, the body has been denied its place in making meaning at all, following the Cartesian division between mind and body and the belief that the mind can transcend body. Therefore the male bias in making meaning has been repressed under a claim that it has no influence, that 'man' is the standard for all;

Since man is the measure of all, the column should be measured and proportioned to his form.

(Filarete, cited by Spencer, 1965, p180, note 14).

The idea that there might be one form or measure that dictates proportion ignores any other, non-'standard' body. Not only woman's body but also all differently abled, sized or sexed bodies. This standardization of structure related to a male body is a static notion of the body as bounded by physical measurements, rather than what

The theory is embodied

The work is the thinking

The feeling is the process

The building is the meaning

Show me where to put my hand first

Gutsy bodily bucketty

Irigaray theorizes which is the body measured and proportioned by feelings, emotions, sensuality; a shifting landscape of physicality. In terms of my practice, this references the active process of making work, with a particular body, which refers to a particular experience rather than a universal one. “Making” is never static or definitive but rather an ongoing and fluid process; creative through action. Irigaray writes that if the female body was to generate language and meaning;

there would no longer be either subject or object, “oneness” would no longer be privileged, there would no longer be proper meanings....instead, that “syntax” would involve nearness, proximity. (Irigaray, 1985, p134).

Objectivity is not positioned as an ideal. Rather closeness, relationship and engagement would be valued. I have worked in this way in my method of making and the way the drawings operate, which is in relation to each other. In making the initial drawings I was up close, blindly making marks on the paper, without standing back to evaluate how they look or what I should alter. The drawing would be finished when I opened my eyes. The energy in these drawings was also important; the speed, the physicality and the reach of them; as far as I could up and down and making them to the point of exhaustion. This intense physicality of making meant that there was no distance for rational thinking; the body took over.

Indestructible any

of its parts are replaceable in that indifference

To our acts

Of memory and mechanical blankness say

what you mean

Reach in

and pull out

a rabbit something soft warm

obvious

and still magic.

You cannot possibly be serious.

The Heroic Expressive body, problematised

In thinking of Merleau-Ponty's conception of the body as an expressive space and using gestural drawing and sculpture, I would like to consider Amelia Jones' reading of Jackson Pollock. She discusses the "Pollockian Performative"; the performance of subjectivity in modernist terms and reinterpreted from a postmodern, feminist standpoint. Jones describes how Harold Rosenberg thought of abstract expressionism as action painting, expressing subjectivity through act instead of subject;

Rosenberg's action painting is about the intrusion of *the body of the artist* at the expense of subject matter, and the act of making a mark through the movement of the body enacts, performs, *makes into representation*, or *indexicalises* the subjectivity of the artist

(Jones, 1998, p72).

This representation is a direct translation from self through body to work. It assumes that subjectivity is translatable and interpretable by others; that the marks made are indexical, a direct imprint of the subject.

She quotes Rosenberg;

The work, the act, translates the psychologically given into the intentional, into a 'world' – and thus transcends it.

(Rosenberg, 1952, p22, cited by Jones, 1998, p270).

Collapsing cities they stole the line

I put it back. Nothing is missing and nothing

is yours but not because we share

it's a trade block

she thrives among wreckage

we have to measure

height against weight against worth against want

(stop thief / stop these rules)

Total recycling everyday

The act is performed onto a canvas and becomes a self-sufficient world in itself; removed from the body and subject who made it. It becomes universal and is not reliant on the interpretation of the viewer. Jones notes that in Rosenberg's conception the unity of the masculine body is never questioned. Neither is the male, straight body of Pollock seen to influence the work, even though as she points out, Pollock himself describes the act of painting as a form of penetration (Jones, 1998, P73). The body is posited as a tool which conduits pure expression through onto the canvas, and is then removed from the meaning of the work;

This body is fully subsumed into an image of Pollock merged with his painting in a "pure harmony" of disembodied creation. Art history's metaphysical narrative of art making as an act of bodily transcendence is thus confirmed.

(Jones, 1998, p74)

I have understood my work as made by my body but also by its limits, reach, energy and force. This is the body subject in process, being made by experiment, touch and trial, never fully formed but moving through time by acting, moving, experimenting and making decisions. Finding out what it is in relation to the work and what it can achieve; by its failures, exhaustions and fears as well as its successes. It is the imperfect body, the body that requires maintenance, rather than the heroic body. The work, process and studio mirrors this; the process of making things, trying out, abandoning, incorporating, cleaning up and starting again.

Display

If anything, the notion of a feeling
is a denigrated paragraph,
spatially and technically related.

When you have to explain
an inclining of something,
it ruins the view

I bruised my finger in an
impossible place, blue and crumpled,
it doesn't go with all the rest

All

so you could look at this.

Binoculars mean you are not the action.



Fig. 26: *Cleaning up*

To prove that I'm rightfully in the wrong, I've invoked all the reasons for the fact that I have no right to write within your logic: nowhere to write from. No fatherland, no legitimate history. No certainties, no property.

No serious declared language.

No law. No grammar. Spelling once a month. No knowledge. Above all, no knowledge. Writing diplomas: none. Models: zero. The infinite.

And Yet She Writes!

(Cixous, 1991, p.36).



Fig. 27: *Studio Shots*

You are spreading out again

Jones discusses Clement Greenberg's use of the mind body split and Kantian judgement of taste;

Kant clearly distinguishes between rational, contemplative, disinterested aesthetic judgement and embodied, sensate, interested, contingent, and therefore individualized and nonuniversal judgements.

(Jones, 1998, p75).

Here, the nonuniversal judgements of the body are inferior to the detached, objective ones of the mind. This is in direct opposition to the position of Irigaray who argues for sensory and personal interpretations made through the body to create an alternative form of understanding;

Truth is necessary for those who are so distanced from their body that they have forgotten it. But their "truth" immobilizes us...if we can't loose its hold on us. If we can't defuse its power by trying to say, right here and now, how we are moved. (Irigaray, 1985, p214).

The description of 'how we are moved', of how we interpret our experiences and express them in our own language, is what frees us from the strictures of a system that represses the body. In order to develop that language, the bias of the mind body split must be acknowledged beneath the veneer of 'objectivity' and the assumption that knowledge can be produced without the experiential input from the body.

Digestion

Complication

Generosity

nature measures nothing. Nobody needs this much sunlight. Nobody needs droughts, volcanoes, monsoons, tornadoes either, but we get them, because our world is as extravagant as a world can be. We are the ones obsessed by measurement. The world just pours it out.

(Winterson, 2004, pp.196-197).

Jones states that it is the disembodiment of Kantian judgement that allows the critic to be the authority on the artists' intention;

The seamless tautology of Greenberg's judgements ensures both Greenberg's authority (as unquestioned arbiter of universal meanings) and Pollock's transcendence (as central yet invisible [disembodied] conduit for these divine messages)...If the potent symbolic body of Pollock...were to be exposed as an actual body / self (loosely speaking, the nonrecuperated yet fully mediated, traumatized, weak, often inebriated and obnoxious male body / self of the artist who painstakingly produced the drip paintings), the carefully constructed tautological model of judgement would collapse.

(Jones, 1998, p77).

By repressing the body, the artist can be set up as a channel for truth unmediated by a human, fallible and particular body. This deifies both the artist and the critic; like the priest who interprets the word of God to the people, the power is vested in one male individual. Once this is toppled and the artist brought to the level of others, then authority is divested to others. Both Irigaray and Jones construct arguments highlighting how the male body has been either veiled or repressed so that it can be positioned as the universal and invisible standard. The eruption of the female or other body with all of its particularities disrupts this and opens the field to all other subjectivities and bodies being active and present in making meaning in the work. This meaning making is active for the maker and the audience, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

It is always more than you can hold in two hands

Make it serve let it push direct address and one

Person announces it

Follow a sequence

Privacy and Proximity; making active meaning

In his introduction to Jean Michel Basquiat's work, Leonhard Emmerling describes Jackson Pollock's alcohol problems and death in a car crash in 1956. This romantic cult of the unwell and unstable genius has had an oft-repeated historical result of destruction of the artist and canonization of their work. Is consumption of the artists' psychic body and story an inevitable consequence of a drive to express a subjective experience? Or is there another way? How can boundaries be placed in revealing the creative process so that the desire of the artist to show and tell, and the desire of the audience to see the process of making can be balanced, safeguarding the body and psychic stability of the artist?

Using my body to make the work has brought up issues of privacy and consumption of the female body. I made my drawings in my open studio space and, eyes closed, covered in dust, moving fast; basically getting hot and sweaty, felt like an exposing experience. A practice that has performative elements, emotional resonances and exploration of sexuality, meaning and identity from a female point of view needs to consider the distance at which the audience is held and whether identity is being performed rather than inhabited or embodied.

During studio experiments, I received a comment from a regular walker through the space. Initially he felt sorry for me, working in full view; how intense that must feel. But over time he felt the dynamic change, becoming an intense experience for the viewer. Constantly shifting and changing, he never knew what to expect.

It is more about a certain feeling

You made such an intense space out of it. At first I felt sorry for you because you were in such full view but the more you worked there the more I felt this intense presence every time I had to walk through it.

I never knew what I was coming to.



Studio cave, Oct 2008

They have told me I am not good enough to write like this.

*I feel seduced but I can't use the language I am accustomed to using in
reference*

not allowed? don't want me to?

cares what is Good, Bad.

not much room to move,

uncertainty, fluidity or insecure connections.

it's just about process. (That's a bad thing.)

the process of doing is unimportant.

(no but don't tell us all about it. Neaten it up. Tell us one thing to
the next.)

What if there is no result?

Showing you something which is beautiful anyway.

Incomplete and full of trying energy.

Unfixableness = uncontrollability = fear = anger = closed

I arrive late and say "You know me; imprecise."

There are many ways for it to be uncontained

This coupled with a later comment from a colleague feeling cheated when I presented a single drawing instead of the whole studio for critique led me to consider the desire of the audience to see and consume the artists body and person through their work.

If the relation to the work has to do with the desire to look, see and experience, then that relation should mimic somehow the dynamic between one body and another as in the relationship between artist and materials, between maker and the active body of form, as well as between the works themselves. This relation is about making meaning in an active interpretation rather than one active maker and a passive receiving audience. Rather than a binary opposition where she 'performs' her femininity for his pleasure, both parties should have to negotiate how their bodies will work together. This meant that the work needed to be something to *be in* rather than to *look at*. (It also led to an examination of how meaning is made in the work, which follows this discussion of the physical works). I endeavored to make large works to walk into and relate to the body of the viewer. The first experiment was for crit week 09.

Emotion comes thick and fast the swimming green daylight the stories
dedicated love retain their faith
a thousand good wishes
There is much to do
And much to learn
But I know how to make the steps
one by one
Incorporation they all need to come in
Containment and release
next to the word they are placed and personally attached a host of variety all
these things are right
I wish to revel



Fig. 29: *Cave experiment*

Intuitive structural fit

Poetic meaning maintenance

Drawing feeling architecture

Disobedient personal structures

Inappropriate found poetry

Her action is the rip slap.

Metaphor tricky and hiding and slipping

through to the floor hiding and laying showing you through

decorum and venture

asking for action,

emotional tones.

If I do this every day then my hands are loose

Loose as a goose

This work attempted to address site specificity. For the structural elements I used only furniture I found in the space, and then brought my own materials to add. I thought of this as a combination of found elements and the aesthetics or influence I as the artist brought to the space. One of the important responses I gained was that the materials seemed too new, that the ‘patina’ of the studio had been lost in translation. There were also questions about how site specific the work was, and comments that where the work connected with the structure of the building it was most successful. I considered that this as a way to move forward, to think about the work as not site specific but site responsive and adaptive. The existing building could be like the structure that the artwork attaches itself to; finding hand holds and places to fix guy ropes.



Fig. 30, *Collapsed tent (detail 1)*

Draw blindly, move many make many.

Build an alternative embodied poetic

mass of active meaning trying and failing seeing the offer the open hand

I am grateful.

I saw a cup of fat

energetic flow and flux

What kind of thing do I need;

it is a something that would make you notice

details and unexpected pieces of beauty

out of the mass, every day material,

which is open and accessible, something which brings you back,

your body halts the numb the mind over matter

be her be here in the world look at this

shiny thing let it be a simple pleasure a biting animal



Fig. 31, *Collapsed tent (detail 2)*

Thinking of the work as site responsive gave me a solution to one of the questions I had been asked concerning mass; making many works. I was asked how I would put them together, where is the end point; the work just 'goes on and on forever'. From a logical, linear point of view this may be so, but as inventive 'feminine writing', this work is explorative and continuous, rather than searching for one definitive answer. Thinking practically about how the work attaches to an existing structure means that the end point of the work may be its relation to the space it inhabits, and so the experiments generated through the year become ways of inhabiting a particular space. This meant that the works I had made as discrete works could also be part of a larger whole to be built later; like components.

It could be something

The effort required

To construct what I have

the dirt and dust.

The first place.

In terms of proximity, I wondered if the desire to see or watch the artist was the desire to see the exotic other. The genius artist has been reified as scarce and therefore valuable. In contrast this research aims to demonstrate how expression parallels living as an active engagement with what we find around us. It is an ordering, rearranging and sorting `process to make meaning. An audience then pulls personal connections and conclusions from made elements in relationship. This process is a kind of play. In his essay *Discovery in Digital Craft*, Malcolm McCullough states that;

According to one classic taxonomy, individual play includes pursuit of sensations, exercise of motor apparatus and experiments with higher powers.

This mental play includes exercise of attention, emotion and will.

Attention play includes tests of memory, imagination, focus and reason. On the other hand, social play includes fighting and rivalry, loving and courtship, imitation and status seeking. Imitative play includes movements, drama, behavioural constructions and emulation of inner states. (Adapted from Karl Groos, 1901 p73, in Abrams, 1999, p134) If / Then Play

McCullough suggests that craft and making engages all these elements, including drama as a means of projecting imaginatively onto the inert materials as a means of engagement. He also states that;

Experimentation is especially useful for becoming familiar with constraints: we learn from our mistakes. We must accept that beginning work in a new medium will be full of setbacks. (Abrams, 1999, p134)

Obedience

Making

Maintenance

Putting the colour back.

Bringing them in

the chaotic potential

I want it to be joyful as well

like a ship.

Right in the space from other sources

set free glory guts revolution rhyme

regardless it is offering itself just bursting

anti-ironic

That is what I am talking about

It needs to be packed

Too scared to say it is beautiful

House cluster spines staircase

Lemon yellow gluggly ochre

Understanding the instances within complication.

Play, then, is a good way for me to think of my experimental making. In play, participants can make up rules rather than an outside authority, and any number of rules may be invented to relate the same group of objects or elements. This play with connections between elements has the potential to form a new kind of sense, which is not directly apprehendable, because the rules of the game can only be learnt by immersion in the form. Gertrude Stein's writing is an example of this kind of play with form. In Stein's 'Lifting Belly', the reader must work to recreate and put together a representation of a lesbian relationship. It forms a kind of collage with words, where the reader is forced to jump from one section to another and reform the meaning themselves. The inevitable 'mistakes' that will occur in such a recreation and attempt to understand what the author was trying to describe, Susan Holbrook argues opens up language;

Error offers the promise of freedom in a language that would correct deviance...By the time we have read close to fifty pages of this poem, a line such as "Lifting belly so meaningly" (51) makes extravagant and promising sense." (Holbrook, 1999, p758).

I have time and I have space all in miniature one life

Dumbness and sophistication

all drawing a collage.

Active engagement movement

with your own finding by doing

not knowing in advance

not using a book

to get to know you.

Reality of materials,

I stay alive I mean what

feeling saying making expanding remaking renaming revaluing

all the components

stay vital in flux

All meaning is the line you draw

all manner of things.

Becoming a building itself of its own meaning

All meaning is the line you draw

By using metaphor and abstraction to describe a physical experience and relationship, the writer frees herself from what is allowed or disallowed, but also performs a disappearing act as the observed writer describing her own experience. Rather the action of the audience to put the meaning together themselves involves them, their bodies, desire, and interpretation. This relationship plays out in my large-scale works that have many details so interpretation them literally depends on where you stand.

Fig. 32: *Collapsed Tent (detail 3)*



Fig. 33: *Collapsed Tent (detail 4, 5)*



Fig. 34: *Collapsed Tent (detail 6)*



My critique of these works, made in a small space is that I needed to make them in a larger space. Because they filled the whole room, it was difficult to crawl in and get amongst it, as I was able to do but an audience would not necessarily feel comfortable to push into the work.

Finding open places; photographic research

In order to understand how to make large scale, building related versions of my work, I decided to research actual buildings. This photographic research looked at self-built structures, sheds, and abandoned buildings. These structures are not functional because they have degenerated; developed holes, and spaces. They become more open. As part abstract, part figurative and mnemonic figures of buildings, they allow us to project emotion and feeling onto them which was more challenging when they were closed, wrapped up in function. Entrances appear half way up walls, and ceilings open to the sky. Porous to the elements, spaces in roofs and floors allow in the air, birds, and grass. As they become less functional, they become more open to imaginative projection. The places I photographed were abandoned buildings and houses on farms in the Wairarapa.



Figs. 35-42: *House research*









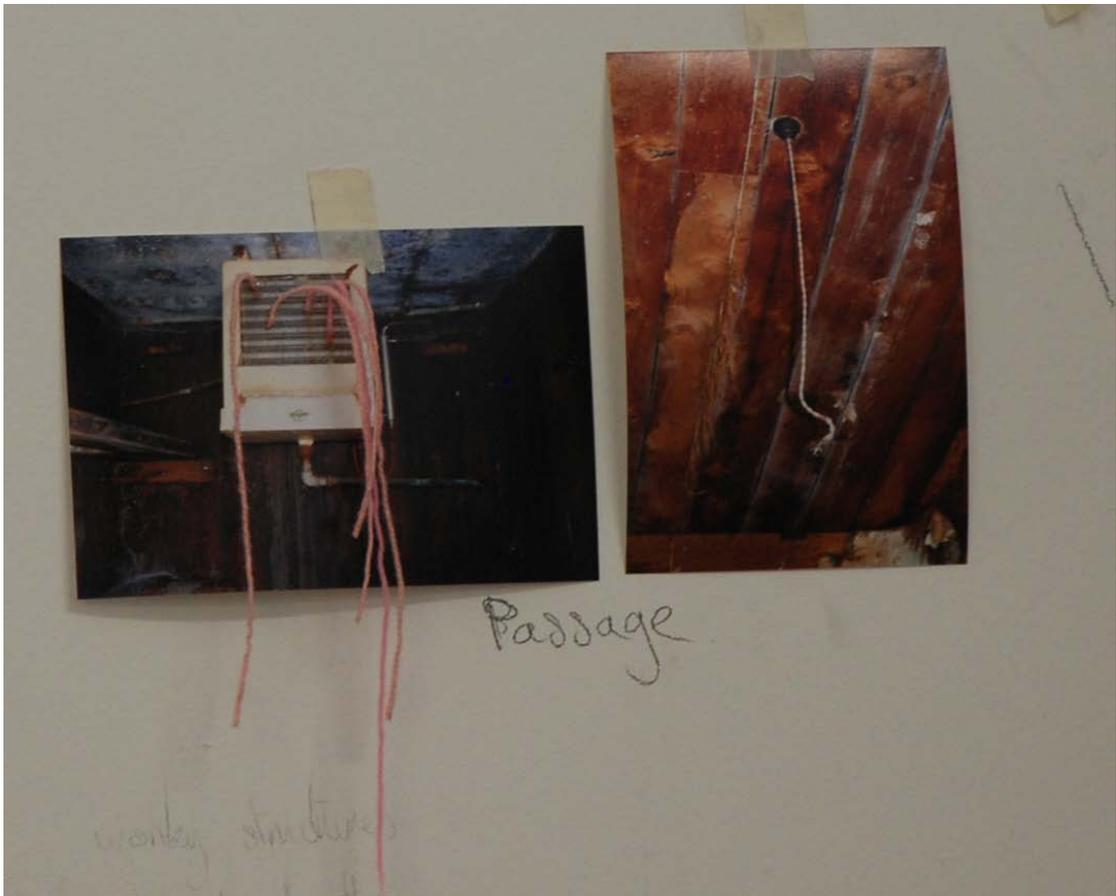




I used this research to extend my language of metaphor into a large-scale environment. As with the previous experiments in translation, this did not mean trying to replicate what I had seen but rather take inspiration from compositions, materials and arrangements. I used the photographs to identify connections between materials I had used in the studio and what I had found in the buildings. These connections were based on the language of feeling through materials that I was developing.

Figs. 43-45: *Studio shots house research*





I found a similar research method, if a more meticulous translation, in the work of Marjetica Potrc. She also photographs buildings as part of her research, which she then puts together to create her own version of the architecture. Liyat Esakov writes;

She presents observations of a life that she sees and respects...As architects, with our good intentions of bringing beauty and excellence to the lives of all, we often end up imposing an order on people and the natural environment that is not their own...But, as the missionaries found out, you cannot give someone something that he or she does not want.

(Rush, 2004, p28).

This research into what exists in the world of architecture rather than what 'should' exist, and the beauty found in that reality resonates with my research into these decaying structures in the New Zealand landscape. For me these structures represent buildings finding their own forms without the human activity of maintenance. In a sense the maintenance is an imposition of an order that is not natural to the structure as it ages over time. Without this ongoing activity they begin to reveal how they were made. The importance of this to my practice is examined in the next chapter.



Fig. 46: *Urban*, 2001



Fig. 47, Sketches, construction and installation of *Hybrid House* – *Caracas, West Bank, West Palm Beach*, 2003

Process, Maintenance and activity

IF NEEDED WE WORK TO DISPROVE THE COMMON BELIEF THAT ALL STARTS WITH THE PLAN. THERE ARE FORMS WITHOUT PLANS –

DYNAMIC ORDERS AND DISORDERS

(Matta-Clark, 1942-76, #502 cited in Walker, 2009, p54).

My practice has used building as a metaphor to explore the creative process as an active construction of meaning. Building is thought of as a process as well as a finished structure, which expresses the symbolic order in which it is made. The works I have made express my ideas about the body, sexuality, identity and subjectivity being connected and in a state of process; made as lived rather than made to plan.

Walker notes that Clark's idea of form is active, as opposed to the modernist idea of form as a static thing;

FORMS WITHOUT PLANS upset the priority of static form, both in the sense that this was *temporally* prior to a thing's existence and that it was the location from which the *authority* of form and meaning were issued, and to which judgement would have to be referred.

(Walker, 2009, p54)

So without a plan, it is perhaps difficult to judge the intention of the artist, but also consequently difficult to retain the authority described by Amelia Jones of critic as

authority or judge. To prioritize the plan is to valorize the mind over matter, initial thoughts and ideas over the subsequent reality of materials and the action upon them. Working without a plan makes form active because the working out is exerted on and through the form itself, rather than worked out in the plan and then exerted on passive matter. Forms without plans allow for mistakes, accidents and the influence of the process. This means that the artist's intention is complicated by these factors, as well as the interpretation by the audience being important in the meaning of the work. If there is no initial plan to which the audience tries to get access through the work (and the critic outlines as interpreter), then any and all interpretations are as good as the artist's experience of making the work, which cannot be explained by referring to a plan but through describing the engagement of making; the process. My actions have been worked out through the year by taking what occurs in the process into account. Rather than working towards a predetermined goal, the goals have shifted due to changing factors physically, materially and emotionally.

I have become interested in the idea of maintenance through my research; buildings are maintained in order to keep them upright. This action is repressed in that it is not seen as part of the building. But there is energy expended in any making. Walker states that Matta-Clark's;

engagement with the role of matter demonstrated the need for ongoing involvement and an *investment* of energy to sustain his or any other 'work', in contrast to minimalism's valorization of the dissipation of energy characterised by entropy.

(Walker, 2009, p50)

The equivalent in my practice, as well as the energy to make the work, edit and sort it into sense is personal maintenance like walking every day, tidying the studio, taking time out, getting support and drinking coffee. Audiences in artist talks ask; How was this made? How does it last? How have you kept going? Artists can be reluctant to discuss these nuts and bolts, as if knowing how it was made ruins the magic. I have come to see these practicalities as the repressed space of making. They are the details that make it possible to relate to the process of making; so questioning the idea of the gifted genius. Matta-Clark's dismantling of the static and self-contained form of a building is similar to my dismantling of the creative process. It is anti-authority to elevate the every day and the material, which is readily available through the senses. Literally showing how something is built is an egalitarian action.

Undoing is a terribly significant approach for advancing architectural thought ...Everybody, to some extent, accepts architecture as something to look at, to experience as a static object. Few individuals think about or bother visualising how to work away from it, to make architecture into something other than a static object.

(Matta-Clark, 1978, p.392, Cited in Walker, 2009, p31).

By cutting through walls and buildings to show what and how they were made, Walker suggests Clark attacked the formal modernist value of the ideal surface, which represses the work that brought it into existence. He writes that this separation had been in place since the Renaissance;

When architecture sought to separate itself from the manual trades of construction

(Walker, 2009, p38)

And continues that the idea originated in Plato's theory of forms;

Things in the world were imperfect imitations of these unchanging ideal forms; although the imperfect form of worldly things was available to the human bodily senses via their outward shape, the ideal form they referred to could only be approached by the intellect. (Walker, 2009, p38)

In this conception, form can only be apprehended by a disembodied, objective and intellectual approach, while the forms in the world are poor copies of the ideal. However Matta-Clark's approach was very much of attacking form as material, matter and bodily existence in the world. This approach, of revealing how things are made and built makes building your own way possible rather than a domain for the people who know how to draw the plan. It opens building to experimentation through doing it and democratizes the process to allow practice as well as theory.

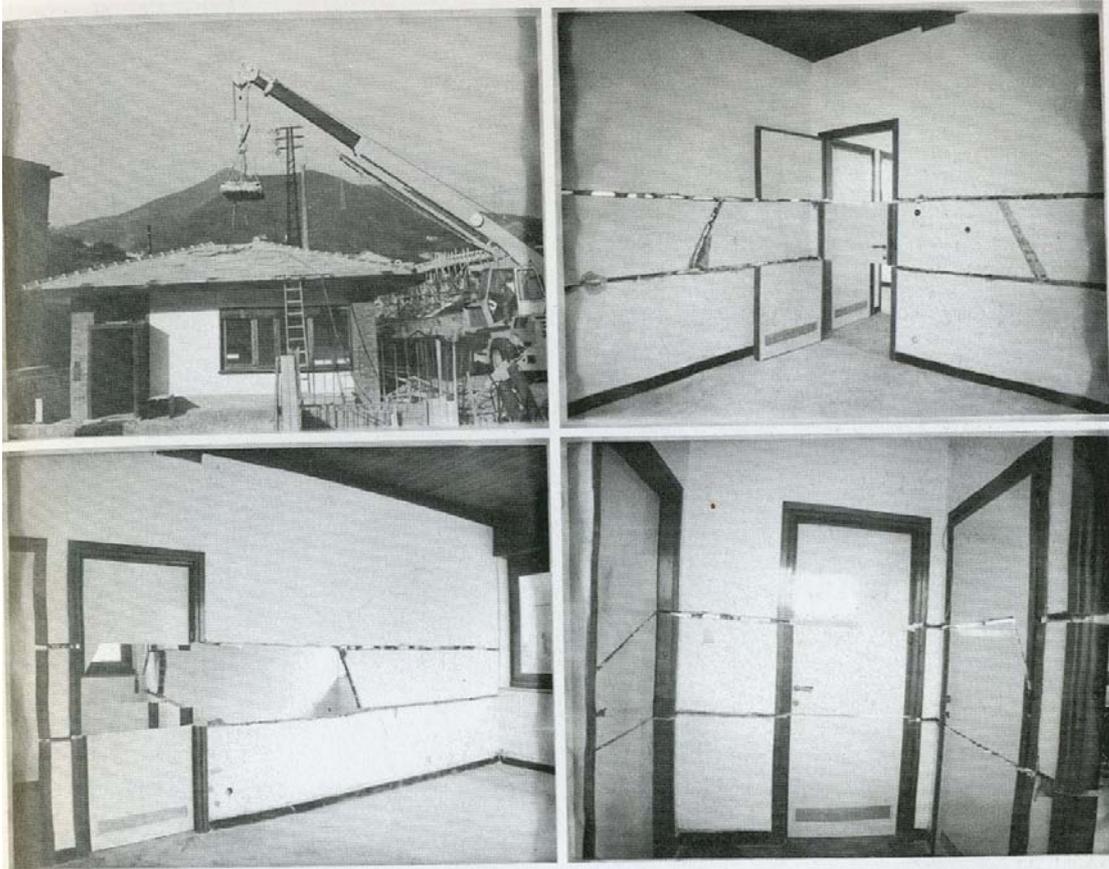


Fig. 48: *A W-Hole House – Roof Top Atrium*



Fig. 49: *Bronx Floors – Threshold*

Jessica Stockholder is another artist model I have used who works through engagement with materials and space. She states;

My work makes use of the state of things. I make my work on top of what is already there. Of course the result is that the work is made of what is there... By mixing together elements that most people take for granted as being part of the 'real world' with elements that I make, elements which in some way express or represent emotional experience, my work calls the 'real' elements into question. Don't they too represent and express emotional experience? And it follows then that the elements I make may be as 'real' as the rest. (Nickas, 1990, p.132. cited in Schwabsky, 1990, p110).

This approach helped me to understand how to connect my work with the structure of the existing building. The architecture of the ceiling, which is made up of pipes which carry energy; heating, electricity, power, could be used as a metaphor for the energy of drawing, for inhabiting a space with creative expression. If the work engages with



Fig. 50,
*Ceiling
shot*

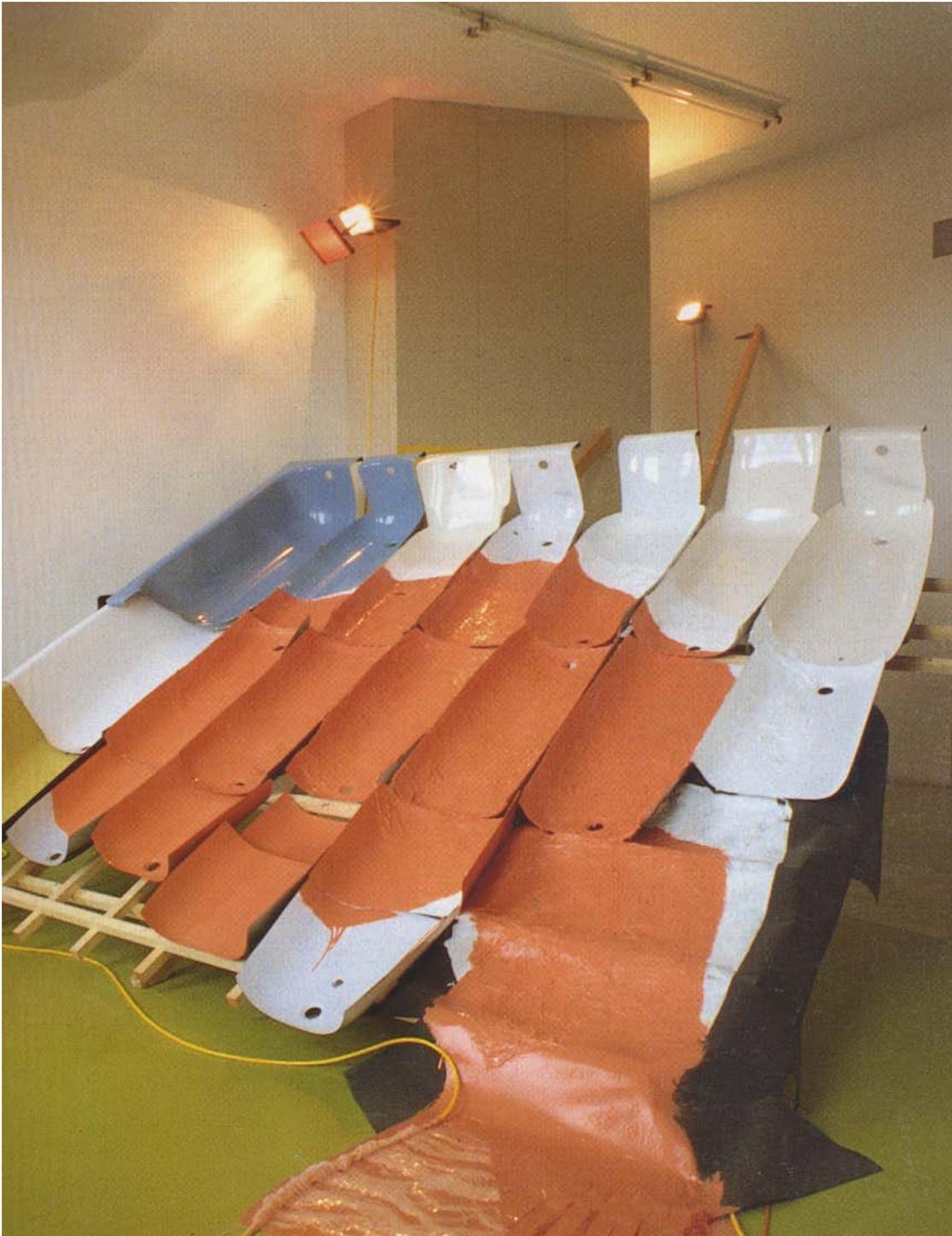


Fig. 51: *Catchers Hollow*

the existing architecture, then it has the potential to alter meaning while also, as Stockholder suggests, confusing the real with the made to highlight the emotional resonances. Catherine De Zehger writes that;

working within and not outside the patriarchal discourse with what is on hand
- a kind of bricolage- erodes established meanings and naturalized differences
and destabilizes fixed gender and racial categories...

(De Zehger, 1995, p23)

In terms of language this might refer to the claiming of words like 'Dyke' by the lesbian community, shifting it through use from an offensive term to a self-referential one with new meanings and associations. Active use establishes the meaning; it is not fixed. In terms of materials and buildings, it is the same process; the use of found materials alters their use, as does their juxtaposition and every other active use of them in making a work. The use of a building as another found structure is an interaction, which again extends the questioning of function, meaning and use. For Stockholder, the building becomes the extended structure onto which she makes her painting, thus including all elements of the room in the composition. Rather than the work as a separate world hung onto a wall in the real world, the work, in scale and attachment, becomes part of the real world. Thus the artists' imaginative play becomes part of the real world, and has weight.



Fig. 52, Part of metal chair, wool blanket, cardboard, metal studs hinged to the wall, paint, stuffed animal

Conclusion; Making your own way / I can build my own way out

Society established a certain kind of symbolic order where not everyone can equally fit...those who have to find their place between symbolic orders, in the interstices; they represent a certain symbolic instability...often called odd, abnormal, or perverse...In strange ways, woman has been placed in this category when she has tried to establish her presence rather than limit herself to finding a way of “fitting” within the established symbolic order.

(Agrest, 1991, p174).

...my impulse to make a work begins with my feeling that emotional life isn't allowed room in the world. This feeling is personal to me and my history, but I think it is also a modern issue in that a lot of people share those worries and feelings. So my work becomes a place to make fantasy and emotional life as concrete and real and important as a refrigerator, or the room that you are in (Stockholder, 1995, p132).

This year began with a *feeling that emotional life isn't allowed* (Stockholder, 1995, p132). in this art institution, and that I must make a space for it. I have done this through drawing, writing and sculpture, as documented in this thesis. I have explored my own metaphors for the making process, drawing them out by using an active, imperfect, maintained particular body. My aim has not been to produce a solution for everyone but to demonstrate a personal exploration of creative expression. The question of my MFA ended up being

how to continue to be creative, experimental and intuitive in an institution; how to be emotional, loud, hot, find out through making, be closely engaged with the process and still be able to contextualise the project and tick the academic boxes. I found that the way to do it was to create a space of shelter to do the work, which is a space created physically in the studio and also by the maintenance required by the body and spirit. This space is described in the writing and the work. The space has room enough for one because the journey is made alone. Helped and encouraged by others but all of the leaps, decisions and directions decided from personal intuition, trying things out and making connections from what has gone before; what the process has taught me. There is room enough for one but others must be invited in. I wish to demonstrate where I have come from and what happened along the way. My research has shown me that rather than presenting conclusions to be looked at and considered, the way to do this is to draw you in close to the process; to implicate your body as well. My aim is to engage others and demonstrate a way to build your own way because I am interested in how others make meaning too, and not just those who are conventionally sanctioned to do so. I have treated my research in my MFA as a practical making concern, and have represented this here in images and writing. My belief that making through physical exploration can make meaning in an embodied way that theory and working from plans can never achieve has been a driving force in trying to invent my own way to present this thesis as a document which does not dry out the living, convoluted, difficult, inventive process of making into something academic, rational and linear. The project is ongoing as the practice is ongoing, but the conclusion to this project is contained in the space

I have chosen, hanging from it and intertwined with it. The following images document the final works that I have made in exploration of this space. I present two works; one is a series of drawings installed in the corridor, named *Speleology*, and the other is a site specific installation named *All meaning is the line you draw*.

Fig. 53-61





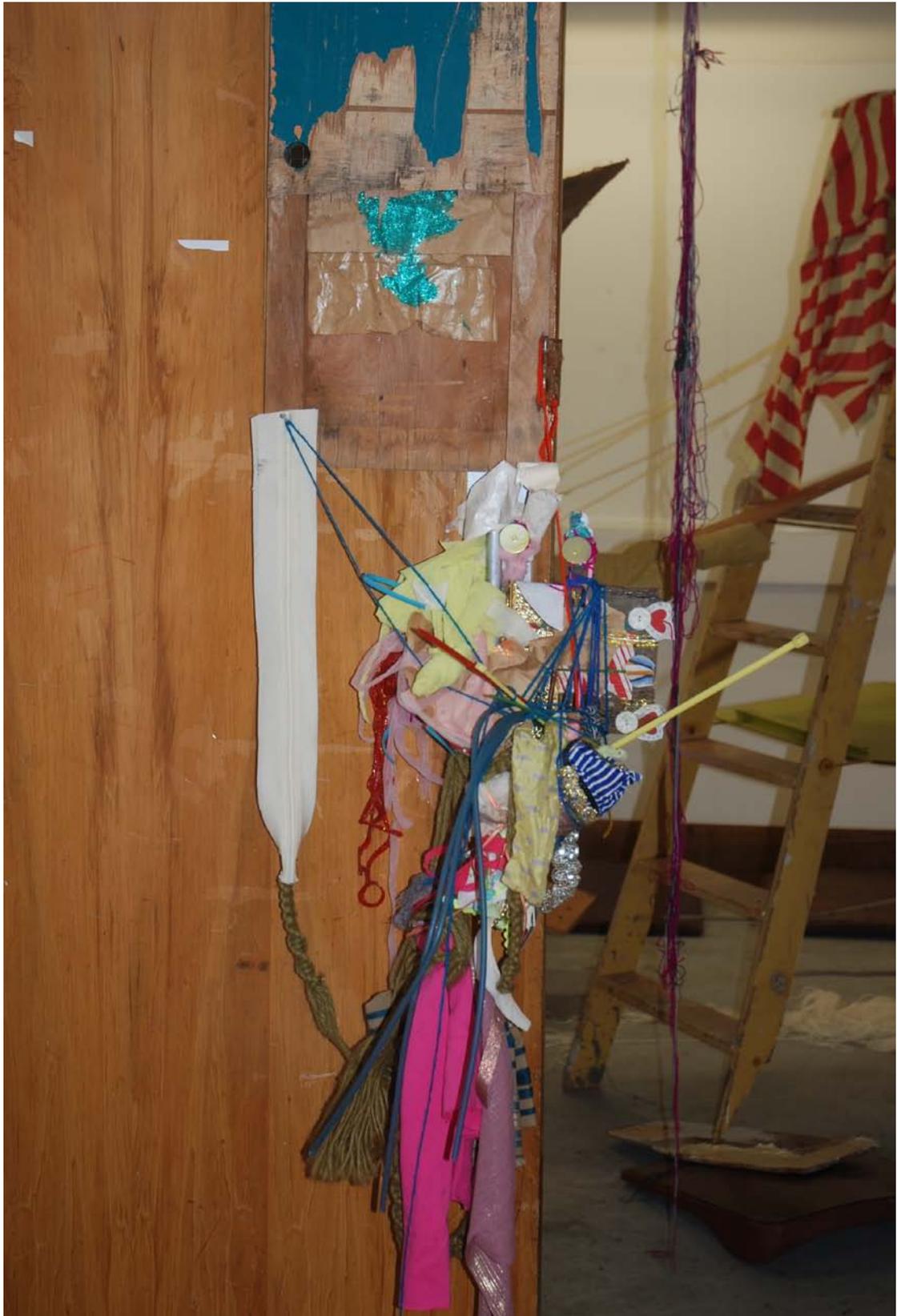






Fig. 63-104: *All meaning is the line you draw*



















































An example; Will you ride with me?

Here, we find architecture not in its functional guise but as a site of desire, memory and doubt, home to personal contingencies and collective histories, the clashing of cultures and coalescing of subjectivities. Refusing to address us as mere spectators, these works implicate us in the spaces they generate, engaging us in ways that are at once visceral and conceptual, and that call attention to what must be experienced rather than merely seen.

(Rugoff, 2008, p5)

As a final shining example. I would like to show one of the many inspirations that began this journey to make my own space. Emery Blagdon is a self taught artist who made his work not as part of an institution or even seeing himself as an artist. Blagdon built his Healing Machine over a period of many years, after his parents' deaths from cancer and his own experience of arthritis, combined with a fascination with the power of electricity. He saw his work as a functioning machine rather than art;

A believer in unseen forces and in the wondrous potential of such forces to heal, he pursued these possibilities until he died in 1986. Doctors supposed that Blagdon had been ravaged by cancer for ten years, during which time his own Healing Machine had been the only treatment he had sought.

(Umberger, 2007, p222)

Fig. 102: *The Healing Machine* (interior site detail, Garfield Table, Neb.).





Fig. 103, *The Healing Machine* (untitled individual component).

Fig. 104: *The Healing Machine* (detail, untitled individual component)



The magic is still present here. The vision, faith, and the trying are present here. The effort, work and vulnerability are present here. The reaching out, making a stretch through materials; an emotional understanding, a bridge from here to there. Making it this way because there is no other way; this is the best way, the only way I know.

syd barrett part 2

If they don't get it
It's all right
It's all right
It's all right
It's all right

If they don't get it
It's all right
It's all right
It's all right
It's all right

(repeat entire section 4x)

Don't
be
scared
of
what's
in
side
you,
don't
be
scared
to
blow
your
own
mind—

If they don't get it
It's all right
It's all right
It's all right
It's all right
If they don't get it
It's all right
It's all right
It's all right
It's all right

(repeat entire section 2x)

If they don't get it
It's all right
It's all right
It's all right
It's all right.

If they don't get it
It's all right
It's all right
It's all right
It's all right.

(repeat final section 4x)

Fig. 105: Syd Barrett Part 2ⁱ

ⁱ Emily xyz is a New York based performance poet. She writes poetry for two voices, so the way this should be read is with one person reading the words on the left and one reading the words on the right. When the lines line up they are to be read together. To hear how it sounds you can go to

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qS-ruwl0ulg>

<http://www.emilyxyz.com/>

<http://www.myspace.com/emilyxyz>

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