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PELAGIC STATES
beyond nomadic and oceanic practices

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To all the collaborators, crew, and artists whom I have worked with over the past four years
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01 ORIENTATION

an introduction to pelagic states

Oceanographers have a name for that remote part of the ocean that is not connected to or defined by a coastline or sea-bed. This is the 'pelagic zone', where movement and operation occurs in a completely four-dimensional environment. My creative practice examines, occupies, and emerges from this condition, applying it across the spatial, technical, cultural, geographic, philosophical, and aesthetic layers across various works and processes. In the theatres, galleries, public spaces, dry deserts, and ocean spaces that I have worked in there is a pervasive liquidity and a pelagic nature that characterises all the states and forms that my works move through.

This thesis argues that a fluid, mobile, and self-sufficient methodology of this kind is necessary in order to navigate the equally fluid landscapes of contemporary performance and culture, traversing diverse disciplinary boundaries, geographies, and modes of working in order to formulate a unique model for what is defined here as a *pelagic* practice. The 'pelagic' (from ancient Greek 'pelagos': of the open sea) is an adjective describing a complete, unboundaried liquidity. It is a term is often attached to species of ocean-going birds and fish, with little use outside of scientific texts, thus providing this research with an undefined space for discussion on creative practice, performance, and philosophy. It is also a term that suggests a proximity to and correlation with Pacific theorists and culture, allowing me to pay homage to this significant body of knowledge whilst avoiding appropriation of their specific cultural knowledge or viewpoints.

There are many artists who work across boundaries in a fluid manner, often with reference to terminology like 'nomadism', 'mobility', and 'migrancy'. This thesis identifies a gap in current knowledge and creative practice by examining the use of these terms by global entrepreneurs, travellers, in artist statements, and critical theories. It asserts new definitions and new perspectives for multi-modal practices by exploring and applying oceanic language and the notion of 'the pelagic' to the existing discourse. As will be demonstrated, current and recent precedents that have been reviewed usually base their operations within one territory, migrate into another territory, or utilise nomadic principles that are geocentric, such as the European paradigms of the forest and the field. By contrast, this thesis argues that a *pelagic* practice is defined by recurring acts of **transgression** and **de-territorialisation**: navigating between various states, across disciplines, and across modes of research in order to define its unique perspective that readdresses approaches which have (until now) been founded on pastoral 'landed' perspectives and structures. Throughout this research, such destabilising traits are characterised by the poetic qualities of the sea and liquid conditions. As a geographic region as well as a condition, this 'oceanic' state provides an alternative to the dominant 'landed' ontologies of European or North American continental thought and creative practice. In this way, I draw upon Oceania, as the world's 'liquid continent' to inform new ways of being, new creative insights, and new practices, in a contemporary context characterised by the threat of rising sea-levels, displacement across bodies of water, and water-scarcity.

My own formation in this environment is important to note. I have what could be called a pelagic upbringing 'living aboard a boat that my family sailed from Europe to New Zealand for nine years of my childhood. In *Questions of Travel: postmodern discourse of displacement* (1996), Caren Kaplan describes three states: the exile, the tourist, and the

Fig 1: Arnold, Corey (2014) *Black Mountain* (detail).

nomad. Considering my experience from Kaplan's perspective, it could be possible to locate my own cultural background within all three of her models¹. While there was a strong sense of exile in leaving Margaret Thatcher's political climate in the UK in 1981, it is also necessary to admit that we were attracted by the allure of warmer climates and ways of life that were more likely touristic. However, there was also a nomadic quality to our position, given that we didn't fit comfortably into the mould of either exile or tourist: there was no return for us, and only a flexible sense of destination and duration to our journey as we passed through various geographic, linguistic, political, and cultural boundaries. This background comprises a unique experience and cultural viewpoint founded in a nautical environment and in a space of movement, rather than any static residence or belonging to one place. A distinction that this thesis makes is that the pelagic state is considered in this way above all else: *a specific cultural experience founded in a space of continuous movement and fluidity.*



Fig 2: The Trubridge family crossing the Atlantic Ocean on the 45' steel cutter 'Hornpipe', 1981. Photo: David Trubridge.

Another distinction needs to be made around issues of migrancy and the current refugee crisis, which is covered well in Kaplan's text, as well as in Zygmunt Bauman's (2016) *Strangers at Our Door*, Vilém Flusser's (1994) *The Freedom of the Migrant*, among others. Although my work addresses these issues in its poetic, political qualities, they are not concerns that should be mixed up with its nomadic, oceanic and pelagic discourse. Regular reports of arduous sea crossings, internment on remote islands, the capsizing of boatloads of migrants all haunt this practice with the confoundingly simultaneous ease of movement (Bauman's 'liquid modernity') on one hand, and the closure of borders to unwelcome travelers (or Bauman's 'migration panic') on the other. While this thesis does not attempt to reconcile these tragically unjust inequalities, it does present a practice that attempts to resist these symptoms, with a critique of the carbon-fuelled digital nomad, schizophrenic nomadism, and the divisive control of borders between disciplines, cultures, and geographies. Just as Pacific scholar Albert Wendt placed his hopes in storytelling and art in his (1976) *Towards a New Oceania*, so do I have faith in the suggestive and subversive qualities of the practice I describe herein.

¹ Caren Kaplan's text is discussed in later chapters.

The practice that is discussed is defined by consistent movement in a four-dimensional manner²: often crossing boundaries, operating between boundaries, or transgressing in order to pursue a particular aesthetic, concept, or question. The work does not rest in one place. It travels through various terrains, accumulating knowledge and meaning as it goes. As such, it is not intended to be measured against localised ‘foundations’ of knowledge or within a specific ‘field’ of practice. Instead it oscillates within a gathering of contexts, references, or aesthetics – reflecting off each within a curated ‘nebula’ or cloud of relevant forms. In their writing on art and science collaboration, Bill Manhire and Paul Callaghan talk about ‘language under pressure’ where new material is being created or discovered. Such is the case with this thesis, where there is a lack of substantial language, canon, or precedence within which to couch the work. Moreover, existing terminology like ‘field’ or ‘foundation’ become awkward with their associations in grounded, rooted, practices and philosophies. Instead the research must look around, drawing on precedents from diverse sources: gathering ‘flotsam’ from cultural theory, architecture, design, anthropology, performance studies, fine arts, literature, philosophy, and geography. The effect of this approach is one that ‘deterritorialises’ various boundaries between disciplines, modes of working, and states, asserting a fluid and versatile methodology and creative practice.

With this blurring of boundaries and deterritorialisation in mind, this written exegesis is presented as a carefully prepared ‘vessel’ which (despite the range of the practices explored) endeavours to maintain a binding analytical narrative using text, documentary images, references, and ‘travelogues’ of particular works. It encounters various precedents, identifying points of connection and semblance with other artists or theories. However, any likenesses that emerge are overshadowed by the holistic shape of the practice, which (as a methodology, style, theory-for, and theory-of performance-making) distinguishes itself from the existing milieu. In this way it cannot be regarded as a practice in fine arts; nor as a practice in theatre, design, curation; nor as a solo or collaborative practice. Instead it must be considered through all of these, in its aggregated form, so that the reader keeps in mind the complex and complementary nature of each angle that the practice takes. It explores the richness of mobility as a critical paradigm of its own, celebrating (for example) comparative analysis over canonical perspectives, or the accumulated understanding that occurs progressively through the journey of the exegesis. In this way, the overall practice becomes gradually more tangible: a practice that is committed to a holistic nomadism, unfolding in an oceanic place of operation, within a pelagic state of production, re-production, and theorising. Last of all, some ideas are revisited more than once, and may be reiterated in a rhythmic or cyclical pattern, like waves, so that they may gather depth and meaning with each incantation made in relation to the new concerns of each chapter.

‘Pelagism’ is a medical term for common seasickness: a feeling of disorientation and nausea brought on by the irregular movement, rhythms, endless motion, and lack of solid boundaries that one experiences at sea. One of the key seafaring techniques of dealing with this ailment is to keep one’s eyes upon the horizon: often the only stable and consistent ‘landmark’ to be found in this space. Just as some people are affected by motion sickness, so too they may find the shape and movement of this narrative and practice disorienting. It is after all a practice formed in (and at home with) fluidity: as a condition or state of being. Thus, motion (action, activity, etc) is no longer the exception or the ‘event’ within a static field such as the stage or gallery space. Instead the conditions or surrounds of the work are also mobile, and could be seen as ‘evental’: existing in a space or state of constant event-

² If we accept temporality (time) as a perpendicular dimension to the other connected dimensions of length, width, and depth. See John Norton (2006) *What is Four Dimensional Space Like?*
https://www.pitt.edu/~jdnorton/teaching/HPS_0410/chapters/four_dimensions/index.html

making, well before the intervention of the art work and performance. This conflation of 'state' and 'space' captures the central concepts of this study, where mobility/liquidity creates a performative condition for works, rather than the uniform terrain or static landscape of traditional spaces for performance and art. These un-mappable, unknowable conditions are the pelagic, nomadic spaces of this thesis, which cannot be stated, en-stated, owned, or completely defined³.

The exegesis has adopted the 'pelagic' term in order to renovate and critique well-used 'nomadic' concepts. The two terms 'nomadic' and 'pelagic' are often used in proximity, because of the viewpoint that this pelagic state is a development of nomadic concepts. This takes the term beyond the devices of a privileged class of travellers (Makimoto and Manners' 'digital nomads') and diasporic conditions that remain nostalgic for a homeland or fixed state. In this way, the pelagic term takes nomadism to its most logical conclusion, to a space of four-dimensional mobility and adaptability that does not attach itself to permanence, belonging, or possessive sentiments. All the same, the 'nomadic' term retains its currency in this thesis through (a) the relevance of texts on nomadism to this study, (b) the influences of nomadic theory and practice on this new practice being proposed, and (c) my intention to expand or develop the 'nomadic' term. In general, I will use 'nomadism' to denote a certain gathering of theories or discussions, defined by several theorists and practitioners as outlined in the following literature review. The 'pelagic' term will be used to denote my particular departures from the nomadism that exists, and to define this unique creative practice.

When this research began, nomadism was primarily distinguished by the theories of Deleuze and Guattari, Rosie Braidotti, Tsugio Makimoto, and Willem Flusser. Non-fiction writer Bruce Chatwin had also dealt with it in his well-known 1987 book *Songlines*. I had written one text: *Terra Nullius: the nomad and the empty space* for Performance Research 18.3 'On Scenography' in 2013. Since then, this interest has been taken up by many more theorists and practitioners in the arts, with some projects leaning towards notions of liquidity and oceanic theory. The most significant of these was the Performance Studies International (PSi) 'Fluid States' project in 2014-2015⁴. My recent co-editing (with Richard Gough) of *Performance Research 21.2 'On Sea/At Sea'* (Appendix 14) gathered many voices from Fluid States and the broader discussion on fluidity and oceanic practice, referencing some of the proponents of Pacific/Oceanic theory (Epeli Hau'ofa, Albert Refiti, Albert Wendt) and Western schools of 'new thalassology' described by Steve Mentz⁵. Despite this burgeoning field, there remains **no creative practice or framework** that explicitly or fully grasps, implements, and expresses a genuine pelagic state: such as one that this thesis presents and demonstrates.

Since beginning my research in 2014 this project has moved through various iterative phases between creative practice, writing, and scholarly research, establishing a broad practical and theoretical body of work for the final exhibition presentation and this exegesis to summate. In this way, the research has occurred across a number of projects and in a number of modes, including design processes, artistic practice, collaboration and devising, authorship and auteurship, curation and artistic direction, drawing, and writing. The eight projects that comprise the practical component of this thesis are:

³ In the discussion of practice, a 'state' can also be considered as an intersection of thinking, doing, and being.

⁴ 'Fluid States: performances of unKnowing' was a global circuit of events that replaced and decentered the usual pattern of PSi conferences. Conceived as an exploration of fluid states, the initiative took place in Panama, Addis Ababa, New Delhi, The Bahamas, Santorini, North Atlantic, Rarotonga, Aomori, Montreal, Melbourne, Manila, and Beirut. My own contribution to the programme was the *Deep Anatomy* symposium run on Long Island, The Bahamas in April-May 2015 (Appendix 10).

⁵ Steve Mentz (2009) *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean*

- (1) *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever* – a devised theatre production made with The PlayGround Collective NZ for stagings in Wellington, New York, Auckland, and London from 2014-2016.
- (2) *Space Invaders II* – a performance work circumnavigating a city block in Wellington as part of The Performance Series 2014 at 30Upstairs Gallery.
- (3) *Subdivision I* – an underwater performance installation in the harbour of Rijeka, Croatia for PSi21 Fluid States in 2014.
- (4) The restaging of *SLEEP/WAKE* for NZ New Performance Festival at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club, New York; and the artistic direction of this same festival in 2015.
- (5) *Many Breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)* – an underwater performance work developed in The Bahamas over two iterations in 2015 and 2017.
- (6) *Deep Anatomy* – a symposium run as part of PSi21 Fluid States in 2015, then presented as an exhibition at Auckland’s Silo Park in 2017.
- (7) *Night Walk* – a performance work that has travelled through various landscapes in Australia and New Zealand from 2015-2017.
- (8) *The Performance Arcade* – an outdoor festival that I have directed and curated in Wellington every year of this thesis.

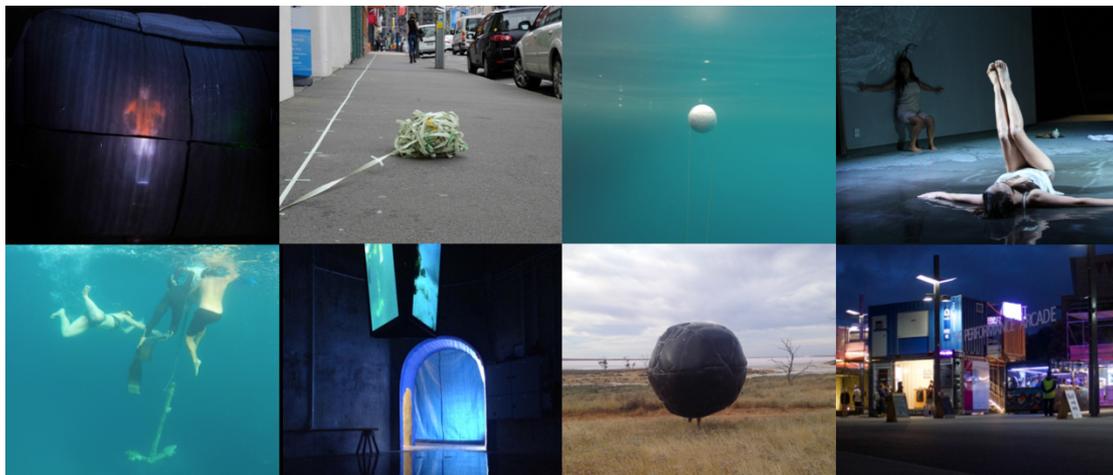


Fig 3: [FROM TOP LEFT TO RIGHT] *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever*, photo: Rosie Remmerswaal; *Space Invaders II*, photo: Amelia Taverner; *Subdivision I*, photo: Sam Trubridge; *SLEEP/WAKE*, photo courtesy of La MaMa ETC; *Many Breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)*, photo: Stephen Keenan; *Deep Anatomy*, photo: Sam Trubridge; *Night Walk (Lake Tyrell)* photo, Amelia Taverner; *The Performance Arcade*, photo: The Performance Arcade.

If the reader would like an overview of all works produced, then please refer to Appendix 01 for a comprehensive and chronological list of the works produced within this thesis. On the matter of scope, it is necessary to note that much of my own theories for performance design and scenography are already established in the articles *Inside the Black Margin* (2012), *Terra Nullius* (2013), *Expanding Scenography* (2013), and my Master’s in Design thesis *1:1 Manifestoes for a Theatre of Matter* (2006). Instead of reiterating the assertions expressed in these earlier documents, this thesis moves beyond the bounds of theatre, performance design, and scenography to operate within a broader terrain of creative performance practice in the presentation of this model for a pelagic practice. This research works within an established aesthetic that is already articulated in these texts. The examination of raw materials and situations, while avoiding theatrical illusionism (in partnership with the manipulation of audience relationships) is a characteristic of this earlier research that still informs much of my work to date. However, it will not be the focus of this particular project. Instead, this thesis focuses on a particular concept introduced at the end

of *1:1 Manifestoes for a Theatre of Matter*, in the Epilogue (A Manifesto in Motion). Having concluded with a clear aesthetic and theory for performance-making, this final section of the document postulated on a mobile practice, and a flexible, mutable methodology and aesthetic that is now formulated fully in this research, ten years later.

Just like my preceding work, the primary practice that this thesis operates within is Performance Design, a term which conveniently lays little claim to any single territory or discipline. Instead it moves between different processes and applications. There is an openness and inclusivity to performance design that better reflects the way that many artists and designers in performance are choosing to work these days, evidenced by the various universities, institutions, and forums that have adopted the term: most notably the Prague Quadrennial for Performance Design and Space, or Dorita Hannah and Olaf Harslof's (2006) *Performance Design*, the first publication to formally announce and describe the term. In this thesis the term performance design is considered in an open manner, almost as a 'soft science' where the study of space, body, action, and media produce a fluency and literacy in the tacit languages through which performance, architecture, and culture influence audiences and broader publics. Several of my own texts described earlier read as definitions or further clarifications of this term in relation to theatre, scenography, and architecture. There are significant texts by others to acknowledge, such as Hannah and Harslof's aforementioned book, Adrian Heathfield's (2004) *Live: Art and Performance*, David Wiles (2003) *A Short History of Western Performance Space*, James Roose-Evans (1989) *Experimental Theatre*, and Amelia Jones and Tracy Warr's (2000) *The Artist's Body*. In addition to Performance Design, the research also operates within the wider ambit of Performance Studies, defined for this thesis as a study and critique of how we do things, why we do things, when every collective or individual action is performed in response to our political, cultural, spatial, social, philosophic context.

While I have worked regularly with scientists and often use scientific analogy in my work, it is worth noting that the writing in this exegesis does not deny the subjective presence of the researcher. In this regard I draw on the work of Richard Rorty, who draws on other philosophers such as Kuhn, Freyerbrand, and Foucault to contest the convention of what Rorty calls "the God's-eye view of things, the attempt at contact with the nonhuman," which he further describes as, 'the desire for objectivity'." (1991, *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*, 24). Apropos of these arguments, I have taken what might be called an auto-ethnographic approach in my text, at all times acknowledging my presence and agency as the artist and author.

The methodology for this research and practice is characterized by its trans-disciplinary, multi-modal facets, as outlined in the table on the following page. Recurrent themes in the works are also listed, as are the various 'transgressions' or 'incursions' into new disciplinary areas. These two terms describe a distinctive feature of the pelagic practice, where the artist operates outside their native itineraries to transgress or make incursions into places/processes of unknowing. More will be discussed on this term in Chapter 05. However, I will note that where transgression occurs into other disciplines, then specialists have been consulted and involved, such as sleep scientists for the theatre show *SLEEP/WAKE*, and free-diving athletes for other projects *Deep Anatomy*, *Night Walk*, *Subdivision I*, and *Many Breaths*. In this way, the practice attempts to define a contained, precise methodology that retains coherence and rigour despite its trespasses.

<p>modes/roles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - creative practice - scholarly study + writing - collaboration /devising - authorship / auteurship - curation / artistic direction 	<p>disciplines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - performance design - performance studies - theatre - live art / performance art - literature
<p>themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - deterritorialisation - transgression through/across disciplinary boundaries - the boat, vessel, or container - physical/geographic journeys - haptic experience - relationships between body + space - walking/travelling and theory - social space - suspension of breath - private and public 	<p>transgressions or incursions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - science - philosophy - anthropology - architecture - sociology - geography - literature

The following chapters begin with 02 Literature Review, which provides a re-definition or re-claiming of nomadism where it has been appropriated, misunderstood, colonised, and (ironically) *settled* by popular language, touristic practices, and agendas that are mobile but not necessarily nomadic. Following that, I will focus upon one particular work for the central argument of each chapter that follows. This provides a central narrative that unfolds with reference to other ancillary works that broaden the scope and demonstrate the mobility of the practice. The focus on only four principle works between chapters 03-06 attempts to introduce core concepts as they evolved, leading the discussion through various examples of nomadic and oceanic practice towards an expansion of these terms and a concluding statement about pelagic states. Thus Chapter 03 The Tumbling Weed begins with a discussion of mobility, the origins of the research, and early works in this thesis. Chapter 04 Migratory Aesthetics takes us beyond definitions and methodology to consider the metonymic qualities of the pelagic state, and how it operates as an aesthetic practice. Chapter 05 Transgressive Geographies considers relationships between landscape, discipline, and transgression, moving into more liquid treatments of space. Finally, Chapter 06 Oceanic Space moves from the land into the sea, addressing the underlying liquidity that pervades all of my practice to define pelagic states and redefine the nomadic principle. Six key findings emerge from this narrative which help to characterise this creative practice and prove its unique contribution. They are:

- (1) There is a gap in contemporary theories on nomadism.
- (2) Pelagic practice creates a fluid poetics.
- (3) This multi-modal practice transgresses and liquefies boundaries.
- (4) A pelagic practice operates in a complex, mobile, and cultural spatiality.
- (5) To be pelagic is to work with change and uncertainty.
- (6) While there are artists with similar work, there are none who replicate all features of this practice.

As a practise-based thesis, this written component is accompanied by four years of research through making. Aspects of two works *Night Walk* and *many breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)* have been distilled in the exhibition that accompanies this exegesis. In addition, this document includes extensive appendices on all my practical outputs. This resource may be referred to as gallery or archive of sorts, arranged in chronological sequence so that the development of my pelagic practice is also documented. A reader of this exegesis is encouraged to draw on this material (as well as in-text images and footnotes) as they move through the main chapters, for any further extrapolation and presentation of projects. These appendices include abstracts on works, conference paper transcripts, and journal articles that may also be paraphrased or quoted in the main discourse.

This sequence of chapters and selection of works presented across the exhibition and appendices leads the thesis towards my conclusions about a practice defined by a liquidity that is both practical and figurative. In the closing chapter the oceanographer's concept of the 'pelagic' is reaffirmed as a key summing term, confirming a claim and hypothesis for 'pelagic states' that is unique to this research: *that a creative practice that is not restricted by boundaries or disciplines (but works across and between complex spatial, temporal, and cultural environments) may usefully unsettle or question the assumed boundaries or constructs that it encounters.*



02 LITERATURE REVIEW

re-defining nomadism

This review of literature and artworks examines my first key finding: that there is a gap in contemporary theories and creative practices which use nomadic, fluid principles. This leads the discussion towards the pelagic term and the pelagic practices that are presented in this thesis. As outlined earlier, this requires referencing from diverse sources: which includes a range of creative disciplines, but also reaches beyond the bounds of performance, art, design, theatre, and architecture to draw upon research conducted in geography, anthropology, philosophy, marine biology, and oceanography. This breadth is as much a matter of necessity as by design, since the subject matter or discourse that already exists is slight, sporadic, and distributed over a wide range of practices. Furthermore, this 'moving-through' areas of knowledge, discipline, or focus constitutes a nomadic 'gathering' of intelligence from diverse terrains: comparing, contrasting, and reading the signs in order to understand the unstated spaces between them. This absence, or in-between space is the *terra nullius*, the empty (un-enstated) space of nomadic, oceanic or pelagic practice. Through the Pacific concepts of Wā/Vā it is a space that has strong significance to Oceanic theorists and cultures. However, because of its statelessness, mobility, and fluidity, this space cannot necessarily be defined by any sovereign ideal or claim, and instead remains a fluid territory for collaboration and dialogue. Thus, the pelagic term belongs to me as much as the scientists and seafarers who use it, and any artists and theorists who may follow.

There is only one text that uses the term 'pelagic' outside of its familiar usage in oceanographic or marine biology: Elena Benelli's chapter 'Mediterranean Seafarings: Pelagic Encounters of Otherness in Contemporary Italian Cinema' for the book *Europe in its Own Eyes, Europe in the Eyes of Others* (David B MacDonald and Mary Michelle De Coste, 2014). Here, Benelli describes the sea as an un-boundaried space where it is possible to face or recognise the other, or the other within oneself. Benelli's sea is the Mediterranean, named from the Latin *mediterraneus* meaning 'inland' or 'middle of the land'. As far as most seas go, this is a boundaried, land-locked sea, an archi-pelagic space at best, but certainly not pelagic by comparison with the waters of the Pacific, Atlantic, and Indian Oceans. It is, moreover, a sea space with an other side like a lake, a reticulated body of water with coastlines just beyond the horizon, where 'the other' resides. In our current epoch this 'other' is the North African refugee, the Syrian asylum seeker, and ISIS insurgents, although in previous centuries it has been defined by various empires, crusades, mythical journeys, and threats. So, the Mediterranean is the appropriate sea for Benelli's article, but it is not pelagic per se. The classification of nomadic and oceanic principles usually default to European paradigms in this way, which are often land-locked, terrestrial, or pastured. Thus, with this contentious usage of the pelagic term it becomes necessary to look more broadly at groupings of literature that have examined nomadic or oceanic principles:

1) European 20th – 21st Century philosophers. Especially Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), and Rosie Braidotti in *Nomadic theory* (2011) and *Nomadic Subjects* (1994).

2) Mobility theorists like Tsugio Makimoto and David Manners for *Digital Nomad* (1997) and Tim Cresswell, whose focus is more on urban studies, planning, and cosmopolitanism (*On the Move: mobility in the Modern Western World* (2012)).

Fig 4: *wade-walk* (performance) by Sam Trubridge and Mick Douglas, at Robert Smithson's Spiral Jetty, Utah, USA; for the Shuttle Mobile Desert Residency, 2013. Trubridge walks the spiral path of water of the jetty, while Douglas walks the path of rocks. They meet in the centre, pause, then return the way they came. Photo: James Oliver.

3) Ethnographic and sociological studies James Clifford's (1998) *Notes of Travel and Theory*, several texts by Andrea Mubi Brighenti, as well as post-colonial theorists like Homi Bhabha, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak.

4) Scholars writing on Oceanic practices and culture such as David Lewis, Epeli Hau'ofa, Albert Wendt, Albert Refiti, and more recently Sharon Mazer, Diane Looser, Tammy Haili'Ōpua Baker, Dorita Hannah, and Keren Chiaroni. This gathering defines an oceanic school of thought or practice derived from the traditions of Polynesian seafaring culture.

5) Writers on migrancy and diaspora such as Vilém Flusser, Caren Kaplan, Mieke Bal, and Zygmunt Bauman.

6) Writers on the sea from the perspective of comparative literature, history, sociology, or the 'new thalassology' initiated in the 1990s by Duke University's 'Ocean Connect' initiative (see Mentz, xi): Philip E Steinberg (2001) *The Social Construction of the Ocean*, and At the Steve Mentz (2009) *At Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean* – a 'poetic history of the ocean'.

My own writing and editorial work has also contributed to these fields. Texts that have already been mentioned like *Terra Nullius* may be read alongside this chapter as a supplementary literature review for nomadic practices and theories in theatrical production and architecture, looking at the work of Peter Brook, Romeo Castellucci, and projects like The Performance Arcade or architect Luis Longhi's occupation of various spaces for performance in Lima, Peru. My work on co-editing *On Sea / At Sea* in 2016 gathers voices in performance studies, for the first time ever providing a journal edition focussed on the sea and oceanic states (see Appendix 14 for my editorial article). Many of the featured articles support my central hypothesis, reiterating key points, or in the case of Keren Chiaroni's article actually offering statements about my own work⁶. In this context (as well with projects I have curated in Wellington, Auckland, New York, and The Bahamas) I have operated as a leader and initiator in developing discourse around performance and liquidity: which has in turn helped me to articulate this model for performance in a pelagic state.

With the exception of Pacific theorists, the majority of references I have studied treat the sea as 'opaque, inhospitable, and alluring', as Mentz describes. However, the ocean in my own writing (and this broader thesis) is as much an endangered, threatened landscape as it is threatening. The thesis accepts and attempts "the basic challenge an ocean always poses: to know an ungraspable thing" (Mentz, ix), embracing this as a condition in the way that the Caribbean poets do: "Eduoard Glissant, Kamau Braithwaite, and Derek Walcott engage the sea as a lived-in space, its presence surrounding and informing their verse" (ibid, xi). Furthermore, the scholarship being claimed is that of a movement between theory and practice or between 'discourse' and 'figure' as French Philosopher Jean François Lyotard puts it⁷. In Keren Chiaroni's appraisal it is a mix of performance with the very essence of philosophy, privileging a way of thinking through movement: "instead of rigid conceptuality, we find the instability of intuition; instead of ownership, we see connection; instead of objectification, we touch the infinity of dreams" (109). For this reason, the literature review will refer to the theorists, philosophers, and scholars listed earlier on an equal footing with the creative practices relevant to the topic.

Not many artists work across such diverse disciplines and modes as the practices presented in this thesis. Even fewer declare themselves nomadic artists or articulate their work in these terms. There are certainly many who use the popular language of mobility and temporality, as evidenced by Andrea Liu's (2011) 'Top ten words I am sick of seeing on artist's

⁶ *Fluid Philosophy: Rethinking the human condition in terms of the sea* (108-116).

⁷ *Discourse, Figure* (1971).

statements'⁸. One artist who goes beyond most is Italian theatre artist Romeo Castellucci: a curator, installation artist, scholar, and collaborator as much as a director and designer of theatrical productions. Castellucci, with his company Societas Raffaello Sanzio, went further than Bausch, Wilson, and LePage in treating the stage as a site of experimentation between visual arts practice, performance art, technology, and the vestiges of post-dramatic theatricality. This is most apparent in their *Tragedia Endogonia* project: a series of works described as 'an organism on the run'⁹ that developed a rhizomatic, evolving discourse on tragedy and the concept of a European community through presentations in eleven cities/venues across the continent from 2001-2004. Alongside this project Castellucci produced 'crescita': small performance installations / sketches that appended several of the larger shows. A third facet of this project was the publication *Idioma Clima Crono* (2008), which was produced parallel to *Tragedia Endogonia* in order to provide a textual and philosophical interaction with (or extrapolation of) this series of works – featuring the company's own writing as well as that of Joe Kelleher, Nicholas Ridout, Celine Astrie, and others. Castellucci describes this whole project as a process that aspired to a nomadic flexibility: seen as the 'auto-generation of a chain of images' with an organic evolution through each progressive 'base' or iteration, where 'the shape's reacting and changing speed becomes a necessary strategy in order to support the scope for the age' (*Idioma Clima Crono*, 1:2). Thus, Castellucci asserts, "A+B shall not equal AB / A + B shall equal C" (ibid), providing a perfect equation for the nomadic process that is not additive and concrete, but progressive, sequential, and evolving.

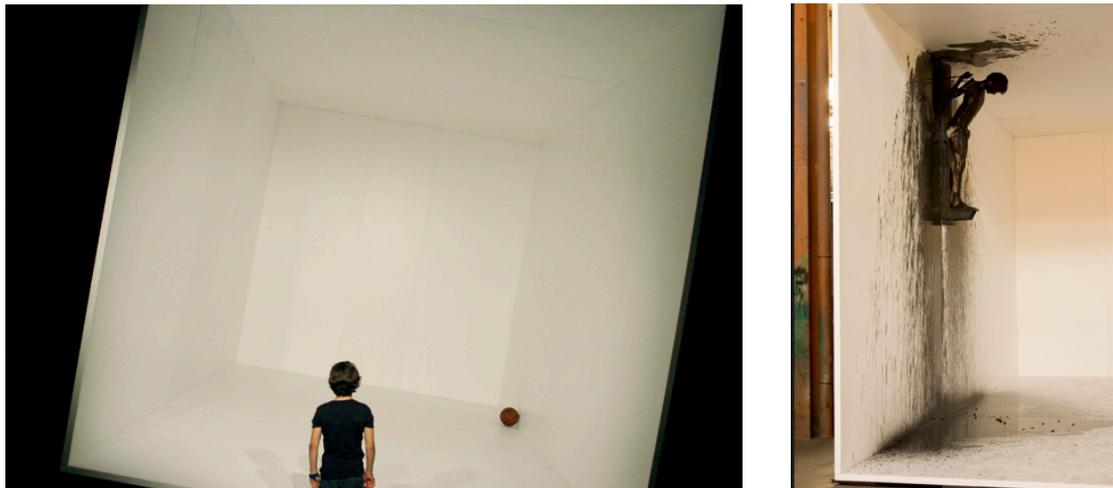


Fig 5: *Crescita XIII Avignon* and *Crescita XII Avignon* (2005) by Societas Raffaello Sanzio, Festival d'Avignon. "In the colossal work, "Tragédia Endogonia" Romeo Castellucci has chosen to single out moments or objects or sounds or gestures to show them as developments stemming from the original work, like outgrowths that, for one brief instant, would have an independent life. As if one looked through a magnifying glass to make the features bigger and draw particular attention to them, to focus on what could appear to be fleeting in the performance itself. Highly dependent on the place where they will be shown, these performances, called "Crescite", throw a particular light on this unprecedented theatrical experience." (Retrieved from: <http://www.festival-avignon.com/en/shows/2005/crescita-xii-avignon>) Photos: Christophe Reynaud de Lage and Frédéric Nauczyciel.

⁸ See item #3: "Itinerant practice"

⁹ *Idioma Clima Crono* (2004). The original Italian text reads 'un organism in stato di fuga'. Being on the run is thus expressed as a 'state' (potentially a fugitive state) which has relevance to this exegesis, where a 'state' is understood as a cultural, cerebral, or organisational situation that assumes the significance of a place, sometimes becoming a place in itself, or in the case of nomadic, pelagic practices – a placelessness.

Despite a rich body of work and this elegant theoretical framework, Castellucci's interests are not nomadic per se, although *Tragedia Endogonia* can certainly be described as a forebear or antecedent for this thesis. Ultimately, Castellucci's perspective is too Eurocentric in its scope to be considered truly nomadic within the terms that have been discussed thus far. Like Deleuze and Braidotti, there are no deserts or oceans in his model, instead it is the urban, cosmopolitan, striated landscapes that concern him. Pastures, state boundaries, and a tour of occidental cities/sites/venues characterise *Tragedia Endogonia* and the European project that it examines.



Fig 6: *Do Not Cross the Bridge Before You Reach the River* (2008) Francis Alÿs. "The Strait of Gibraltar is 7.7 nautical miles wide (13 km) and separates Africa from Europe. If a line of kids leaves Europe and heads towards Morocco, and a line of kids leaves Africa and heads towards Spain, will the two lines meet in the chimera of the horizon? Francis Alÿs' Gibraltar project is peculiar: a peculiar place was chosen, a plot was written, an event took place in real time with real people and cameras recorded an imaginary meeting. There is a story but no happy ending. There is a fable but no moral. All the artist has is a *mise en situation*". (Retrieved from: <http://www.felixblume.com/dont-cross/>)

Francis Alÿs is an example of an artist with a larger global ambit, with works moving through ocean spaces as much as various terrestrial terrains. Thus, the Straits of Gibraltar, the Pacific Rim, and the Caribbean Sea are all traversed or circumnavigated in his works. Alÿs also develops a nomadic practice for walking the city, for intervening in urban rhythms, and for exploring poetic and political ways to activate geographies in works such as *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002), *The Green Line* (2007), *The Loop* (1997), *Do Not Cross the Bridge Before You Reach the River* (2008), and *Tornado* (2000-2010). Alÿs is also an artist who works prolifically across media, producing paintings, drawings, objects, video works, animations, documentaries, texts, photography, and sculptures in an iterative, connected, and fluid practice. While he does not engage with theatre, his background in architecture employs similar collaborative, spatial interests that characterize my own, and his move from Belgium to work in Mexico City indicates a migrant experience, albeit eased by his European nationality and position of privilege. Perhaps a critical difference in Alÿs' practice from my own is that it seldom casts out to the depths, and seldom enters the pelagic space, preferring instead to explore urbanized, coastal, or bounded conditions. Moreover,

despite working in a variety of ways and in a collaborative fashion, Alÿs does not curate or initiate projects where other artists' contributions are the principal subject. This focus that characterizes my own projects like *The Performance Arcade*, *The Waking Incubator*, *NZ New Performance*, and *Deep Anatomy* is critical to a nomadic practice because of the fluid sense of authorship and collaboration that is engendered, and where the research focusses on developing curatorial frameworks, platforms, and architectures as the principal creative output. Finally, although Alÿs moved into Fine Arts from his practice as an architect, he has remained a fine artist since then: becoming a disciplinary 'ex-pat' or 'migrant', and one whose performance is exclusively fine arts, not theatrical, that even rejects his architectural origins. This makes his practice more migratory by contrast with my own work, which instead mobilises between curatorial practices, theory/scholarship, collaboration, and authorial processes as **the** practice. More will be discussed on Alÿs in Chapter 03.

As Andrea Liu points out 'itinerant practices' are currently very popular, with many artists like Tino Sehgal attaching themselves to this trend. In a recent article about a new work *Untitled* (2016) at opera Garnier¹⁰ Sehgal appears to move between fine arts and dance, also shifting between roles as author, facilitator, curator, or collaborator on various works. In this review Dorian Batycka identifies a concept of the 'non-linear' which has some connections with pelagic or nomadic practices. But Sehgal's preoccupations are less spatial, and more focussed on interior, social, inter-personal relationships and roles. In the history of avant-garde performance, this work at Opera Garnier is not particularly novel for its use of the stage¹¹, except for the fact that it is a fine artist working at Opera Garnier. It proves that phenomenological, site-specific use of the theatre has finally been admitted into the establishment, by being given license to one of the most hallowed examples of the Baroque stage and Western theatre architecture¹². Perhaps Sehgal will be remembered for doing this more than those who went before him, in the same way that Punchdrunk Theatricals seems to be considered the proponents of immersive theatre, eclipsing the work of Blast Theory, Dreamthinkspeak, and (80 years earlier) Soviet director Nikolay Okhklopkov. However, the question for this thesis is whether Sehgal could be considered nomadic or pelagic in his practice. His body of work certainly moves between disciplines and forms, but overall it seems almost exclusively focussed on the interior, on the room of the gallery or the theatre, and their spatial, social regimes: emptying galleries of art, breaking the fourth wall, and animating mute security guards or orderlies. He seems disinterested in the journey outdoors, the exterior world, or the unpredictable encounters and situations that occur when performance is removed from the controlled environments of the theatre and gallery. Thus, Sehgal may appear to subvert systems of control in his works, but always with his own firm control of the conditions where that dynamic is explored. His work is never exposed to the volatile conditions of being outdoors – it is never exposed to the wind, to rain, to the ocean, or the undisciplined behaviour of a public in their own space that characterises my work across curatorial projects (*The Performance Arcade*) and solo performance works (*Night Walk*, *Many Breaths*).

After introducing three artist examples (Castellucci, Alÿs, Sehgal), it is necessary to shift attention to some of the philosophies that have defined nomadic theory to date: considering Western theorists, Pacific theorists, and writers in Performance Studies who are exploring

¹⁰ <http://hyperallergic.com/329809/tino-sehgal-dances-across-line-art-life/>.

¹¹ This deconstructive approach to the stage, as well as working between fine arts and dance/theatre has recent precedent in the work of William Forsythe, Jerome Bel, Nigel Charnock, Romeo Castellucci, and in my own productions of *Sleep/Wake* and *The Restaurant of Many Orders*.

¹² This work resurrects many of the dynamics that characterised the 'participatory performance' of Baroque-era audiences in this space, which is discussed in detail in Beth Weinstein's 'Turned Tables: The Public as Performers in Jean Nouvel's Pre-performance spaces' (Marcia Feuerstein, Gray Read, 2016, *Architecture as a Performing Art*).

new notions of 'performance philosophy'. It is not new for artists to philosophise, nor is it new for art to be considered within a philosophical milieu. Since the dialogues of Plato and Socrates, the Western histories of Theatre and Philosophy have been inextricably intertwined in the processes of discussing, critiquing, and re-shaping contemporary culture. The Greek amphitheatre was designed as a site where philosophical and democratic principles were expressed directly through spatial relationships and architecture of the space, as much as through the stories that were told there. Later came Shakespeare, a commonly accepted figure in philosophy and theatre alike, then Beckett, and then Sartre: the latter a writer of both philosophy and theatre. In the past fifty years, performance has expanded beyond the focus on literature and dramatic arts represented by these precedents, but it has nonetheless continued to work alongside contemporaneous philosophers and theorists to examine the new paradigms affecting each era. In the past 100 years this has included the hyper-reality of the cinematic experience, and the increased availability of the screen and televisual media. New physical, social, interpersonal, and relational encounters have produced an array of new disciplines and approaches, including (for example) the 'pervasive theatre' of Blast Theory and Rimini Protokoll, the immersive theatre of Punchdrunk Theatricals and Dreamthinkspeak, the social sculpture of Joseph Beuys, and numerous kinds of interactive media, augmented realities, and digital art forms. At the same time performance has begun to span or bring together previously distinct or demarcated disciplines. Thus, by looking beyond the traditions of dramaturgy, theatricality, the scene, and the script, one may now consider how wider performance perspectives and practices could affiliate themselves anew with current issues in cultural critique and philosophy, which finds itself equally challenged by the same phenomena in media and public life: addressed by writers like Paul Virilio, Slavoj Žižek, Gilles Deleuze, Laura Mulvey, Elizabeth Grosz, Amelia Jones, and many others.



Fig 7: *Bom Retiro 958 Metros* (2013) Teatro da Vertigem. This Brazilian company combine immersive and pervasive theatre forms with a theatre production that occupies streets and buildings across a square kilometre of São Paulo's fashion manufacturing district. Glassy malls and busy streets are co-opted as performance environments, with ingenious hacking of street lighting, portable sound and AV systems, choreography with traffic lights, passage through the remains of an abandoned theatre, and a final curtain call punctuated by passing cars and busses.

The challenge to respond to new media and new relationships of the 21st Century is forecast in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (1968) when he says "the time is coming when it will hardly be possible to write a book of philosophy as it has been done for so long [...] the search for new means of philosophical expression... must be pursued today in relation to the renewal of certain other arts, such as the theatre or cinema" (xx). This thesis is a response to Deleuze's provocative statement, and performance theorist Laura Cull's more recent suggestion made in her introduction to *Encounters in Performance Philosophy* (2014) that: "Might we, in other words, say that *performance itself thinks*, that performance itself philosophizes – not in a way that reduces it to being the 'same as' philosophy (as if philosophy was always the self-same thing anyway) but in a way that enriches our very concept of philosophy?" (26). Thus, my nomadic, pelagic practice is a considered and enthusiastic response to the invitation made by Deleuze for the arts to participate in this 'new means of philosophical expression', taking Cull's proposal for a way 'that performance philosophises' into the formation of a new theory for art and performance-making.

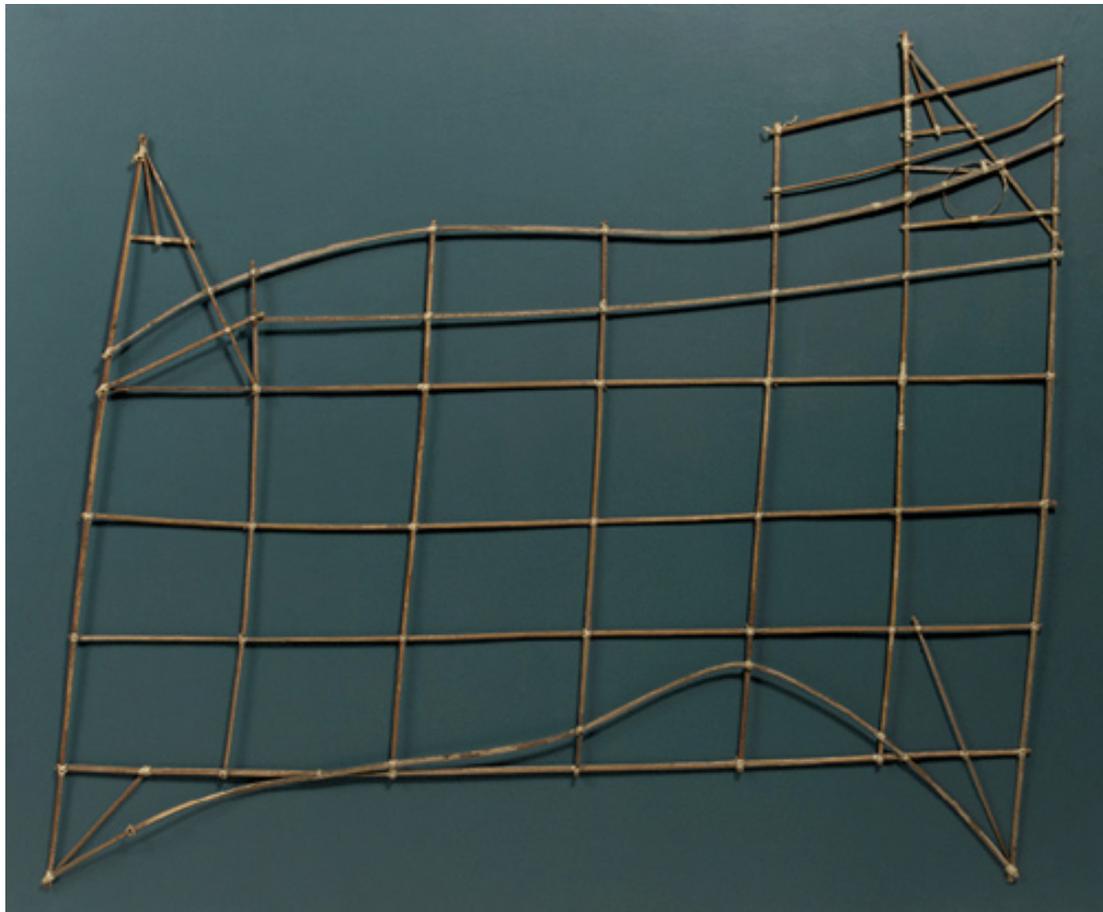


Fig 8: A 'Medo' stick chart from Polynesia. This variety was used to cover a few islands and was used to map the movement of swells around islands that the navigator would use to identify each land mass. The mapping of ocean currents had never before been accomplished and was an integral feature of Pacific navigational processes. Retrieved from: http://thenonist.com/index.php/thenonist/permalink/stick_charts/

A precedent framework for liquidity and oceanic philosophy can be found in the theorists and cultural practices of the Pacific. Writing in this area is covered by scholars like Albert Wendt (*Towards a New Oceania*, 1977), Epeli Hau'ofa (*Our Sea of Islands* 1994), architect Albert Refiti, and David Lewis (*We the Navigators*, 1972). Wendt's 1977 text is a seminal

manifesto for a renaissance in Pacific culture and philosophy, decrying the impact of colonialism, and exhorting the value of Pacific artists who were “explaining us to ourselves and creating a new Oceania” (60). Twenty years later Hau’ofa celebrates this ‘New Oceania’ that has maintained its fluid, mobile roots despite the imposition of colonial borders and economic zones which disregarded their traditional travelling and navigational culture. Hau’ofa discusses how contemporary Oceanic peoples move around the Pacific on the level of everyday people and routines, thus maintaining and reasserting their nomadic culture. Since the 1980s the resurgence of seafaring waka and traditional navigation is helping the Pacific peoples reclaim their liquid continent as a cultural space, including those pelagic spaces between islands and international waters. At the same time, it has enabled the clarification and assertion of philosophical frameworks such as the concept referred to across various Pacific nations as Vā or Wā space: a condition of between-ness, or relationality that holds separate entities and things together, expressed both through a sublimated sense of individuality (I’uogafa Tuagalu, 2008, *Heuristics of the Vā* in AlterNative, 110), loose land boundaries, and in the ‘central openness’ of Pacific architecture described by Albert Refiti¹³. All of this reveals a philosophical framework that is liquid and mobile, shaped by the environment that the Pacific peoples are at home with.

“They played in it as soon as they could walk steadily, they worked in it, they fought on it. They developed great skills for navigating their waters, and the spirit to traverse even the few large gaps that separated their island groups” (Hau’ofa, 1994, *Our Sea of Islands*, 8).

The Pacific philosophical context and seafaring traditions are rich with metaphors and understandings which may be related to this performance and creative practice. Speaking in her recent Live Article for The Performance Arcade 2018, artist Suzanne Tamaki discussed her mixing of augmented reality work with Māori taonga for the event, stating that “culture is not a harbour, it is a journey” - affirming Hau’ofa’s own claims on the entrepreneurial spirit of Oceanic cultures and their dynamic negotiation between change, modernity, and tradition. This notion resonates well with my own concepts for mobility and focus on the iterative nature of the practice that doesn’t fixate on a single destination, resolution, or ‘harbour’ of meaning - instead moving on through cyclical or rhythmic movements between states.

After these writings on oceanic thought, I would like to consider contemporary theories on nomadism, which are largely dominated by the discourse provided in Deleuze and Guattari’s (1988) *A Thousand Plateaus*, and Rosie Braidotti’s texts on *Nomadic Theory* (2011) and *Nomadic Subjects* (1994). These texts promote a sense of fluid subjectivity that has significant implications for perceptions of state, body, identity, and capitalism. Deleuze and Guattari’s key contribution is the notion of a ‘smooth’ space defined by nomadic movement that is not limited by paths, walls, boundaries, and the ‘striated’ space of the city, field, or territory. Here, nomadic notions of territory are fluid, plural, and interstitial. However, these theorists largely avoid discussion of a nomadic individual or nomadic culture’s relationship with space, place, architecture, and landscape, focussing instead on dynamics of Western interpersonal and political relationships, or on abstract terms about board-games, rhizomatic plants, and nomadic art. Where they do make direct reference to nomadic spatial practice, it is to define nomadic space as “between two striated spaces: that of the forest, with its gravitational verticals, and that of agriculture, with its grids and generalised parallels” (448). This model demonstrates less regard for the non-European nomadic spaces

¹³ ‘Whiteness, Smoothing, and the Origin of Samoan Architecture’ (2009), in *Interstices 10*, Journal of Architecture and Related Arts (Edited by Ross Jenner, Mark Jackson and A.-Chr. Engels-Schwarzpaul).

of the desert, the steppe, archipelago, or ocean, affirming the need for Pacific and pelagic theories of operation to broaden the discourse.

Described in her own words, Rosie Braidotti's work is "a critique of representational regimes that focus especially on the dominant image of thought as the expression of a white, masculine, adult, heterosexual, urban-dwelling, property-owning subject" (2011, 184). On the whole, Braidotti seems to have adopted the term 'nomadism' to describe a brand of philosophy that demonstrates only superficial interest in the historical practises and cultures of nomadism, as well as their accompanying philosophical, political, and spiritual relationships with place. Instead she focuses on a political, social perspective that defies singular notions of state, nationhood, and territory. Eva Aldea's (2014) *Nomads and migrants: Deleuze, Braidotti and the European Union in 2014* further connects Braidotti's work with a brand of trans-nationalism produced by the European Union, thus reiterating the same European preoccupations of popular nomadic theories that have been described earlier. Like Braidotti, Castellucci also bases his discourse within the context and concerns of the European Union project, focusing on the Deleuzian rhizome and Agamben's 'interregnum'. There is no coincidence that the hefty 'Culture 2000' fund that made *Tragedia Endogonia* possible included criteria to present in at least four European centres and work with each European community in that area.

By moving beyond Western philosophical treatments of nomadism the study begins to complexify, and threatens to sprawl. This thesis does draw upon indigenous or cultural cosmologies and nomadic traditions to formulate its proposal for a contemporary performance practice. However, in the spirit of the transient and the oceanic, these connections always remain what Barkandji scholar Sophia Pearce refers to as 'blended methodologies'¹⁴: mixing the contemporary with the traditional, cautious of appropriation, but not afraid to explore and dialogue with diverse territories. In this way a phantasmal, porous, and self-contained identity takes shape that is unique and solitary in the sense that it does not identify with a single cultural group or disciplinary category, but instead defines its own hybrid processes and definitions. This 'pelagism' may not comfortably sit in any seat for long. It is instead a constantly revolving, evolving organism that is completely nomadic and fluid. In response to these tendencies, this research celebrates the liquid, Non-Western spaces of the ocean, the desert, and the steppes as defining terrains for nomadism. It considers relationships between the body of the nomad and their terrain as central considerations, defining nomadism or oceanism as a unity of practice and philosophy within the landscape. This was also expressed in my published rationale for the Deep Anatomy symposium, which brought artists and free-diving athletes together across The Bahamian location on Long Island and the Vertical Blue championship. This text looked at the two disciplines of performance art and free-diving as integrated processes, "where action and intellect combine, and a 'deep anatomy' occurs, applying Richard Sennet's discussions on craft to the work of the athlete and the performance artist, where a physical act or process is invested with deep ethical values through material consciousness and care-full action"¹⁵ In this spirit, *Deep Anatomy* and earlier art-science projects like *The Waking Project* examined hybrid practices between science and art, responding to what Zygmunt Bauman refers to as our 'liquid phase in modernity', and situations where old paradigms are being challenged by the environmental and ethical concerns of the moment. Because of the (social, environmental, and humanitarian), problems caused by late capitalism and technological advancement, commerce and science are now facing significant challenges with the paired threats of impending climate change and the economic volatility. Lyotard's combination of

¹⁴ In her yet to be published Master's thesis at RMIT University.

¹⁵ See Appendix 15 for a full article on this project.

'discourse' and 'figure' emphasises the need for reconciling the conceptual with the sensual, seeing the rise of capital, science and technology linked through legitimation by performativity as a threat that he calls 'terrorism'¹⁶. The lessons that we are learning from this prove that we can no longer divorce thought from action, production from environment, business from culture, or intellect from craftsmanship. This synthesis between theory and practice within a fluid terrain distinguishes this research and defines its unique pelagic stance.

As discussed by Deleuze and Cull in earlier citations, philosophy has been retained for a long time as a cerebral artefact of the mind over body. In response, this thesis positions philosophy as an active process, an intervention, and a creative component of the artistic practice. Anthropologist James Clifford suggests that nomadism is at the root of philosophy as a practice in his (1998) *Notes on Travel and Theory* which demonstrates how theory "is the product of displacement, comparison, and a certain distance" in the model of the Greek student of philosophy who travels between cities and regions for their apprenticeship. Thus, philosophy can be seen as the product of difference and movement: a trajectory and a journeying as opposed to the fixed notions occurring exclusively in the realms of thought. What better symbol for this old, fixed model of philosophy than Rodin's popular (1902) sculpture *The Thinker*, also featured in the logo for the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy (<http://www.iep.utm.edu/>). Here the philosopher is presented as a monumental, monolithic shape, as 'thought' itself. The hand, deprived of its action and craft, instead becomes a prop in this sculpture, a stanchion for that holiest of casements: the head. And the thinker himself, a seated figure, is fused to the block of stone that he occupies. In fact, he is cut from that very stone, half emerging from it, eternally bound to the place of his conception. What better metaphor for the landed, pastoral preoccupations of contemporary philosophy and practice than this bonded figure? – a man first of all, but also a man set in stone, a man of words and thoughts, and a man for whom action is extraneous. By contrast, Deleuze's earlier statement celebrates theatre and cinema as two media that are mobile, ephemeral, and transient, echoing Kierkegaard's own 'unsettling' of philosophy in his autobiographical discussions on the unity of walking and thinking. This synthesis of walking and philosophy promotes the synthesis of action and thought that affirms that there is an alternative image for philosophy to be found in the figure of movement: the walker, the traveller, or the nomad.

This research does not attempt to define a new 'field', as Laura Cull and her colleagues do with performance philosophy. Instead the intention is to propose a creative practice that is nomadic, migrant, and liquid, as well as politically and philosophically motivated. It examines and seeks modes of expression for a philosophy born from a space/state of endless movement. This is less philosophy in a rarified academic sense and is rather a practice (a practice as philosophy, or vice-versa), and a state of doing and theorising together. Thus, a village of shipping containers full of live art works (*The Performance Arcade*, Appendix 07) is not just an artistic and architectural statement or intervention – it is an ongoing, evolving experiment in thinking, being, and doing in public; as are all of the other works that constitute this research.

In *Ghosts of the Theatre and Cinema in the Brain* (2010) Mark Pizzato talks of the stage and cinema screen in the skull, and of the theatre as an outward expression of the mind's inner constructions¹⁷. But today, the Greek amphitheatre, the Elizabethan roundhouse, the

¹⁶ Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/lyotard/>

¹⁷ Pizzato's text identifies the broader significance that the operations of the theatre have, as a socio-symbolic model for the operations of the brain and the perceiving subject. As such the labyrinthine sphere of the brain, with its complex three-

Baroque stage, the black-box, and the white-cube are all abstractions that reflect past eras and dated theoretical models of the world. Our models have changed now, and artists can choose between showing in these familiar platforms and contexts or finding alternative spaces and modes of presentation. Similarly, contemporary publics spend more time in online social environments, and the online world is changing the kind of live performance experiences that new audiences seek out in person. In particular the immersive theatre model has seen significant economic returns, perhaps due to how this form addresses the first-person audience, breaking down the singular hemisphere of the auditorium into a cellular space of one-on-one performance encounters more akin to the 'direct address' of online platforms. This thesis responds to the challenge presented by these changing conditions: identifying in the writing of Braidotti, Deleuze, Kaplan, and many others an interest in the itinerant, deterritorialised, unboundaried condition of nomadism that needs critique and expression through creative practice.



Fig 9: Douglas, Mick (2015) *Sal de Sal (Circulation #0007)*. For Performing Mobilities, PSI#21 Fluid States: performances of unknowing, at Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Melbourne. Douglas' Circulations series was distributed through performances in The Performance Arcade, Deep Anatomy, and several Fluid States clusters (Croatia, Japan, Philippines, and Australia). The exploration of salt unites this series – as a material of the earliest global trade, as a circulating mineral in blood-flow, ocean currents, hydrological cycles, soil reflux, and osmotic transformations.

So, who are these nomads? In addition to the three artists already mentioned (Castellucci, Alÿs, Sehgal) what work is relevant to this definition of 'nomadic states'? There are long traditions of traveling theatre and minstrelsy in Medieval and Renaissance European history. But as already explained, my primary references for this study are the contemporary conditions described above. This suggests more contemporary artist references like Mick Douglas, Theaster Gates, Richard Long, Janet Cardiff, Situations, Bas Jan Ader, Doug Aitken, William Kentridge, Blast Theory, Hito Stayerl, Rimini Protokoll, Teatro Vertigem, Tristan Sharps and DreamThinkSpeak, Teresa Margolles, Christopher McElroen, Chris Burden, and Small Metal Objects. Each have aspects to their practice that is nomadic, but neither do they

dimensionality and four-dimensional operations sits as an additional pelagic environment. Research conducted in *SLEEP/WAKE* led to similar conclusions as Pizzato, though also observed how the 'theatre' of politics/media/culture is also reproduced by the architecture and systems to be found within the brain and the theatre. While connected to the discussion of pelagic states, much of this content moves beyond the premises of this particular thesis.

demonstrate all the qualities that I am looking for: where mobility is approached as a journey rather than a migration, and where disciplines and modes of operation are traversed fluidly to define the overall practice. Perhaps only Mick Douglas does this so much: an artist with whom I have collaborated regularly and continue to develop works with on the topics of fluidity, concurrence, globalism, walking, and passage¹⁸. However, this overlap does not extend across all aspects of my practice: Douglas' own oeuvre does not extend across theatrical mediums, nor does his work set out to sea or navigate oceanic spaces in the way that this exegesis describes.

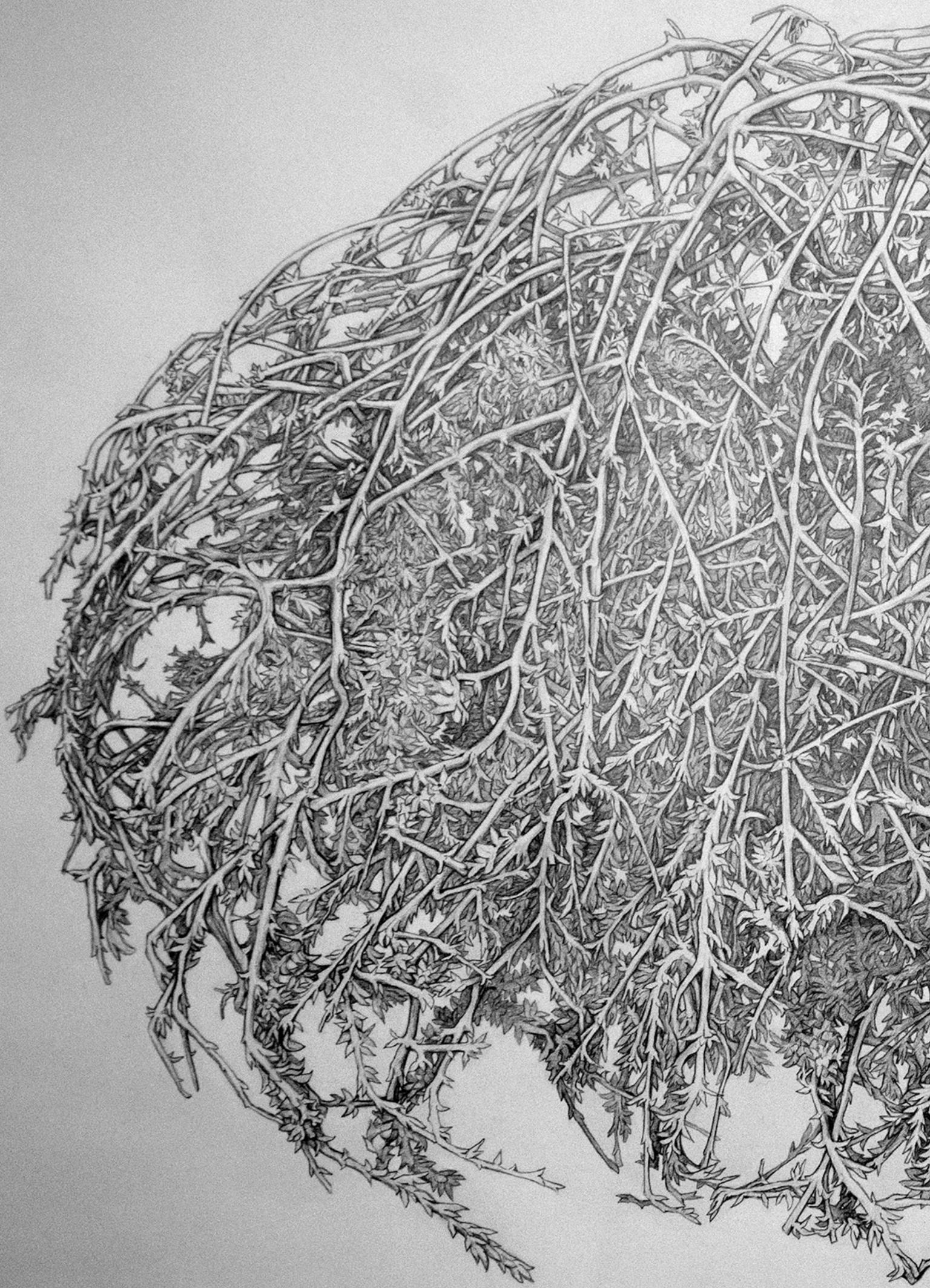
This research began in 2014 focussed on the nomadic term and its implications for creative practice. However, through the readings of the theorists and artists discussed in this chapter it became evident that there was a gap in nomadic theories and artistic models. What was missing was a statement and practice for performance and live art that was consistently nomadic, oceanic, or pelagic: one that responded to Cull's invocation of a 'performance that philosophises' through its weave of practice, scholarly research, and writing. In the following four chapters I will outline a practice that does this, following a sequence of works that are connected within a network of other projects and relationships, but which provide a condensed analogy for the broader practice. This iterative series of works will unfold through the following chapters as a single 'trajectory'¹⁹: tracing a lineage that starts with the study of a tumbling plant, gathering meaning as it rolls, shapeshifts, evolves, and produces the body of work that is presented herein. It is hoped that along this path of works a holistic understanding might be achieved that encompasses my other projects and collaborations with scientists²⁰, athletes, as well as other artists and art forms, always varying in scale, medium, discipline, role, or canonical milieu. In this way, it will become clear that the practice is as mobile, flexible, and as nomadic as I claim. However, the greater challenge here is proving that it does so with its own rigour, using clearly defined principles that are deliberate, measured, and prescient in their uniqueness. For this reason, the chosen trajectory of works has been developed and pursued as the main focus of the thesis, exemplifying and condensing core principles around what a nomadic, transgressive²¹, and pelagic practice might be. Thus, we follow an idea rolled through the desert in the following chapter *03 The Tumbling Weed*; moving on to the stage with *04 Black Lung*; then returning to open spaces again in *05 Transgressive Geographies*; finishing in the ocean and entering a complex fluid space with *06 Oceanic Space*, and finally resolving the narrative with a closing statement about pelagic states. Elements of literature review extend from this chapter to pervade the whole text that follows, as a process of comparison between preceding theories and practices and the work produced within this thesis: both expressing and testing my hypothesis for a pelagic practice in performance.

¹⁸ See Appendices 15 for texts written about/with Mick Douglas on these topics.

¹⁹ Romeo Castellucci introduced 'trajectories' in his *Tragedia Endogonidia* project as an alternative understanding of 'dramaturgy' or 'narrative'. Also used by Deleuze and Guattari to describe the nomadic path, Castellucci's use of the term suggests an arc, a movement, or pathway made without deference to theatrical or literary models. In this thesis, the trajectory is an aesthetic, conceptual, thematic path that links a series of works. Deleuze and Guattari's use of the term suggests that a trajectory may have a departure point, but the sense of a destination is more complex and open ended. Trajectories do not end or arrive, they are only cut short, in the way that a nomadic path "distributes people (or animals) in an open space, one that is indefinite and non-communicating" (*A Thousand Plateaus*, 443).

²⁰ *SLEEP/WAKE*, re-presented at La Mama Theatre in New York City in March 2015, as part of the New Zealand New Performance Festival (Appendix 09)

²¹ More will be discussed on transgression in Chapter 05 Transgressive Geographies.



03 THE TUMBLING WEED on mobility

In this chapter, the presentation of my creative practice begins, with a focus on providing definitions of mobility and nomadism that function as departure points into a more liquid state of pelagic practice.

*“[T]he question is what in nomad life is a principle and what is only a consequence. To begin with, although the points determine paths, they are strictly subordinated to the paths they determine, the reverse of what happens with the sedentary. The water point is only reached in order to be left behind; every point is a relay and exists only as a relay. A path is always between two points, but the in-between has taken on all of the consistency and enjoys both an autonomy and a direction of its own. The life of the nomad is the intermezzo” [Deleuze and Guattari, 1980, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 443]*

This PhD study was preceded in 2013 by the three-week Shuttle project: a ‘mobile desert performance’ residency/laboratory conducted with eight other artists and scholars travelling together across three deserts and six states in the USA. The journey itself came after my solo crossing of the continent by Greyhound Bus from New York to arrive at the Shuttle departure point in Tucson, Arizona. A work that was incubated in this project and which extends into the first year of this thesis was *Space Invaders*. Developed in the desert and performed at PSI#19 in Stanford University, the first iteration (*Space Invaders I*) involved blowing a tumbleweed around the campus with a leaf-blower, as a response to the American cultural landscape and the unwelcome ‘ingress’ of alien cultures and estranged bodies into suburban ecologies. These bodies included migrant workers, border-crossing Mexicans, and the disruptive character of the tumbleweed (a ‘nomadic plant’) within the organised and carefully controlled campus landscape and ecology. A year later *Space Invaders II* was presented at 30 Upstairs in Wellington, NZ. In recognition of strict NZ biosafety laws, the tumbleweed was not brought from the USA for this work, but instead was replaced with a ball of masking tape, accumulated from a single unbroken line that circumnavigated the city block around the gallery.



Fig 10: Trubridge, Sam (2014) *Salsala Targus (Russian Thistle/Tumbleweed)* (detail). *Salsala Targus (Russian Thistle, or Tumbleweed)* is an invasive species with origins in Russia. Upon maturity a plant’s roots and stem will wither, causing the bush to uproot and blow through the desert, distributing its seeds as it goes. This nomadic plant is a fantastic example of the ‘rhizomatic vegetation’ of the desert that Deleuze and Guattari describe ‘that is temporary and shifts location’ (*A Thousand Plateaus*, 1980, 445).

Fig 11: Trubridge, Sam (2013) *Space Invaders I*. Performed for Shuttle Mobile Desert Residency and PSI#20 at Stanford University. Photo: Claire Robinson.

This work serves well as a starting point for a discussion on my practice, since both iterations enabled the study and exposure of nomadic principles in controlled urban and suburban precincts through performance. The journey of first laying, then gathering up 500 metres of tape on a busy city street addressed tensions around public ownership of space, around who was entitled to transgress urban boundaries, who was allowed to draw lines through that space, as well as the significance of the line, measurement, or boundary to our sense of safety and propriety within various cultural contexts. Connections with my other projects also occurred, forecasting my work with the free-diver's safety line, the measurement of the unmeasurable, and storied pathways within the landscape. After laying the tape down carefully over six hours the previous day as a kind of architect or surveyor, the process of removing it the next day came with a whole new experience. The same path was repeated in this second journey, but this time involved a process of erasure, moving from the mundane to the absurd through the six hours, following the line around the block until I finally blew the large mass of tape back into the gallery in the final seconds of the performance.

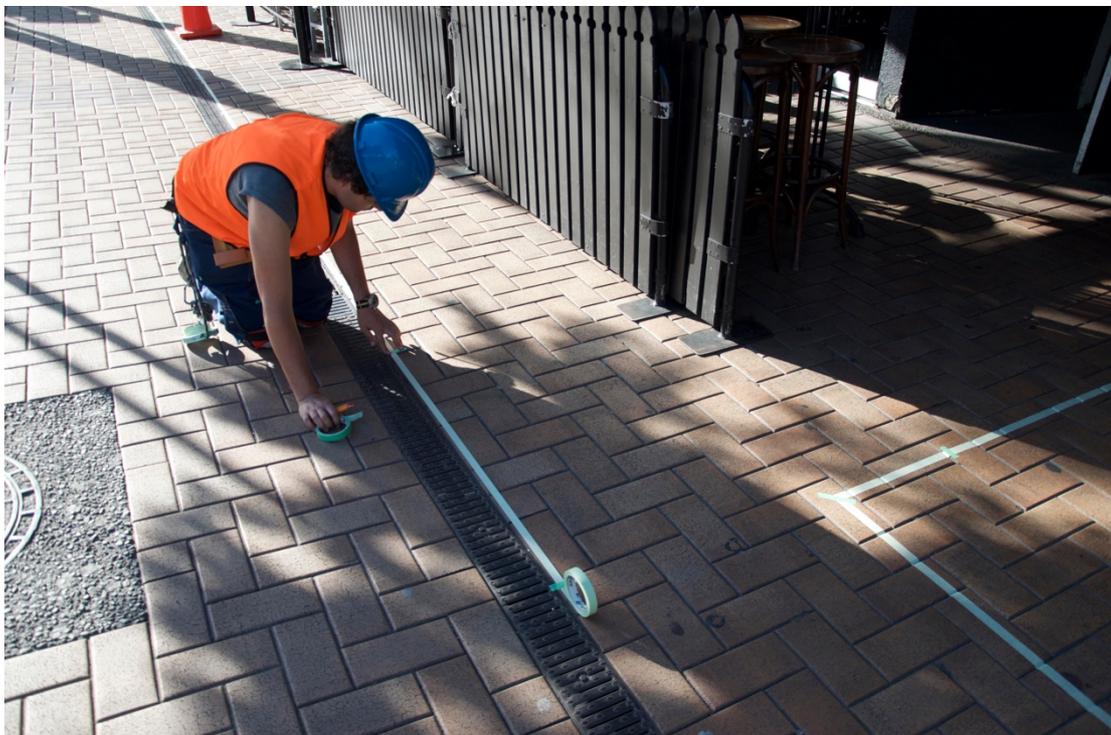


Fig 12: Trubridge, Sam (2014) *Space Invaders* (Day 1).

I will dress myself in their garb, so they don't recognise me. Work-boots, blue coveralls, a bright orange vest, head protection, safety glasses. I will work amongst them on my own purposes: drawing lines that trace boundaries of property and ownership. Lines that divide these urban pastures into spaces of residence, commerce, and controlled access. My line begins at the gallery. My line ends at the gallery. Between, it traces a circuit past cafes, bars, car-parks, businesses, and apartment buildings. Perhaps by walking this thin margin between private and public property I will avoid their prosecution – because they won't know which space I am working in, or which space I am invading. The colour of my line will be green – a colour uncertain in its authority over human time and space – seldom given opportunity to demark boundaries for the nature it usually divides. It will be the masking tape of the kind used in paint jobs: a temporary material employed to ensure a clean straight paint line, a tidy border.

Photo: Amelia Taverner.



Fig 13: Trubridge, Sam (2014) *Space Invaders* (Day 2).

On the next day I will join them again, tracing this line with the leaf blower: carefully erasing with my miniature hurricane that blows materials and objects ahead of it around the space. An ever-expanding supply of power cabling leads back to the point of origin. The artist takes on the role of suburban cultivist, pioneer, street cleaner, weather god, and shift worker – extending a fragile and tenuous path through the urban environment. And as the tape is lifted by the blast of the machine it will gather, it will roll, sticking to itself and turning around itself to form a large adhesive tumbleweed that collects detritus from the streets that it passes through, until finally arriving back its point of origin – blowing back up the stairs, and back into the gallery to rest.

Photo: Amelia Taverner.

Whilst I worked on this performance during the day, I also laboured by night on a full-scale botanical drawing of the original tumbleweed that was used in the Stanford performance, to hang on the wall of the gallery at the beginning of the second day. This meticulous nocturnal task involved similar processes of measurement, marking, and erasure that mirrored my daytime activities. My immersion in the plant's labyrinthine textures became all-consuming, obsessive, and eventually disorienting as I emerged from drawing all night to perform the last phase of blowing the line of tape into a ball. My perception was affected by this task: texts on my phone became wriggling knots of plant matter, maps of the streets became as dense as the weed's tangle of thorns, and despite some 25 hours of work, this simple scribble of vegetation still withheld a deeper system and structure that evaded my attempts to render it accurately. Drawing became a process of navigation and frustration: meticulously exploring the dense and disorienting subject on a journey of exploration. Thus, the process of drawing constituted a dwelling upon, navigation through, or study of, not only the object itself, but also the concerns within the work and my broader thesis, as a kind of scholarship through observation, slowed action, and mark-making²².

²² Botanical drawing is used to document the form, colour, and details of plant species for science within a strict set of conventions. In an era of 17th Century colonial expansionism, the drawings of Joseph Banks preserved samples of fauna from the newly explored Pacific Islands and Terra Australis. There is some irony in this process of drawing *Salsola Targus*, where the task seeks an invested 'knowing' of the subject or NZ ecologist Geoff Park's 'genius loci' of a particular space or environment. But it is a plant that detaches from its roots to seed, blowing across the steppes of Russia and the deserts of North America. It is a common plant, a weed, and an invasive species, causing environmental damage and destruction in the US states due to its aggressive response to the new ecologies there. In this way the reverential, colonial process of botanical drawing is subverted by the task of reproducing an image of a noxious travelling weed.



Fig 14: Trubridge, Sam (2014) *Space Invaders* (Day 2). Photo: Amelia Taverner.

Fig 15: Trubridge, Sam (2014) *Salsala Targus* (*Russian Thistle/Tumbleweed*).

Space Invaders makes reference to Francis Alÿs' (1995) *The Green Line*: a path that the artist walked with a leaking paint-can along the fragile and deregulated border of the Palestinian territory. In both iterations of *Space Invaders*, I responded to local narratives associated with displacement, colonisation, and the environment in ways that Alÿs also does. As an iterative work, it also evolved, substituting new objects for the tumbleweed, and making new responses to ecological and cultural concerns specific to each new landscape, time, or event. This kind of site-specificity is not new in art or performance, but it is another feature of the practice that remains intrinsic to the basic tenets of nomadism being presented. At 30Upstairs Gallery the road-worker's uniform was used to authorise a process that was unsanctioned by the City Council, or any other authority except my own. This revealed similar tensions to those that were explored at Stanford University, where the informal occupancy of public space is highly regulated, associated with lower status, gypsy, or squatting practices; unless "authorised" by the use of high-vis vests and hardhats.



Fig 16: Alÿs, Francis (1995) *The Green Line*.

Alÿs' work often involves similar unauthorised or clandestine actions performed to examine or reveal invisible boundaries, structures, or operations within a cultural space / state. The use of drawing and painting also feature in Alÿs' own practice as a tool to understand the work better, to rehearse or prepare critical details, and to create artefacts or residue of the work when it is gone²³. This performance of drawing is important to consider, since it functions as a kind of juxtaposition between an action performed in solitude and the public encounters of the work on the street. This proximity between a private experience and its public surface recurs often in this thesis, and hints at the ascetic qualities of nomadism, and the scholarly reflective nature of each performance or action in addition to its more public, presentational motives. However, despite these connections with Alÿs' work, the pelagic practice is distinct for its broader movement across disciplines, going beyond Alÿs' migration

²³ Similar also to Antony Gormley's drawings, working on set designs for dance with Akram Khan and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui as well as in his own work.

from architecture to performance, video, and drawing to encompass a wider ambit of collaborative, curatorial, and theatrical processes and art forms.

The nomad is described by Caren Kaplan as “one who can track a path through a seemingly illogical space without succumbing to nation-state and/or bourgeois mastery and organisation” (*Questions on Travel*, 1996, 66). As a chameleonic, indistinct persona, the nomad has been claimed by many artists, theorists, and forms of literature. They are Baudrillard’s travellers of ‘Astral America’, TE Lawrence’s Arabians, Braidotti’s new citizens of the de-territorialised EU, or Bruce Chatwin’s Bedouin, Aborigines, and Tartars. However, Kaplan’s text provides a less culturally specific definition, generally defining nomadism by its transient relationship with the environment and not fixating upon a particular subset or geographic bias. Literally taken, Kaplan’s ‘seemingly illogical space’ is the sea, the desert, the steppes, or any unmarked, unclaimed territory or terrain – the *terra nullius* of colonial Australia, the wildernesses of Africa, Asia, and South America, or the still estranged surfaces and depths of the world’s oceans. To many, these spaces may seem empty, intractable, and even terrifying. But these are only *seemingly* illogical landscapes that are actually comforting and logical spaces to the eyes of those who know them and traverse them²⁴. Their ‘illogical’ nature is a matter of cultural outlook, and a fabrication of what Deleuze and Guattari or Bruce Chatwin would call the prevalence of ‘territorial’ or ‘sedentary’ paradigms that are shaped in pastoral, sylvan, or coastal terrains.

Kaplan’s ‘seemingly illogical space’ may also be found in the arts – particularly in those that break from the frame, gallery, and stage; or that move across disciplinary boundaries or practices. On this matter, a reader of Theatre Studies may recall Peter Brook’s famous quote on ‘the empty space’ and also refer to his *Conference of the Birds* tour of North Africa in the 1970s. Much has been discussed about Brook’s practice in my earlier texts *Terra Nullius* (2013) and *Inside the Black Margin* (2012), so perhaps it is enough to say that his statement “I can take an empty space and call it a bare stage” (*The Empty Space*, 1968, 11) was more of a directorial/colonial action, and had little to do with site, scenography, or nomadic performance. By contrast, a nomadic creative practice moves through architectures, across disciplinary boundaries, contexts, and ways of working with precise navigation and purpose – reading and relating to the specifics of each new environment that is traversed in order to assemble a ‘fuzzy aggregate’ of connections, in the style of Deleuze and Guattari’s *nomos*. As discussed in the Literature Review (Chapter 02), much has been said and written about nomadism recently in academic circles, travel blogs, and mainstream journalism. This has given rise to new terms such as Tsugio Makimoto and David Manners’ ‘digital nomadism’ and ‘working nomads’, which refers to those who make their living from anywhere in the world, using the internet to connect with centralized locations of commerce²⁵. It is a popular thing to call oneself a nomad. Curriculum vitae, biographies, online dating profiles, and introductions will often make claims to nomadism, because it paints the subject as a cosmopolitan, culturally versatile, fluent, sophisticated, and adventurous ‘citizen of the world’ for whom no border is insurmountable, no journey too far. The arts abound with this fashionable nomadism too. Kaplan describes a Euro-American class of middle-class expatriates, adopting “the attributes of exile as an ideology of artistic production” (1996, 28). This form of artistic-tourism, and the model of an “artist in exile that is never at home, always existentially alone” (ibid, 28) echoes with the same romanticism from earlier epochs: Byron, Shelley, Lawrence, Hemingway and other ex-pat artists and authors. This

²⁴ See Guardian article: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/22/indigenous-australians-know-were-the-oldest-living-culture-its-in-our-dreamtime?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other

²⁵ The online resource nomadlist.com provides digital nomads with information about living and working remotely from cities around the world: the average weekly cost for an AirBNB apartment, the quality of internet, how much a Coke costs, etc.

phenomenon is only one illustration of architect Robert Kronenburg's (2007) description of how "social and economic changes are forcing, or at least encouraging, a new form of nomadic existence based on global markets, the world wide web, and cheap, fast transportation" (*Flexible: Architecture that Responds to Change*, 10) This thesis posits that nomadism has become appropriated and misshapen by overuse use in this cosmopolitan neo-liberal environment: where populations are travelling more than ever before, and where the very act of travel has become controlled and territorialized by privileged classes, through the regulation of mobility, and of migrant or refugee populations.



Fig 17: Sestini, Massimo (2014) Italian Navy flying above boat load of asylum seekers travelling from North Africa.

The regulation of mobility is most apparent in the use of two terms: 'ex-patriots' and 'immigrants'. These contrasting labels for displaced persons reflect just how 'class oriented' and commodified travel has become, illustrating mobility theorist Tim Cresswell's (2012) concepts of the 'kinetic elite, and the 'kinetic underclass'. Across the world, these two kinds of travellers share beaches, main-streets, and ocean crossings: the immigrants selling faux Luis Vuitton bags amongst the sunbathers of Sardegna, Lanzarotti, Miami, and Falaraki; the pleasure crafts of holiday-makers and millionaires that share seas with barely floating rafts and flotillas of refugees; the 'south of the border' weekends in Tijuana and Rosarito Beach passing Mexicans scurrying through the desert to get into Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, or California. In Kaplan's three modes of displacement, the state of exile connotes a lack of choice, tourism 'celebrates choice', while the nomad is both and neither: exiled from birth, afoot as a way of life, and yet following the landscape, and their journey in a speculative fashion. By contrast with the models of exile and tourism, the authentic nomad collaborates, initiates, and migrates between practices, contexts, and modes in order to survive. The nomad has no single, fixed sense of home, and is just as comfortable with the unknown as they are with consulting local knowledge and working with others. They are not just lone geographic navigators of landscapes, but are mobile across disciplinary fields and

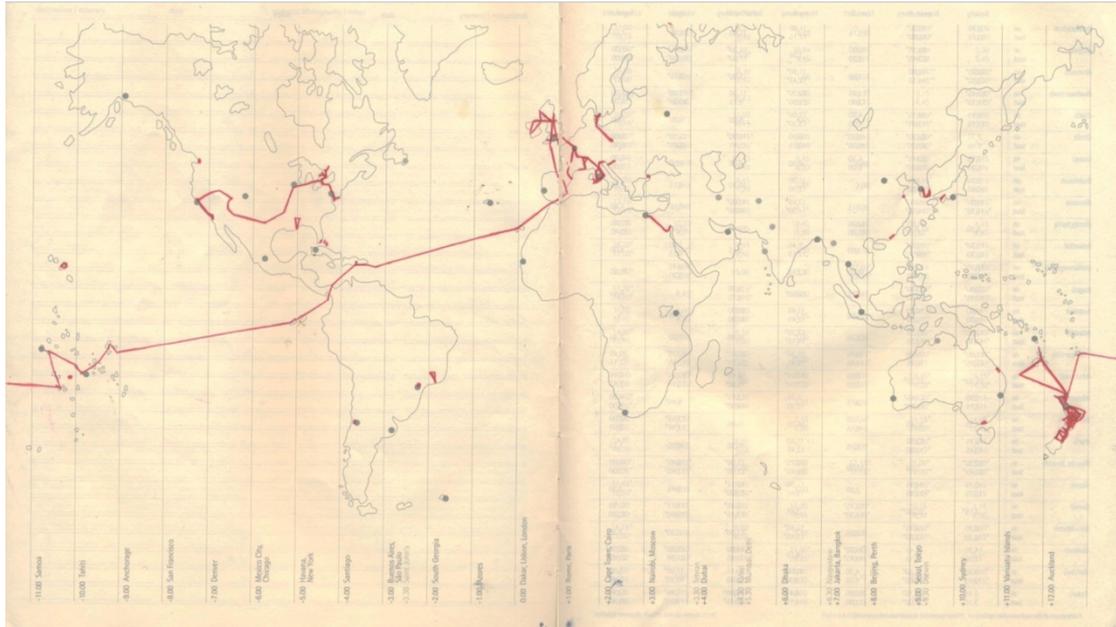


Fig 18: A map of everywhere I have been at ground level, capturing two eras of travel: the age of travel by ship, rail, and road; and now the schizophrenic jumping from location to location by airline transport, compressing time-zones.

communities, engaging new vantage points, and working across various modalities. By presenting a theory for a ‘pelagic’ practice, this thesis avoids advocating for a return to any perceived, romanticised, or historical model of nomadism; with all its risks of misunderstanding, appropriation, and problematisation by the position of privilege that the artist occupies. Instead it offers an alternate position: a pelagic ‘state’ or ‘statelessness’, that sidesteps the contradictions and frictions around ownership and definition of the term ‘nomadic’. Having established this position it does not eschew the artist’s responsibility for issues of migrancy and displacement either, but rather allows for a positioning of that responsibility within the same fluid and volatile conditions that are affecting those with less rights and privilege. By travelling there is a risk of falling into the same trap as other members of Kaplan’s ‘kinetic elite’. However, works demonstrate an engaged and recurrent relationship with local communities in each place: the Barkandji people of Culpra for *Night Walk* (Appendix 12) and the locals of Long Island for *many breaths* (Appendix 11). When work has been taken on overseas like *SLEEP/WAKE* (Appendix 09), then a new model for presentation has examined ways that work can be shared internationally (see Appendix 08 New Zealand New Performance Festival). What characterises each of these examples is a responsibility towards issues of mobility that is not just expressed in the conceptual underpinnings of each work, but is expressed through methods and practical solutions that feature in project.

Boundaries or obstacles arise often. However, examples presented in this thesis will prove that there is productivity to be found through impedence and adversity that causes the creative process to evolve. This is evidenced already in the adjustments made to the *Space Invaders* work that brings is across geographic boundaries from the location of its first iteration to engage with the specifics of a new site in Wellington. In another example, the formation of a collective production ethos for the NZ New Performance Festival emerged from the challenge of touring just one show (*SLEEP/WAKE*). Instead, seven other works were packed into the same touring plan, distributing the onus across these projects and the twenty-two practitioners who became involved. Further on, works like *Night Walk* and *Many Breaths* will be discussed – where environmental and cultural factors which may be

perceived as challenges are in fact important conditions that the works seek out with each new iteration. In this context, the value of dialogue with localised knowledge and contributors becomes a critical factor in determining the shape of the works. More will be discussed on this in Chapter 5.

In philosophy and cultural theory Braidotti adopted nomadism for her own brand of European trans-nationalism, employing the same Euro-centric models as her mentor Gilles Deleuze. In this way, the nomad again becomes a romanticized, appropriated figure, much like that of the noble savage. But it is a culture with no land to make a stand on. Nor is there an indigenous nomadic voice to make claims for their practice. Nomads slip away, or they were already absent. To extend on my previous writing in this area (*Terra Nullius: the nomad and the empty space*, 2013) nomadism itself is an unclaimed territory, and therefore an easy and enticing territory for neo-liberal, privileged modernists. Aided by technological revolutions, virtual reality, and the world wide web, the 'armchair nomadism' described by Braidotti and Flusser is another popular contemporary expression of nomadic tendencies – in this case turning the home space inside out, where it “should be conceived of no longer as an artificial cave but rather as a bending in the field of interpersonal relations” (Vilém Flusser, 1994, *The Freedom of the Migrant*, 50). However, this synthetic nomadism misses the encounter between a live body and the haptic, socially complex environment of lived time and space. Moreover, when physical travelling is involved these days, it is often the "schizophrenic" nomadism that Deleuze and Guattari describe, where we fly from airport to airport, from city to city, when before steamships and railways were the primary mode of travel. Now the globe is smaller and time zones are compressed, making our age even more this 'age of juxtaposition, of the side-by-side, the near and far' that Foucault described fifty years ago in *Of Other Spaces* (1967). This synthetic, schizophrenic approach to travel knows Paris and knows New York, but it does not know the space in-between, it doesn't know the journey, or the value of the journey as a creative process or output.

Conventional nomadic practices have little to do with the schizophrenic preoccupations of contemporary travel, which jumps from one location to another with a short attention span, never really understanding that new location. For as Deleuze and Guattari say, the points on a nomadic trajectory are subordinated to the paths in between, “the nomad goes from point to point only as a consequence and as a factual necessity” (1980, 443). By contrast, our modern popular nomadism is touristically preoccupied, because it does not embrace the journey as a gradual evolution of sensations, languages, cultures, landscapes: from one terrain to another. This evolution is perhaps described by Castellucci's "organism on the run", but without the arbitrary distribution that characterised *Tragedia Endogonia*. Neither does it collect passport stamps like Rikrit Tiravanija's *Untitled 2008–2011 (the map of the land of feeling)*. It is more partial to the kind of journey that Doug Aitken's train made across the USA in *Station to Station* (2013) or Alex Hartley's work with Situations on the (2012) project *Nowhere Island*. The former traversed the landscape at ground level, linking various localities with a sequence of concert/events and transmissions from the train between stops. The latter 'removed' an Arctic Island from its location onto a large seaworthy barge, then proceeded to tour it around the British Isles to recruit a nation of global citizens. Rather than working with the relatively instantaneous speed of air travel and modern telecommunications, these works moved through the landscape on nomadic journeys, both accumulating and losing something as they went, but always affirming a sense of the local, and developing linkages between sites through the unbroken nature of their journeys.

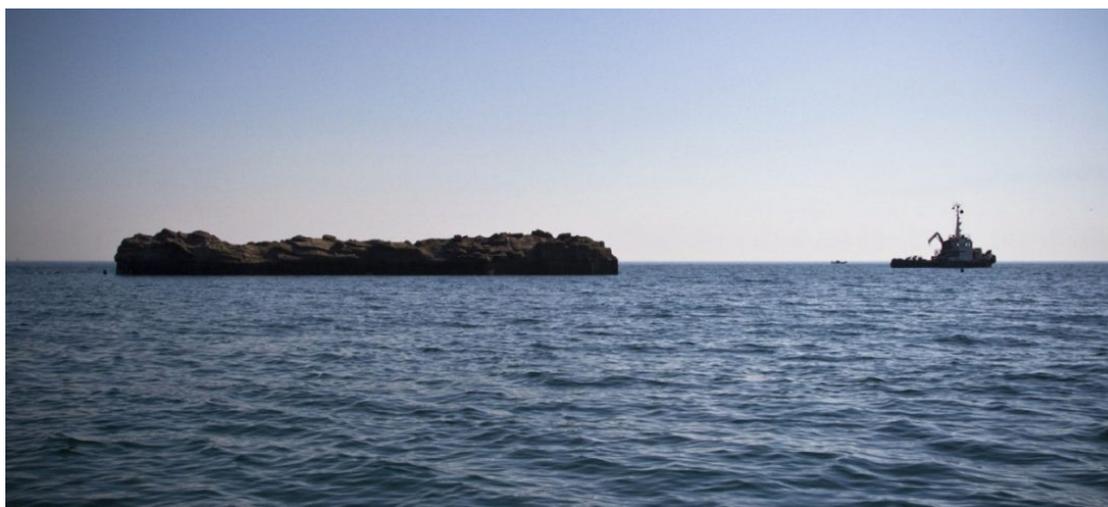


Fig 19: Hartley, Alex (2012) *Nowhere Island*. An island revealed by melting glaciers was excavated and rebuilt on a barge that was towed around the British Isles. At the end of the journey the island was broken up and distributed amongst the 23,003 people from 135 countries who had signed up as citizens of Nowhere Island.

As an answer to these concerns, this research examines the *tread* as opposed to the leap: celebrating walking, pace, the path, the labour of drawing, and the journey at ground level or across the sea as a way of passage. Thus, the foot that marks the ground is also marked by it. celebrating the haptic, embodied experience of live performance and spectatorship. In Deleuze and Guattari's model, it seems that schizophrenic thought jumps from one idea to the other without connections, and without a clear acknowledgement of context. Thus, we may also consider this with relation to creative practice. Instead of being a 'teleporter' or 'jumper', the creative thinker or creative artist does not see (disciplinary, geographic, architectural, conceptual) boundaries as insurmountable. They have discipline, but they are not disciplined. In this way, a creative thinker can cross boundaries and appear to walk through walls. To an exclusively logical or rational perspective, it looks like they are jumping around, when in fact they are following a path that is unfamiliar or not instantly recognisable. This is the essence of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as a 'nomadic space' and a 'smooth' space or movement that passes through striated or subdivided territory.

The issue of trespass follows the nomad wherever they go, and it is entwined with contemporary concerns about the ingress of refugees, and what Zygmunt Bauman refers to as 'migration panic'. These concerns became a part of the public action in the *Space Invaders* series and later works like *Night Walk* or *Many Breaths*. A common discussion that arose in preparation for *Deep Anatomy* (Appendix 10) was the question of the appropriation or ownership of the Blue Hole site for the Vertical Blue competition, and the relationship between free-diving athletes and local Bahamians. These concerns focused around exploitation, a possible colonisation of the Blue Hole space by divers, and a neglect of indigenous cultures by what is perceived as a First-World indulgence: the 'extreme sport'. My response to this discussion is to offer models of how artists and athletes may employ nomadic principles to become vital parts of a 'mobile ecology' for places like Long Island. Often marginalised by sedentary categories, nomadism has much to contribute to the notion of 'the indigenous'. In the case of Long Island this is problematised by the erasure of the native Lucayan people of The Bahamas by the first wave of European settlers arriving in the New World²⁶. Even in places where this is not the case, nomadic culture complexifies notions

²⁶ Long Island (Yuma to its indigenous people) was the place that Christopher Columbus first set foot on land after crossing the Atlantic Ocean in 1492. He renamed it Fernandina, and from that moment it became the Ground Zero for Europe's conquering

of indigeneity. It challenges indigenous frameworks that would exclusively tie a certain people to a specific landscape; establishing a fixed sense of the local, envisaging the native as a kind of terrestrial bondsman or serf. On this matter Albert Wendt is adamant that "There are no *true interpreters* or *sacred guardians* of any culture" (*Towards a New Oceania*, 1976, 54). He goes on to encourage a multi-cultural approach to nationalism in *The Pacific*: one that seems more liquid, and open to concept of mobile populations further promoted by Hau'ofa.

The notion of a 'mobile ecology' created by travelling artists and athletes that was posited earlier is supported by examples in the animal kingdom, where migrating species are a natural part of local and global ecologies. The bar-tailed godwit is called the 'kuaka' in New Zealand, and in China 'hei wei yu'. Individual birds, like many ocean-going species (whales, sharks, seals) may connect continents with their itineraries, and will be known in many locales. Like these animals, the nomad could be considered indigenous to a fluid, mobile state, and becomes native to a number of terrains rather than specific places. In a turn of events that helps validate these ideas, local Bahamians have turned to the free-diving community for assistance and guidance on water safety education and marine conservation, allowing the freediver to become Gayatri Spivak's 'local informant', but in a foreign land. On another level, economic level, the freediving community has brought a lot of revenue to the island. Thus, partnered with the freediver's almost unanimous concerns for people and the environment, their contribution to the ecology of the place has exceeded tourism and has provided important ongoing outcomes for the local community.

In this way, the thesis defines nomadism as a committed, rigorous practice of engagement with the environment that the travelling subject finds themselves in. Like the freedivers, one may consider the French yachtsman Bernard Moitessier a valuable exemplar in this regard. Born in Indochina to a French Family, his sense of homeland is complicated. He gravitated towards sailing and almost won the first Golden Globe racing against Donald Crowhurst, whose story is also well known. Along the way he discovered a deep affinity with the ocean, and at the point of almost certainly winning, he abandoned the race, sailing his second time around Cape Horn and returning to Polynesia. At the time, he wrote: "I no longer know how far I have got, except that we long ago left the borders of too much behind" (*The Long Way*, 1995). Moitessier's practice as a committed sailor and pelagic nomad is significant to this study. It is also interesting to consider how Moitessier's cultural claim on the ocean is simultaneously tenuous and firm. He has no sovereignty over any of the waters that he has called home: not the South China Sea where he was born, nor the North Atlantic and Mediterranean of his family roots, nor the South Pacific where he made his home. And yet, as a consummate sailor with deep relationships in each of these places, he is also more at home there than anyone else may be.

of the Americas, for the subjugation and extinction of native cultures, landscapes, and continents for the building of European empires. There are no Lucayans left on Long Island. The people who live there now are descended from the Spanish pioneers (and possibly their congress with the Lucayans in some small proportion), but mainly come from successive waves of British, American, Greek, and Haitian settlers or immigrants. So in this sense there is no native, and no local, although some families living there can trace their lineage back a few centuries, and certainly *belong* there, have custodianship, and inalienable rights to the space.



Fig 20: Bernard Moitessier aboard his boat 'Joshua' at sea.

Summating this section, it is possible to describe the nomad in this research as a figure that challenges popular concepts of belonging, resists Eurocentric interests of contemporary nomadic theory, and resists definitions of nomadism produced by “global markets, the world wide web, and cheap, fast transportation” (Kronenburg, 10). Instead I offer the notion of the nomad as a navigator of ‘seemingly illogical spaces’, a figure that is indigenous to the very act of movement, a walker, and traveller through terrains at ground level (rather than over them), traversing invisible poetic, cultural, or disciplinary boundaries as much as geographic and geopolitical borders. This nomad is aware of their privilege of mobility and are attuned to the environmental, social, and political specifics of the places they are travelling through or arriving in. A caveat is also necessary: considering that many cultures which may be defined as nomadic do not necessarily cover large territories, often travel on routine migratory routes, and do not eschew concepts of home or belonging entirely. This is manifested in the movement of Aboriginal people around the Murray River Basin: occupying higher ground during flooded periods, then moving closer to the river during drier spells. Aboriginal peoples inhabit the land using the more temporary and informal structures of the fireplace, the humpy, or defining space by using the gathering of bodies in a circle. But all the same, a map of languages and Aboriginal peoples of Australia proves that there were clear ideas of territory, boundary, and belonging within this landscape. This discovery of migratory habits or routines in ostensibly nomadic peoples around the globe challenges the research to look more closely at what nomadism is, suggesting that earlier stages of the research may have misinterpreted nomadism. It also points to the need for new terms that may express the intentions of this thesis, pursuing the mobility and fluidity that it seeks through the use of ‘pelagic’ terminology instead.



04 BLACK LUNG

on the aesthetics of a pelagic practice

Following the review of literature and the last chapter's outline for a new direction in nomadic creative practice, I will now address the poetics and aesthetics that have emerged in the formation of this pelagic practice: not only with regards to the creative works themselves, but also in order to consider the poetic devices that are used in this document.

The use of poetics in this thesis falls into two categories. First, as a device within the text of the exegesis, to articulate previously un-named concepts or qualities, using poetics where there is a lack of existing terminology, canon, or single methodology, or where landed terrestrial etymologies may divert the intention of the writing. Instead, the language of oceanic cultures and practices are used, often to provide poetic analogy and metaphor for the practices and methodologies being discussed. The second way that poetics is used occurs within the work itself, whereby imagery, themes, metaphors will travel through various works. Thus, poetic connections occur between diverse projects and modes of operation that give shape to the definition of a 'fluid poetics' akin to Barthes' notion of metonymy, best described in his epilogue to George Batailles' (1928) *Story of the Eye*

It is useful to reiterate that this thesis builds upon an aesthetic practice already articulated in my Master's thesis: *1:1 (Manifestoes for a Theatre of Matter)* and several articles on performance, scenography, and design. These texts have already established aesthetic principles that this practice follows: such as an interest in a base materiality (the tumbleweed, the black plastic sphere...) wrapped with layers of cultural association and poetic implication, whilst entangling the audience/viewer physically, socially, and conceptually within the work.

There are also aesthetic qualities to the documentation and re-presentation of the work to consider. On this matter, it is necessary to acknowledge the role that photography, video, and writing all play in creating 'secondary experiences' for each performance that they give account of. This documentation is secondary in the sense that each work resists the desire for a lasting object (monumentalism), and instead explores a preference for the ephemeral, ambiguous, and unboundaried in constructing scenarios, such as those created with *Space Invaders* in the last chapter. What we are left with are remainders from the performances such as the images presented in this document or the videos, drawing, and installation, and 'extracts' presented in the accompanying exhibition. These various traces play a role in re-performing the works within this exegetic discourse that always aspire to preserve a notion of the performance itself as the primary artefact, an artefact that is already lost in its making, and only *described* by the media that follow. Drawings (such as drawing of the tumbleweed) also play a role in this dynamic, producing an artefact that either re-enacts qualities or labours in the work, or performs and anticipates works yet to come as a prospective, aspirational device; carrying the provisional nature of what a work could be or might have become long after the event has passed. Gathered together, these various processes of 'annotation' (drawing, writing, photography, and video) create an overview of the work that resists any empirical description of a work, instead seeking a subjective account akin to geographer Paul Carter's notion of 'Dark Writing': a form of documentation

Fig 21: Trubridge, Sam (2014) Performance design for *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever* by The PlayGround Collective. Photo: Rosie Remmerswaal.

that is always evaded by a sense of the live, the living, and the temporal qualities of the subject.

At times photographs, videos, or drawings have an aesthetic quality to them that may seem to elevate or romanticise the subject, such as those images shown in this thesis of works like *Many Breaths*, *Night Walk*, *SLEEP/WAKE*, and (in this chapter) the design for *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever* (Appendix 02). Affective imagery like this is often a product of (a) the scenographic considerations and placement of the work in the environment, and (b) my attempt to draw attention to these same considerations after/before the fact using documentation. There is also a desire to appeal to the eye of the viewer so that they can more easily recognise poetic inferences in the work, or actively look for them because they are aesthetically invested. At other times (especially with video) I may use a more provisional, rough aesthetic, in order to resist scenic or spectacular distractions, and remind the viewer of the unreliable nature of the documentation. The key reason for this is that viewers can easily misconstrue the experience of a video and assume they have had an experience which is equivalent to the performance itself. This is seldom the case with photography and drawings, where the stillness of the image serves as a constant reminder of temporal aspects that are missing from the documentation. Of further note is the exhibition that accompanies this written exegesis. By electing to present physical artefacts from my body of work (such as drawings, videos, and objects) in a spatially considered presentation I hope to underscore the iterative and unfixed nature of the practice. By presenting my work in this third platform (first in the original performances, and secondly in this exegesis) the intention was to expose the ambiguous, fluid, and evolving character of the work is made clear, whereby the material qualities of each piece, and their arrangement in relation to one another in the gallery, helps to unsettle the linear, two-dimensional nature of this printed/digital document. Text describes the exhibition as a collection of 'extracts' of performance works and projects conducted in spaces of growth, change, reflux, and liquidity that attempts to capture the fleeting quality of working with nomadic, liquid, and evasive media. These collected works and 'extracts' examine the difficulty of reinvoking the original performances, but also capture various planned and unplanned failures that are intrinsic to these works: their failure to remain, their failure to last, their failure to function as planned, or the inevitable failure of an unsustainable action repeated in unforgiving environments.

A work's poetic properties are always amorphous: creating an outline that can only be generally defined because they are subjective, changeable, and suggestive. This is best described in a letter between Polish artists Bruno Schulz and Stanislaw Witkiewicz: "There is no such thing as a dead object, a hard-edged object, an object with strict limits. Everything flows beyond its boundaries, as if trying to break free of them at the earliest opportunity" (Miklaszewski, 2002, 37). In this chapter, the concept of a mobile and fluid poetics is examined, distilled in the image of the black plastic sphere that was first used in a stage show at Bats Theatre, which then produced *Night Walk* (Appendix 12), a central work for this thesis. It is an image that evolved from the rolling soft-edged shape of the tumbleweed in *Space Invaders* - moving toward other connected shapes and symbols. The black sphere is a shape of limitless potential. Like the black hole, it sucks things towards it, attracting meaning, and absorbing associations. Like the dark side of the moon it contains things not yet known or discovered.

This inflated shape evolved into an object that became a spatial environment: an enclosed interior for the walking artist to occupy as well as a discreet object to be viewed from outside. Constructed from household rubbish bags, the thin tissue or membrane of the plastic was a surface upon which various industrious actions and poetic inferences become conflated through the works that follow: the tread of the foot, the cartographer's pen, the

swelling of an infected organ, or cycles of waste disposal and retrieval. Inflated into a spherical form, this sculptural gesture is a globe: that three-dimensional map which encapsulates the oldest notions of neo-liberalism, imperialism, and European primacy²⁷. Its material is as universal as this shape is, constructed from the cheapest packaging material possible: one that is designed to carry the excesses, wastes, and unwanted rubbish of our globalised economy.

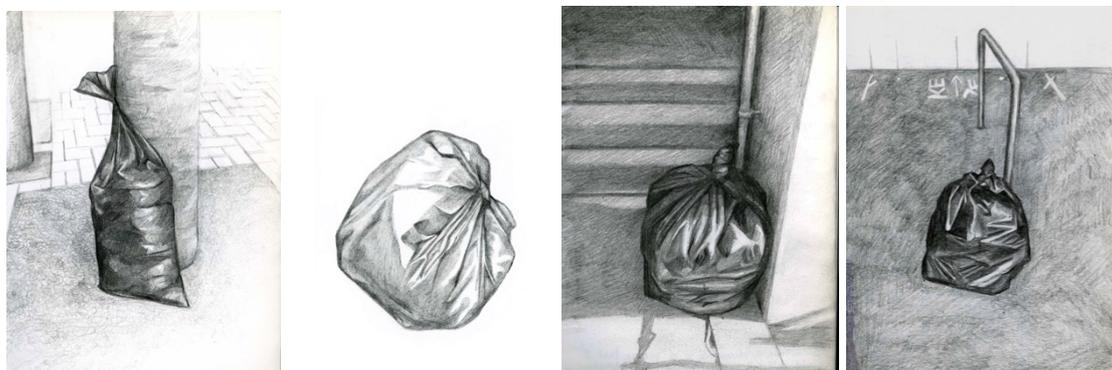


Fig 22: Trubridge, Sam (2014) *All Your Wants*. Pencil studies for performance design of *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever*.

The interest in this base material began while working on the performance design for the theatre show *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever* in 2014 (Appendix 02), prompted by scriptwriter Eli Kent's stage direction for 'a black mass' that consumes the protagonist, the other characters, and then the entire stage. Something that initially drew me to it was the semiotic function that the black plastic rubbish bag plays in our civic ablutions: creating an invisibility akin to that made by the black curtains of our theatre spaces. It is an object and a material that hides its contents from us, encouraging a sense of calm, organized, and uniform endlessness: either the dark empty void that Edward Gordon Craig described when he conceived the black box theatre (Roose-Evans, 1970, 40), or the myth of endless consumption promoted by the invisibility of our waste. This black plastic has a materiality that gives our waste anonymity and invisibility as it waits on the city streets, waiting to be whipped away to rubbish dumps in the backstage spaces of our landfills and rubbish tips. Thus, the black theatre curtain and the black plastic bag are both artefacts of disguise, in spaces of enhanced hyper-visibility. As stated in *Inside the Black Margin* (ADS Journal 2012) and *In Visibility* (Appendix 03) this soft architecture of the theatre curtain promotes a "notional invisibility" or "visible invisibility" – a quality that takes on a political resonance within the discussion of nomadism and nomadic practice²⁸. In this way, the black rubbish bag brings theatricality together with art-object, to investigate representation, politics, and environmental concerns.

²⁷ See discussion in the following chapter on Sloterdijk's texts *Spheres* (1998-2004).

²⁸ Nomadic cultures are all but invisible, through their delegation to precincts on the margins of cities and society: from the Gypsies of Europe, the Bedouin of the Middle East, and the Aboriginals in Australia. This invisibility is a device that helps deal with the unstable, or undefinable qualities of their culture. The 'big mobility' was the original term that became shortened to 'the mob' in early American vernacular, referring to the tide of immigrants that came in to cities like New York. These days the term is claimed by the Aboriginal people to describe their extended family or circle of friends and colleagues. However, the status quo still maintains a suspicion of, and a tolerant repression of these qualities of mobility and unfixity.



Fig 23: Trubridge, Sam (2014) Performance design for *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever* by The PlayGround Collective. Photo: Rosie Remmerswaal.

The symbol of the black sphere or circle rolls through many works in this thesis: creating a poetic trajectory, a mobile aesthetic, or transfer of symbols. It is there in the drawing of the tumbleweed, the performance work *Space Invaders*, the design for *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever*, continuing into works like *Night Walk* that will be discussed in the next chapter. Even *The Performance Arcade* (Appendix 07) is implicated: conceived as an evolving curatorial framework, a kind of rolling, tumbling organism that accumulates themes, ideas, connections, and new programmes in its overall shape year by year. The temptation is to use the term ‘migratory aesthetics’ for this quality, as Mieke Bal has done. Citing Bal and writing about *Night Walk* (Appendix 12) for the ‘Performing Mobilities’ catalogue (2015) Sven Mehzoud says “*Night Walk* performs this mobility and formational condition [migratory aesthetics] through the act of traversing ground, of traversing country. The sphere and artist, joined in tandem, intrude into the site as a foreign body’ (Mick Douglas ed. *Performing Mobilities*, 89). However, for this thesis I will focus on other terminologies, since migratory aesthetics are the product of diaspora, and of the specific experience of exile that has been discussed earlier. The migrant is not nomadic or pelagic. Instead, they move from one coastline to another, from homeland to new world. The aesthetics discussed by Mieke Bal and others are the product of displacement, difference, and the nostalgia for home. By contrast, this practice examines unboundaried conditions, seeking out displacement again and again whenever interpretation becomes too comfortable. It is always on the move. It is about the move. So, whilst there is evidence of the migratory aesthetic in this work, it must be considered as an effect of the transient, and transgressive nature of the work and not its exclusive intention or purpose.

Following from this, the migration of poetic images and ideas through diverse terrains and landscapes (as well as within works themselves) could be better described as ‘metonymy’: a state of unfixed-ness, instability, or nomadic poetics. Roland Barthes analysed Bataille’s *Story of the Eye* (1928) in this way; in *On Sea/At Sea* Clara Berger describes metonymy in

relation to a liquid, feminine dramaturgy; and I have also written extensively on the use of metonymy in theatre in *1:1 Manifestos for A Theatre of Matter* (2006). Barthes' description of metonymy as "that of a migration, the cycle of avatars it passes through, far removed from its original being, down the path of a particular imagination that distorts it but never drops it" (Bataille, 119) aligns well with my work, describing a metaphor in constant motion. Meanings and possible worlds made by a metonymic symbol, scene, or sign in this pelagic practice are constantly in flux. Like the surface of the water, this poetic quality responds to environmental conditions, intervening forces, and the angle or viewpoint of the viewer. Thus, the architecture of La MaMa Theatre responded to the intrusion of the black plastic organ in *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever* in 2015 differently from how it did at Bats Theatre in Wellington in 2014, Q Theatre in Auckland 2015, or the Vault in London in 2016. Other works in this thesis that are walked through various landscapes experience this effect as well, but often more radically, with various physical, perceptual, symbolic, and cultural imprints being made on a receptive poetic device, structure, or material. It seems that the journey of a metaphor is never truly done, but continues to shift, transform, and realign itself with various contexts. So, the inflating lung of black plastic has all the intriguing, enticing, familiar traits of a powerful image, but retains an evasive quality that the metaphor has when it is not overstated or overdone: never quite unwrapping or revealing its intentions completely. Thus, the metonymic quality is always in a state of interpretation, of constant unfolding (like the layers of an onion, or Polish director/artist Tadeusz Kantor's *embellage*), with the audience/viewer continuously reading from changing or changeable signs in order to navigate across an ocean of signs.

The process of navigation (as a reading of subtle signs woven into empirical mathematical processes) provides fitting analogies for this process of creating and interpreting poetic meaning. Following a course at sea we will search for the sun through the clouds and observe patterns in the waves, orientating ourselves from bearings that are always in motion: such as reading the cast of sunlight on the water, or 'aramoana' as Māori call it. Translated, the word means 'path to/of the sea': describing that scattering of light that leads across the waves towards the rising or setting sun. When you are out of sight of land, this sign is truly the sea's only landmark: one of the few constants in a place of endless change. And yet this sign is also not fixed. If you follow it too long in the morning then the width of the path will grow as the sun rises in the sky, until the reflected light covers the whole ocean. And, unless you are on (or near to) the equator, then the sun will curve to the left or right as it rises, thus moving the path's bearing north or south. For this reason, oceanic navigation needs to be mobile and flexible: adjusting with the movement of the vessel, in negotiation with other signs and motions, and in constant dialogue with environmental knowledge. Using these same principles of orientation and navigation, each work in this thesis contains a cosmology of signs, providing reference points and systems of orientation within a shifting poetic trajectory or metonymic chain.

To most artists the notion of metonymy may not be radical or new. But it is an important concept to discuss in relation to nomadism and pelagism, because it leads to an understanding of the poetic and aesthetic processes that define the practice. In all examples, the final reading of the work (the 'poetic destination') remains partly concealed. Like an island just beyond the horizon it is not visible to the naked eye. Instead it is indicated by a range of ephemeral signs and temporal conditions²⁹. To the seafarer, the 'island' represents a fixed location that marks the completion of a journey, a place where ropes are coiled and sails are stowed. The island is land-within-the-ocean, solid within the liquid, an

²⁹ Such as particular waves and current formations, sea bird movements, the light reflected on the bottoms of clouds, the 'aramoana' mentioned earlier, flotsam, kinds of wind, etc.

answer, a destination, and a solution. However, a nomadic poetics, like a nomadic practice, does not stop at the island, although it may linger there. Instead the journey will move to other islands and archipelagos of meanings. In this way, metaphors move, evolve, and develop – pausing at locations of resonance before moving on. As Deleuze and Guattari have noted, more important to the nomad than the island/node, is the space between: the Wā/Vā space of Pacific languages, the state of being afloat within a terrain, unfixed, and always moving towards some moment of realization or harbor that we must eventually depart³⁰. Here an Oceanic poetics needs to be acknowledged, already evident in the Māori terminology used above, and the Pacific concept of Wā/Vā alluded to in earlier chapters. As a culture and a language made in the sea I have found a rich lexicon here, by contrast with the limitations of English words that are often connected with a pastoral, terrestrial experiences.

The liquidity that pervades this practice makes poetic vessels of the work, from the boxlike set of *Sleep/Wake*, to the inflated plastic sphere, the repurposed shipping container, the tumbleweed, and the nose-cone of a salvaged rocket. Each space, and each object becomes an amorphous carrier for its own metonymic associations that continues to shift and change like Castellucci's 'organism on the run' or Barthes' description of a 'cycle of avatars' that both descriptions that evoke a cellular, evolving nature. As such, these vessels carry new matter across boundaries or media: co-opting artefacts of global sea-freight into curatorial narratives in *The Performance Arcade*; bringing a hemisphere of breath to a liquid space devoid of air (in *Many Breaths*); or creating a globe of liquid meaning within a dry plain (in *Night Walk*).

Within the controlled space of the theatre this approach engineers similar transgressions: producing a rupture of materiality, a challenge to 'the real' within the genteel bourgeois space of theatrical production. Much like Castellucci's use of children, animals, machines, and staged-accidents; these poetic devices create moments of surprise, or turn a non-acting, non-performing eye back upon the audience: such as the baby placed on stage in *BR.#03 Bruxelles* or the three Mercedes-Benz cars that fall from the stage ceiling in *P.#06 Paris*. In *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever*, the inflating plastic lung is a simple intervention into the architecture of the theatre, using a low status material that spills out of a backstage door and fills the stage. Like the Castellucci's cars it is a practical device, a function or operation, but also a spectacle for its scale and impending threat upon the 'safe space' of the auditorium. Despite their simplicity, these moments are always politically charged events in the disciplined space of the theatre, precisely because of the shock, danger, and irreversible nature of this action, which turns an accident into an intervention and a poetic explosion. It creates a disruption in seeing, and a disruption of the spectator's experience that is no less powerful when it becomes the gentler act of placing a baby on stage, whose pensive silence regards us with its gaze, or bursts into laughter at us: the audience.

Phenomenology was a popular term in theatre and performance studies ten years ago when these works were being seen around the globe. Restaging *SLEEP/WAKE* in New York in 2015 (Appendix 09) brought me back to this period. Six years since its last season, and for its first season outside of New Zealand, the work's key interests were exposed to a new cultural context and to the new concepts and theories taking shape in this PhD. This season was also

³⁰ "To move in such landscape was survival: to stay in the same place suicide" (Bruce Chatwin, *Songlines*, 1987, 54). Chatwin's analysis of Aboriginal and North African nomadic cultures provides additional analogies from a terrestrial environment, and solutions for issues of navigation, survival: "To survive at all, the desert dweller – Tuareg or Aboriginal – must develop a prodigious sense of orientation. He must forever be naming, sifting, comparing a thousand different 'signs' – the tracks of a dung beetle or the ripple of a dune – to tell him where he is: where others are; where rain has fallen; where the next meal is coming from; whether plant X is in flower, plant Y will be in berry, and so forth" (200).

followed by a short season of *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever* in the same theatre, as part of the New Zealand New Performance festival that I had curated at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club. What persisted in both works was an interest in the rupture of the theatrical gaze, and the treatment of the theatre space and the theatrical interlude as a platform, play-ground, or disciplined environment to be questioned and unsettled. Keren Chiaroni's analysis in her article for *On Sea/At Sea* discusses how *SLEEP/WAKE* is a production "in which water, its materiality and poetics, is a primary constituent element"³¹. Her discussion of materiality next to poetics emphasises the claims made in this exegesis³², affirming a vital relationship between the 'actual' phenomenon and the hypothetical, imaginary poetics around it. Similarly, Dani Lencioni of Culturebot writes in her review: "Trubridge plays a trick wherein he sets up a few conventions – a boxed room, a narrative opening monologue – and allows the audience to fall into the pattern of watching performance in a familiar way. But as the dreamscape devolves into an unsettling frenzy, the conventions of what a theater space looks like [...] get broken down too"³³. In this way *SLEEP/WAKE* enforces a poetic liquidity on the space, helping to liquify critical relationships and boundaries.

The devolution that Lencioni describes happened for the most part in a gradual manner, but is also accelerated by two events or catastrophes. The first event was a collapsing of the rear



Fig 24: Trubridge, Sam (2015) *SLEEP/WAKE* in the Ellen Stewart Theater, La MaMa Experimental Theater Club, New York.

wall of the set, and the sudden depth that this provided into back of the space, welcoming the architecture of the unique Ellen Stewart theatre auditorium into the performance landscape. At the very end of this cavity, the audience could see their reflection through an open door into a mirrored dressing room³⁴. The second event occurred at the end of the

³¹ *On Sea/At Sea*, 113

³² "The 'water dance' recorded in 2008 shows the merging of fluid elements as the water that flows onto the stage interacts with the bodies of the performers. Reflected in the spreading pool they also move through it, using its unstable materiality as a fulcrum" (114).

³³ <http://www.culturebot.org/2015/03/23555/sleepwake-the-startling-world-of-unconsciousness/>

³⁴ "In one catastrophic motion, the set transforms from a box to an archway, framing the view of the space beyond. This site that had been excluded from the experience before this moment comes rushing into the picture, expanding the performance world beyond the theatrical 'cul de sac' of the boxed set to embrace new horizons and new possibilities within the microcosmic culture of the theatre space. A shift in perception is engineered that may resemble the discoveries of the "mirrorstage" infant, or the collective realization that scientists like Galileo, Darwin, or Einstein provoked in their times. As Foucault says of Galileo' "[t]he real scandal [...] lay not so much in his discovery, or rediscovery, that the earth revolved around the sun, but in his

show, when a Skype performer in New Zealand addresses the New York audience, causing a second collapse of boundaries that extended beyond the walls of the theatre space to encompass the global surface stretching between the theatre in New York and a garden in Hataitai, Wellington³⁵. Keren Chiaroni best summates the effect of these events when she says “Trubridge gives us a performance where fluid philosophy is at its most suggestive. It is a work that expands outwards in circles of reflection, and in its harnessing of perpetual movement it demonstrates the secret mechanism of all fluid perspectives, whereby ‘[i]t is at the point where a concept changes its meaning that it has more meaning’ (Didi-Huberman 2004, 259). *SLEEP/WAKE* is an exploration of the other face of knowledge, the night to our day, ‘wet being’ so to speak, as opposed to ‘dry knowledge” (114). In this new iteration of the work, the La MaMa venue offered the opportunity to study depth in performance space, a thematic that has been developed further through the *Deep Anatomy* symposium and subsequent exhibition in the concrete wells of Auckland’s Silo Park (Appendix 10).



Fig 24: Trubridge, Sam (2015) *SLEEP/WAKE* in the Ellen Stewart Theater, La MaMa Experimental Theater Club, New York.

Moving from the theatre stage into curation and performance art, this interest in poetically rupturing thresholds and boundaries between disciplined states remains. But the architecture, routine, and structures that the works confront change accordingly. In this way, *The Performance Arcade* (Appendix 07) is a presentation concept that rejects the familiar frames of the gallery or the theatre to explore more liquid relationships with the public, in a coastal site along Wellington Waterfront. The event creates an intervention in public space and public rhythms with a programme of performance work that would usually be presented to niche audiences, within controlled spaces of production and reception.

constitution of an infinite, and infinitely open space” (1967). In the *Sleep/Wake* venue a similar reconstitution of space occurs, wherein the audience are forced to discard an outmoded way of perceiving the performance merely as localised action upon the stage, and instead must open their senses and their horizons to include the whole environment and its possibilities. It is the experience of one physical state, and one moment, becoming perpendicular to the other: an expansion of the dimensions of the work beyond the boundaries of the proscenium container, the cogitating, cerebral space of the theatre-machine opening, as eyes may open on a waking body” (Trubridge, 2009, *Coming to Sleep*, 58-59).

³⁵ “With this world-shrinking technology beamed around the planet, paradigms of the near and far, here and there are collapsed. The limited horizon of the performance expands as before, this time to move beyond the walls of the space, beyond Wellington, and beyond New Zealand to embrace the curvature of the earth and create a connectness between bodies distant and close.” (*Ibid*, 64-65).

Using an assembly of shipping containers and scaffolding, the transgressive qualities of the carnival midway are utilised, creating a mobile space and a temporary architecture where audiences encounter bodies or enter scenarios that challenge or redefine cultural relationships with art³⁶. As with previous examples, the poetics of the work combines with its production, mixing methodology with metonymy. In this way, the poetic device or formation becomes a tool or assumes a pragmatic function. Conversely, the processes of making, testing, organising, and presenting a work becomes on some level part of the aesthetics and politics of the work, much in the same way that a nomadic journey or path has been described. In keeping with earlier claims, this path does not fixate upon a destination, island, or single output but instead celebrates the paths between iterations, the dialogue between various media, the friction between areas of knowledge or disciplines, and the various landscapes/architectures/locations visited. Together this creates a poetic journey for the work – evidenced in Dani Lencioni’s review that compares the staging of *SLEEP/WAKE* in Auckland Town Hall with the more threatening and dangerous Ellen Stewart Theatre; or in Sven Mehzoud’s commentary on the journey of *Night Walk*, and how it “performs this mobility and formational condition through the act of traversing ground, of traversing country” (Douglas, 89).

The metaphor is described in Mirriam Webster as “a figure of speech in which a word or phrase literally denoting one kind of object or idea is used in place of another to suggest a likeness or analogy between them”. This basic building-block of poetics is used across this study as a way of connecting oceanic or nomadic practices within a diverse range of projects and outputs. In this way, the use of metaphor also helps to articulate the work and develop a vocabulary for talking about it. The movement between media, between disciplines, and across terrains can be presented as a committed and rigorous practice that does not mimic existing models for creative production and research; but instead constitutes an ever-evolving practice formed in a condition of motion, comfort-with-instability, and the process of seeking shapes and terrains that are amorphous, out of reach, or just over the edge of the horizon. In this way a fluid and versatile poetics takes shape, one that allows for new languages to form around the work and make space for new ways to talk about creative practice that are not limited by landed, terrestrial ontologies.

³⁶ In an unpublished text about *The Performance Arcade* I have discussed the concept of ‘the carnivale’: “as a state of exception, of enticing, terrifying, and seductive otherness encapsulated within a field of attractions and distractions: such as the arcade, circus midway, or fairground. In *The Performance Arcade*, artists and their publics step outside the familiar relationships prescribed by the disciplined spaces of the gallery and the theatre. This carnivale body that challenges familiar conceptions of corporeality: expanding notions of what the human body is (the bearded lady, siamese twins), what it is capable of (the sword swallower), and celebrating or fetishising otherness. Performance art does something with this spectacular body: the body that presents itself ‘as itself’ with no mimicry, the body that presents actions without emulation, without characterization, narrative, or drama. It gives this un-theatrical body a political, ethical power that moves beyond the sideshow ‘distraction’ to unsettle the comforting notions of how the body is seen, felt, or understood. Sometimes the body is lost as well, leaving architectural and situational elements communicate directly with the audience”.



05 TRANSGRESSIVE GEOGRAPHIES

a walk in the dark

In this chapter, the discussion moves to consider discipline, and processes of disciplining or 'undisciplining' practice. Transgression becomes a core concept and a key finding – defining the methods by which the practice liquefies disciplinary, political, cultural, and geographic boundaries. The movement of the inflated black sphere and the walker within it is compared with the nomadic trespass, as a transgression, a blind passage without prejudice or preference, without sight, embracing uncertainty... a walk in the dark.

To 'roll-through' a space is to visit a certain terrain, and to retain a certain form while making impressions in that terrain, and to be marked or impressed-upon it in turn. This chapter looks at the rolling black sphere imprinting the spaces that it encounters, whilst also being marked by them: being scarred, perforated, punctured, and deflated until it disappears breathless into the landscape.

Night Walk is a performance piece that would be best described as a 'trajectory' rather than any other terms that may give preference to a singularity, completeness, or iterative quality. Certainly, the work has experienced a number of applications to various geographies. So it is iterative in this sense, but the term misses the nature of its movement, the discussions, the preparations, repairs, and repercussions that all define this work in some way³⁷. So, *Night Walk* is a trajectory – a journey or pathway in a creative practice that may be characterised by several performances, or moments in its journey. These moments (to date) are listed below. This work is expressed in four different ways: through seven 'passages' (walks performed through various terrains); one video work; four 'lodgings' (where the sphere spends time within a gallery architecture); and two 'openings' (invitations extended to a group, to another artist, or other artists to inhabit the sphere, explore it, and explore their space with it).

0.0 Prelude (passage): Ocean Beach, NZ.

1.0 CULPRA STATION

1.1 Culpra Station (passage). For the Interpretive Wanderings symposium.

1.2 Culpra Station (video). For Interpretive Wanderings exhibition, Mildura Arts Centre.

2.0 MELBOURNE

2.1 Swanston Street, Melbourne (passage). For Performing Mobilities.

2.2 Swanston Street (lodging). For Performing Mobilities, RMIT gallery.

3.0 MELBOURNE

3.1 Niagara Lane, Melbourne (passage). For Performing Mobilities.

3.2 Niagara Lane (lodging). For Performing Mobilities, RMIT gallery.

4.0 MELBOURNE

4.1 Margaret Lawrence Gallery (passage). For Performing Mobilities.

4.2 Margaret Lawrence Gallery (lodging). For Performing Mobilities.

Fig 25: Trubridge, Sam (2016) *Night Walk (Lake Tyrell)*. Photo: Amelia Taverner.

³⁷ "In nomad thought, the dwelling is tied not to a territory but rather an itinerary" – Anny Milovanoff *La Seconde Peau du Nomade*, quoted in Deleuze and Guattari, (656).

5.0 WELLINGTON

5.1 30Upstairs Gallery (lodging). For The Performance Series

6.0 SYDNEY

6.1 Redfern (opening). With Redfern Community Centre.

6.2 Redfern (passage). For Migratory Wanderings exhibition. 107 Projects.

7.0 LAKE TYRELL

7.1 Lake Tyrell (passage).

8.0 SOMERS BEACH

8.1 Somers Beach (opening). With Mick Douglas and Amaara Raheem.

9.0 CUBA STREET

9.1 Cuba Street (passage)

10.0 WELLINGTON

10.1 The Engine Room (lodging)

Texts describe *Night Walk* as a walk in the dark and as a blind navigation through cultural and environmental environments, both known and unknown. In the previous chapter analogies have connected my way of methods to that of a seafarer who cannot see the island but can sense its presence past the horizon. Yet, within this precarious condition there is also the logic and confidence of the navigator or the ship, that passes through terrains carrying all that they need to move through fluid and variable contexts – adapting and evolving its processes, but also self-sufficient. In this way, this ‘walk in the dark’ is a movement with comfortable uncertainty that invokes the words of Hélène Cixous:

"Ordinary human beings do not like mystery since you cannot put a bridle on it, and therefore, in general they exclude it, they repress it, they eliminate it – and it's settled. But if on the contrary one remains open and susceptible to all the phenomena of overflowing, beginning with natural phenomena, one discovers the immense landscape of the trans-, of the passage. Which does not mean that everything will be adrift, our thinking, our choices, etc. But it means that the factor of instability, the factor of uncertainty, or what Derrida calls the undecidable, is indissociable from human life. This ought to oblige us to have an attitude that is at once rigorous and tolerant and doubly so on each side: all the more rigorous than open, all the more demanding since it must lead to openness, leave passage: all the more mobile and rapid as the ground will always give way, always. A thought which leads to what is the element of writing: the necessity of only being the citizen of an extremely inappropriable, unmasterable country or ground".

Hélène Cixous (1997) *Rootprints: Memory and Life-Writing*, London: Routledge (51-2)

In practical terms the work is a walk in a large inflated sphere, made from unfolded black plastic rubbish bags. As the journey proceeds, its movement across various surfaces perforates the thin membrane, creating a constellation of pinpricks for the walker within. The intention of the work was to follow this ‘milky way’ around the rotating sphere, thus producing a rudimentary navigational system that allow one to walk in a straight line through any landscape. However, various ‘currents’ in each space have pushed it onto

alternative pathways each time. Cultural boundaries, wind, disorientation, and the architecture of streets or galleries have all played their part in diverting the intentions of this black orb. The blindness mentioned earlier reveals a state of unknowing, and the tension between the body and the cultural/geographic terrains that it passes through that expresses colonial experiences echoed in Paul Carter's lines: "scientists as well as artists have found it hard to connect the ideal lines they carry around in their heads with the actual appearance of the world" (2009, *Dark Writing*, 79). In the specific Australian context where *Night Walk* was developed, walking country has particular significance as a cultural artefact and a mode of culturally-located knowing, resonant with the 'songlines' of Aboriginal traditions. Arriving in this 'storied terrain' the work performed as an 'auto-poetic' gathering of intersections between mobile spatial practices and the landscape. The work also seeks out challenges through this intersection with indigenous practices and narratives, where the artist is compelled to address critical concerns in nomadic practices and theory, and where the colonial/colonising implications of the nomadic process are made visible.



Fig 26: Trubridge, Sam (2014) *Night Walk* (drawings).

Collaboration becomes a key strategy for navigating these concerns. *Night Walk (1.0 Culpra Station)* was made in close consultation with the Culpra Milli Aboriginal Corporation and the people of the land that the work passed through, as part of the 'Interpretive Wonderings' symposium and subsequent exhibitions in Mildura Art Centre and 109 Projects, Sydney. The symposium provided an important context for knowledge-sharing with CMAC and provided a right of passage through the landscape that was never taken for granted³⁸. In this environment of extended conversation the practice became porous and interactive through contributions and dialogue with CMAC leaders Barry Pearce and Sophia Pearce, as well as their fellow symposium leaders Campbell Drake, Jock Gilbert, and Sven Mehzoud. Mobility without permission or reciprocity quickly becomes aggressive and colonial, but through this process I was able to observe that a truly transgressive and nomadic process must admit or embrace local contributors and guardianship as collaborators, guides, curators, or co-

³⁸ **Right of way and right of passage:** a right of way is a cadastral device for land access, a marking on a map that outlines a public corridor through private properties. On the other hand, a right of passage is an unmapped, undefined-as-yet license (or will) to pass through territory wherever it is found. There may be confusion here with the **rite** of passage – a coming of age or moment of transition in the social status of an individual or group. Perhaps this double-meaning is useful, since this 'rite' helps to frame the journey, the path, the act of passage, and the transgression as one that changes the traveller, much in the same way that James Clifford describes the travelling theorist. Thus, the right of passage is connected by a nomadic practice to the rites of passage. Māori navigator Piripi Smith's rite of passage involved guiding his waka 'Te Matatau a Maui' through a 6930km journey across open ocean from New Zealand to Rapa Nui (Easter Island), using only his training in traditional Polynesian navigation. In Australia the Aboriginal may go on 'walkabout', while other cultures send their young adults into the desert, forest, or ocean to navigate these terrains in their own way. Through this encounter with difference, with the trans-(traversing/transgressing) we become trans-formed. The journeying changes us, and we emerge with a new understanding of the world, a new sense of purpose, and new responsibilities.

authors of the work. It mirrors my own processes as a curator of my own events (*The Performance Arcade* and *Deep Anatomy*) where my authorial processes as curator or director also make space for other voices and narratives to emerge. The choice of site and the journey that *Night Walk* took within the station came from this same process, and a broader understanding of the landscape was developed through the three days I was there. Not only has this dialogue set a precedent for the walks that followed, but it has continued with Sophia Pearce through further iterations of the work, revealing profound and productive insights into the landscape, into issues of using landscape in performance, and important strategies for admitting multiple voices into the work. However, it must be asserted that in the context of a full-time PhD there is not a lot of time to develop such promising collaborations further, which need more space to grow, particularly in a cultural environment where information is not necessarily an immediate right, and where knowledge must be earned through gaining trust and mutual understanding.



In spaces owned by the state or by institutions these dynamics in the work shifted dramatically. Thus, on the streets of Melbourne, in two different galleries for the 'Performing Mobilities' symposium, as well as in Sydney, the work became a trespasser. Permission was not asked-for when using Swanston Street at rush hour, or the Niagara Lane alleyway at 11pm when the nearby bars were beginning to fill up. A conversation with a police officer five minutes before the former revealed a relaxed, almost dismissive approach to the work, once they had ascertained that no weapons were involved. The clandestine character of the sphere's movements through these city spaces and its dialogue with urban regimes also produced new motives: intervening in and critiquing the spatial regimes of these landscapes that it passed through. Thus, the work created a grotesque caricature of the atomised space of Swanston Street, interrupting the routines of passing commuters, who were glued to their smart-phones, enveloped in bubbles of private space reflective of Peter Sloterdijk's discussion in his three-volume series *Spheres (1998-2004)*, describing a globalised space of many bubbles, cell-walls, and foam. Here the response from passers-by was to make use of this same cellular technology/bubbles to pose for photographs, to record, and then re-experience the work in their digital spheres³⁹.

Camping within the rooms and thresholds of the RMIT and Margaret Lawrence galleries, this nomadic object unsettled the clean, white architecture with its dark intrusion into these spaces: creating alternative, non-linear, and nomadic counter-narratives, similar to the unsettling of the arcadian gardens of Stanford University with *Space Invaders I*. The intention of *Night Walk* in these spaces was to both reveal and examine various tensions and struggles: inviting and embracing the challenges, interactions, acceptance, or rejection that may arise there. As in other works, it was conceived as an intrepid excursion or exploit that was doomed to encounter impedence, friction, and finally failure. As such I held on to the original plans and trajectories for the work as tenaciously as I could in each circumstance, despite environmental adversity (wind, foliage, sun, terrain, people, architecture) in order for the work to achieve its aims, finally dissipating and losing its breath within an impeding landscape.

This was the original gesture anticipated in the work when I prepared for the first iteration at Culpra Station: of walking a map, walking a map until it breaks down, walking a globe, walking the idea of the global into shreds, until I find myself alone in the bushes of some unknown field – torn, sweating, dehydrated, bothered by flies, with my art in pieces around me, walking the globe until it becomes a plastic bag, a plastic bag blowing in the wind. I am reminded of the pathetic resolution of Piero Manzoni's work *Artist's Breath (1960)*, where the optimism and joy of an inflated balloon as art has receded with history and over time into a smear of aged rubber. Still fixed to the plate that bears the name of the artist and the work, these abject remains of an exhalation carry the same sad fate of the wrinkled globe that I walked into the dense native foliage on a reclaimed sheep station in Northern Victoria.

The act of perforation upon this object is one of the 'autopoetic' devices in the work described earlier: a device that sustains and continues to create meaning through its production and re-production, without requiring much further aesthetic curation by the artist. There is a perforation of boundaries and relationships on many levels in the work:

Fig 27 + 28: Trubridge, Sam with Culpra Milli Aboriginal Association (2015) *Night Walk (Culpra Station)*. For the Interpretive Wonderings symposium. Photos: Campbell Drake.

³⁹ Sloterdijk is a philosopher like Zizek and Deleuze who often uses art to extract or distil a theory. It is interesting that the introduction to *Bubbles (1998)* uses his principal conceit that "wherever human life is found, whether nomadic or settled, inhabited orbs appear, wandering or stationary orbs" (11). Thus, a sphere becomes a model for living, both incredibly private (inside the sphere of the skull) but also incredibly public, or global.

between the daylight exterior and my midnight interior, or between the white modernist cube and the black, wrinkly unwelcome object of the bag with all of its theatricality. There is also the action of the landscape breaking into the hermetically sealed and airtight space of the sphere, the bubble, the monolith, or the black rubbish bag, with all of the 'notional invisibility' to this material that was discussed in Chapter 04. Finally, there is the inevitable perforation between the plastic globe/map and the land that it covers, and the tearing of both that evokes Jorge Luis Borges' story of the empire and the map (Jorge Luis Borges and Adolfo Bioy Casares, 1970, *Extraordinary tales, a collection of short narratives from a variety of sources*)⁴⁰

Another action in the work is that of an irrepressible swelling, like an object bursting from the landscape: a blister, a polyp, a blot of oil, an embarrassing bulge, or boil of black humor. Inside its toxic surface it is empty, hollow, a large gaseous empty void. Walking inside the void reveals other autopoietic registers: what I do to the ground, I also do to the sky, since it all turns around me. There is also no horizon, only a sky becoming ground and back again. The seams of the structure become horizons that tilt with my pace and become zeniths. Latitudes become longitudes. Then sky becomes ground again, and again, round and round. On longer walks such, condensation forms inside of this surface, from my breath and perspiration. The walls grow slick with this dew. My hair wipes at it as I walk under the sagging plastic that turns past, soaking my curls. Any sudden impact causes it to drizzle slightly, revealing how I have created my own micro-climate, my own biosphere. Litter that I drop follows me around. In the Margaret Lawrence gallery, I walked this way for eight hours as the blob slowly lost air: swilling from white wall to white wall of the space, a drop of black mercury, pacing back and forth, restless, tireless, lost. Inside I was soaking and partially asphyxiated, outside the bone-dry floors and the hum of air-conditioning.



Fig 29: Trubridge, Sam (2015) *Night Walk (Melbourne)*. Margaret Lawrence Gallery, Performing Mobilities for PSi#21 Fluid States, performances of unknowing. Photos: Mick Douglas.

⁴⁰ The story describes a map so large that it covers the entire territory that it charts. As time passes, the map becomes decayed and ruined, only remaining in the remote deserts and corners of the empire.

There is a theatricality to the work – that looks back to the allure of the black curtain. Spectators gather and speculate on the body inside, waiting for its emergence or reveal. In her opening speech for *Performing Mobilities* the director of RMIT gallery called on me to emerge, but I couldn't bring myself to reveal myself in the work through a verbal response or curtain call. The sphere is like a giant black mask or Halloween costume that only discloses the walker inside vaguely, or in flashes: the shape of a hand through the plastic, the trail of footprints it leaves on the sand and salt pans, or the outline that it finds as it deflates inch by inch around a head, shoulders... For the following two days at RMIT Gallery I sat inside it as it went through cycles of inflation and deflation, experiencing moments of spaciousness when it was at its fullest, then the slow crinkling compression of space that began to reveal my body. When it was fully inflated I had time to drink and stretch without being seen, as if I were backstage. I passed time by looking for holes to repair in the plastic: a second skin that I tended to from within. But as it fell again I become visible, theatrically emerging from the darkness like the man in the moon. This recalls the comparisons made between the black plastic rubbish bag and the theatre curtain made in the previous chapter, but also portends the direction that this research is going towards experimenting with this object as a new theatre architecture, or a 'new globe': with a cheeky nod to Elizabethan theatre and Shakespeare's Globe. More on that later.

There is a literal and figurative globe-ism and globalisation that is examined in this work. The orb/sphere/globe has figured as a symbol for globalisation since the Greek philosophers and the Classical Romans. Their pantheistic or universal cosmologies are reflected in the motivations of contemporary global capitalism, as much in its architecture as anywhere else: such as the United Nations meeting rooms and the Palladian design of government buildings across the planet. *Night Walk* constructs for itself a fragile globalism that is then applied or imposed upon various post-colonial landscapes.⁴¹ Rolled over, rolled through, or rolled into these spaces, the sphere becomes an architecture, a philosophical model, or a cranium⁴² that is anti-monumental, febrile, impermanent, and impressionable. It emerges from each journey transformed or completely destroyed. It becomes the plastic bag/rag stuck in the tree branches, or the sweaty suffocating biosphere that clings to the body like an oil slick, gathering shit and scars as it shambles onward. As well as a symbol for globalisation, the sphere is also globalisation's residue: reminding us of the microbeads of plastic found across the food chain that will be found in rock strata, defining this age in geology as the 'anthropocene': a planetary shape marked by human efforts, a globe that leaves human footprints.

Unpacking the shredded plastic from the Culpra Station *Night Walk* thirteen months later at UTS in preparation for the Sydney performances, my hands were instantly greeted by the familiar sting of the thorns from Culpra. The plastic bristled with them: as fine as hypodermic needles, they gave me a jolt when they pricked me: almost like electricity or venom. It made the hair on the back of my neck stand up, and my scalp crawl. A lazy fly buzzed around the studio, a reminder of the persistent hordes that plagued us at Culpra, and later at Lake Tyrell. Perhaps it had slept in the plastic this whole time. After 30 seconds working on repairing the plastic from inside I was dripping with sweat, so I opted to turn the bag inside out and lay it on the table to work on instead. There was dust on it from Culpra, which stuck to the tape. I could feel it on my fingers. There was sand from Ocean Beach caught in the lining. And everywhere there were holes: from long stretched gashes, to the finest pinpricks, puckered welts where a foot or branch did not quite break through, and

⁴¹ reclaimed farmland, city streets, a salt-lake

⁴² Sloterdijk says that "Intelligence is spheric tension" (16, Sloterdijk, *Globes*), making metonymic connections between the symbols of the orb, the globe, the sphere, the skull, and the mind.

dotted lines where something juddered a morse-code across the membrane. I was taken back to that walk again as I laboured over each hole that my passage through the field had made: sealing up the memories of this path to make it airtight. The gleek and screech of the packing tape accompanied me for five hours as peeled it off and pored over the black inky surface, trying to find holes to cover: spots of blacker-black than the black already there, black that does not reflect the light. It was like searching the surface of the ocean for fish, rocks, or signs of land and incoming weather: you began to learn the subtleties, anticipate the tears, and find ways of scanning quickly to pick up the finest mark, difference, or irregularity that betrayed a breach in the surface. The longer I worked, the smaller the holes become. I had been around the globe several times now and I knew that I was retracing my steps. But still more holes showed up, still more of them defied my attempts to secure this impermeable barrier. My eyes struggled to focus on anything that wasn't twenty shades of crinkled black. Everything else was a blur except this night-sea that I worked on, where the crumpled folds caught the fluorescent lighting. The sigh and rustle of it reminded me of the sea. I felt the mythical quality of my task, patiently patching up the sea's surface so that it wouldn't spring a leak: a tailor or a seamstress for the ocean's swell, a caring hand that smoothes the waves and troughs, seeking imperfections and wetting them down in the moonlight.



After this preparation, I invited a group into the sphere for the first time: a group of children from the Redfern Community Centre, a place defined by its Aboriginal community and history in the birth of Aboriginal rights and activism in the 1960s and 1970s. Helped in one by one, the excitement of these 20 children filled the sphere with a punching, jerking, and shrieking energy. Hardly able to contain the bodies within, the object perforated in all directions as it was walked back and forth outside the centre. Like a tiny black particle or amoeba, it jiggled, threatening to combust at any moment with its energy. Later, I performed the Redfern passage of the work, circumnavigating a block nearby, pressing past people on the street on a Friday evening, engulfing them so that their shapes became visible to me inside, swallowing items of street furniture, dogs, and parked bicycles; then egesting them in its wake, before slithering back into the 107 Projects gallery.

The contrast between these two iterations in Sydney repeats the same relationship between the Culpra Station passage and the presentation of the work for *Performing Mobilities* in Melbourne. At the community centre the work was subsumed by an enthusiasm and joy for the object, whereas a kilometre away it became a subversive agent when it rubbed up against more disciplined or controlled urban spaces. This preoccupation with transgression and trespass reveals how the unsettling of discipline is a core motivation of this thesis: addressing the social phenomena of control as much as the ordering and classification of practices and art forms into distinct 'disciplines'. As stated in my art-science publication (*The Waking Project*, 2011) the processes of play and infant exploration occurs in a 'pre-disciplinary' space that is less concerned with the boundaries and categories that characterise a bureaucratic, adult world. This simple playfulness becomes a powerful political and poetic device⁴³.

Whilst acknowledging the various practices that it moves through, this research attempts to redefine discipline: challenging the fixedness of this term and resisting the assumption that one must choose a location for one's creative processes that must then be called home, or 'your field'. The nomadic experience leads to a mobile approach towards disciplinary practices, reflecting Cixous' discussion of 'the immense landscape of the trans-, of the passage'. This is a significant defining feature of this research, and a key feature in how it contributes to the field of performance and live art. Amongst all the examples addressed in this thesis, no artists traverse the diverse disciplines and various modes of working with the same purpose that this nomadic-becoming-pelagic practice does, making use of transgressions and trans-disciplinary dialogue to set this work apart.

Some may argue that without specialization we lose rigour and become generalists: that discipline is lost. But this implies that nomads passing through the land do not know or respect their terrain, belying the prejudices of what Bruce Chatwin refers to as 'pastoral thinking' in *Songlines* (1987). In *The Revolt of the Masses* Ortega Y Gasset refers to this as 'the barbarism of specialisation'. Discipline is not lost, instead discipline must move from a description of territory to a description of process. No longer is discipline where I belong, or what belongs to me. Instead it becomes an adjective, a quality or an approach, and a process of consulting areas of expertise in order to orchestrate various elements and respond to an ever-shifting terrain. In this way 'the discipline' or 'field' need not be a piece of topography that we inhabit, but instead becomes the unique position or 'scope' that we

Fig 30: Trubridge, Sam (2016) *Night Walk (Redfern)*. For *Migratory Wonderings* exhibition. Photo: Campbell Drake.

⁴³ Much has been written on play by the likes of Johan Huizinga with his 1938 book *Homo Ludens*, where play is acknowledged within various scales of operation within human and animal culture. Huizinga describes how play is freedom and distinct from the 'ordinary' but he does not talk about play as a pre-disciplinary condition. This concept has emerged through my collaboration with Sleep Scientist Philippa Gander from 2007-2015.

adopt for any particular project or research path. Certainly, there is much that can be said about the weaknesses of 'floating', unfixed, and uncontained research. But this attaches negative connotations to nomadic traits that require boundlessness, movement, complexity, and uncertainty. I would argue that a rigour and discipline in nomadic/fluid/pelagic states needs to be pursued, and that we need to be open to how it may radicalise our language or systems that have until now been based on pastoral 'landed' perspectives and structures. So the intention here is not to denounce specialisation, but to recognise how there is also discipline in moving across practices, by consulting areas of expertise, and bringing together or comparing knowledge systems in order to produce new practices such as this.

An important question arises in how a nomadic creative practice can maintain the rigour that Cixous describes, without being constrained by conventional boundaries between 'fields' of practice. Eva Aldea may appear to be addressing this same challenge in her lecture *Deleuze's Migrants and Nomads* (2014), where she uses the term 'accountability' in relation to Braidotti's concepts of flexible citizenship and the 'nomadic subject'. This can also be considered with regard to the Dutch artist Bas Jan Ader, and in particular his final journey with *In Search of the Miraculous* (1975), where he attempted to cross the Atlantic Ocean in a tiny sailboat and was never found. Ader was in many ways a nomadic artist, moving across disciplines as well as examining geography through performance journeys and site-specific actions. However, his work had an element of mark-making: working upon the 'scenic backdrops' of Dutch landscapes that were once painted by Piet Mondrian, walking through the suburban grid of Los Angeles, and finally crossing the Atlantic Ocean in his boat. There are in these examples less consideration of the specifics of site, but rather an interest in space as a kind of 'canvas' upon which he made his journey. Aside from the incredible risk of setting to sea in such a small craft, there is a romanticism and lack of 'accountability' that haunts his work and his final disappearance. There is also much comparison to be made with theatre makers of his time, like Peter Brook: whose travelling through African villages with *The Conference of the Birds* and (1968) text *The Empty Space* are now problematic in similar ways, evoking the artist as a divine mark-maker and coloniser, preoccupied with a kind of sublime romanticized emptiness to be found in the empty stage, ocean, or landscape.



Fig 31: Ader, Bas Jan (1975) *In Search of the Miraculous*. Photo: Mary Sue Ader Anderson.
 Fig 32: The remains of Bas Jan Ader's boat 'Ocean Wave'.

Bas Jan Ader's hubris demonstrates an important point about discipline and nomadism. The nomad must respect the terrains that they inhabit as well as its inhabitants: consulting specialised knowledge as Francis Aljys does with the rotulistas (sign-makers) of Mexico City, or Mick Douglas does with the tram drivers of Calcutta and the retired salt workers of Long Island. Similarly, on the boat of my childhood it was necessary to do this in every country we went to, asking questions in each context: is it safe to eat this fish? — where can we get

fresh water? — is it okay if we pull our dinghy up on your beach? — do your maps use the French meridian or the Greenwich meridian? In a similar way *SLEEP/WAKE* (Appendix 09) relied on the involvement of sleep scientist Philippa Gander. For *Night Walk*, there are various concerns like this around gas exchange, asphyxiation, navigation, and the specifics of the landscapes that I traversed. Thus, it was necessary to consult the appropriate specialists: free-divers helped verify that I would not suffocate or become short of breath, locals showed me routes through landscapes or helped provide power for my air pump, and other locals connected the work with the stories of the land. As in the work of Alÿs or Douglas, and the writings of Richard Sennet or Gayatri Spivak, a scholarly integrity and political consciousness can be found in including non-academic pursuits, focussing on well-crafted action, or consulting with 'the local informant' (Spivak).

To discipline someone or something is to make them behave. This has association with control or at worst punishment and abuse. And yet we often talk about art, design, philosophy, and science as 'disciplinary fields' of practice. This term 'disciplinary field' is a great example of Deleuze/Braidotti/Aldea's notion of how we create territories around what we do, and how they are tied to land-based pastoral practices or the 'striated' space of the city or field. Coming from the fluid 'smooth' space of operation on a boat, and its unfixed sense of home, I am often aware of these distinctions, and of how we are now used to occupying spaces that are more disciplined than ever before. An example of this is the airport, where the architecture of the space works alongside its organisation to create specific routines in that environment for a greater sense of safety for travellers and border security. This is similar in the theatre space, where once again the architecture prescribes codes of behaviour to create a programming for that space that is cultivated, 'cultured', or what architect and performance designer Dorita Hannah has referred to in several lectures as a 'disciplined space'.

Certainly, the subdivision of (and classification of) space alongside knowledge systems, languages, and territory is necessary in order to comprehend the world around us. The nomad's personal space (the boat, the caravan, the backpack) are intensely organized environments. So, subdivision and territorialisation is a necessity of survival. But it is also equally necessary to traverse these boundaries that we have constructed, and thereby recognise them as structures of convenience. Artists play a significant political role in rethinking these boundaries, and reminding us of their hypothetical nature, as Frances Whitehead said at the *Breaking Ice* art/science symposium in Christchurch 2014 "artists are the producers and critics of culture". Works like *SLEEP/WAKE* and associated projects played with the collapse of boundaries between art and science for this same spirit: not just seeking innovation, novelty, or satisfying curiosity, but also with an interest in producing and critiquing culture. A commitment to respecting and pursuing Gander's own scientific interests and integrity was critical in this process, so that her scientific peers could agree with the information and sentiments layered into the work. This experience of operating across boundaries has led to an understanding of discipline as a PROCESS OR QUALITY, instead of a territory that is possessed or owned by a particular set of individuals, practitioners, or terms.

Although it predates this period of study, these aspects of the process of making *SLEEP/WAKE* provides informative precedent and reference for this discussion. In particular, the process of consulting my collaborator's 'local knowledge' of her science and bringing it together with my own knowledge of performance, design, and art was critical to the work. The *Sleepless* series of performance works that followed, allowed for more transgression where it became possible to open up a discussion on the scientific distinctions / binaries

between sleeping and waking, or between dreaming and other forms of mentation⁴⁴. It also brought us back to a play-full space: the 'pre-disciplinary' space that we all inhabit as children, where an experimental and curious "scientific" investigation of the world and our environment is indistinguishable from expressive and creative forms of play. As a child living on the boat (playing on beaches or on deck) play moved between these modes fluidly.

This brings me to *Deep Anatomy* (Appendix 10), where I worked with my brother and a community of athletes and artists on a symposium as part of the Performance Studies international Fluid States programme. *Deep Anatomy* was planned in a similar way to the *Waking Incubator*, the art-science laboratory run with Gander in 2010 using interdisciplinary dialogue, a common space, and an open-ended approach to the outcomes. During this earlier process, I had become interested in the athlete as an exemplary cross between scientist and artist. The freediving athlete synthesizes scientific repetition, measurement, and other familiar scientific conventions with an irrational 'risk' act that expands an understanding of our potential, revealing our capabilities beyond protective 'disciplined' cultural norms and beyond the perceived or entrained limitations created by state, architecture, and media. More will be discussed on the outcomes of this process in the final chapter.

The ethos behind a lot of this work is the awareness of the role that performance can play in our everyday lives. As 'actions that we watch', performance re-presents to us the things we do, exposing and critiquing our actions as it does so. Here I am particularly interested in what the performance theorist Jon McKenzie has said in his 2004 text *Perform or Else* about the importance of **discipline** to the formation of knowledge and power in the 18th and 19th Centuries, and how *performance* is now taking its place as a shaping paradigm in this way. Throughout our collaboration Philippa Gander and I often discussed how science has shaped the world-view in the last 100 years, and how that world-view is now being challenged. In this new century, our global 'performance' (our ability/inability to act in light of ethical, political, or environmental urgency) is under a spotlight from both scientists and artists, with each playing important roles in a process of understanding our actions, providing critical reflection upon them. But it is the 'trans' —that space BETWEEN the scientist and artist that reveals the most— where expression and analysis meet, and where ambiguity wrestles with didacticism. So, while it is the scientists who are revealing environmental crises, we also need to message these concerns: not just as science communicators, but to examine these concerns in the charged, ambiguous, and subversive space of art practice.

In New Zealand we inhabit a disciplined, striated landscape that has been stripped of its flora and fauna, and subdivided in a Western, European fashion that has been well discussed by Geoff Park in his (2006) *Theatre Country*. These terrains are cultured, cultivated spaces that are unlike the smooth nomadic spaces of the desert or the vast territories of the ocean: places where passage demands innovation, versatility, and adaptation of our routines to survive. This pelagic practice suggests a new radical activism that can move across the boundaries of science, art and technology in order to find new solutions, new ways of working, and new answers to our problems. The nomadic, liquid methodology is thus rigorous without being boundaried, not afraid to transgress, and open to engaging with local areas of knowledge. Alone at sea, or faced with crisis, we are forced to transgress in order to survive: to cross these boundaries in order to find new territories, or to find new ways of working together. In this way, the thesis posits the 'trans-disciplinary' pelagic practice as a

⁴⁴ Philippa has spoken at length about the implications this work had for her own research – particularly on how it made her question the binary distinctions between waking and sleeping, and to recognize liminal states between the two.

political stance, and as a 'trans-gressive' but disciplined activism.



Fig 33: Trubridge, Sam (2016) *Night Walk (Lake Tyrell)*. Photo: Amelia Taverner.

NIGHT WALK at LAKE TYRELL.

Shit. Capitalism. Calamity and salt.
Keep the globe turning.
An homage to Bas on a salt-lake.

This walk seemed to be all about shit: the hurried shit I took in the bushes before the walk, and the guilt I felt about the toilet paper that I left strewn on the branches like a sad attempt at decorating. The stick I used, trying to poke it out of sight. The shit-brown mud that seeped through my footprints on the salt. And then in the walk, my feet traced the mud all over the inside of the globe, following me as I walked. The globe itself billowed uncontrollably in the slight breeze that became amplified by this giant spinnaker of plastic. It tore underfoot and whipped into shreds around me as I struggled forward. I thought my walk would end when I reached the other side of the salt-lake, or when the mud became too deep and treacherous to continue. But instead my labour in the work very quickly reduced to the sole act of rotating the remains of this sphere around me for as far as I could go – turning that simplest engine of capitalism – the wheel, or the globe – around in circles in the mud. It smeared me with the dirt and shit of this task as I locomoted this primal machine onwards, onwards through the mire and destruction: at all cost, and despite all better sense. Until this globe/map was torn beyond all recognition and I was soaked in stinging brine and muck.

I am reminded of Bas Jan Ader's final hubristic voyage across another salt body, of the overpowering turbulence of sailing in a storm, of foundering at sea, and of the experience of drowning, where our spherical space billows, folds, then compresses upon us to the point of asphyxiation. Here at Lake Tyrell my liquid plastic capsule visited a salt-lake: a landscape of uncertain or expired liquidity, a space that information signs say is caused by terrestrial reflux. This passage of *Night Walk* reopened the space to its liquid potential – evoking the intrepid journeys across oceans and deserts of historical explorers like Burke and Wills, Magellan, Columbus, and Captain Cook. Complete with their colonial hubris, these analogies of white men's follies across salt bodies are embodied in my furious stumbling in the wind. These first travellers were given credit for discovering territories already sovereign to non-European peoples, and navigated passages that were already traversed by the expert

navigators of the Pacific Ocean and the Australian continent. For this reason, the work established failure as its goal or destination, seeking to express something (or provide critique) of the hubristic journeying of colonialism, capitalism, and romantic artists like Bas Jan Ader, as a kind of toxic nomadism. It shows the global capitalist project in shreds, the tattered map of Borges' story. The artist as the protagonist of this work is aware of his position as a white male artist, and how this aligns with the status of the white male as the main beneficiary and driver of the catastrophic machine of late capitalism, continuing to devalue the environment, intellectualism, human rights, and equality: as expressed by the surprising victories of right-wing policies in Europe, North America, and Australasia.



Fig 34: Trubridge, Sam (2016) *Night Walk (Lake Tyrell)*. Photo: Amelia Taverner.

Like the practice behind it, this work iterates and is mobile. It is not a fixed output, but instead operates in a milieu that is multi-poetic, transdisciplinary, multi-modal, and diverse in its application. It is a kind of surveyor's dance, a litmus test, a meter: that measures various environmental conditions, but also operates as a measure of itself and of its own poetic, political, and methodological production. So, in some instances the work occurs as a solitary performance in various urban, manmade, or natural terrains: from Lake Tyrell to midnight in a Melbourne alleyway. With audiences varying between two to one-hundred for the passages, the video documentation and re-presentation plays a role in re-performing the passage for the benefit of other (later) audiences, most recently at Te Uru gallery in Auckland.

What has been achieved in this work is a poetic that unsettles and liquefies the spaces that it occupies: as much through material or aesthetic devices as through the various cultural, geographic, and disciplinary transgressions that occur. A 'liquefaction' occurs, whereby spaces flood, are flooded, or become fluid through the intervention of this work. In this way the nomadic quality is surpassed, and a different kind of mobility is anticipated, one shaped by the key finding that a pelagic practice transgresses and liquefies boundaries. With *Night Walk*, the research pauses on the brink of a liquid state, anticipating the condition of a pelagic practice, moving towards the boundless state of the ocean, seeking mobility and complex 3-dimensionality that can only be described as 'becoming pelagic'.

Coda: *Night Walk* on Somer's Beach. Mick Douglas and Amaara Raheem walk inside the sphere: across the sand, amongst sunbathers, past families playing in the water and groups of children with boogie boards. Amaara exits early, because it made her feel nauseous with the constant, all-encompassing motion of the plastic. She describes a state of being lost in the folds and billows with nothing to fixate upon and no stable horizon to balance the navigational senses. She was, in effect, seasick. I am reminded of the first time I tested the work on Ocean Beach in Hawkes Bay. As I ran to keep up with the wind that was blowing the sphere and me along, I experienced a dizziness. The seams in the plastic provided a grid of horizons that, at this pace, spun around me rapidly. While I was aware that they were not true horizons, the cumulative effect of their rotating motion created the impression of a tilting-forward of the actual plane of sand below me, and of the horizons outside. This caused me to lean too far forward in my pace, and I crashed forward into the hard sand and the bubble wrenched to a halt around me. The longitudes and latitudes suddenly stopped their spinning, and instead twisted and pulled at my heavy form that held them down. Perhaps more a sense of vertigo than Amaara's nausea, it was nonetheless a loss of fixed navigational devices, causing a sense of disorientation within a state of constant and liquid motion. The solid space of the sand beach had become unreliable and liquid.



06 OCEANIC SPACE

like a boat on a restless sea

This chapter provides definitions of a pelagic practice, focussing on the works that best exemplify it through key features: the movement across boundaries, assuming fluid states of operation, and occupying oceanic sites for performance.

There is a liquidity and a pelagic nature found in many of the projects already presented. What recurs throughout is an interest in, and investigation of, a complicated, mobile, and cultural spatiality: formed in the space of the ocean, within a four-dimensional environment of constant motion. I avoid using the word 'terrain' here, which denotes a flat, planar condition with its Latin roots in *terra* (earth), opting instead for the more complex spatiality of the sea. An equivalent complexity has also been examined within the dense tangle of the tumbleweed, within the multi-levelled architectures and scaffolding of *The Performance Arcade*, in the collapse of familiar theatrical boundaries in *SLEEP/WAKE*, in the shape-shifting globe of *Night Walk*, and finally (in this chapter) with the subaquatic spaces of *Many Breaths* (Appendix 11) and *Subdivision I* (Appendix 04). These observations lead to the fourth key finding in this thesis – that a pelagic practice operates in a complex, mobile, and cultural spatiality. Thus, the practice creates performance works and curatorial scenarios that question the planar (two-dimensional) conditions of the stage, gallery wall, and public space. In response, three-dimensional and temporally engaged strategies are employed that have the liquefying effect discussed in the previous chapter.

We ended the last chapter at the threshold, on the beach: that liminal space of liquidity where stone and earth are ground into the fluid masses of sand and silt. In this way, we proceed with the notion of liquefaction and becoming-liquid, and the liquidity that *Night Walk* introduced into the various landscapes that it traversed. This work's last few iterations also provided an 'opening up' of the practice, through exposure to groups of observer-participants and invitations to others to enter the work: such as the beach in the Somers' peninsula, Victoria, Australia. In this way my work returned to the ocean – quite literally by visiting the beach, but also through explorations by Mick Douglas and Amaara Raheem that constitute a sublimation of the authorial or individual voice within a collaborative, interpersonal liquidity.⁴⁵ The migration or development of this work also promises to outlive this thesis, with further *Night Walks* planned for the future: first a solitary passage along the water's edge in Napier, then an 'opening' of the work with locals of Mahanga Beach and the people of Ngati Rongomaiwahine, and a walk at Bonneville Salt-flats in Wendover, Nevada.

New and future approaches to this work will include inviting small audiences into the sphere, as a vessel for the telling of hidden, erased, or subversive 'counter-narratives' emerging from that landscape⁴⁶. These new iterations produce a model for a new stage, a

Fig 35: Trubridge, Sam (2017) *many breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)*. Photo: Daan Verhoeven.

⁴⁵ Aspects of this liquid collaborative condition have been examined in the 'Concurrent Practices' journal article for *Performance Research 21.1 On Sea/At Sea* (2016) and the *Concurrent Forces* performance lecture for PSI#22, *Performing Climates* in Melbourne, 2016, both co-authored with Mick Douglas.

⁴⁶ Writing for *The Live Press 2018* artist and curator Reuben Friend explains the roots and meaning of this term: "Counterfactual histories or narratives are a genre of fiction writing that applies a 'what if' scenario to historical events to suggest how the world might look today had events of the past played out differently. For example, what would the world be like today if Christopher Columbus had not discovered the Americas? Or, what if Abel Tasman did not discover Aotearoa New Zealand? Of course neither Columbus nor Tasman were responsible for discovering either of these lands, and is these types of narratives - those that exist in the minds of the masses - which artists are able to address and challenge by expressing alternative perspectives and ways of seeing the world".

new performance, and a completely new performance architecture: a kind of 'rolling theatre', as a conscious subversion of the Shakespearean Globe as much as a critique of the globalism and capitalist symbols encompassed in this shape. This rolling theatre is propelled by its audience walking inside⁴⁷. Much like The Performance Arcade, it will function as somewhere between a temporary architecture and a curatorial framework, inviting diverse voices or narratives into the place usually occupied by the work's voice or message. It is an apt resolution of the various threads presented here, bringing together in one action a hybrid between performance art, theatre, architecture, and curatorial practices. It also constitutes a 'giving over' to various currents and liquid forces in the projects, a casting-off into new and unstable territories that have been anticipated in the practice and exegesis presented so far. In addition to its liquefying action upon the landscape, *Night Walk* has the quality of a vessel that demands further consideration, not just for its ability to receive, hold, embrace, and contain bodies and ideas – but also for its associations with the boat. The boat has become a recurrent motif in this research, one that informs my pelagic methodologies, poetics, aesthetics, and theories. Like *Night Walk*, the boat travels through diverse terrains but retains its own unique internal logic and potential,⁴⁸ that remains in dialogue with the environment.

Within, the boat is a space of intense organisation and economy. Every space is utilised for storage, every detail is critical to the overall functioning of the vessel/home/craft/journey. Living on a boat one cannot rely on others for subsistence and survival. On the boat you are a plumber, electrician, carpenter, cook, mechanic... If something breaks or needs attention, then you have to resolve it yourself, with the tools and resources that you have available. Even the act of moving through terrain requires care, craft, and knowledge. This navigational process is a complex (and transdisciplinary) integration of maths, geography, astronomy, and intuition. Life on a boat requires versatility, innovation, and a flexibility in terms of what you could do and how you could do it. So, we became used to comparing knowledge systems, using different knowledge systems, and consulting local knowledge in each new place. Something that might be added to Foucault's well-used description of a boat as 'a floating piece of space, a place without place'⁴⁹ is that experience of being between two distinct hemispheres, and in the centre of both: the above and the below, the wet and the dry, the sea and the sky. One may ask why a philosophy formed in this space (with two separate surfaces) resist the binary so much. Why isn't the tendency instead to divide the world in a similar fashion? Perhaps it is because any experience of being at sea is one of immersion. When we swim, only our heads show above, so that we always have to work at being between these two states or spaces rather than in one or the other. The sailing boat exploits this meeting of the two and the complementary forces of both: using the pressure of the wind on the sail against the resistance of water on the keel to slip sideways between the elements. Swimming relies on breath above, and propulsion below. Sometimes even the recovery of the stroke is executed in the less resistant medium of the air. In this way, our experience of being at sea is a complex one, that situates the self in the process or state of being in-between (as Cixous describes) and of operating within both spaces simultaneously in order to craft a single pathway. Perhaps in deserts there is a comparable liquidity, save that the above and below are not so interwoven, although the experience of sitting between the two is just as strong.

⁴⁷ Another organism on the run like Romeo Castellucci described.

⁴⁸ See Deleuze and Guattari on 'smooth' and 'striated' space, which are easily applied to the contrast between the smooth space of the ocean and the pastoral grid.

⁴⁹ "...the boat is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, that exists by itself, that is closed in on itself and at the same time given over to the infinity of the sea". (Foucault, 1967, *Of Other Spaces - Heterotopias*)

As established from the beginning, the movement that this research promotes is not migratory and is not the result of diaspora or exile. The 'migrant' term implies a passage between locations, a displacement, rather than movement as a constant state. My alternative is thus closer to Deleuze's rhizomatic, multi-nodal movement, which has affinity with Non-Western concepts such as Buddhist notions of 'sunyata' (movement with freedom and in natural flow with the elements), Australian aboriginal notions of 'dreamtime', or the Polynesian concept and practise of 'Wā/Vā' space. The latter moves fluidly between interior and exterior without distinction, between home and landscape, between the individual and nature in a philosophy born from the endless movement of the ocean. Works by Māori or Pacific artists, like Lisa Reihana's *Emissaries* (2017), have been described in relation to these concepts, utilising a circular, cyclical nature of the ocean as opposed to teleological, sequential, or linear structures⁵⁰. There is also precedent and context for this in contemporary scenographic and performance design practises: Societas Raffaello Sanzio's (2001-2004) *Tragedia Endogonia*, and various attempts to redefine performance space and theatre architecture by Dorita Hannah, Luis Longhi, Sodje Lotker, and the Prague Quadrennial *Intersections* project. However, rather than working with the terrestrial architectures that these examples utilise, my unique practice casts out into the depths, identifying the sea, the boat, and the nomadic practices of the navigator as principal paradigms around which architectural and spatial strategies can be formed – producing completely new performances and new architectures in liquid spaces without breath, or in spaces filled by breath.



Fig 36: Reihana, Lisa (2017) *Emissaries* (detail).

Through this practice design and performance work together in a process that can be compared with navigation. In Western traditions, the navigational 'sighting' stands out as a significant device within an architectural, cartographic reading of a liquid environment. As such it measures both the position of the boat and the progress made since the last sighting in order to determine a fixed point in a place of eternal movement. It is an ingenious piece of mathematics: measuring the angle of a planetary body (the sun, a star, or the moon) to the horizon, to thereby fix one's own position on the globe. Ironically, these systems remain fundamentally terrestrial (land-oriented) through their use of the map (as a grid, or fixed two-dimensional idea of terrain) and the Greenwich or French Meridian: a singular place in

⁵⁰ Reihana, Lisa (2017) *Emissaries*, 22.

time and space for the navigator to measure the globe from, tying both back to a colonial homeland. This friction between the fluid ocean and the cadastral grid was the principal focus of the works like *Subdivision I* (Appendix 04), discussed shortly. Through this and other works the performance designer and artist is positioned as a kind of navigator – attuned to environmental conditions so that they may find orientations and pathways within ever-changing landscapes⁵¹. Intrinsic to this consideration of architecture and environment in my work, there is also social space, interactivity, and crowd dynamics that also produce their own fluid effects on the work. In this regard, I draw on sociologist Elias Canetti’s (1960) book *Crowds and Power*, which analyses the behaviour of crowds and packs, and addressed questions of how and why crowds obey various impulses and imperatives. Within this text there are potent examples for performance design practice as the ‘soft science’ mentioned earlier; one that studies crowd and group thinking in the symbolic space of the theatre, or through performance exchanges in more unconventional spaces.



Fig 37: The Performance Arcade 2015, Wellington Waterfront. Photo: David Goldthorpe.

⁵¹ “With the shift from scenography towards performance design, theatre becomes open to an architectural, social and perceptual dramaturgy that is fluid, uncontained and independent of territorial or scenic preoccupations. As such, performance design can be compared with the processes of nautical or terrestrial navigation, since it does not seek to claim a space with scenic preoccupations, but instead constitutes a negotiation with the terrain, or a pathway through it. Space is explored through precise measurements and ‘dead reckonings’ from the cardinal points in the architecture in order to ‘site’ or ‘locate’ a performance within it. This likens the designer to the maritime navigator, whose task it was to guide the ship’s company through new waters by consulting sextants and almanacs: a form of seafarer’s script that annotated the movements of celestial and planetary bodies in the sky. Alternatively, Polynesian navigators were able to read by eye the subtle patterns in the waves, the rhythms of the swell, the flight of birds, the shapes of clouds, and the light reflected off their undersides– all in order to make passage from one island to the other or to find fish in the massive expanses of ‘empty’ ocean. The terrestrial nomad travels in a similar way, identifying key features and landmarks as well as the ephemeral signs in the clouds and the stars in order to find their way across the landscape. These examples provide promising new patterns for performance design as a navigational process of identifying a production with the here and now”. Sam Trubridge, 2013, *Terra Nullius’ for Performance Research 18.2, On Scenography* (144-145).

The Performance Arcade (Appendix 07) examines these relationships: between performance and architecture, performance and the city space, performance and public, and through these interactions: between performance and the state. After four years of development, I founded the event in 2011: the year of the PQ *Intersections* project, the year of Manchester Arts Festival's *11 Rooms* project, and the year of political unrest and reclamation of public space that spread across the world through the Arab Spring and Occupy movements. Through these examples one can identify a common questioning or crisis in the architectures and systems that we conventionally use to negotiate between public agency, performance cultures, and art. Each was influenced by the architectures of the commercial arcades of the 1800's to present, as well as the 'arcaded' social media platforms of Facebook and Twitter, where individual choice, subdivided space, and endless opportunities for engagement enable new models for interaction and communication. Each example (to varying degrees) impacted beyond the familiar constraints of public presentation to produce new relationships with the audience. However, the *Intersections* project slipped into the patterns of territorialisation by charging entry into its 'village' of works: constructing a bordered condition, gate-keeping tasks, and specific transactions or expectations amongst its audiences. Being situated inside a gallery, the Manchester exhibition encountered these same issues to a much larger extent, deferring to the elitism of the gallery space and the celebrity of its artists.

The Performance Arcade finds a more pertinent connection closer to home, with the *One Day Sculpture* programme of works run by Litmus (Massey University) across New Zealand in 2008-2009. Indeed *The Performance Arcade* concept was being formulated in the context where this project was being presented: as I worked in the Performance Design degree at Massey University and ran a programme of works at the Print Factory performance laboratory. Like the Arcade, the *One Day Sculpture* experiment engaged with an accidental audience, by putting works in the way of unexpecting locals within New Zealand's own public terrains, cityscapes, imaginaries, and cultural fabric. The radically transient quality of this programme allowed for artists to navigate diverse and intricate places, many of which have something of the "seemingly illogical spaces" that Caren Kaplan's nomad traverses: locations like the small rural town of Hawera, a lot for relocated houses, a private jet between Sydney and Auckland, postcards, a cinema, and weather forecasts – each became sites for performances, interventions and social sculpture.

The Performance Arcade is an event that addresses the public in the same way: occupying the open, undisciplined environment of Wellington Waterfront at the edge of the fluid space of the ocean, in dialogue with the container port seen across the harbour. It is a place away from the confines of the street or institutional architecture, occupying a space where codes of behaviour and traffic management are more relaxed: with less road markings, traffic signals, and without the intangible rules and disciplined spaces of the gallery or theatre. There is a political resonance to these encounters, to the experience of coming across performance within the fabric of everyday contexts where the invisible disciplinary structures are not assumed. It has the effect of liquifying space, unsettling it, and unbordering it in a way that demonstrates how congruent my curatorial processes are with my solo performance in works like *Night Walk*. Also, where I do make work in the theatre, projects like *SLEEP/WAKE* play with the limits of the performance enclosure by making visible the concealed features of La MaMa's Ellen Stewart Theater, with its old proscenium stage at the back, the complex matrix of technical apparatus and old walkways, and a more blurred edge between stage and auditorium. The examination of binary divisions in the work (between sleep and wake, art and science) reflects Aldea's statements about subdivision and state/polis territorialisation, but also considers in its composition the striated nature of the

theatrical space, through the 'quotation' and eventual misuse of the proscenium arch and elevated stage, employing these features as devices in the poetic exploration of sleeping and waking.

This preference for deterritorialising or re-boundarying of space through performance is also examined in other works in this study: such as in the dense interior of a tumbleweed (drawn in *Space Invaders II*), in the three-dimensionality of underwater movement (*Subdivision* and *Many Breaths*), upon the unfixed mobile surface of the ocean, or the flat surface of a salt plain made uncertain and precarious by situating the work inside a large black sphere (*Night Walk*).

Night Walk works with a slick black surface that performance or spectation cannot penetrate or escape from: the black curtains of the stage, the dense pre- and post- colonial landscapes, theatre or gallery walls, and the surface of the ocean. What the work promises, and what it yearns for, is immersion. Audiences respond to this allure, pushing their faces, hands, and bodies into the plastic as they crowd around it in Wellington, Sydney, and Melbourne. The move towards the beach and the coastline in later iterations is a return: a return to the allure of the water, and that time when the ocean held mystique and intrigue (as discussed by Steve Mentz in *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean*, 2009). By attempting to return to the sea, to return to childhood, or to a romantic pre-modern notion of the sea, the practice finally enters that space below the vessel, below the surface, where movement becomes three-dimensional rather than planar. Works like *Subdivision I* and *Many Breaths* provides a conclusion to this movement from earthbound movement and nomadic preoccupations, towards a greater liquidity, and ultimately – towards a pelagic state.

Subdivision 1 (Appendix 04) was an early work in this PhD study, presented as part of the 2014 Zooming Fluid States Festival in Rijeka, Croatia, which launched the global programme of events in Performance Studies International's Fluid States project. The principal objective of this installation was to cast a grid of small polystyrene spheres just under the surface of the harbour, at the end of the city's 2km long breakwater. Threaded on invisible lengths of fishing line and spaced at intervals of exactly 1 metre apart, 300 small plastic 'pearls' were threaded on lines to float just under the surface of the water. As the tide reached its full ebb they would appear to almost touch the surface but would never quite emerge. Arranged with mathematical precision over 50x7m, this grid of dots undulated with the swell, attempting to map or colonise the unfixed, transient nature of the sea with the rigidity of land-based navigational systems and agricultural subdivision.



Fig 38: Trubridge, Sam (2014) *Subdivision I* (*Kvarnerski Zaljev*). For Zooming Fluid States Festival, PSI#21 Fluid States, performance of unknowing. Rijeka, Croatia.

The sea-bed 6 metres deep became a terrain upon which a grid of anchor points were laid down by local scuba divers working for the festival. Fine monofilament threads attached to this grid held the spheres just below the surface of water: a man-made mathematical system within a fluid space. Despite these intentions, the aspirations of the work were defied by the challenges of working underwater. As with *Night Walk*, an ambitious task was pitted against an unforgiving and ever-moving, ever-changing element. The uncooperative threads, rigging, and miniature buoys refused to float in perfect lines in the water, despite hours of careful line-work on the sea bed with three ‘technical’ scuba divers, and despite hundreds of dives back and forth to adjust positions, wipe off engine oil and scum that had accumulated on the lines, accounting for the sway of various currents and swells in a six-metre deep column of water. Beneath, various sunken artefacts and detritus became tangled in the archaeologist’s grid of mooring lines: bricks, bottles, knives, shoes, tyres, baskets, and an old wallet... Above, plastic rubbish floated through the rigid formations of the polystyrene balls. Diving without a tank, there was danger that I would get tangled in lines on my dives. The work anticipated the *Deep Anatomy* cluster of Fluid States where the format of ‘the incursion’ was examined as a method of engaging with a site through creative, analytical, and community-based practices. In *Subdivision I*, tensions between land-based systems and aquatic states were examined in an endeavour that was poetically suggestive: casting a shallow ‘net’ that revealed deeper, submarine ecologies, hydrological movements, and environmental tensions in the space. It also examined, in a semi-satirical fashion, an exhausting, absurd, and doomed preoccupation with applying land-based (terrestrial) two-dimensional mapping systems into a complex four-dimensional environment.

The second subaquatic ‘incursion’ in this thesis occurred during the *Deep Anatomy* event: with the performance installation *Many Breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)*. In 2012, on the bottom of a lagoon near Clarence Town I had found an anchor, covered in coral and weed. In 2015 I invited *Deep Anatomy* participants and members of the island community to fill bottles and plastic vessels with their breath and attach them to its shank. Thus, piece-by-piece, their individual breaths became a buoyant mass that lifted the anchor from the sea-bed and returned it to the surface in a collaborative performance-act and poetic salvage of an item that had rested there for a more than a century.

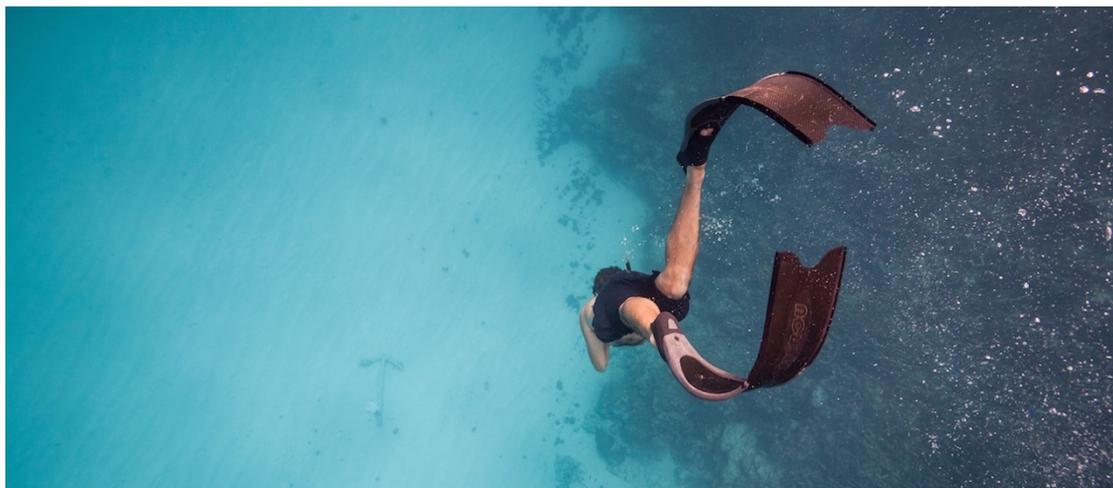


Fig 39: Trubridge, Sam (2015) *many breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)*. For *Deep Anatomy*, PSi#21 Fluid States, Performances of Unknowing. Photo: Daan Verhoeven.

Moving from the vessel and the boat discussed in the last chapter, we now move to a maritime device. The anchor is a boat's connection with the earth through the sea floor. It

creates a link between the floating, fluid state above, and the safety and security of terra firma below, by holding a boat fast in storms and keeping it in harbour. The anchor is a quintessential symbol of old maritime culture and seafaring. It reminds us of the passing of this era that Steve Mentz describes: “the end of the age of commercial sail and the advent of airline travel, airborne warfare, containerization, the automation of ports, and even the romance of outer space have displaced the sea from the centre of our cultural imagination” (*At the Bottom of Shakespeare’s Ocean*, 2009, ix). At fifteen metres deep, the anchor is twice the full fathom five where fathers lie and coral grows on bones. This is not a space where performance often ventures, except the athletic performance of divers and their minds. But there is great potential in bringing performance to this place where we should not go as an audience. The sea’s surface is like a stage curtain or veil that we must struggle to look through, and the idea was that a breath of air could raise an anchor from behind this veil as a messenger from this place.



Fig 40: Trubridge, Sam (2014) *many breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed (study)*.

Fig 41: Trubridge, Sam (2015) *many breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed*. For *Deep Anatomy*, P*Si*#21 Fluid States, Performances of Unknowing. Photo: Stephen Keenan.



Upon filling with air, the canopy of breaths caused the anchor to lift, and sit on its shanks, bobbing in the swell, but still resting on the bottom. Then with a few more breaths it was buoyant enough to rise. Upon breaching the surface of the ocean, the construction of nets and cabling that held the breaths was suddenly exposed to the large swell that had begun to roll in. Bouncing up and down on these waves caused stress upon the steel rings attaching the flotation, and after a few seconds they snapped. As the anchor dislodged from the cloud of breaths and plummeted back to deep, the bodies watching from the rolling surface of the water all relaxed in dismay. In a cloud of sand, it landed back where it started. Except its arrow didn’t point South anymore, it pointed out to sea and back to Europe. The plan had been to send the anchor in that direction afterwards, to Santorini in Greece as the ‘Vessel’ for the next Fluid States cluster, as a gift from an older era of seafaring, from an island with a large population of Greek immigrants who have built churches here in the style of Santorini. But the sea did not yield the anchor in the way we had planned. It is in this way that *Many Breaths*, unable to produce an artefact or trophy, became the story that would be told about it. Like the one that got away, performance art thrives on the myth, and the retelling of that myth⁵².

⁵² So it is with many of the works in *Deep Anatomy*: performed on a small island, to small audiences, in difficult to document circumstances. Each undergoes an almost alchemical transformation into the storytelling and recounts presented here and in the *Deep Anatomy* catalogue: a direct transformation from matter into the intangible, a ‘sublimation’ perhaps. Mick Douglas lost a kayak laden with salt during his performance. Untethered, it drifted away from the shore at Diamond Crystal and into the

We cannot help but idealise that which is lost or unreachable, and wherever there is water there is romance: forever entangled with the risk of drowning, of places too deep for breath, where we lose things that are close to us, and where we cannot be found. By naming the artist projects selected for *Deep Anatomy* ‘incursions’, the cluster attempted to resist the notion that new knowledge or methods resides completely in exoticised others, or through external sources. Traditional academic, touristic, or creative excursions seek knowledge elsewhere, through ‘the other’, and by means of an ingress into foreign or unknown territory. However, in this event where athletics, academia, and creative practice met (with and within) an isolated local community, it was necessary to resist exoticism, using the concept of incursion to re-centre any journey that ventured too far into novelty or voyeurism.⁵³

I returned to Long Island in 2017 with the ambition to raise the anchor a second time, for a new iteration of the work. This does not imply any failure of the 2015 performance, rather it represents a commitment to developing the narrative around the work, where the first iteration left an opportunity for its continuation as an extended exploration of pelagic states. The original hypothesis for the work was that I could harness the productive energies of a community of divers to create an unprecedented kind of underwater performance. My second iteration pursued this original hypothesis, approaching the process using new materials, and inviting the divers of Vertical Blue 2017 to breathe their air into the salvaged nose-cone of a US space rocket attached to the anchor. This new addition to the work had been recovered from a nearby beach, where it had washed ashore 10-15 years earlier. A label peeled from a cylinder inside names it as a rocket jettison motor, constructed in October 1990. Attached to the anchor, the cone would slowly fill with air to lift off from the sea bed. Encrusted with sea life, and pitted by years of corrosion, the anchor was still in its same place, pointing East and out to sea. It is a different artefact entirely from the nose-cone, one that speaks of previous centuries of travel and discovery. The nose-cone represented the aspirations of the 20th century, a piece of flotsam cast off from a missile test, satellite rocket, or space-shuttle. Brought together on the sea bed and fuelled by the breaths of many divers, the intention was for these two items to travel again, escaping the sea bed and ‘lifting off’ to the surface of the water 15 metres above.

Caribbean Sea between Cuba and The Bahamas to be documented only in search notices that were issued at the Fluid States cluster in Rarotonga, at PSi#22 in Melbourne, and in Performance Research 18.2 *On Sea / At Sea*. Amelia Taverner’s patchwork shroud of garments was lost to the elements as well, quickly shredded by the wind and tide around the jagged remains of the wreck of the Miss Shirley (extracted from *Sudden Depth: fluid states in the shallow sea*, Appendix 15).

⁵³ “Thus Tracy C Davis found a familiar dramaturgy and epic poetic performance within the structure of the freediving event and its disciplined competitors. By venturing to the abandoned edge of the island Mick Douglas came across a salt farm, and found himself back in the circulation of ideas around issues of global capital and trade that powers his ongoing body of work about salt. It is a poignant and melancholic discovery that on this island, ‘the exotic other’ has been erased with the extinction of the Lucayan Indian, as well as a number of indigenous animal species, such as the Caribbean Seal. So it is that the touristic excursion only ends amongst ruins such as Diamond Crystal Salt, the old cotton mills and churches, in the silent uninhabitable depth of the Blue Hole, the wrecks of boats, the wreckage of coral die-off, or with the absence of a First People. In this space of ruin Mick Douglas returns to the communities in Clarence Town and seeks knowledge and history within. Similarly with Tracy C Davis, Sally J Morgan, and Jess Richards—they do not pursue their inquiry at the bottom of a diver’s trajectory, in that dark compressed space at the bottom of the sea. Instead they look within, like the diver does, and find a startling and sudden depth in that closest space—in a childhood memory, in a lover’s touch, or upon the surface of the water where preparation and subtle decisions make the dive. Here is the paradox of this space, with its misleading shallow waters and patterns of light blues, greens, and bright sand that open suddenly into the dizzying darkness of that Blue Hole. ‘Here be monsters,’ the cliché goes—where Lucayan beliefs describe a terrible beast ‘Lusca’ and where many contemporary Long Islanders will not set foot. Here, where a bright lagoon gives way to depth we may face the terror or the unknown of the other, and perhaps return changed” (extracted from *Sudden Depth: fluid states in the shallow sea*, Appendix 15).



Fig 42: Recovering the nose-cone from West Harbour, Long Island, The Bahamas. Photo: Phil Clayton.

Fig 43: The nose-cone aboard the Darville brothers' boat.

Fig 44: The label from a jettison motor.

As with *Night Walk*, the process behind *Many Breaths* has created an autopoietic sequence of events that included planning processes, preparations, and several salvage attempts – from its first iteration in *Deep Anatomy* to the ongoing narratives that it continues to produce. The retrieval of the nose-cone from an isolated bay provides a good example. Attempting to access the bay by land we encountered uncooperative landowners who denied access to the main track in. Another track had been identified on Google Earth, but we had to turn back after an hour of scrambling over rocks and through bushes that had completely swallowed this route. This left me with only one option: to enter the bay by boat. Arriving at the narrow pass in local freediver Luke Maillis' skiff, we found a strong outgoing tide, large coral heads looming out of the choppy water, and the wreck of a New Zealand yacht lying on the rocks at the opening, its hull torn open. We had 15 minutes to retrieve the cone before the tide would run out and strand us in the bay overnight.

Four days later I enlisted two local divers to help set the work up underwater. Using a compressor to pump air from their boat to where they worked at depth, Ricky and Danny Darville installed the nose-cone on the bottom and attached it to the anchor shaft by chains⁵⁴. Soon twenty divers arrived and began filling the nose-cone with their breath. Of this group, three held world records, and one, Italian diver Alessia Zecchini, had just that morning broken the world record for Constant Weight with a dive to 102 metres. Slowly an upside-down puddle of air grew – a wobbling pool of mercury that reflected the divers faces as they each pushed into the gap underneath, to spew a cloud of bubbles into the quicksilver cloud held within.

Despite detailed planning, preparation, and advice from an engineer, the system did not work as planned. As the nose-cone filled with breath, its shallow dome became lighter so that any slight imbalance caused it to tip and 'belch' out enough air for it to become negatively buoyant again. Twice the divers were engulfed in a cloud of escaped breath that expanded in volume as it rushed to the surface past them. The Darville brothers tried filling the dome with enough air for it to float up onto the chains, but between the two of them it was not possible to control the rolling motion of this heavy object as it filled with air from their compressor. The nose cone and the anchor were not coming up. Spirits fell on the surface as we tried to find a solution. The divers decided that they would all swim down together and recover the anchor themselves, carrying it to the surface using the breath contained within their own bodies. So, using a breathe-up technique known as 'packing' they all pumped as much as air as they could into their lungs and dived down to the anchor.

⁵⁴ I was later told by a local historian that the Darville family were descended from pirates who had been pardoned by the governors of the islands centuries ago.

It lifted easily and flew to the surface amid a fluttering swarm of fins and wet-suited bodies. Encouraged by the ease of this maneuver, they decided to bring the nose-cone up too. Although much heavier, it also lifted, floating up like a jellyfish to surface next to the boat.



Fig 45, Fig 46, Fig. 47: Trubridge, Sam (2017) *many breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)*. Photo: Daan Verhoeven.

Four days later, I sunk the anchor onto the sand at the side of the Blue Hole, next to the platform where the freedivers train and compete. On the edge of an abyss 202 metres deep I secured a lift bag borrowed from the Darville brothers' treasure-hunting kit and invited divers to add their breath to the work for a third time. The anchor floated after 20 minutes and about as many breaths. It proved my point and did exactly what I had hoped it would do. But somehow I found the struggle with the nose cone and the anchor at Compass Rose Beach more interesting, despite its apparent failure. It revealed how, in that space of much greater depth, in this pelagic space of the open sea, our engineering, our understanding of physics, logistics, as well as our creative practices are all pushed to their limits. As a result, we are required to adapt our practices, to work together, and constantly revise our plans in this environment. As well as revealing these things, the work also showed that I had as much to learn about this environment as Bas Jan Ader had, and it helped me understand more the nature of his hubris as well as my own. All the more for this perhaps, there was a compelling poetry to the sequence of events surrounding *Many Breaths* that continues to produce more

meaning. A poetic dialogue continues to evolve between these two incongruous objects (the nose cone and the anchor) sunk to this depth. Both are from pelagic zones (outer space, like the ocean, is a pelagic, unboundaried environment) and both objects operate between atmospheres, or layers of space, providing critical actions that either tether a vessel to firm ground or propel it away from the planet's gravitational pull. Together they always formed an incongruous but poetic partnership that never quite functioned: the above meeting the below, and the 20th Century of space travel meeting previous centuries of ocean-voyaging and discovery⁵⁵.



Fig 48: Trubridge, Sam (2017) *many breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)*. Photo: Daan Verhoeven.

The nose cone and the anchor were then packed into a wooden crate to voyage together by sea to New Zealand for the *Deep Anatomy* exhibition (Appendix 10) at Silo6 in Auckland. But once again, the objects' incompatibility and evasiveness confounded my plans. The Bahamian Antiquities, Museums, and Monuments Corporation seized the crate from the work yard at 'Under the Sun' convenience store and drove it under police escort to the Long Island Museum before shipping it off to Nassau. Bahamian law dictates that any object retrieved from the sea or buried in the land that is older than 50 years is classed as an antiquity and belongs to the Bahamian government⁵⁶. The nose-cone was governed by a separate agreement with the United States, that obliges the Bahamian government to declare and return any space wreckage to the US space programme and the US Navy. It turns out that the anchor would not have survived long out of the water anyway, due to the rapid disintegration that occurs in iron artefacts once exposed to air after long periods in salt water. It is now sitting in a tank of salt water, waiting for the time that the National Museum

⁵⁵ Nick Maillis, a historian and salvage expert from Clarence Town dated the anchor to somewhere between 160-200 years old. The shape of the flukes indicate it was of American construction, and the holes in the top of the shank show where wooden crossbars were passed through. Maillis tells me that American ships only used wooden crossbars between the 1820's-1880's.

⁵⁶ With the exception of Spanish gold, which is pledged to the Spanish government due to an agreement made recently with the government of Spain.

of Bahamas can afford an electrolysis bath, which is used to stabilise ions and stop the oxidisation process.

These objects' refusal to lift together or travel together continues to produce more meaning for this thesis. It reveals something important about the pelagic space, and about the sovereign laws that attempt to rule these environments. Within the fluid space of interdisciplinary, multi-modal, itinerant practice, this example demonstrates the importance of specialist knowledge and local knowledge – in this case knowledge of archaeology, marine engineering, salvage, and the sovereign laws of that place. This proves my earlier assertions that work made in a pelagic space must always have respect for, work with, and negotiate with these factors. More can also be said about the evasive quality of the work and its refusal to produce an object. For once again it had slipped through my fingers, and once again the work was unable to produce an artefact or trophy – instead slipping into mythology and storytelling. However, rather than sinking to the sea floor again, these items instead had disappeared into a bureaucratic space: in a sense sublimating or quite literally disintegrating, but not completely lost, but just beyond reach – in the warehouse of the National Museum of The Bahamas. This quality, and the rapid oxidisation of the anchor, reminds me of the moment of waking, when things dreamed-of cannot be passed through the liquid surface of the mind into a physical / real space above the waves. In childhood, trinkets I had dreamt of often fell away like sand through my fingers upon waking, and I would awake mournful for the things I could not take with me.

This evasiveness, where objects escape us and slip away into the deep, is intrinsic to this study, and to the definition of a pelagic performance practice. For anything that does not float will sink. The moment that the anchor reached the surface in the first iteration of the work was a moment of sudden appearance and exposure – a dramatic stage entry perhaps. On the beach, spectators applauded. For it to suddenly disappear again so soon was a disappointment, but one that preserved the mystery of that moment and the mystery of the sea as an untameable element that will not be stage-managed, directed, or coerced. This recalls the 'Orphic' nature of the sea that Steve Mentz describes in "At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean" and the mythic qualities of recounting performance art that is described earlier in this chapter.

I am reminded of the many things we lose at sea, and those things hinted at in my editorial for the *ON SEA/AT SEA* journal, when I describe the sea as our planet's own "inner space", a place of 'submerged things, dark fantasies, and intimate secrets' (1). Among the stories of the rediscovery of the Titanic, the submerged ruins of Heracleion, or the Kursk submarine I think of my own personal relationship with this world of lost objects. Like the dream-treasures mentioned earlier, I can recall a host of other items lost at sea in my childhood. There were the new bed sheets lost overboard in Port Malekula, Vanuatu, where the sharks were too ferocious to dive. There was an apple crumble that came tumbling out of the oven on a passage across the Pacific Ocean. The ceramic pot it was in smashed, sending shards through the food, so it was thrown overboard. I remember lying in bed two hours later, thinking about the two miles of ocean below us, and wondering whether or not the pot had reached the bottom yet, and trying to imagine the creatures that were eating our apple crumble down there. I recall objects lost to other spaces: such as a shark tooth that fell into the deep recesses inside the boat, or a windsurfer board that I did not tie correctly to the transom. The next morning some Tahitian children had found it on the beach and were paddling it around. According to the salvage laws and custom on the island we could not ask for it back. There were also things that we could not take with us because we did not have enough space on the boat – treasures found on beaches or underwater that had to stay

where they were. Upon returning from the UK in 1988 to visit our relatives we encountered the biosecurity laws at Auckland airport, and a bunch of peacock feathers that we had gathered at Robin Hill park in the Isle of Wight were taken for incineration. Customs officers would climb aboard our boat in each port to inspect storage lockers, holds, and bilges for any biomatter. And in this body of work I can also recount the tumbleweed, unable to join me on my return to New Zealand, and how the process of drawing became a strategy for passing this object through borders. This is the evasiveness of the pelagic condition: not just because of its unboundaried state, but also because of the state boundaries and laws that would control it and keep it in its place. This is the challenge when human laws interact with our mobility: do we obey them, or how much do we attempt to remain fluid, boundless, and unfixed? There are risks in both directions, and complete boundlessness is as fatal as complete fixity. So once again the pelagic artist must weave, forecast, negotiate, and navigate unstable territories between lines of control and conditions of freedom and movement, proving the fifth key finding that to be pelagic is to work with uncertainty and change.

At the close of this chapter, it is important to note that the practice is still clearly in a state of becoming or moving towards a pelagic condition rather than one of arrival or settlement. The story of each work's realisation effectively demonstrates this transitional, becoming, quality of the practice: where each work proceeds through a series of iterations, much like a scientist's experiments, which gradually reveal their pelagic qualities and the challenges of making work in this way. This practice is in the process of 'becoming-pelagic'. In the way that a selkie pulls off their skin, there are processes of transformation and becoming at play. Much of my work does not yet inhabit the truly pelagic spaces in the middle of the ocean. It may never do. Bas Jan Ader's attempt to do so was part of his undoing. So, we may have to admit that the middle of the ocean will always remain unknowable and unreachable, as Steve Mentz says "The first challenge of the ocean is the basic challenge the ocean always poses: to know an ungraspable thing" (ix). But here, 100 metres out from the shore in Long Island, the work operates between two surfaces – creating a dialogue between the two largest boundaries of the sea – where the sea meets the air above, and where it rests on the ground below. And here *Many Breaths* takes performance somewhere that it has never been before, into 15 metres of water between the surface of the sea and the sea bed.



07 CLOSING STATEMENTS on pelagic states

We return to the six key findings which were outlined in the introduction of this exegesis and addressed individually in each of the previous chapters. Chapters 1 and 2 defined the gap in contemporary theories on nomadism, Chapter 3 discussed how pelagic practices create a fluid poetic, Chapter 4 demonstrated how this multi-modal practice transgresses and liquefies boundaries, and Chapter 5 defined its complex spatiality before concluding on the instability and flux that characterises pelagic states. Throughout all of this, precedents have been examined in order to demonstrate the final finding – that while there are artists with similar work, there are none who work across all the disciplines and modes in the way that I do, especially within the liquid spaces of the ocean.

Many have never been to sea or been at sea. Instead they stick to the coastlines, chartering the shallow waters, inlets, and straits between landforms and terrestrial practices. This exegesis has proven how my creative practice is unique because it sets out to make the sea a destination, seeking that evasive ‘pelagic’ space undefined-by and unconnected-to any particular coast, landmass, or sea floor. Throughout the past six chapters I have pursued a hypothesis for a pelagic practice, exemplified through various creative projects in performance and visual arts. By enacting this fluidity or nomadism shaped through the experience of being at sea I have managed to radicalise the nomadic principle as outlined by previous theorists and taken my creative practice into a space and state only explored in part by the artistic precedents discussed in the Literature Review and the chapters that followed.

To be pelagic is to open oneself to uncertainty. In this ‘pelagic state’ a thing is neither/nor. By embracing mobility and migration as the condition, and by embracing the liquidity of space and form there is a sublimation that occurs between a thing being nothing and everything at the same time. Pelagic thinking does not subdivide knowledge into ‘fields’ or dogmas. Instead, pelagic aspirations are holistic, searching across disparate territories for common threads and productive contradictions. This process relates to many precedents in seafaring practices and cultures, from Western maritime practices, to Pacific navigators, or the Hebridean seafarers documented by Robert Macfarlane in *The Wild Places* (2007) where he observes the ‘pilot poetics’ that had names for the various qualities of wave, water, current, or mixing zone; where “the acquisition of information shifted the outline and position of the whole” (129). He observes how even on fresh water, the river was for Mark Twain “a capricious text, which punished literalists and allegorists alike for the fixity of their interpretations” (ibid).

Many precedents for nomadism and oceanism have been investigated in practice and theory. In each example, I have found them falling short of the concepts and processes that I have been pursuing. For this reason, the terminology has needed to evolve from the limited definitions available, in particular with reference to nomadic creative practices and theories. The pelagic term offers a solution to this problem and provides a definition for the practice that is unflavoured by preceding frameworks or concepts. It is however, an obscure term, which requires regular reference back to nomadism and oceanism in order to locate itself and find its context.

There is no tradition or single canon for making work in this way, and the practice cannot be refined in secrecy. Iteration is crucial. Preparation is crucial. Collaboration is crucial. Planning

Fig 49: Photo: Carlos Correa.

is crucial. Each work is not a single thing. Each work is a journey. Each work negotiates a path through various territories, often seeking unfamiliar terrain, but always retaining some kind of contained logic or practice into these spaces. Moreover, by creating contexts and institutions (The Performance Arcade, Deep Anatomy, New Zealand New Performance Festival) for creative practice, as much as working within other contexts and institutions on my own works, I have been able to test the hypothesis – engaging open-ness and uncertainty.

Operation within three-dimensional and time-based (four dimensional) contexts are key to this practice – using seemingly empty surfaces and seemingly empty fields of operation as fluid stages and scenes of activity or intervention. Although the surface of the ocean seems unboundaried, it is itself a boundary between states: a meeting place between the air above and the water below. This recognition of boundaries (as well as performance or intervention upon them) is an important feature of most actions or moments within the practice: such as the liquefaction of landscapes, the entry into the water, the dive into the depths, or emerging up from the deep. This exegesis places movement between states and through borders as an important central experience, theme, methodology, and concept to the study, as expressed through the following transgressions:

- crossing borders, geography, walls (vertical thresholds)
- breaking the surface of the water, depth, and layers (horizontal thresholds)
- moving between art, science, sport (disciplinary perspectives)
- moving from the visual, to the theatrical, and the literary (between states)
- moving between theory and practice
- moving between sleep and wake (states of consciousness and perception)
- traversing the frame of the gallery or the proscenium arch
- moving between scales and modes of operation (curation, solo, collaboration)

These transgressions, ‘passages’ or ‘rites of passage’ demonstrate how a pelagic practice is able to deterritorialise fixed, sedentary, and pastoral paradigms, engaging a liquid state of wandering in order to come to its answers, rather than through a static or linear arrival at solution-based processes. There is also an invisible, almost-incomplete, always-completing quality to these works, since they are not only works in process, but also seek out productive and reproductive endings. This is echoed in Kevin Brown’s article ‘The Orphan Sea’ for *On Sea/At Sea* where he discusses Caridad Svich’s ‘water plays’ and her attempt to write theatre based on fluid, liquid dramaturgies, where an intangible, evasive quality of writing and storytelling emerges. Like navigation, my pelagic practice does not fixate on a single destination in order to cross oceans, but instead steers towards the larger radius of signs that surround a land mass or objective. This ‘not needing to see the thing that you are seeking’ defines this pelagic practice and its processes: navigating and orientating in a haptic, embodied way between knowing and not knowing.

Presented at the end of the research process, the exhibition ‘pelagic states’ focussed on *Night Walk* and *Many Breaths*. The accompanying catalogue text explored the evasiveness of the pelagic state as discussed in the previous chapter, lamenting the impossibility of preserving works beyond the milieu that they were formed in. Thus, the exhibition became an examination of this transience as a way of summing the practice and bringing it into documented form. It didn’t create another liquid space, like the *Deep Anatomy* exhibition in Silo6 (Appendix 10), The Performance Arcade, or the flooded stage of *SLEEP/WAKE* at La MaMa. Instead the exhibition used the conventions and history of the white cube gallery to enhance the sense of the items representing an ‘afterlife’ of those works, providing views

into pelagic environments, and presenting ‘extracts’ from the pelagic experience to explore this sense of intangibility and loss. Thus, three screens provided portholes in the wall of the Engine Room gallery, where video from underwater cameras illuminated the space in blue light – as if they were windows of an aquarium or glass-bottomed boat. Next door, the video installation of *Night Walk* in Culpra Station is folded into a corner, providing two contrasting views of the performance: the fluid billowing interior filmed on a head-mounted GoPro opposite the fixed camera angle, where the liquid shape of the plastic sphere slowly shrinks within a static, arid landscape. At the end of the room the sphere itself breathes in the space: going from a completely empty form wrinkled flat on the floor, inflating to its full shape every fifteen minutes to push against the architecture and its fixtures, before exhaling, collapsing, and shrinking into its starting shape again.

Accompanying these elements were the collection of ‘extracts’ – smaller inclusions in the exhibition that played with the formality of these larger contributions: sand from Long Island, some Caribbean sea salt, an electrical conduit and label from one of the nose-cone’s jettison motor, and the Deep Anatomy catalogue. In the same room as *Night Walk* there is a folded black rubbish bag, a miniature video of the Lake Tyrell walk, drawings of the work, a map of the world with my travels at ground level marked on it, and a piece of coal given to me by Barry Pearce from his ancestors’ fire pit at Culpra Station. Together, these objects explore an alternative scale and intimacy, possible meanings for the work, different modes of engagement, as a sense of loss surrounding the actual event that has passed, as well as providing material evidence of the works where materiality is lost through other media. These extracts also documented where objects and actions had failed to pass through boundaries or borders, or where conditions arrest a movement or fluidity, stopping the pelagic subject in its tracks. Thus, the pelagic artist finds strategies to being these elements ‘through’ in some way, as a kind of transgression or alchemical transformation. In this way the tumbleweed drawing is included on one wall, as an object turned into a drawing in order to pass through biosecurity thresholds and state boundaries. In similar fashion, the collected sand from Long Island documents a solid substrate (rock) made liquid, with the salt documenting the complementary process – of liquid (sea water) turned solid.



Fig 50: The ‘Pelagic States’ exhibition at the Engine Room, Massey University, Wellington, NZ. Photos: Amelia Taverner.

One of the challenges with this research is fitting a hypothesis or research question to a practice that is fluid by nature. It may seem contradictory to do so, since the device of the hypothesis or research question may be considered to be obstructively linear, or teleological, with analogue in the exploits of Western navigation, exploration, and maritime practices rather than the Non-Western cultural models or paradigms referred to

throughout⁵⁷. So, the challenge remains – how to define and conclude this research in a way that best articulates how this body of work has made a unique contribution to the field of creative practice and performance? The answer lies in the concept of the creative practitioner as a negotiator and a navigator of territories – releasing the artist from service to mechanisms and disciplinary constraints, whilst holding them accountable for the constant rewriting, creation, and exploration of new paradigms. In this way experiments in arts presentation like New Zealand New Performance Festival, Deep Anatomy, and The Performance Arcade become crucial exemplars of the study alongside keystone works like *Night Walk* and *Many Breaths*. Together this diverse collection of projects, unified by a common philosophical/theoretical framework confirms this thesis and body of work as a response to a contemporary context and conditions that are shifting under our feet – the unstable state of the environment and of contemporary politics, both liquefied by the unfamiliar influence of online terrains, such as the echo chamber, fake news, alternative facts, the confusion between politics and populism. In this way, we find that our contemporary landscape is not a LANDscape at all, it is not a clear image, but instead comprises a fluid challenging environment with layers and threats — more like an ocean or seascape than anything else — the ‘liquid uncertainty’ of Zygmunt Bauman. And as such there is a strong need for an (as yet) unprecedented and unarticulated model for a creative practice that responds to these conditions.

The original hypothesis proposed the following: *a creative practice that is not defined by boundaries or disciplines, (but works across and between complex spatial, temporal, and cultural environments) may unsettle or question the assumed boundaries or constructs that it encounters*. There is clear evidence of these qualities in the works and theory in this exegesis that have been presented, and there is clear evidence of how the outcomes and key findings make a unique contribution to creative practices. As discussed before, I do not claim or appropriate this fluid oceanic practice from the owners and custodians of this knowledge in the Pacific, liquid continent. Instead, this practice applies these principles within a Western art milieu, critiquing that milieu, and adopting the ‘pelagic’ turn to set it apart slightly, functioning as a ‘blended methodology’ (Sophia Pearce). The works developed as examples of this practice demonstrate that this pelagic condition evades preservation and definition, resisting the object that provides material evidence. In the same way, a sample scooped from the pelagic place of the ocean into a test-tube, petri-dish, or tank will lose many of its pelagic qualities as soon as it is separated from its context. The sample may have all the associated biologic and chemical composition, but it will have lost the flow of its currents, thermoclines, and hydrological mixing zones; it is no longer the deep blue of open ocean with the light playing through it; and it is no longer the movement of fish, larvae, plankton, salp, jellyfish, sea-birds, and other species. Likewise, the pelagic condition is only preserved in that moment, in those conditions, and that state of liquidity and flux. Despite my attempts to control, document, or extract artefacts from it, this space remains as elusive and as intangible as a dream-space. It only exists there. It cannot be kept. It cannot be forever. It cannot be one thing. It cannot be preserved. It cannot be charted. It cannot be fully known. It cannot be fully spoken. It cannot be mine. It is never complete. It cannot be this. It only exists there, in the space that is passing or that has passed. It is unreachable. It only exists there. It only exists there. It only exists there.

⁵⁷ Captain James Cook’s search for the North-West Passage or his attempt to capture the Transit of Venus, and Christopher Columbus setting out across the Atlantic in an attempt to prove that the earth wasn’t flat. These actions, partnered with colonial expansion, are markedly different in their motivations from the nomadic and oceanic practices discussed earlier, but have the structure of a scientific hypothesis or question.

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APPENDIX 01

list of works

2014

All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever

Form: theatre production

Role: performance designer

20-31 May 2014, Bats Theatre, Wellington, NZ

In Visibility: staged acts and the unseen

Form: conference paper

Role: author

27 June 2014, 'Restoring Balance: ecology, sustainability, performance' ADSA conference, Victoria University, Wellington, NZ

Subdivision I (Kvarnerski Zaljev)

Form: performance installation

Role: artist

6 September 2014, Zooming Fluid States Festival, Rijeka, Croatia.

Disciplinary Action: performance and science and transgression

Form: conference paper

Role: author

11 October 2014, 'Breaking the Ice' art-science conference, for ICEfest 2014, Christchurch, NZ

The Performance Series 2014

Form: exhibition

Role: curator

31 November - 11 December 2014, 30 Upstairs Gallery, Wellington, NZ

Space Invaders II

Form: performance art

Role: artist

8-9 December 2014, The Performance Series 2014, 30Upstairs Gallery, Wellington, NZ

2015

The Performance Arcade 2015

Form: performance festival

Role: curator and artistic director

18-22 February 2015, Wellington, NZ

New Zealand New Performance

Form: performance and theatre festival

Role: artistic director

12-29 March 2015, La Mama, New York, USA

SLEEP/WAKE

Form: dance/theatre production

Role: director and performance designer
19-22 March 2015, Ellen Stewart Theater, La MaMa, New York, USA

All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever

Form: theatre production

Role: performance designer

27-28 March 2015, Ellen Stewart Theater, La MaMa, New York, USA

Deep Anatomy

Form: symposium

Role: director

26 April - 10 May 2015, For PSi21 Fluid States: performances of unknowing, Long Island, The Bahamas

many breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)

Form: performance art

Role: artist

9 May 2015, for Deep Anatomy symposium, Long Island, The Bahamas

All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever

Form: theatre production

Role: performance designer

9-19 September 2015, Q Theatre, Auckland, NZ

Night Walk (Culpra)

Form: performance art

Role: artist

13 September 2015, Interpretive Wonderings symposium, Culpra, Australia

Night Walk (six iterations)

Form: performance art

Role: artist

26 September - 23 October 2015, Performing Mobilities conference, RMIT + VCA Galleries, Melbourne, Australia

The Performance Series 2015

Form: exhibition

Role: curator

20-28 November 2015, 30Upstairs Gallery, Wellington, NZ

Night Walk (Wellington)

Form: installation

Role: artist

20-28 November 2015, The Performance Series 2015, 30Upstairs Gallery, Wellington, NZ

2016

Dream Analysis: private journeys in public thoroughfare

Form: journal article

Role: author

10 February 2016, for 'On Sleep' Performance Research 21:1, 72-78

Night Walk (video)

Form: video

Role: artist

20 February - 10 April, Interpretive Wonderings exhibition, Mildura Arts Centre, Mildura, Australia

The Performance Arcade 2016

Form: performance festival

Role: curator and director

2-6 March 2016, Wellington, NZ

All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever

Form: theatre production

Role: performance designer

2-6 March 2016, Vaults Festival, London, UK

On Sea/At Sea

Form: journal

Role: co-editor (with Richard Gough)

3 May 2016, Performance Research 21:2

Concurrent Practices

Form: journal article

Role: co-author (with Mick Douglas)

3 May 2016, for Performance Research 21:2, On Sea/At Sea, 96-107

Concurrent Practices

Form: performance lecture

Role: co-author

22 June 2016, for PSi22 Performing Climates, Melbourne University, Australia

Night Walk (three iterations)

Form: performance art and video

Role: artist

11-21 November 2016, for 'Migratory Wonderings' exhibition, 107 Projects, Redfern, Sydney, Australia

Night Walk (Lake Tyrell)

Form: performance art

Role: artist

27 November 2016, Lake Tyrell, Australia

2017

Night Walk (video)

Form: video

Role: artist

23 February 2017, for 'Heat: acts into nature' exhibition, at Te Uru Gallery, Auckland, NZ

The Performance Arcade 2017

Form: performance festival

Role: artistic director and curator

9-19 March 2017, Wellington, NZ

Many Breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)

Form: performance art

Role: artist

6 May 2017, Long Island, The Bahamas

Sudden Depth

Form: online journal article

Role: principal author

9 June 2017, for 'Looking Back on Fluid States' Global Performance Studies 1.1

Deep Anatomy

Form: exhibition

Role: curator

26 November - 4 December 2017, Silo6, Auckland, NZ

Many Breaths (to lift an anchor from sea bed) (video)

Form: video installation

Role: artist

26 November - 4 December 2017, for 'Deep Anatomy' exhibition, Silo6, Auckland, NZ

2018

The Performance Arcade 2018

Form: performance festival

Role: artistic director and curator

23 February - 4 March 2018, Wellington, NZ

Pelagic States

Form: solo exhibition

Role: artist

22-29 March 2018, The Engine Room, Wellington, NZ

APPENDIX 02

All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever

Performance design for theatre production

20-31 May 2014, Bats Theatre, Wellington, NZ

27-28 March 2015, Ellen Stewart Theater, La MaMa, New York, USA

9-19 September 2015, Q Theatre, Auckland, NZ

2-6 March 2016, Vaults Festival, London, UK

By The PlayGround Collective. Devised by the performers and core creative team comprising Eli Kent (writer), Robin Kerr (director), Sam Trubridge (performance designer), Gareth Hobbs (composer), and Marcus McShane (lighting designer). The work examined key concepts around the telling of the perfect story and factors that confuse or challenge these narratives; such as death, entropy, and freedom of choice.

A plain white set is used to introduce the play's key protagonist: Simon Simon. Around the edges of this space a team of performers work hard to propel his story forward by playing the voices of various characters in his life and stage-managing key events; all under the direction of the disembodied voice of a talking light-bulb. As the story develops, the team's desire to please the audience with the perfect story and the perfect narrative becomes more and more challenged by the actions of their unwitting protagonist.

The design, script, and performance worked together seamlessly to create two coexisting worlds on stage: the fictional world of Simon's narrative, and the world of these operators. Layers of meta-theatricality are constructed through the use of various framing devices: windows into the set, boxes, TV monitors, ipads, and the set itself. The backstage is crowded with objects for the operators to use rendering Simon's imaginary worlds. These objects are thrust through small windows that open in the walls, creating a montage effect that plays with the cinematic themes in the production.

The final scene in the script describes a 'black mass' that enters the space and swallows the performance. The design creates this image through the inflation of a large blob made from black plastic rubbish bags, which open into the space until it fills the stage.

More is written about this work in Chapter 04 Black Lung.

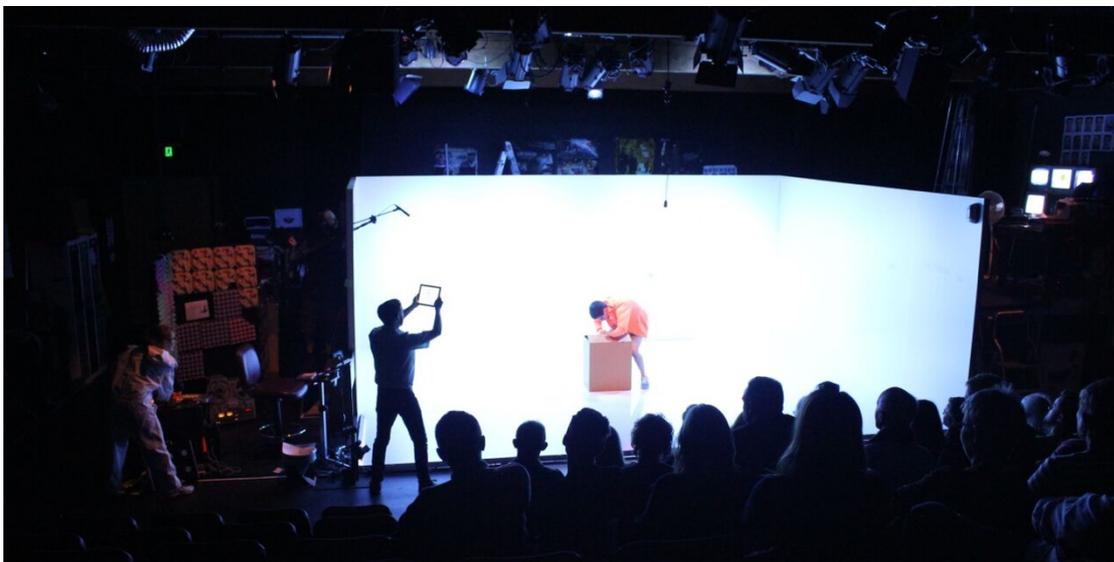


Fig 51: Photo: Marcus McShane.

APPENDIX 03

In Visibility: staged acts and the unseen

Academic paper presentation

'Restoring Balance: ecology, sustainability, performance' ADSA conference 2013
Victoria University, Wellington, NZ
27 June 2014

ABSTRACT: This paper considers contentious acts performed within the super-visible space of theatre. Through reference to contemporary work it is possible to consider what issues there are in making and presenting physical destruction through performance. This discourse positions theatre as a material, relational art-form, and suggests that conventional scenic devices using symbolism and simulation only distance the viewer from the subject; no matter how altruistic the intentions are. On the other hand, unsustainable acts in the space of performance draw objection and revolt, not because of what is done, but because it is seen. By comparing a singular destructive action on stage with the scale of destruction beyond the stage it is possible to recognise the theatre as a space where complacency can be temporarily suspended, and exposed. This reveals how theatre fictionalizes concerns, through appealing to gratuitous needs for humour, spectacle, and virtuosity. Through responding to Artaud's claim that "man must reassume his position between dreams and events" I suggest it may be possible to construct a theatre that makes us witnesses rather than audience, turning an act of destruction into a catharsis: that ritualistic transmission of responsibility and physical burden.

This presentation is based on an abstract that I submitted and had accepted into the 'Staging Sustainability' conference at York University, Canada, in April 2011. But I had no other reason to travel to Canada and felt it was a bit frivolous travelling so far to talk about sustainability for 20 minutes. I explained this, asking if I could present through Skype instead, but it was not possible. I acknowledge the value in travelling to a conference and sharing research with peers and colleagues. Working in performance as I do, I understand the value of physical presence, liveness, social and geographic embodiment. But there is a dilemma here about what we expend our world's resources on, and what we don't. And this is a question that goes far beyond just the concerns of conference attendance.

I am going to start this paper by declaring that: **performance is unsustainable.**

it is my intention to discuss in this paper why this is actually important, and necessary. It is partly a manifesto, partly a brief look back at what theatre/performance has been, and partly a look forward to the challenges we are dealing with or have yet to face. But most of all, it is an experiment in thinking, a test of how radical we may need to be as artists to really address the issues we are faced with in a way that only performance can, rather than just providing a report or illustration of them.

In saying that PERFORMANCE IS UNSUSTAINABLE, I do not mean to only reiterate its temporality, and its ephemerality, as plenty of others have. Certainly, writing by Andre Lepecki (*Exhausting Dance*) and Marcia B Siegel (*The Vanishing Point*) have much to offer in this regard. However, my interest here is something more connected to issues of ethical and environmental sustainability than these theories on performance at a 'vanishing point' or 'as an event that disappears in the very act of materialising'. All the same, this aspect of Performance's Unsustainability is, if you agree with DeBord, one of its greatest qualities.

“Our situations will be ephemeral, without a future. Passageways. Our only concern is real life; we care nothing about the permanence of art or of anything else. Eternity is the grossest idea a person can conceive of in connection with his acts”.

Guy DeBord (1957) *Report on the Construction of Situations* (retrieved from: <http://www.cddc.vt.edu/sionline/si/report.html>)



Fig 52: Burden, Chris (1971) *Shoot*.

Fig 53: Steinberg, Paul + Carsen, Robert (2006) Set design for *Il Trovatore*, Bregenz Opera Festival.

Fig 54: Whiteread, Rachel (2005) *Embankment*, Tate Modern.

My contribution today is to look at contentious acts of harm, pollution, and destruction enacted within the hyper-visible space of live performance. A list of what is unsustainable in performance could include physical harm, labour, destruction, waste and pollution. I think it is important to consider what problems, what politics, and what value may lie in making performance that is inherently unsustainable. There are certainly failures, such as Paul Steinberg's and Robert Carsen's set design for *Il Trovatore* in Bregenz Festival, Austria, 2005. The opulence of this outdoor opera festival is taken to the point of meta-irony with a the extravagant design using a large amount of resource to create the mise en scene of a large, polluting factory environment, complete with underwater effects and pyrotechnics. This excessiveness is so gratuitous and uncritical that it effectively *reproduced* whatever regimes may be available for critique with this staging. The production seems to latch on to a particularly relevant trope (a power hungry industrial complex or hegemony) for this opera and only uses it for titillating effect. I don't think there is any belief within the making of this work that it is about environmental threat or any expression of urgency, rather a demonstration of scale and expenditure. But would this criticism be possible if Steinberg had chosen to set the show in any other context at the same scale? - so that it looked like any other Bregenz presentation? - or any other opera at the Met, Covent Garden, or Paris Opera? Is this production of *Il Trovatore* just an expression of how divorced some of these well-funded performance spectacles have become from any kind of social/ethical/environmental responsibility?



Rachel Whiteread failed here as well, with her (2005) response to her trip to the Arctic, *Embankment*, constructing a gargantuan installation that uses mountains of cast plastic shapes to conflate allusions to melting ice-caps with aisles of supermarkets or warehouses: the grandeur of nature and rampant consumerism deftly contained within one image. However, it is an image that uses a large amount of plastics and resources in its own making, thus crafting its own poetic redundancy. There are ethical failures too. Such as the scale of death and displacement that goes into contemporary spectacles like Zaha Hadid's stadium for the Qatar 2022 FIFA World Cup, where 500 Indians and 382 Nepalese workers have already died. Or the police 'clean-up' of favelas in Brazilian cities for this year's World Cup. In response, Hadid claims that it is not her responsibility as an architect.

"...the PHOTO-FINISH imposes the instantaneity of its violence on all the various 'artistic representations' and modern art, like war – BLITZKRIEG – is no more than a kind of exhibitionism that imposes its own terrorist voyeurism: that of death, live". Paul Virilio (2000) *Art and Fear*, 43.

In *Art and Fear*, Paul Virilio discusses an obsession in modern art with the "photo finish", making connections between this aesthetic ideal and a kind of exhibitionism, or terrorist voyeurism. For artists and designers like Steinberg, Whiteread, and Hadid the aesthetic statement has to be achieved at **whatever the cost** to humanity and environment, for an egotistical statement or what Virilio refers to elsewhere as PRESENTATION.

In the wake of the counter culture, aren't we now at the dawning of a culture and an art that is counter nature?" (ibid, 55).

So, while I will continue by promoting the unsustainability of performance under specific terms, I do not want this to be misconstrued. I do believe that performance must above all, remain committed to its environmental, cultural, and ethical RESPONSIBILITY. It is no longer possible for artists to make statements like "War is the world's only hygiene" like the futurists did. We can make art sustainably, choosing the right materials, the right processes: recycling and constructing in ways that are sensitive to the environment

I do this with my production company: The PlayGround NZ. Here are three productions that demonstrate this:

Ecology in Fifths (2010): the design for this show was made from sustainably produced and organic materials that were biodegradable and compostable.

The Performance Arcade (2011-2018): 95% of all material used in this annual event is returned to the fabric of the city, including the rental of all shipping containers, scaffolding, equipment, and materials for the construction of the event.

SLEEP/WAKE (2015): rather than ship just one work to New York I packed a whole festival of NZ shows into the touring plan for this show, sharing personnel, expenses, and opportunities in order to have maximal effect for the fossil fuels used.

This paper doesn't dispute that we must work towards sustainability in everything we do. But it does argue that materials also MEAN something, and that the use of materials affects a relationship with the work, and symbolic readings of the work.

In developing the performance design for a new work *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever*, I have become interested in the black plastic rubbish bag. This is an object that gives our waste an anonymity, comparable with the black curtains of theatre spaces. Its work is to hide its contents from us, disguising our waste as it waits on the streets before it is whipped off to rubbish dumps backstage.

As I stated in *Inside the Black Margin* (ADS Journal, 2012) this soft architecture (of the black curtain) in the theatre promotes a "notional" or "visible invisibility". This is the kind of visibility I am interested in. Considering the theatre as a material, relational art-form, I would suggest that conventional devices of symbolism and simulation conspire to distance the viewer from the subject, no matter how well-meaning the intentions of the artist are. This world of theatrical make-believe and suspension of disbelief extends into media and popular culture. It exists in PR and spin doctoring, but also the construction of the media world itself: a media of special effects, mythologies, and simulations, a Maurice Merleau-Ponty describes:

"We see things themselves, the world is what we see: formulae of this kind express a faith common to the natural man and the philosopher - the moment he opens his eyes; they refer to a deep-seated set of mute "opinions" implicated in our lives". Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1964) *The Visible and the Invisible*, 3.

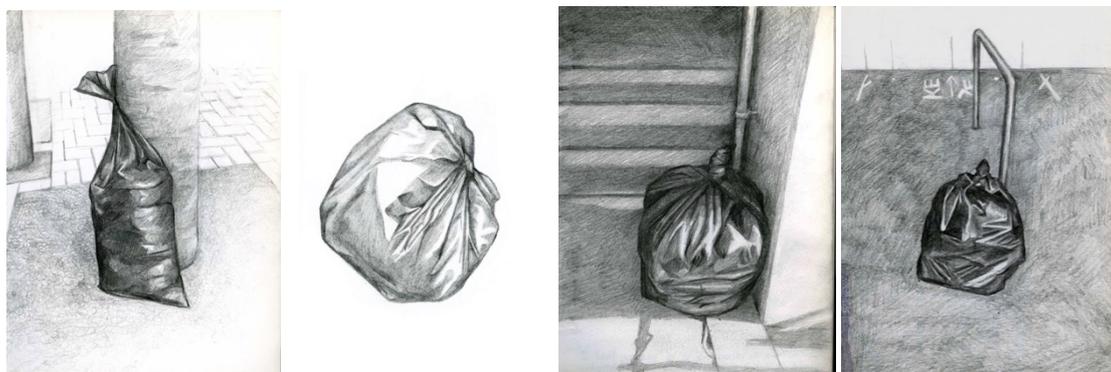


Fig 55: The PlayGround Collective (2014) *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever*. Photo: Rosie Remmerswaal.
 Fig 56: Trubridge, Sam (2014) *All Your Wants*. Pencil studies for performance design of *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever*.

Since Merleau-Ponty's time, the media has become the global 'dreamspace' that I have discussed elsewhere⁵⁸, connecting a kind of social/political inactivity with neurological, biochemical features of sleeping and dreaming states. When Ponty says "the difference between perception and the dream not being absolute, one is justified in counting them both among 'our experiences'", it would also be possible to add everything we experience in this world of media as inseparable to this 'dream-life' which other philosophers like Plato, and Zizek have all described in similar terms. But, at odds with these fluid movements between perception, dream, and dream production are the hard facts presented to us by environmental disaster, economic collapse, and ethical crisis. Experience of catastrophic events have a phenomenological status, making us witnesses. Virilio talks in these terms about the Nazi concentration camps, Zizek on 9/11, and I have written my own accounts of various floods and storms in the UK (2007) and USA (2006) (ibid).



Fig 56: Hurricane Katrina, 2006. Photo: Reuters.
 Fig 57: Flooding in UK, 2007. Photo: The Guardian.

“A dreamer is surprised, even threatened, by his dream, not knowing what it means; yet even while dreaming he is himself inventing it; so that two aspects of one subject are here playing hide-and-seek: one in creative action, the other in half-ignorance”. Joseph Campbell (1974) *The Mythic Image*, 361.

This same disruption occurred in the 'theatre' of (then NZ prime minister) John Key's 2011 appearance on BBC Hardtalk, and how his performance was interrupted/upset by NZ scientist Mike Joy's findings that the Manawatu River had been measured as the world's most polluted waterway. Mike Joy's research shows that waste from one cow is equal to four people. Considering that the population of cows in NZ is around 19,000,000 one can start to appreciate just how overpopulated our landscape actually is. And that does not begin to account for the sheep and goats. How do we (as artists of conscience) engage with these problems? How do we instill in our audiences this same concern?

This responsibility will not be transmitted by a fictional character taking a bow at the end of the performance, nor through a situation that will be 'wiped clean' by the curtain calls or by a tidy wrapping up of the narrative and dramaturgy. How can theatre ever express something about the IRREVERSIBILITY of tragedy? There are 50 Maui Dolphins left. They are not going to take a bow like King Lear or Hamlet once they are done. Neither are our rivers, forests, or ways of life. If we watch fiction too much, then we begin to believe that life is bound by the same rules as a fiction, and it comes as a shock when it isn't. But after looking at some instance where people have been very upset about art, or moved by art, I wonder if there are some opportunities...

⁵⁸ Trubridge, Sam (2009) 'Coming to Sleep: a travelogue in science and performance with The Playground's *Sleep/Wake*' Shank, Ted (Ed). *Theatre Forum* 36. La Jolla: UCSD Press. 54-65.



Fig 58: Trubridge, Sam (2010) *Ecology in Fifths* (development season).

In *Ecology in Fifths* I examined the actual destruction of a native tree on stage, trying to see how this act may contain more political value than creating the illusion of such an event taking place. After all, what does one nursery-grown native sapling matter, when indigenous habitats are being stripped back at rates that grossly overshadow this one event? Nobody seemed offended by what I was doing, so perhaps something more radical needed to be done.

Around the same time, I had become embroiled in an online debate about smoking on stage, and what became apparent to me in both these situations was this matter of VISIBILITY. Performance is a hyper-visible medium.

“[I]n this modern age of mediated visibility, the struggle to be seen and heard, and the struggle to make others see and hear, has become an inseparable part of the social and political conflicts of our time”. JB Thompson (2005) *The New Visibility*.

As Thompson states, this visibility is a significant political concern of our times. But this paper is not concerned so much with the struggle to be visible, or the power structures around visibility that concern Thompson. Rather I am trying to pinpoint a moment that people begin to CARE about art, when it enters popular media, becomes newsworthy, and a subject of moral or ethical outrage. In the 1998 Tania Covats’ work *Virgin in a Condom* stirred up considerable outrage when it was shown at Te Papa Tongarewa in Wellington NZ, attracting protests and public debate all over the media. Another artist whose work has also provoked a considerable amount of affront is Santiago Serra, with works like *160cm Line Tattooed on 4 People* (200) where he purportedly gave heroine to four prostitutes with drug addictions in exchange for their participation in the work. Criticism for Sierra’s work has come through academic circles as much as through popular press and public reaction,

dismissing his work as "pseudo-activist engagement with political issues". In response Andres David Montenegro Rosero says:

“Sierra’s work does not simply reproduce methodologies of exploitation but critically appropriates its procedures to bring to light the conditions – both social, economic and political – that configure a specific situation”. Andres David Montenegro Rosero (2013) ‘Locating work in Santiago Sierra’s artistic Practice’ (Ephemera Journal 13:1).

A lot of work has already been done in this quote by defending Sierra's work and discussing how his work critically engages with 'the larger schema of capital exchange and control'. Performance works in China pursue similar interests, where mass labour is employed to execute a work, both through redemptive projects (Ai Wei-Wei's 2012 *Sunflower Seeds*) or satirical enactments of communist productivity: Zhang Huan's bodies that raise the water level of a lake, or that turn a hill into a mountain.



Fig 59: Sierra, Santiago (2000) *160cm Line Tattooed on 4 People*.

Fig 60: Zhang, Huan (1997) *To Raise the Water Level in a Fish Pond*.

This goes horrifically further in works where artists like Zhu Yu appears to have eaten a fetus, or another Chinese artist constructed a living wall of creatures found in the local food market by tying them on hanging strings. What horrifies us about these works? Animals struggle in buckets throughout China's marketplaces across thousands of its cities. Species are plowed away with the demolition of the Brazilian and Indonesian rainforests, the Indonesian rainforest, the dredging of the Great Barrier Reef and Spratly Islands in the South China Sea.

Works like those by Sierra and Yu horrify us less because they are already happening, but because it is being made into art. Even if these works are not put into those institutions of visibility (the art gallery and theatre) then it is made visible and disseminated through familiar art media channels online. In this way art continues to 'make strange' and critique those things that familiarity has made invisible to us. It often causes outrage. But inherent in this very outrage is the assumption that the function of art and performance is for aesthetic appreciation, entertainment, or placation. If we make the distinction that it is not for entertainment, that this is serious, then does something else happen?

I said before that art is hyper-visible. And my key point in this paper is that people will care about a prostitute being made part of an art-work, when her exploitation is made visible. But much less is said and done about the systems that make this possible. Moreover, less outrage is directed at the more insidious and EVERYDAY exploitation of female bodies for pleasure, rather than the artist's attempt to draw attention to a situation through an extreme action like this. These unsustainable, unethical, and exhaustible acts in the space of

performance draw objection and repulsion, not because of what is done, but because it is shown, and because it is seen.

Performance is hyper-visible. And it can use this trait to reveal things that are harder to see, and harder to grasp. It must do so without fictionalising the subject, avoiding the conceits or actions that communicate old storytelling tropes like:

"Once upon a time"

"Imagine if..."

"Don't worry it's not real"

"It was all just a dream"

As I said earlier, the more an audience have to suspend their disbelief, the larger the gap is between the world of the performance and the world that it comments on.



Fig 61: The PlayGround Collective (2014) *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever*. Photo: Rosie Remmerswaal.

At the end of *All Your Wants and Needs Fulfilled Forever* I really wanted for there to be no curtain call at the end, with no further dramatisation once the blob of black plastic had swallowed the performance. But the work was about other things, and it was not my call. However, what interests me in endings like this is that it doesn't let the audience off the hook. Santiago Sierra does not let his audience off. He forces them to be outraged by the fact that he really tattooed four women for his art. He forces his audience to be outraged by the fact that they really were street-workers, and not some privileged art graduate keen to get some souvenir or cachet by being a part of a famous artist's work. He forces them to be outraged by the fact that he paid them with drugs. There is no happy ending to this story.

Now we are reminded in other ways that there are no happy endings.
Because at the end of this story these women go back to the street.
At the end of their story the Hector's dolphins will not take a bow.

We live in a world of regenerating computer characters, inexhaustible cartoons, digital lives, and seeing actors like Pedro Pascal joke about having a headache after his character in *Game of Thrones* had his head crushed by a character called The Mountain. It is easy in all of this to think that mortality is a myth, that environmental collapse is just another Hollywood fantasy, and that despite the complete obliteration that may follow nuclear war, epidemic, zombie apocalypse, or alien invasion, it will be ME that is left, that I will band together with some small band of hopefuls (and a love interest) and together we will rebuild and repopulate the world. As Merleau-Ponty says in *The Visible and the Invisible* - what we see becomes our world. This illusion of immortality that the inexhaustible mediated image has taught us is our contemporary myth. But performance can do otherwise. The bleakness of Sierra's work tells us otherwise. It is this very FACT of performance's inherent unsustainability that is its greatest strength in trying to affect some form of change here.

Also, by comparing the singular VISIBLE action with the 'unseen' acts around us or in other places of the world, it is possible to recognise performance as a space where complacency is temporarily suspended (PEOPLE CARE), and where complacency elsewhere is exposed.

"This naked theatre language must allow us to transgress the ordinary limit of art and words, actively, that is to say, magically, produce a kind of total creation in real terms, where man must reassume his position between dreams and events". Antonin Artaud (1932) *The First Manifesto for a Theatre of Cruelty* (93).

Through responding to Artaud's claim that "man [sic] must reassume his position between dreams and events" it may be possible to construct a theatre experience that makes us *witnesses* rather than audience. Ultimately this may have the effect of turning an act of destruction or unsustainable, irreversible action into something more... Transforming performance into a ritualistic 'transmission of responsibility and physical burden'. A catharsis.

And to do so performance must be visible. Not in the tidy way that the black plastic bag wraps up all of our excesses for landfills. It cannot pretend that these concerns are fictional, or that they do not exist. It has to be careful with fiction, for fear of being seen as such. Performance must be unafraid of visibility in an offensive, exciting, terrifying, and challenging way. It must be unafraid of appalling us with the irreversible nature of life, the way that other media (painting, sculpture, photography, film) might not be able to do. It must remain hyper-visible with these traits, and responsible for its visibility in order to confront audiences with the invisible statistics: that is the invisible erosion of biodiversity, ecological collapse, global warming, pollution, dispersal of communities, and the invisible casualties of our sustained and very visible continued GROWTH.

I would like to end with a disclaimer, and a coda of sorts to illusionism.

Sensationalism is not the intent, and hyperbolic extensions of the examples I have cited (like Sierra and Zhu Yu) are not useful. Virilio's concerns about the aesthetic links between the concept of the PHOTO-FINISH, and the aestheticisation of atrocity ARE valid: as shown in his discussions on the photographic archiving of Cambodians before their execution, or Ilse

Koch's Buchenwald. Sierra pumping a synagogue full of poisonous gas (*245 Cubic Metres, 2006*) and inviting audiences to enter the space with masks on may seem shocking, but it is also an expression of moral outrage so powerful and haunting.

So here is my final provocation. Who knows if the synagogue really was full of gas? We wouldn't dare take our masks off to find out anyway. And who knows if the prostitutes were really given cocaine? It is important for the integrity of the works that we never know. But I do believe that in deepest, most secret spaces of these works there is space for a little illusion.

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APPENDIX 04

Subdivision I (Kvarnerski Zaljev)

Performance installation

6 September 2014, Zooming Fluid States Festival, Rijeka, Croatia.

Referencing Borges' story of the emperor's map, and Baudrillard's philosophical analysis of this text, this work casts a meticulous grid over the shifting seascape that it occupies.

Threaded on invisible lengths of fishing line and spaced at intervals of exactly 1 metre, 350 small plastic 'pearls' float just under the surface of the water in Rijeka's harbour. As the tide reaches its full ebb they appear to almost reach the surface, but never quite do. Arranged with mathematical precision over 50x7m, this grid of dots undulates with the swell, attempting to map or colonise the unfixed, transient nature of the sea with the rigidity of land-based navigational systems and agricultural subdivision.

The work anticipated the *Deep Anatomy* cluster in Psi#21 Fluid States where the format of 'the incursion' is examined as a method of engaging with a site through creative, analytical, and community-based practices. In *Subdivision I*, tensions between land-based systems and aquatic states are examined in an action that is both polemic and poetic: casting a shallow 'net' that reveals deeper, submarine ecologies, hydrological movements, and environmental concerns about the space. It also examines, in a semi-satirical fashion, the exhausting, absurd, and doomed preoccupation with applying land-based (terrestrial) two-dimensional mapping conventions into a complex, four-dimensional environment.

More is written on this project in Chapter 06 OCEANIC SPACE.



Fig 62: Trubridge, Sam (2014) *Subdivision I (Kvarnerski Zaljev)*. For Zooming Fluid States Festival, Psi#21 Fluid States, performances of unknowing, Rijeka, Croatia.

APPENDIX 05

Disciplinary Action: performance and science and transgression

Academic paper presentation

'Breaking the Ice' art-science conference, for ICEfest 2014, Christchurch, NZ.
11 October 2014.

SHORT ABSTRACT: Reflecting upon my experiences of art/science collaboration (Sleep/Wake, The Waking Incubator, and Deep Anatomy), I will discuss how 'discipline' can be approached in an age where familiar boundaries between fields of practice are being challenged by innovations in art, science, design, and technology.

Today I will talk about my work in art/science collaboration: where I am taking it in new projects, and why this dialogue is so important. This includes the collaborations that Philippa Gander mentioned, as well as the 'Waking' art/science incubator that the two of us lead in 2010: involving a number of sleep scientists and artists - including Anne Noble, the curator of this symposium.

Today I will focus on DISCIPLINE: to discipline someone or something is to make them behave. This has association with systems of control or at worst corporal punishment and abuse. Despite this we often talk about art, design, and science as 'disciplinary fields' of practice. In NZ we have a lot of fields in our landscape, and I think there is a connection between our everyday lives, our philosophy, and how we use our language. This term 'disciplinary field' is an interesting meeting of two loaded terms, and a great example of how we create territories around what we do - and how they are tied to land-based pastoral practices.

My background is that I was brought up living on a boat for 9 years, so I'm often aware of this language, coming from a very fluid space of operation + and an unfixed sense of home. Also, as a spatial designer and performance designer I am very interested in the environments that we inhabit, and how we inhabit them. One concern is how social norms may seem more relaxed that 100 years ago, but we are used to occupying spaces that are more disciplined than ever before.



Fig 63: Security checkpoint, LAX airport. Photo: TSA.



Fig 64: Theatre audience (2011). Photo: Ken Davenport.

Fig 65: Street from above (2011) Photo: Kristina Møller.

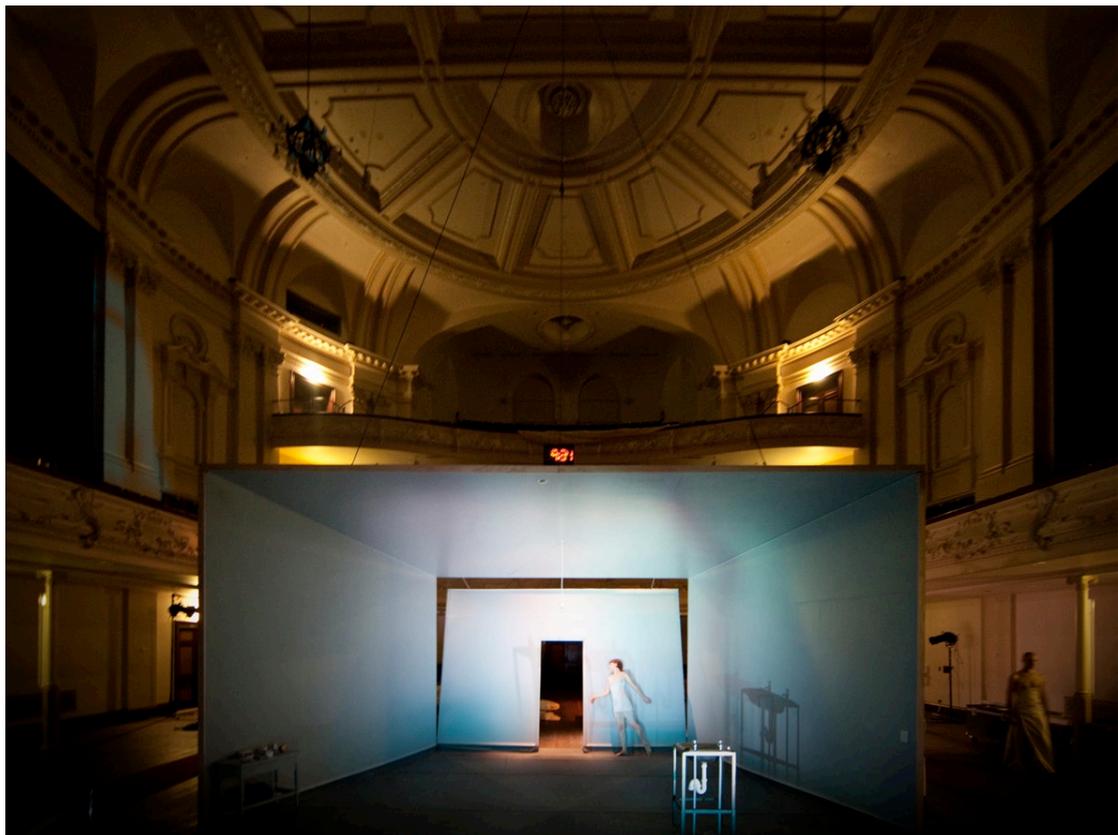
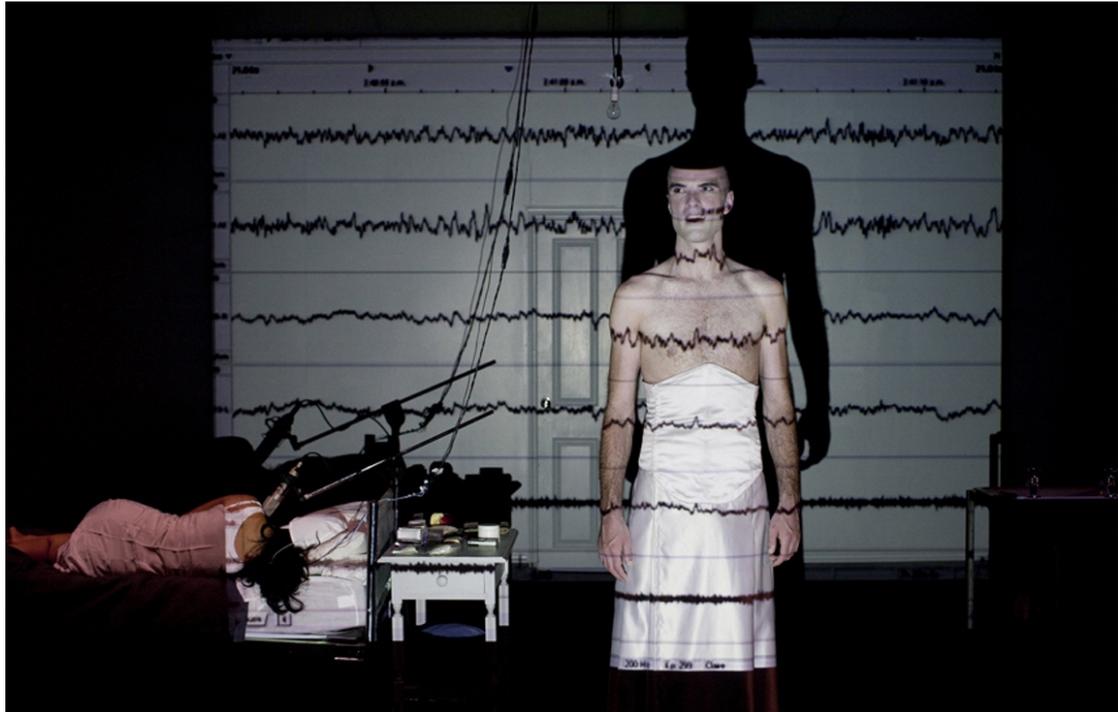
Fig 66 + Fig 67: Trubridge, Sam (2009) *SLEEP/WAKE*, Auckland Town Hall, Auckland Festival, NZ. Photo: Richard Robinson.

One example is the contemporary airport, where architecture works alongside the organisation of the space (its programming) to create specific routines in that environment. We have learnt to behave and interact in a certain way in these spaces. This is similar in the theatre space, where once again the architecture prescribes codes of behaviour, creating a programming of that space that is cultivated or 'cultured'. This emphasises the links between culture and discipline that I mentioned before. We can also identify spaces such as the road and the office, as other disciplined spaces of interaction. These are all spaces that discipline us: how we behave, the way that we interact, our languages, and our thinking.

Certainly the subdivision of (and classification of): knowledge, language, space, and discipline is necessary in order to comprehend the world around us. But it is also equally necessary to traverse the boundaries we set up, and recognise them as *structures of convenience*. They don't need to become limitations or rules, especially when we are trying to work creatively with a situation or to solve problems. Increasingly we ARE working across these boundaries, between art, science, design, and technology. In NZ we have a great example of this in Peter Jackson's own innovations in film-making, stemming from his knowledge of special effects, from working from a very early stage on them himself, and his close working relationship with Richard Taylor. Jackson's process does not approach cinematography, direction, and SFX as separate disciplines, but integrates each in order to produce new solutions for film-making as a holistic, trans-disciplinary art form.

There is a downside to this fluid, integrated approach too. I was recently reading about the Israeli Defence Force's use of philosopher Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's philosophical concept of 'smooth space' described in *One Thousand Plateaus* (2000) to develop their military tactics in Gaza. So while the crossing of boundaries can produce innovations, it can also be applied to support regimes, or to discipline peoples in negative ways.

This gives the trans-disciplinary agent responsibility, and requires a rigour when we consider how we apply the new strategies that emerge in a trans-disciplinary space. I believe that artists play a significant political role in questioning the way we see the world and how we do things, and as Frances Whitehead said earlier: "artists as producers and critics of culture". This ethical concern is really at the centre of this talk about disciplinary action. Next year I will be presenting *SLEEP/WAKE* at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club in New York. I won't talk so much about the scientific content and the metaphors in this work today. Instead I would like to consider how the work has developed my interests in discipline, and the disciplined space of the theatre.



In some symbolic way, the theatre replicates the systems present in our political regimes, or in the physiology of the sleeping/dreaming brain: all of which elevate the performer or individual's voice over rows of compliant 'witnesses' or spectators. Theatre is a kind of model of a representative democracy or internal dream space. I was very conscious of this in the design for *SLEEP/WAKE*. The audience enter a very familiar theatrical arrangement, which is progressively deconstructed and reassembled throughout the show. At first a closed

box faces the audience: a very familiar convention in set design. The audience face this and look into it. The performance begins with a conventional delivery of a theatrical script, a kind of theatrical lecture, by a single performer who has memorised information about sleep science and repeats it with some characterisation. Then this experience changes. The back wall of the set drops. What was a box turns into a frame. The site of the performance becomes part of the landscape of the work. Lights illuminate the walls of the whole space, breaking down the bounded space of the stage set and allowing worlds to merge.

This experience extends further when we engage with a Skype performer on the other side of the globe. Each event like this breaks down the disciplined / entrained horizons of the performance space: 'waking up' the audience to distant othered spaces, beyond the preoccupations of the here and now - to places where crises may be happening 'off stage' in some capacity.

On one level *SLEEP/WAKE* was also an investigation of disciplinary boundaries: working closely with sleep science, we were committed to respecting and pursuing my collaborator Philippa Gander's own scientific interests and integrity in what was being presented so that artists as much as scientists would agree with the information and sentiments layered into the work. Thus I sought a synthesis of different actions and perspectives, between:

- Theatre/Space/Outside world
- Direction/Design
- Science/Art

This experience of working across boundaries has led to an understanding of discipline as a PROCESS OR QUALITY, rather than a territory that is possessed or owned by a particular set of individuals, practitioners or knowledge. The intention here is not to denounce specialisation, but to recognise how there is also discipline in moving across practices, by consulting areas of expertise, and bringing together or comparing knowledge systems. This is connected to my own experience of living on a boat. On our travels from Spain to NZ my family crossed cultural boundaries, languages, geographic terrains. We had to learn and understand the many contexts or territories we were entering, and get to know the locals and local routines in a way that was less touristic, but more concerned with co-habitation, living, and survival.

Also within the boat we needed to be self-sufficient and look after everything ourselves. Any concern that was medical, navigational, mechanical, electrical - we had to look after ourselves. A versatility was necessary and an innovation and flexibility in terms of what you could do and how you could do it. So we got used to comparing knowledge systems, using different knowledge systems, and consulting local knowledge in each new place. This is certainly the model I used when working with Philippa. It was really important to consult her 'local knowledge' of science and bring it together with my own knowledge of performance and art.

Our collaboration continued with *The Waking Incubator*, a symposium that invited twelve artists and scientists to dialogue together and work together for a week long period in shared facilities. Something notable about this project was the opportunity to set up a performance lab in the same building as Gander's own laboratories. This allowed us to work within each other's spaces, moving fluidly between various sites with ease. The disciplinary boundaries were not emphasised by the architecture, and so a more loose, playful culture was able to emerge.



My own collaboration with Gander developed in a similar way. I transgressed more into her own practice by setting up experiments in response to her statement that “sleep is an involuntary, unperformable action”. This for me was a very inviting challenge and I am interested in how this work pushed our collaboration through several works, in particular the last iteration of a performance work *Sleepless*.



Fig 68: The Waking Incubator, Wellington 2010. Photo: Rochard Larsen.

Fig 69: Trubridge, Sam (2009) *Sleepless II*, St Paul St Gallery, Auckland. Photo: Sama Yousif.

Fig 70: Trubridge, Sam + Gander, Philippa (2010) *Sleepless II: Transgressions*. Caxambu, Brazil. Photo: Rodrigo Mexas.

Philippa Gander has already described her experiences in this work, playing a working as an musician in the piece. Although I did not sleep, I was unable to easily measure the time I spent there during the performance. The experience became quite subjectivised and surreal in the way that dreaming does, opening up a discussion on some scientific distinctions and binaries between sleeping and waking, or between dreaming and other forms of mentation. Since then, science has mimicked this conversation, and sleep scientists now acknowledge the unreliability of earlier distinctions between phases of sleeping, and between sleeping and dreaming. So here our work blended the two worlds of artist and scientist, and we

transgressed into one another's territory with significant results. Works like *The Waking Project* and *Sleepless* brought us back to a playful space: the pre-disciplinary space that we inhabit as children, where a playful and curious "scientific" investigation of the world and our environment is indistinguishable from expressive forms of play, and creative play. As a child living on the boat, playing on beaches or on the deck, our play-making would move between these modes very fluidly. Science, art, and sport was a feature of all our play. I almost did marine biology at university, and my brother did actually go on to study science and work for a genetic engineering firm in Auckland University. But now he is a world-record breaking free-diver.

This brings me to my next project. I am going to be working with William Trubridge and his community of athletes that compete in the annual Vertical Blue competition, in The Bahamas. We have athletes, scientists, artists, and locals participating, and it will be run in a similar way to the 2010 Waking Incubator. It is a nice development of this earlier event, because during the incubator I became interested in the athlete as an exemplary cross between scientist and artist, through these two factors:

1/ First there is the meticulous knowledge of physiology and their use of scientific repetition, measurement, and other familiar scientific conventions in athletic training and analytics. Freedivers have advanced knowledge of respiratory systems and gas levels in the blood. Doctors and medical researchers regularly attend Vertical Blue to learn from the athletes as much as assist in the safe running of the event.

2/ Second there is the irrational 'risk' act that expands an understanding of our potential: that challenges familiar boundaries, shows our capabilities beyond the protective 'disciplined' cultural norms, beyond perceived or entrained limitations created by state, architecture, and media. Like artists, freedivers are often confronted with a mixture of wonder and incredulity about their work.

The ethos behind a lot of this work: is this awareness of the role performance plays in our everyday lives. Performance re-presents the things we do to us: it exposes them, critiques them. And here I am particularly interested in what the performance theorist Jon McKenzie has said about the importance of **discipline** to the formation of knowledge and power in the 18th and 19th Centuries - and how *performance* is now taking its place as a shaping paradigm.

Throughout our collaboration Gander and I would talk about how science has shaped the world-view in the last 100 years and how there is a common sentiment that science can provide all the answers. But that world-view is being challenged in this new century. Our global 'performance' (our ability/inability to act) is under a kind of spotlight with both scientists and artists playing important roles in a process of coming to terms with various impending environmental threats, understanding our actions, and providing critical reflection upon them.

While scientists have some answers, it is the space BETWEEN the scientist and artist that reveals the most, where expression and analysis meet, where ambiguity wrestles with didacticism. So scientists are revealing these problems, but also need to message things, not just as science communication, but to examine these concerns in the charged, ambiguous, and political space of art practice.

In NZ we inhabit a disciplined landscape, that has been subdivided and stripped of its flora

and fauna. These terrains are cultured, cultivated spaces. It is so unlike the ice of polar ice caps or the vast territories of the ocean: wild, undisciplined spaces that are sending warnings of climate change and plastic pollution. When we visit these spaces we are reminded that we are a culture of innovators and pioneers. In spaces like the middle of the ocean or in Antarctica we must innovate, be versatile, and adapt our routines to survive.

This suggests a new radical activism. One that can move across the boundaries of science, art and technology in order to find new solutions, new ways of working, and new answers to our problems. It requires rigour without being boundaried, not being afraid to transgress, whilst engaging and respecting local areas of knowledge. A transgressive but disciplined action is required. We must transgress in order to survive.

Fig 71: Flooded swimming pool in Florida, 2013. Photo: Dracula + Design.



APPENDIX 06

Space Invaders II

Performance art

The Performance Series 2014, 30Upstairs Gallery, Wellington, NZ.
8-9 December 2014.

I will dress myself in their garb. So they don't recognise me. Work-boots, blue coveralls, a bright orange vest, head protection, safety glasses. I will work amongst them on my own purposes: drawing lines that trace boundaries of property and ownership. Lines that divides these urban pastures into spaces of residence, commerce, and controlled access. My line begins at the gallery. My line ends at the gallery. Between, it traces a circuit past cafes, bars, car-parks, businesses, and apartment buildings. Perhaps by walking this line between private and public property I will avoid their persecution - because they won't know which space I am working in, or which space I am invading. The colour of my line will be green - a colour uncertain in its authority over manmade time and space - seldom given opportunity to demark boundaries. It will probably be from masking tape of the kind used in paint jobs: a temporary material employed to ensure a clean straight paint line, a tidy border. On the next day I will join them again: tracing this line with a leaf blower - carefully erasing this path that I have marked around their territories. And as the tape is lifted by the blast of my machine, it will gather, it will roll, sticking to itself and turning around itself to form a large adhesive tumbleweed that collects detritus from the streets that it passes through, until finally returning to its point of origin - blowing back up the stairs, and back into the gallery to rest.

Space Invaders is a work that uses a leaf-blower operated by the artist to create a miniature weather system: forcing objects and materials ahead of it around various spaces. Upon moving beyond the confines of the gallery/exhibition, this activity begins to colonise larger city spaces. An ever-expanding supply of power cabling leads back to the point of origin. The artist takes on the role of suburban cultivist, pioneer, street cleaner, and shift worker – extending a fragile and tenuous path through the urban environment.

Space Invaders has its origins in two projects: the performance production *Ecology in Fifths*, and participation in the *Shuttle Mobile Performance Laboratory*. It was first presented in Stanford University for PSi#19 with artists from the *Shuttle Mobile Desert Laboratory* project, where the work responded to the specifics of the American cultural landscape and the unwelcome 'ingress' of alien cultures and estranged bodies into suburban ecologies: migrant workers, border-crossing Mexicans, and the Salsala Targus / Russian Thistle (tumbleweed).

This work responds to specific local narratives associated with displacement, colonization, and the environment. In each iteration, new objects are substituted for the tumbleweed, and new associations are brought into the design in order to engage ecological and cultural concerns specific to that landscape, time, or event. The most recent presentation at 30Upstairs used the road-worker's uniform to authorise an action that was unauthorised by the city council, or any other authority other than my own. This revealed similar tensions in the work that were experienced at Stanford University, where occupancy of public space becomes highly regulated, and is associated with lower status, gypsy or squatting practices.

Further discussion on this work is presented in Chapter 03 The Tumbling Weed.

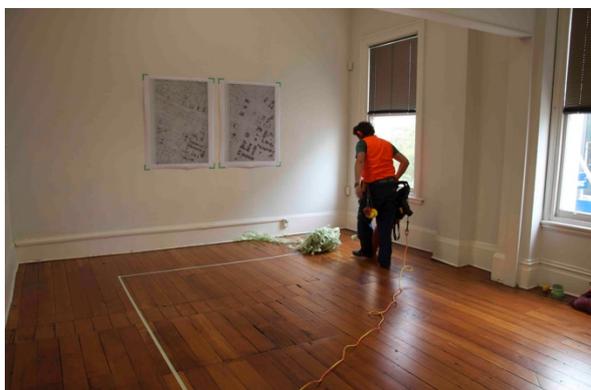
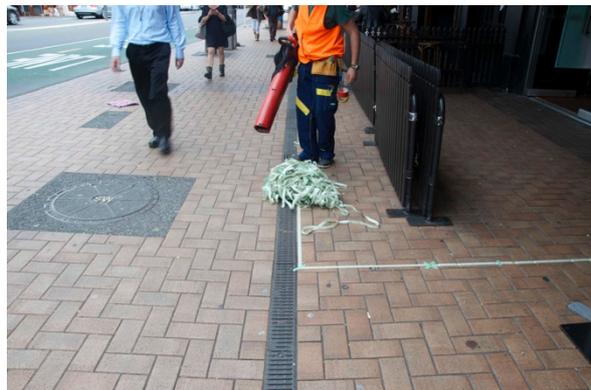


Fig 72, Fig 73, Fig 74, Fig 75, Fig 76: Trubridge, Sam (2014) *Space Invaders II*, The Performance Series 2014, 30Upstairs Gallery, Wellington, NZ. Photos: Amelia Taverner.

APPENDIX 07

The Performance Arcade 2015-2018

Performance festival

18-22 February 2015, Wellington, NZ

2-6 March 2016, Wellington, NZ

9-19 March 2017, Wellington, NZ

23 February - 4 March 2018, Wellington, NZ

The Performance Arcade is an annual presentation format and event in Wellington, New Zealand that was initiated in 2011 after several years of development and preparation. The event looks at ways to present and make live art outside the disciplined spaces of the gallery and the theatre, making a temporary home for a diverse range of practices in the public environment using shipping containers and other structures. A critical feature is that the event is free and immediately accessible, often allowing the experience of the work to precede any expectations or prejudices that the audience might have. The shipping container provides a 'third space' beyond the paradigms of the theatrical black-box and what reviewer Sophie Jerram has described as "the class and knowledge-restrained white cube" (2011). As a symbol of our globalised culture, this object becomes a potent vessel for works which present challenging questions about contemporary publics and audiences. Curatorial themes distinguish each presentation, and help to guide my curatorial research into methods and theories for presenting performance in public space.

2015: LAYERS

The curatorial concept for The Performance Arcade 2015 was that of a 'layered space': acknowledging the cumulative approach to themes within the event, and the gradual development of the event through each presentation. This theme celebrated the Arcade as a live performance laboratory, where ideas have been tested over its five years and continue to accumulate new ideas and creative strategies. As such, the theme utilises recognisable elements from previous years, layered over with new innovations in container use. The concept of 'layering' also relates to the way that various contributions have each brought a quality to the event, and how a dense programme of events was created for this year's presentation, woven through the existing programmes and the fabric of the city (such as the 'city series' and 'AV series'). These works extend out from or reject the closed spaces of the shipping container to interact with the surrounding cityscape and communities, interpenetrating the boundaries between an interior scenic space and the surrounding environment. Within the Arcade, architectural interventions pushed through (and layer over) the familiar setup. In this way, the Arcade celebrated its five years of development, and the many contributions that have shaped it.

2016: POLITICS

Live Art is political: to work with an implicated audience, or to implicate your audience and make them a 'participant', is a political act. Thus, live art is by its very nature is activism. To be a live artist is to be political – from Manifesto for a Performance Community, The Performance Arcade, 2014.

To make art in public is a political act, no matter what it is about. To bring expression out from spaces of control like the gallery or theatre into public space provokes new possibilities, new relationships, and new perspectives on what our shared culture is or could

be. This year's programme looked at this notion of politics in many ways, sometimes through the gentle act of just placing art, with all its attraction, revulsion, wonder, and uncertainty in these live spaces. Other works looked at burning questions in our collective psyche, and come from the artists' own experiences of our political, cultural landscapes. In the news we are regularly reminded of how cities can be turned into places of fear and terror by gratuitous and seemingly random acts of violence. With this programme the hope was to find some way of sharing values that work against the effects of this brutality. In this instance, we provide a gratuitous, free art experience that people come across on the Waterfront and in the city without expecting it. These experiences re-enchanted the urban space, allowing us to meet with the other and encounter ideas that are new, strange, and challenging, but also beautiful and interesting. In this way we are compelled to see the world through somebody else's eyes and care more about the people and spaces around us.

2017: PERFORMING, WRITING

"We all know the performative power of writing now. Since January 2017 the 'executive order' has become the grand hyperbole of writing-as-theatre, presented in a bi-fold leather portfolio to a room of applauding White House supporters and staff. Almost overnight, writing has become performance in one of the highest offices of power. This single stroke of the pen now signifies action and repercussions that will be felt around the world for years to come. JL Austin described how to do things with words, but now only eleven letters scribbled across the bottom of that order is enough. Real words are not written in this act, no declaration is necessary like 'I hereby announce' or 'I decree', only the first thing that everyone learns to write – his name. That most basic I AM has become all that is needed to govern words, people, policies, and futures. In response, how might we preserve the noun, the verb, the adjective, or the fact in this era of their alternatives? How might writing serve us a performance that resists hypocrisy and equivocation: that documents itself, provides proof, and continues to provide proof of its own veracity? Or perhaps, how might we be reminded that writing is no more reliable than performance? – that it is no more duplicitous and equivocal? – that it cannot or never will stand in for what has happened, for what is happening now? In precarious times let us celebrate the complexity, the fragility of action and text. Let us celebrate the labour of performance and action over a hastily scrawled autograph. Let writing be activism, reclaiming the word, reclaiming names, and bearing testament" Trubridge, Sam (2017) Curatorial statement for the Performing, Writing programme.

The Performance Arcade 2017 engaged with writing as an active process and as performance itself, collaborating with the Performing, Writing symposium (Massey University) to consider relationships between performance and writing, looking at how texts are used in dance, architecture, performance art, installation, sonic arts, and theatre. The hallmark Arcade experience was sustained within this theme. This 2017 lineup brought some of the most influential performance makers from NZ and the world to share new works and new visions on Wellington Waterfront: including Tony-Award winning US director Christopher McElroen (*Waiting For Godot in New Orleans*), and the acclaimed Anatomical Theatre of Mixed Realities (ATOM-r) group. The Arcade experience deepened this year for audiences as well, with the event open over two consecutive weekends, and a rich experience woven into the architecture of the event. This included a double-leveled stage space, a live press featuring twelve guest writers on performance, integrated online platforms, and an international symposium event with keynote speakers.

2018: COUNTER NARRATIVES

Working with a diverse range of art disciplines and perspectives, this year's event examined new ideas, alternative visions, and *counter narratives* for life in 2018.

Performance art reveals undercurrents, bringing to life relationships and situations from the worlds of collective dreaming, imagination, fear, uncertainty, pleasure, and resistance. It allows voices unvoiced to be heard, in languages that are not known. This art form has always provided a critical lens on society, constructing lived scenarios for audiences that interact with all the senses to create embodied encounters with art. The shipping container is a potent device in this dynamic, as an artifact of our global, capitalist society, and an ocean-going vessel that carries memories, lifestyles, cultures, and commodities across the many borders that define our contemporary world. In 2018, we looked at this object in relation to vessels that define our Pacific culture, from the ocean-going waka to the whareniui and fale structures of the lands and islands. This Arcade is considered in relation to the traditions of pa architecture and the hakari stages of pre-colonial Aotearoa, creating a site for cutting edge new art practices, wananga, public forums, eating, drinking, and live music. The scaffold structure, layers of gauze, and terraced platforms allow multiple spaces for interaction and relaxation for the Wellington public that evoke these precedents.

Within this space, our counter-narrator James Nokise hosted artists and visitors to the event, providing a voice to introduce guest speakers, make announcements or welcomes, and create a unique series of 'counter narrative' Youtube interviews and statements with artists and Arcade contributors.



Fig 77: The Performance Arcade 2017, Wellington Waterfront, NZ.

APPENDIX 08

New Zealand New Performance Festival

Performance and theatre festival

La MaMa Experimental Theater Club, New York, USA.
12-29 March 2015.

The curatorial focus for this festival of New Zealand works at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club focused on New Zealand's distance from centres for culture and cultural production, providing new perspectives 'from the periphery' and from the Oceanic 'liquid' continent. In an overview of the programme written for the La MaMa website I state that:

"Audiences for this programme of works will find that we have much in common with American audiences: sharing common experiences, stories, and perspectives. And yet ours is a view from the other side of the world. New Zealand is one of the 'Antipodes': a group of nations found on the exact opposite of the world from the global/cultural centres. These countries occupy an alternate time-zone, their seasons are back to front, and are quite literally found beneath the feet of people living in cities like Paris, London, and New York. In this upside-down world we work while you sleep, and sleep while you work. Recent successes in NZ film-making specialise in making wonder and spectacle, creating innovative special effects and building fantastical worlds like Narnia, Middle Earth, and Pandora. This festival of works at La Mama come from this 'dream factory', 18 hours in the future, where our today is your tomorrow. We may speak the same language, share cultural memories, watch the same programmes, and listen to the same music as you; but our perspective comes from our distance, where things are similar but slightly different".

The organization and conception of this festival was a radical testing of new models for performing arts touring that brought a group of artists and works together in a compact arrangement. Thus, all eight works were packed into one shipping container, artists worked as crew for one others' projects, and fundraising/marketing/freight was all shared. This produced a nimble mobile and fluid economy for touring, which extends on similar collaborative models examined through *The Performance Arcade*, and the concept of the boat that was presented in the literature review.

As well as the obstacles of getting a carnet issued, transporting 20+ artists and a shipping container of sets to New York, the experience also revealed a provocative cultural challenge with the opening event. Jack Gray (a Maori artist and researcher in cross-cultural dialogue) volunteered to lead an opening ceremony that would acknowledge local First Nations, and celebrate NZ's own indigenous culture and customs. The anxiety within the mainly white, middle-class group of artists about doing some of this (the haka in particular) was wonderfully disarmed by Jack's approach, and the involvement of his partner, who is a native of Guahan/Guam, and an indigenous person of a US territory. This process, and the dialogues that occurred around it, provides rich material for the discussion on cultural license and cultural 'territory' in a liquid contemporary landscape.

APPENDIX 09 SLEEP/WAKE

Dance/theatre production

In collaboration with Professor Philippa Gander, director of Sleep/Wake Research Centre, Massey University.

Ellen Stewart Theater, La MaMa, New York, USA
19-22 March 2015

This production was first presented in Wellington 2008, then the Auckland Festival in 2009. With a season at the famous La MaMa experimental theatre club in New York it was possible to revisit a landmark work in my practice that examined boundaries between art and science whilst also examining the boundaries of theatrical space. In the Ellen Stewart Theatre, the depth of the space became an important feature of the work – telescoping backwards with each scene into the hidden architecture. The presentation offered an opportunity to test theories of pelagic practice, liquefying conventional approaches to many works (see Appendix 08) and exploring deep space in the theatre one month before the *Deep Anatomy* symposium (Appendix 10).

In Dani Lencioni's review of the work for Culturebot, we see testimony to the intentions of the work to play with the breakdown of the space and its implications within the poetic worlds it constructs, as well as in the dialogue between art and science that is occurring:

“This heightened sense of dread, the darkness, the shadowy corners, created a very distinct dreamscape that suggests we re-evaluate our nightly journey into ourselves. Theoretically, sleep is peaceful. It's familiar, and takes no work. The act of watching a play, too, is familiar. You go in, sit down, the lights dim, you watch people move and speak in a framed space. Trubridge plays a trick wherein he sets up a few conventions – a boxed room, a narrative opening monologue – and allows the audience to fall into the pattern of watching performance in a familiar way. But as the dreamscape devolves into an unsettling frenzy, the conventions of what a theater space looks like – are the walls supposed to stay standing? Are you supposed to have light flashed in your face? – get broken down too. And perhaps that's the point. That just as sleeping versus waking is the act of coming in and out of self-awareness, so too is real life versus performance. Coming on and off stage. When we sleep, we don't perform. If that's the most authentic version of us, then we don't really know ourselves. The moment we wake up and re-enter the world, we start to prepare ourselves to face the world, to take the stage. Perhaps we should pay more attention to our dreams”.

(29 March 2015) *SLEEP/WAKE: The Startling World of Unconsciousness*. Retrieved from: <http://www.culturebot.org/2015/03/23555/sleepwake-the-startling-world-of-unconsciousness/>

This observation reiterates what I have said about the work in previous articles, and what has been said in several of texts regarding the nature of sleep – where various distinctions between sleeping and waking, art and science, on stage and off stage are deliberately challenged or 'clouded' by the transgression between states (Appendix 05 + 13). This pursues an influential quote in Antonin Artaud's (1932) *First Manifesto for a Theatre of Cruelty*, when he attempts to define a particular 'naked theatre language' which “must allow us to transgress the ordinary limits of art and words, actively, that is to say, magically, to

produce a kind of total creation *in real terms*, where man must reassume his position between dreams and events” (93).

By bringing this work to a US audience it was also possible to revisit how the show was originally conceived as a reflection on the first world dreams that we inhabit, where environmental disasters and conflicts exist in a mediatised, televised space: always ‘somewhere else’ rather than a part our waking lives. Bringing it to New York allowed the central lament in the work to come forward: where a distance from global events is revealed as not just a New Zealand condition, but one shared by first world nations, protected by the bubbles of safety in our urban and suburban dormitories.

For more on *SLEEP/WAKE* see Chapter 04 Black Lung, and Appendix 05 Disciplinary Action.

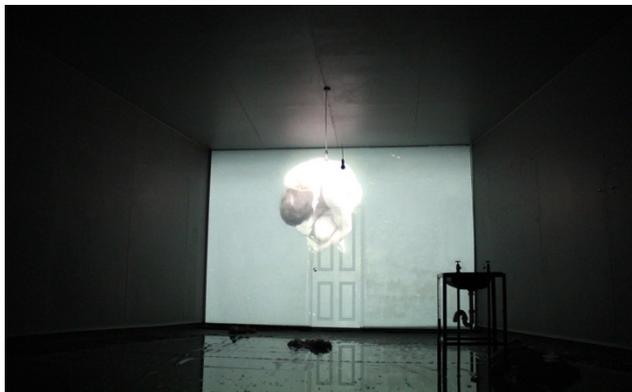


Fig 78, 79, 80: *SLEEP/WAKE* at La MaMa New York featuring liquid space, deep space, and projection of freediver William Trubridge.

APPENDIX 10

Deep Anatomy

Symposium + exhibition

Symposium: one of thirteen regional ‘clusters’ for PSi21 Fluid States: performances of unknowing, Long Island, The Bahamas.
26 April – 10 May 2015.

Exhibition: Silo6, Silo Park, Auckland Waterfront, Auckland, NZ.
26 November – 4 December 2017.

This project began with a symposium that used the unique geography of The Bahamas and the Vertical Blue free-diving championship (‘the Wimbledon of Free-diving’, NY Times) as a site for provocative intersections between the local community, athletes, and performance studies academics. By locating the event in a place such as Long Island, there was a proximity to and a distance from Western culture that emphasised certain paradoxes. In these islands (Baha-mar, “shallow sea) of flat unthreatening depths and long sands, the sudden abyss of Dean’s Blue Hole provided an invitation to look beneath the surface of things, and dive into places beyond the reach of breath.

By engaging with a so called ‘extreme sports’ it was possible to look at an activity that society marginalises and defines as dangerous with this label. The event attempted to discuss this contemporary condition that is preoccupied with physical limitations and irrational mental constructs such as fear and terror, recognizing the pervasive impact this has across society. Free-divers disregard these inhibitors in order to reach great depths, conquering mental and physical boundaries to redefine the limits of human performance. An alliance with this sport helped the performance studies community that was involved to critique the limitations that are imposed on our physical and mental lives by the performance cultures that we inhabit.



Fig 81: The Deep Anatomy keynote talk with Sam Trubridge and William Trubridge at Dene’s Blue Hole. 9 May 2015.
Fig 82: Freediver Timothy Oehmigen in Dene’s Blue Hole. Photo: Daan Verhoeven.

Deep Anatomy was a rich ground to address many of the issues in this thesis: examining diaspora and migrancy in the stories of Haitian refugees; considering dialogue between philosophy and practice (freediver Daan Verhoeven on his father Cornelis Verhoeven, author of *The Philosophy of Wonder*, 1972); two programmes of “Intersections” talks; a keynote presentation on ‘pre-disciplinary’ and ‘trans-disciplinary’ practice with my brother; exploring the sensorial nature of performance art in this liquid tropical environment; and investigating various liquid and mobile spaces for performance around the island.

The project continued in 2017 an exhibition installed in 30m tall concrete silos on Auckland Waterfront: a perfect space for further examination of depth and volume. Works used the tall cylinders of the silos and the cavities between them to evoke various experiences of depth, immersion, and liquidity of space. Two more “Intersections” talks with freedivers and artists were organised. In her review for EyeContact, Claire Ulenberg writes:

“The exhibition wove a connection between body and mind, exploring pathways to overcome what seem unnatural in both professional sport and in performance art. The state of mind and the waking meditative state, repetition, trance and ritual belong to a mindfulness, which allows performers to push boundaries for both athletes and artists. Both stimulation and sensory deprivation was explored; the psychological boundaries created. The feeling of entering an underwater world—on a single breath—and being deprived of water, control, love, and eating salt.”

(20 December 2017, retrieved from: <http://www.eyecontactsite.com/2017/12/the-arts-and-free-diving-in-dialogue#ixzz5B06y0MQL>)

See Appendix 11 + 16 for more outcomes from this project.

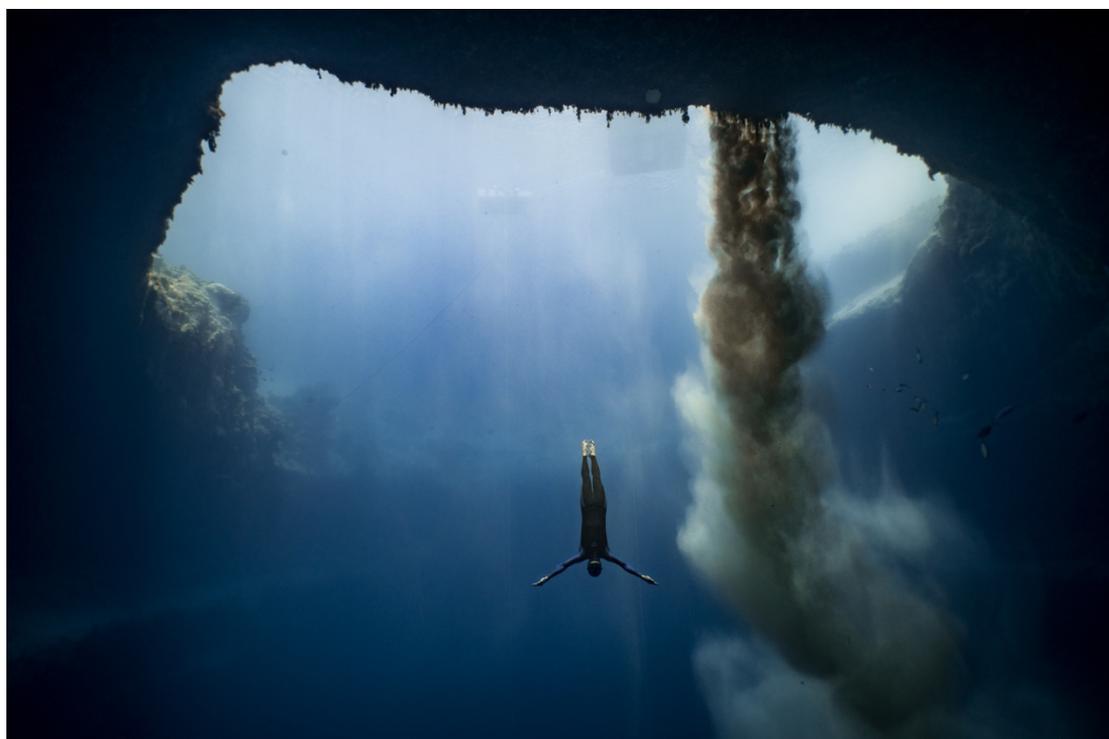




Fig 83: *Many Breaths*, by Sam Trubridge. Fig 84: *Drowned/Undrowned*, by Sally J Morgan + Jess Richards. Fig 85: *Passage*, by Mick Douglas. Fig 86: *The Shallows*, by Denise Batchelor. Fig 87: Photograph by Daan Verhoeven.



Fig 88: *Castaways*, by Amelia Taverner.

Fig 89: *Static Apnea*, by Christopher McElroen + The Box Collective.

APPENDIX 11

many breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)

Performance art

Deep Anatomy, PSi#21 Fluid States, performances of unknowing. Long Island, The Bahamas.
9 May 2015

An anchor is a boat's connection with the earth through the sea-floor. It creates a link between the floating fluid state above and the safety and security of terra firma below: holding a boat fast in storms and keeping it in harbour.

On the bottom of a lagoon near Clarence Town was an anchor, covered in coral and weed. Deep Anatomy participants and members of the island community were invited to fill plastic bubbles with their breath and attach them to a growing cluster of bubbles affixed to its shank. Thus, piece by piece, their individual breaths lifted the anchor from the sea-bed and returned it to the surface.

Upon removing and cleaning the anchor of its accumulations, the intention was to transport it to Santorini as a 'vessel' or gift to the next Fluid State cluster. With a large community of Greek fishermen on Long Island, this gesture would form a link back to the Mediterranean homeland. However, the wave action on the surface stretched and snapped the rings attaching the anchor to the buoy, and after moments on the surface, it plummeted back to the sea-bed again.

The unresolved nature of this work produced a further iteration in 2017, with its own story, which is recounted in Chapter 06 Oceanic Space.



Fig 90: The Anchor sunk in 15-17m of water at Compass Rose Beach (Bonacord), Long Island, The Bahamas.

APPENDIX 12

Night Walk

Performance

(See Chapter 05 Transgressive Geographies for full list of presentations and discussion)

In practical terms this work is a walk in a large inflated sphere, made of unfolded black plastic rubbish bags. As the journey proceeds, the movement across various surfaces perforates the thin plastic, creating a constellation of pinpricks for the walker within. Walking in a straight line involves following this 'milky way' around the rotating sphere.

Night Walk is a performance work/process conducted as a blind navigation or migration through the landscape. This condition of blindness reveals tensions between the body and the cultural and geographic terrain that it passes through. In the specific Australian context, a walk in the landscape has significance as a cultural artefact: the 'songline' of Aboriginal tradition. Arriving in this 'storied terrain' the work is challenged by its intersection with indigenous practices and narratives, where the artist is compelled to address critical concerns in nomadic practices and theory.

The work began in collaboration with Culpra Milli Aboriginal Corporation, for the Interpretive Wonderings symposium, then made various 'passages' through sites and lodgings' in galleries in Melbourne, Wellington, and Sydney. As nomadic interventions, these two phases of work negotiate with the cultural, architectural, geographic, disciplinary, conceptual territories it traverses from a live, unmediated position. As such, it creates a receptive an open-ended framework, whereby it invites and embraces the challenges, interaction, acceptance, or rejection that may arise from embarking into such an environment. Through this process, the work begins to engage speculatively with the risks and difference of nomadic and pelagic practices.



Fig 91: *Night Walk* (test) Ocean Beach, NZ. Photo: David Trubridge.

Fig 92: *Night Walk* (Niagara Lane, Melbourne). For Performing Mobilities, PSi#21 Fluid States, performances of Unknowing, Melbourne, Australia. Photo: Briedi McCrostie.

APPENDIX 13

Dream Analysis: private journeys in public thoroughfare

Journal article

For 'On Sleep' Performance Research 21:1, 72-78

10 February 2016



Fig 93: Trubridge, Sam (2005) *Street Sleeper* (ink drawing) Santa Maria Maggiore, Rome, Italy,

ABSTRACT: *This article looks at sleepers in public spaces: from the performance artist to the derelict. The territory of sleep becomes a private space, an interior state in the (exterior) public space of the street and the gallery. With the onset of sleep comes the relaxation of familiar performance paradigms. Thus, the street sleeper lies in a place beyond the architecture, denying its familiar boundaries, constructing its own frames, to journey beyond the physical present. Through three iterations of the performance work Sleepless (in Benasque, Auckland, and Caxambu) it has been possible to explore this world beyond performance, where the sleeper is both a vulnerable body and an entity completely content within its own internal machinations.*

“A man lying down is a man disarmed. All things over which he normally takes so much trouble and which, when he stands upright, makes him what he is – his bearing, his habits and all his activities – are laid aside like his clothes: it is as though they ceased to be part of him. This outward process mirrors the inward process of going to sleep, for in sleep, too, we are stripped of much that seems indispensable when we are awake – the fixed, compulsive ways of thought which are the clothes of the mind. Anyone who lies down disarms himself so completely that it is impossible to understand how men have managed to survive sleep”. (Elias Canetti, 1960, 453)

My research into sleep and performance started in 2005 with drawings and photographs of homeless people asleep in Rome’s Piazza Santa Maria Maggiore. In these studies, I became interested in this condition of the body asleep in public, where one witnesses the vulnerability of sleep, the body without guises, and without agendas. Upon waking, the relation between this body and the people around it becomes once again knowing, self-

conscious, and awkward. Since these early explorations, this interest has produced a full-scale performance project *SLEEP/WAKE* (Wellington 2008, Auckland 2009, New York 2015); the *Waking* arts/science incubator (2010), and several performance installations, one of which *Sleepless II*, is the focus of this article. Through all of these projects, this research has been conducted in close collaboration with chronobiologist and sleep scientist Professor Philippa Gander from the Massey University Sleep/Wake Research Centre. Together, our work has helped examine intersections between sleep science and performance, opening up new dialogues on art-science collaboration and trans-disciplinary practices.

What attracted me to this collaboration in the first place was the notion that sleep was the antithesis of performance, and therefore rich territory for the study of borderline, transitional states between performance and non-performance. In an earlier article 'Coming to Sleep' I defined this relationship further: "sleep is an absence of responsive action and external awareness. The sleeping body contradicts the paradigms of the performing condition because it is unaware of the demands that a self-conscious body responds to, and remains sentient only in the sense that its faculties and consciousness are turned completely inward". (*Theatre Forum* #35, 2010, 55)



Fig 94: Trubridge, Sam (2009) *Sleepless II*, St Pauls St Gallery, Auckland, NZ. Photo: Sama Yousif.

In 2009 we presented two versions of a performance installation entitled *Sleepless*: first at the 'Art and Science: exploring the limits of human perception' conference in Spain, then later for the 'Glitch' performance and media art event at St Pauls St Gallery in Auckland, NZ, curated by Sue Gallagher. *Sleepless* explored a germinal concept from the *SLEEP/WAKE* theatre production: that as the opposite of performance, sleep is inherently un-performable. So, our intention was to explore this challenge: I would attempt to 'perform' sleep whilst attached to the polysomnographic equipment used in sleep studies. This technology uses electrodes attached to various locations on the subject's head to measure the activities in the cortex (the part of the brain that is most active in waking states) as well as eye movements, and movements in the chin muscles. In the 'performance space' data projectors were used to cast this polysomnographic information onto a screen positioned behind the

bed. Put under such scrutiny, it was natural that the involuntary act of sleep would evade this performing, sleepless body as it waited for that moment of release, when the mask would slide from its face, for the muscles to relax, and the breathing to slow.

Perhaps dreaming complicates this claim that sleep is the opposite of performance, as a kind of internal performance. Recently sleep science has articulated how a certain amount of revision and rehearsal occurs in the dream space, wherein daytime experiences are assessed and internal performances occur that improve our waking performance. Here I refer to the work of Harvard sleep scientist Robert Stickgold, who specialises in research into dreaming and 'sleeping mentation'. His studies have observed that as we go to sleep, the brain undergoes a process of reorganising and storing of the day's events and experiences: thus, breaking down the experiences of the day into discreet 'memories' through a process of fragmentation and archiving. During REM sleep (or dreaming) these 'memory-segments' are then revisited and recombined with other experiences from the past in a series of absurd juxtapositions and simultaneous narratives. This is a process of lateral thinking and deep analysis, comparing past experiences with new ones in creative ways, to help with problem-solving and assimilation of new knowledge (learning). It does so in a way that is essentially theatrical, both on physiological level as well as in the dramaturgical, surreal, and symbolic makeup of the dream itself. Using a broad range of cognitive faculties, dreaming occurs as a deep analysis that uses processes of citation, comparison, and metaphor to examine the challenges and enigmas that we face in our waking lives. This suggests dreaming as a form of theorising, albeit one that uses visual, symbolic, and experiential signifiers as much as language, reasserting the importance that dreaming has always had in indigenous cultures and in texts like Antonin Artaud's (1932) *The First Manifesto For a Theatre of Cruelty*, where he says: "[t]o view theatre as a second-hand psychological or moral operation and to believe dreams themselves only serve as a substitute, is to restrict both dreams' and [the] theatres' deep poetic range" (92).



Dreams may incorporate external realities, but they do so in the context of their own personal associations, paranoid anxieties, and perspectives. This is the dream as an internal construct, composed from personal mythologies in a personal language so obscure that even the dreamers themselves will often only marvel at their strangeness. From the very beginning, the entry into dreaming is the entry into a vulnerable state of contemplation, where reality and fiction are easily confused. It is in the transition into dreaming from deep sleep where the most erratic sleep behaviour is observed, and socially unsettling interactions between interior and exterior realms can occur; producing the 'parasomnias' or 'transitional behaviours' of sleep-talking, sleep-walking, and bed-wetting. A transitional phenomenon that occurred in the performance of *Sleepless II* was the 'hypnagogic hallucination', whereupon transitioning between sleeping and waking

Fig 95: Cross, David (2009) *Pump*. PSi#17 Misperforming, Zagreb, Croatia.

(or back) we construct hybrid states of reality: incorporating external events that are occurring whilst we dream into the dreamscape. For this second iteration of the work in Auckland, *Sleepless II* was presented in the context of an academic conference and symposium: one that featured performance practise (exhibition work, performances, video installation, etc) alongside papers and panels on performance theory; such as presentations by Dorita Hannah on her *Tongues of Stone* project and David Cross on Valie Export and his own performance works that conceal his own body inside inflatable structures. Often encountering his audience within these devices, David Cross' works engages in vulnerable, often unpredictable relationships with the public. In *Pump* (2009) he encounters an almost sexual charge as participants work with him to keep the structure inflated. As part of the day's event, the *Glitch* exhibition event opened only a few hours later. This meant that the various discourses on performance practise occurring in these presentations became assimilated into the sleeping mentation in *Sleepless II*, as an extended theorizing upon my work and the concerns being discussed. My hypnagogic reveries also incorporated the specifics of the place that I was performing in as well as the activities contained within it: a window in the architecture set between the traffic of the city and the gallery behind me.

A large proportion of this *Sleepless II* performance was left unresolved and unwitnessed by the visitors to the gallery over those three hours. Despite the polysomnographic representation of my sleeping and waking states projected on the wall behind me, despite the scrutiny of my sleeping form, (with the only privacy behind the sleep mask I wore) I had left out of the work any account of the vulnerable psychology of the dream states that I experienced inside the work, keeping it as a private aspect of this very public act that I had performed. These hypnagogic 'waking dreams' occupy an interesting hybrid space between the public performance and my own inner constructs. It is this internal dimension of the work that this article attempts to reveal in all its nakedness, using the following 'dream recall' as a mode of re-performance. This written account reveals sleeping mentation as an extended process of theorizing, albeit in an abstract, visual, and experiential language that exceeds the capacity of the written word to capture it. It attempts to describe the experience as clearly as possible, avoiding the arcane or mystical preoccupations that typify most writing on dreaming, and to reveal its rational purpose and 'deep poetic range' that Artaud describes.



Fig 96: Trubridge, Sam (2009) *Sleepless II*. St Pauls St Gallery, Auckland, NZ. Photo: Sama Yousif.

SLEEPLESS II: dream recall and re-performance (from the Glitch Performance and Media Art Event, St Paul St Gallery, Auckland, New Zealand, 28 November 2009)

[FIG.4] It seems counterintuitive: to depart at this very moment of production, to withdraw when the social senses and their corporeal, haptic equivalents should be so attuned to the environment around them. In this space of the exhibition-opening, it seems strange to turn off these social faculties that measure, construct, and moderate appropriate attitudes, guises, and relationships.

My window-box is a step away from the activity of the exhibition. And yet, down a narrow corridor I can still hear the preparations and spy the odd scrap of action that takes a turn through that far doorway. The street outside is a montage of greys: asphalt, concrete, steel, glass, and reflected clouds. I can see the Auckland's Sky Tower through a slice between two buildings. It is cold. I pull the mask over my eyes and enter that dark tunnel of solitude three hours long.

With earplugs in, I become aware of my body as a resonating listening device. I feel the rasp of fabric on my skin, or the bumping of limbs against angles and surfaces. It is like diving underwater into a realm where the senses of the body connect with the body of water around it.

I am like a whelk, or a bivalve: a seemingly arbitrary assembly of organs enclosed in the safety of my shell. Bodily functions pump air through my lungs, digest matter, and filter fluids through a network of capillaries, arteries, passages, and veins. I retract my muffled senses; focussing only on my breathing, the placement of my limbs, and the thoughts that surface in my resting mind. I am alone with my interior monologues. Those that knock against the glass sound miles away.

I have only one anticipation: knowing that in an hour a performance artist will open the door as part of her own work, look in, and then walk back down the corridor to the gallery proper. So I lie, experimenting with positions that comfort me, that rest my limbs, my breathing, and my brain. I let my mind drift.

Some 30 or 40 minutes in I have what is called a 'myoclonal jerk': a muscular contraction that occurs on that point of slipping into unconsciousness or deeper reverie. My leg spasms and I am suddenly returned to the room again. I must work once more at the task of softening the limbs, settling into position, and distancing myself from the muffled hubbub of the gallery: shrieking children, conversation, the howling and stutter of a performance work. I must count the paces back to my sleep, where each step is lighter and wider than the one before. I fold my limbs and my body in ways to keep myself warm: micro adjustments to fit to the mattress and the pillows better.

When the footsteps come, I am almost asleep. I am too far away to care as the performance artist opens the door. I am already so lost in myself, so deep in anticipation of this moment that I am not even sure if I am imagining her. My external senses are so far from my internal reality that I imagine, I think, I feel, I am convinced that she has put a hand on either side of my head and has started to massage my ears with gentle, circular motions. I am affronted by this proximity to my work but can make no protest as she lies down next to me. The walls of my space are transparent now, its boundaries slipping away so that I may be seen from the gallery on one side, as well as the street on the other. Despite this I still feel alone, locked in a private struggle with this person who has invaded my dreams.

Arranged next to me on the short thin mattress, she continues to impose herself on me. I remain unresponsive, yet she persists, taking my loose fingers and pushing them into the cavities of her clothing. It is an almost Valie Export moment, that 30 seconds of her (1968) *Tap and Touch Cinema*. However, it is not towards her breasts that she guides my loose digits – but towards her loins – where a penis sprouts surprisingly. She holds me on her for a moment, I feel violated, but stay unresponsive, disempowered by the decision I have made for my own work to remain passive and unresponsive. Then the touch is gone and whatever has sprung from her body returns. I am cross with her but resigned to the failure of my performance.

Removing my eye-mask, I can see that the polysomnography has cut out, leaving a blue screen. No signal. I stand, awkwardly, finding my knees above my feet and wobbling on them. Curling toes on cold concrete. I climb out, step down, and ascend the long dark corridor to the light. There are people, and a pile of artworks stacked upon each other slimy with rain, resin, and soil. There are artists bemoaning the failures of their works, others proclaiming their satisfaction. Clumps of people are chatting. In between, others wander from work to work, from conversation to conversation. I walk through all of this in my pyjamas to the greatest, densest congregation outside the toilets. A queue stretches out of the vestibule itself, into the hallway, and into the gallery. A queue of straining bladders and tight bowels all yearning for that primal creative act: to egest matter and relieve the internal pressures of the organs. I turn my attention elsewhere: across a wasteland of cardboard stencils, floppy with their resinous excretion on the floor; abandoned by an artist now waiting in the queue.



Fig 97: Trubridge, Sam (2009) *Sleepless II*. St Pauls St Gallery, Auckland, NZ. Photo: Sama Yousif.

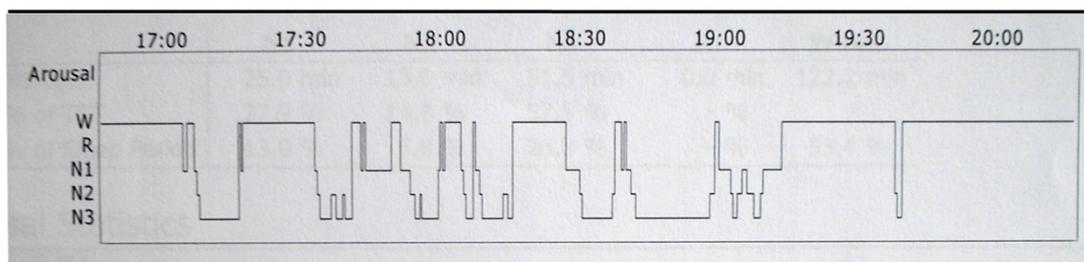
I cannot say how much longer I dreamt, or what else I dreamt about, but at some point I woke: returning to my physical occupation of the space with the realisation that for the past hour or so I had been asleep. I had performed sleeping and drifted amongst the relics of my day's encounters such as David Cross's lecture on Valie Export, and the experience in his own work of an objectification at the hands of his audiences. All this blended disconcertingly with a remix of the current 'real time' events: the sounds of the gallery, and the knowledge of the performance artist intruding into my own internal world, to become one with the concerns about the work that I was creating.

I had succeeded in performing sleep, and I also thought I had succeeded in performing dreaming. However, the sleep study [FIG. 6] shows that I had only transitioned between waking and sleep stages 1-3 and did not actually enter REM (Stage R) sleep. So, the mentation I experienced was, in scientific terms, only hypnogogic hallucination. Nonetheless these experiences had all the dramaturgical 'structure' of dreaming, and apprehended the world around me on the basis of an internal reality. The lining-up of artists for the toilet reflected upon the creative energies seeking expression in the gallery behind me, whilst the sexual 'invasion' of my work mirrored certain concerns that arose in David Cross's lecture and my own work regarding the performer's vulnerability at the hands of an implicated audience. In becoming a sleeping body in a public space I had indeed become vulnerable: not to an external agency, but to a force within. I had set up a scenario which allowed my 'sleeping mentation' to associate freely between experiences, and provide their own responses to the conference material, the exhibition, and my own work. The response was, naturally, one defined by an oneiric internal psyche: one that feels free to speak in the language of excrement, genitalia, and in-between indeterminate states. Half the time I was convinced that what I was experiencing was really happening to me, and that I was performing this vivid masquerade of my most private parts in the public space of the gallery.

Sleepless // Sleep Summary

Total recording time:	211.7 minutes	Polysomnography by Sama Yousif NZ Respiratory and Sleep Clinic 28/11/2009
Sleep period:	192.2 minutes	
Wake after sleep onset:	102.7 minutes	
Total sleep time:	89.5 minutes	
Sleep onset:	19.5 minutes	
Sleep efficiency:	42.3%	
Number of awakenings:	14	
Sleep latency to N1:	19.5 minutes	
Sleep latency to N2:	22.5 minutes	
Sleep latency to N3 (SWS):	23 minutes	
Stage R latency from onset:	No Stage R	

Summary Graph



It is possible to describe these interior dimensions of the work as a reflection of Artaud's own proposition, where he says "[t]his naked theatre language must allow us to transgress the ordinary limit of art and words, actively, that is to say, magically, to produce a kind of total creation in real terms, where man must reassume his position between dreams and events" (1932, 93).

This assertion encourages us to embrace the illogicality of dreams and understand that there is instead a deep logic or poetics to be discovered in this active stage of our sleeping cycles. Thus, dreaming is experienced (as live performance is) through an embodied state of observation, communicating with a sensorial, social body that navigates metaphorical scenarios, paradoxical architectures, and contradictory time zones.

Further to this study of dreaming, the sleeper in public ignores the routines and constructions of the waking world around them in favour of the internal universes that they traverse. This vulnerable body is not protected by the social and physical architectures designed for sleeping, thus unsettling both the public space that they inhabit as much as their own internal dreamscapes. The first architecture ever constructed probably served to shelter the act of sleeping and dreaming in this way, as well as protecting us from nature and the elements. Today this space lies in the most personal sanctum of the domestic enclosure, within concentric circles of security and privacy: the bed within the bedroom, the bedroom within the house, the house within suburbia, suburbia within the city. As well providing practical functions of warmth, security, and shelter this architecture also helps protect the sleeper from the disorienting experiences that I had encountered in *Sleepless II*. This sleeping in public makes dreaming a fluid movement between external and internal realities, uniting the sleeper with the environment in a way that is lost in modern suburban living. Thus a "theatrical space" between the dreamer and their environment is created, perhaps in one sense the 'dreaming' of the Australian Aborigine: a culture traditionally accustomed to sleeping outside that does not so easily distinguish between dreaming and waking realities, articulating the natural world and geography through an understanding of dreaming as a mythological process. This unity between dreaming and landscape alludes to the potential that dreaming in public or outdoors may have to help shift our relationship with the environment, with nature, or with the 'other' to produce a deeper empathic or experiential understanding that is not possible within the isolated contemporary spaces of the urban apartment or suburban dormitory, where sleeping and dreaming is performed as a model of separation, of isolation, and indifference to nature and fellow human beings. This suggests sleep in public as a kind of private personal activism: not as street performance or as any kind of public performance, but rather one where the self becomes indistinguishable from the world around it for a while, and one where the public or the world outside enters and unsettles an interior domain.

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APPENDIX 14

ON SEA/AT SEA – AN INTRODUCTION

Journal editorial

Performance Research 21:2, On Sea/At Sea
3 May 2016

The sea is a space beyond every coastline: a seemingly homogenous surface of restless, endless movement that connects all shores as a single, connected medium that bears no trace of the territories and names that we impose upon it. This body of water is said to be just as unknown to us as the stars and galaxies of our universe. However, it exists at closest quarters, within our own 'inner space' and planetary atmosphere: as a place of submerged things, dark fantasies, and intimate secrets. On land, our planetary cortex is alive with the flashing of synapses between cities and across the grids of terrestrial industry. Below this activity there is the ocean: our space within, where the odd fibre-optic cable is laid down, where occasionally a submarine blinks its lonely lights, and wreckage drifts to rest. On the whole this space sleeps beneath us, detached, and at a different speed. In this way the sea can be seen as our planetary subconscious, keeping secrets in darkness, and then revealing them with a theatrical power: such as the discovery of the wreck of the Titanic in 1985, the submerged ruins of Heracleion in 2000, the horrors awaiting the salvagers of the tomblike Kursk submarine nine days after it was disabled on the Russian seabed (also in 2001), and the (as yet) unfound wreck of Air Malaysia Flight 370, lost in 2015. Like Flight 370, there are other mysteries of the sea yet to be resolved, that have entered the space of myth and fantasy: the Bermuda Triangle, the sunken-city of Atlantis, ghost ships, and unusual oceanographic readings of the sea floor. In this way the sea exists for many as a cultural imaginary and a space of fantasy, since only a few go beyond its shallow edges and recesses. Most recently, the sea has also been experienced as a tragic space of border-crossing, with the attempted passage across oceans and seas by refugees from The Middle East, North Africa, Indonesia, and Haiti into westernised 'promised lands' in Europe, North America, and Australia. As well as a being a site for these human tragedies, the sea also carries its own environmental anxieties and portents of collapsing ecologies: the giant North Pacific gyre of floating rubbish, the dismembered trunks of finned sharks, the explosion and oil slick of Deep Water Horizon in 2011, or the bellies of dead fish, whales, birds, and animals filled with plastic.

The ubiquity of the sea resists a singular notion of belonging or attachment, dispersing the subject, unsettling it, imposing a fluid and continuous state of being that has been described by Polynesian notions of 'Va/Wa' (between) space, or Buddhist 'sunyata'. By contrast, writing and research about performance often defaults to placing the human figure at the centre of any field or topic of discussion: such as the anthropocentric sentiments of Peter Brook's famous claims about empty space. This reflex always turns the subject back towards human primacy, human subjectivity and agency, within any field or terrain. Thus, a discussion of the sea may require a boat, a swimmer, or a figure of some kind in order to encompass its vastness, to provide human scale, or to somehow traverse it conceptually or geographically. The photographs of Hiroshi Sugimoto and Corey Arnold provide a different view: of the seascape without a figure, and of the sea as a performing subject in its own right. So it seemed important to this issue of *Performance Research* that the discussion would not easily gravitate towards boats, sailors, nomads, or specific practices that foreground human agency within the sea. Co-editor Richard Gough and I have worked to focus upon this oceanic condition, where coastlines are no longer visible, where the self

becomes indistinguishable, where our humanity and subjectivity is challenged the most, and where we struggle to survive or even stay in one space.

The ocean resists the same mark-making impulses of the performer or artist, resulting in an erasure or sublimation whenever there is an attempt to make an imposing or memorable impression, such as Dutch artist Bas Jan Ader's final performance *In Search of the Miraculous* (1975), where he attempted to cross the Atlantic Ocean single-handedly from the US to Ireland in a small 13-foot pocket sailboat 'Ocean Wave'. The work starts with the image of an individual, Homeric in his bravery and miniscule against the sea in his absurdly tiny craft. But it ends where most stories of seafaring ends: with an empty sea and no trace of the lost sailor. It is an almost literal sublimation, which has evaporated or absorbed the artist and his work into the elements that surrounded him: a transformation that possibly mirrors master-seafarer Bernard Moitessier's own mental and spiritual journey circumnavigating the world's oceans on the first round the world yacht race (The Golden Globe) in 1968. After months alone at sea and leading the race to the finish line, Moitessier turns away with only a few days to go, rejecting prize money and fame to return to the Pacific and his simple life upon an atoll in the Tuamotu archipelago. In both stories, all we are left with is the empty ocean: a limitless expanse that holds no traces, asserts a turbulent or fluid condition, and 'admits no record' as Herman Melville says in *Moby Dick*.

This churning mass of currents and eddies that covers 75% of our planet has the potential to direct a new way of doing, thinking, and being based upon a condition of perpetual motion, perpetual flux, and uncertainty. Contemporary philosophy and practices have only just begun to touch upon these implications, and in the current trend for mobility, nomadism, and fluid theory there is a persistence of fixed, pastoral viewpoints that remains entrenched in the language and perspectives of leading philosophers and writers, such as in Deleuze and Guattari's (1988) *A Thousand Plateaus*, and Rosie Braidotti's texts on *Nomadic Theory* (2011) and *Nomadic Subjects* (1994). In these texts there is almost no discussion of the sea or the ocean, and where they do make direct reference to traditional nomadic spaces or practices, it is to define nomadic space as "between two striated spaces: that of the forest, with its gravitational verticals, and that of agriculture, with its grids and generalised parallels" (Deleuze and Guattari, 424), with little regard for the non-European nomadic spaces of the desert, the steppe, archipelago, or ocean. In response to these tendencies, this edition celebrates the liquid spaces of the ocean as defining terrains for many trends in contemporary performance and theory: celebrating a mixing of processes, disciplines, practices, modes, and perspectives that resist the earthbound traditions that dominate our language. What then does it mean for research when it no longer needs to be 'grounded'? What then is discipline if it is not limited to a 'field' but may range more freely? Helene Cixous provides a template for this approach in her writings on 'écriture féminine' that have been a valuable source for many texts in this issue of *Performance Research*:

"Ordinary human beings do not like mystery since you cannot put a bridle on it, and therefore, in general they exclude it, they repress it, they eliminate it – and it's settled. But if on the contrary one remains open and susceptible to all the phenomena of overflowing, beginning with natural phenomena, one discovers the immense landscape of the trans-, of the passage. Which does not mean that everything will be adrift, our thinking, our choices, etc. But it means that the factor of instability, the factor of uncertainty, or what Derrida calls the undecidable, is indissociable from human life. This ought to oblige us to have an attitude that is at once rigorous and tolerant and doubly so on each side: all the more rigorous than open, all the more demanding since it must lead to openness, leave passage: all the more mobile and rapid as the ground will always give way, always. A thought which leads to what

is the element of writing: the necessity of only being the citizen of an extremely inappropriate, unmasterable country or ground".

Hélène Cixous (1997) *Rootprints: Memory and Life-Writing*, London: Routledge, 51-2.

This 'inappropriate, unmasterable country' is the sea: that terrifying terrain that is unknowable in any fixed geographic or political sense, that remains in flux, and where change is its defining character. Despite this, the sea is fragile and endangered by the fear, indifference, and lack of understanding that would seek to master it. But now that theory, culture, and performance practices are starting to look to mobile and liquid practices for new paradigms, perhaps we will be ready to go to sea. Perhaps this is part of the transition that Jon McKenzie discusses in *Perform or Else* (2001) regarding the movement from 18th and 19th Century paradigms of discipline towards performance in the formation of knowledge and power. In this new century, our global 'performance' (our ability/inability to act) is under a spotlight from across many knowledge systems and practices. So, while it may be the scientists and reporters who are revealing problems in the environment and politics, we also need to message these concerns in our communities: not just as science communication, journalism, or advertising; but also in the charged, ambiguous, embodied, and political space of performance and art practice.

In our cities, suburbs, and country-sides we commonly inhabit disciplined, striated landscapes that are stripped of native flora and fauna, and subdivided for the planting of pastoral terrains, Arcadian suburbia, or urban industrial complexes. These terrains are cultured, cultivated spaces that are so unlike the smooth nomadic spaces and vast territories of the ocean: places where passage demands innovation, versatility, and adaptation of our routines to survive. This model for survival suggests a new radical activism that can move across the boundaries of science, art, and technology in order to find new solutions, new ways of working, and new answers to our problems. The oceanic methodology is thus rigorous without being boundaried, not afraid to transgress, and open to engaging with local areas of knowledge. Alone at sea, or faced with crisis, we are forced to transgress in order to survive: to cross these boundaries in order to find new solutions and new ways of working together. Many texts in this issue do just this, through seeking out new relationships between disciplines, new ways of working across conventional territories that present compelling cases for fluid, versatile, and transgressive practice. Despite the fears of some, discipline is not lost, instead discipline must move from a description of territory to a description of process. No longer is discipline where I belong, or what belongs to me. Instead it becomes an adjective, a quality or an approach, and a process of consulting areas of expertise in order to orchestrate various elements and respond to an ever-shifting terrain. In this way 'the discipline' or 'field' need not be a piece of topography that we inhabit, but instead becomes the unique position or 'scope' that we adopt for any particular project or research path. There is much that can be said about the weaknesses of 'floating', unfixed, uncontained practice and theory. But this attaches negative connotations to nomadic or fluid traits that require boundlessness, movement, complexity, and uncertainty. Instead these texts suggest that a rigor in oceanic, liquid, or pelagic states needs to be pursued, and that we need to be open to how it may radicalise our language or systems that have until now been based on pastoral 'landed' perspectives and structures.

As Richard and I conceived and prepared for this edition together, the ambitious Performance Studies international (PSi) *Fluid States: performances of unknowing* project also took shape. This 'globally dispersed' conference format examined liquidity as a defining paradigm for performance and culture, between 2014-2015 in diverse locations such as

Panama, The Bahamas, Santorini, Rarotonga, The Philippines, and The North Atlantic. This global initiative by PSI, the unusual number of submissions for this publication, and the proliferation of discussions around nomadic, oceanic, and fluid practices all testify to significance of this topic in this moment, and we are very excited to share this selection of texts with you. They are arranged in a sequence that allows a 'transference' of concepts and themes in a fluid movement between the many voices and texts. It is ironic that no matter how porous and fluid one wants to be, a structure inevitably emerges. So it is also with the sea: which may at first appear formless and homogenous, but is in fact an ordered space with diverse qualities, each flowing together: a space of confluence. Pacific Island navigators have for centuries learnt to read the ocean in this way: recognising the different patterns in the swell that islands create, the deep blues of ocean water, cloud formations and colours. Thus, the ocean is a place of subtle progression: a complex three-dimensional environment where signs and systems are legible but of a diverse nature. So it is with this assembly of articles, presented as a liquid body of voices that contain crossing currents of thought, mixing zones, and deep pelagic waters. The concept of the 'pelagic' refers to a space in the ocean that is not connected to any terrestrial boundary – whether that is the sea bed, coast-line, or the surface. The pelagic space is a space of complete separateness. And yet it is also fully connected to all around it: sediments fall, currents rise or carry other waters through, and various denizens enter pelagic zones from all three dimensions.

While each article contains its own pelagic spaces, they also connect with one another through various shared fluidities and confluences. A 'transference' occurs between articles, adding up to a 'cross section' or 'core sample' of oceanic thinking in performance. This is perhaps comparable with those diagrams which show the different layers in the sea, moving through various gradients of blue, sharing the inhabitants of each layer: surface, oceanic, pelagic, benthic, abyssal zones. This sequencing is arranged into four distinct groupings or 'mixing zones'.

floating texts ~ writing vessels

We begin with a collection of 'floating texts' that examine performance-writing, transferring through to the notion of 'writing vessels'. In *Performance Waves* Sophie Sleigh Johnson begins with the dance of light upon the waves, and the motion of the surface of the sea in what may be seen as a glossary for performance, writing, and liquidity. JR Carpenter continues in this same direction with a discussion of *Writing Coastlines*, but maintains the performance of the other-than-human, decentralising locales of performance away from the city and land into a space between. Separate texts by Cara Berger and Roisin O'Gorman displace the familiar image of the male protagonist at sea with discussions on connections between femininity and water. Berger examines a 'gestational logic' and fluid dramaturgy based on the feminine liquid body in *A Chain of Creation, Continuation, Continuity*. Meanwhile Roisin O'Gorman looks at the female body and the ocean in relation to border-crossings made by Irish women for abortions in *12-A-Day*. Sarah Penny provides a contrasting account to these concerns, looking at the all-male environment of naval rites of passage. Thus, we encounter the ship as a distinct figure or performer upon the seascape, and one that signifies both the male and female. The ship is historically an all-male environment, and yet was considered a female entity with female names: perhaps for its associations with the maternal vessel, or perhaps to establish a character that contrasted and conflicted with the all-male cast of characters on-board. The transference between these texts points to a more fluid relationship between masculinity and the femininity that the boat begins to encompass. Marking the closure of the first mixing zone is our first of four

sound works – that can be accessed through online links provided in the text⁵⁹. This starts with *Sounds Nothing Like the Sea* by Soundcamp, a hydrophonic survey that bridges the worlds between coasts, and between the ship and the sea, circumnavigating the waters of the globe with recordings of underwater movement. The collection of sound works included in this edition of *Performance Research* all testify to the number of proposals we received that addressed sound, revealing something more sensorial, more intangible and all-encompassing about the subject. For the sea is a very resonant body, where sounds are transmitted further, and where the vibrations in the water connect to the bodies that float within it, thus compelling the emergence of alternative narratives and dialogues that address embodied experience through vibrations or sound-waves.

between the ship ~ and the shore

The article that opens our second ‘mixing zone’ extends upon the discussion of the vessel, introducing it as a political, poetic, and redemptive device within contemporary Pacific Island culture. Tammy Haili’ōpua Baker, Sharon Mazer, and Diana Looser’s *The Vessel Will Embrace Us* discusses the reclamation of traditions which define the Pacific people as master navigators and sailors, asserting Oceania as a ‘liquid continent’ of sophisticated sea-faring cultures and practices. This discussion is wonderfully contrasted with the touristic revelations in *Competing With the Sea*, Melanie Bennett’s account of the extravagant ‘omnitopia’ in cruise ship culture, and with Ian Maxwell’s more ascetic experience of being *12 Hours Before the Mast* on a sailing race in the Tasman Sea. Within this confluence of texts, a dialogue begins to emerge that recounts the ocean as a palimpsest for numerous journeys and experiences, from various cultures, some solitary and others shared, that collectively define the vessel as a significant model for old and new cultural paradigms. As these texts shuttle between the ship and the shore, a notion of ‘coming from’ and ‘going to’ is formed – where the paradigms of the harbour and the beach begin to assume a cultural significance in connecting land-based cultures with their oceanic equivalents. Thus in *Liquidities* Kinsella and Loeffler examine the harbour as a space both open to the ocean, but also a home and a shelter, bearing qualities of both land and sea. Similarly, in *Impossible is Real* Dorota Sonsowska looks at Tadeusz Kantor’s own use of the beach as a liminal space between the known and unknown in a series of art happenings in the 1960’s. *Still Every Year They Went* is the concluding audio-visual contribution in this zone by Reeder and Lamb. This beautiful video takes the sea shanty back to sea aboard a fishing vessel, exploring the longing that a sailor feels for the sea when he is stranded ashore, and the longing that he feels for the land when he is at sea.

from the coast ~ to three oceans

It was very important in this collection of texts that each of the world’s three oceans and as many of its seas are discussed, to provide a comprehensive circumnavigation of the globe’s liquid spaces. Our third collection of texts deal with these spaces, and develops further discussion on oceanic states and performance cultures. Evelyn O’Malley’s *You Do (Not) Assist the Storm* recounts performances of *The Tempest* at Minack, setting sail from the British coastline and departing the mimetic Shakespearean stage to expose performance to the elements and the Atlantic Ocean. *The Tempest* is the key transference into Stephen Muecke’s following article *Writing the Indian Ocean*, where notions of performance, writing, and liquidity re-emerge in discussions on this most unknown of our three oceans. After this is *Sea Change* by Margaret Werry, Dorita Hannah, Latai Taumoepeau, Ani O’Neill, and

⁵⁹ All available at the Performance Research Journal YouTube channel:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/Uck9OgcBbJ6gl3ny7_hFKlrg

Amanda Yates that extends Baker et al's discussion on the Pacific Ocean, giving account of the 2nd Oceanic Performance Biennial and Fluid States cluster in Rarotonga. While Baker et al discuss the recovery and maintenance of Pacific traditions, *Sea Change* expands the discussion to consider what oceanic states of performance and culture might be. In a smaller microcosm, Mick Douglas and myself write in *Concurrent Practices* to recount our work together and in parallel across four distinct bodies of water (Utah's Great Salt Lake, and the Tasman, Caribbean, and Adriatic Seas) in order to demonstrate and articulate fluid ways that individual processes can intersect or converge – asserting 'concurrency' as an alternative to collaborative models. Finally Keren Chiaroni makes a strong claim for a *Fluid Philosophy* expressed through the works of various oceanic performance makers, giving voice to many unspoken sentiments – and extending concepts – expressed in preceding articles. Misha Penton's sound work *even my body now lets the light through* attempts to perform or enact its liquidity with a series of sonic works that reasserts the importance of the sensorial and embodied in any discussion on fluid philosophy.

ocean philosophy ~ fluid politics

Our final zone of texts develops the discussion on oceanic liquid philosophy and moves into fluid politics, maintaining the presence of earlier themes just as much as these closing themes are present in earlier texts. And so it is with the ocean, that we may come full circle (as Moitessier did) to the place that we began. In *Oceanic Geographies* Kevin Brown writes about the fluid dramaturgy of Caridad Svich, echoing the words of Cara Berger and others on performance, writing, and liquidity. In *The Disappearing Act* Sara Malou Strandvad and Tracy C Davis look at the free-diver as a new paradigm of sportsperson who is more politically or philosophically aligned than other athletic figures. Tania El Khoury transfers this notion of 'the swimmer' into the politically charged context of the Mediterranean Sea with *Swimming in Sewage*. Emma Cox and Marilena Zaroulia also discuss this same troubled water in *Mare Nostrum*, moving from the plights of refugees to performance works that are currently addressing this crisis in Europe. Fittingly, we finish with reviews of two publications on liquid matters, and *SOUND((ING))*: a sonic work by Amy Evans which travels across the English Channel – that stretch of water where tent cities and migrant hopes gather for their final and furthest crossing.

This edition of *Performance Research* asks how often performance goes to sea. It is both a literal and poetic question, inquiring about specific nautical performances 'on the sea', as well as the poetic state of being 'at sea', that is, within a fluid, unfixed, or liquid condition. Stories about the sea or set on the sea are almost always performed on dry stages. But how often does performance go to sea, as a place? Does the need for survival in this place render artistic, performative expression as something superfluous and trivial? How can a performance culture be shaped by this liquid, ever-moving terrain? Is the sea a place where performance is suspended momentarily? - lost, and at sea? For we are seldom actually ON the sea. A boat may seem to float on it, but it is always half-submerged, half-sinking into this medium. And being AT sea is a giving over to the elements, a risk taken, and a casting off from attachments and moorings.

Sincere thanks to my co-editor Richard Gough on editing this issue with me, and for his fantastic vision and interest in the topic that initiated this concept for On Sea / At Sea. Also the greatest thanks to managing editor Siu-Lin Rawlinson for her untiring efforts, attention to detail, and steering of the vessel.

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APPENDIX 15

Sudden Depth: fluid states in the shallow sea

Journal article

First published in *Global Performance Studies (GPS) 1.1* (edited by Maaike Bleeker and Kevin Brown).

Authors: Sam Trubridge, Jess Richards, Sally J Morgan, William Trubridge, Mick Douglas , Sara Malou-Strandvad, Amelia Taverner, Tracy C Davis, Denise Batchelor, Daan Verhoeven

ABSTRACT: A polyvocal assembly of texts and images, ranging in style and form, attempting to reanimate the intersections, relationships, and fluid exchange that occurred between individual practices and diverse disciplines at the Deep Anatomy PSI Fluid States cluster on Long Island, The Bahamas, 26 April – May 10, 2015.



Fig 98: Photo: Daan Verhoeven.

SAM TRUBRIDGE: Held on one of the less frequented ‘Family Islands’ of The Bahamas archipelago, Deep Anatomy was a Fluid States cluster that took its place within another event that occurs annually in this location. Since 2008, the 202 metre ‘Dean’s Blue Hole’ at Turtle Cove on Long Island has been the site for the esteemed Vertical Blue competition, dubbed ‘The Wimbledon of freediving’ by NY Times. Around 40-50 athletes from around the world attend the event every year to attempt national and world record dives, hosted by world champion and 18x world record-breaking diver William Trubridge. Competitors attempt to dive as deep as they can without any breathing apparatus in three distinct dive disciplines: with fins, without fins, and pulling on a line.

This Fluid States cluster used the unique geography of Long Island and the structure of the Vertical Blue competitions as the site for provocative intersections between the local community, free-divers, and performance studies academics. The programme and curation of the event considered performance and freediving as integrated processes: where action and intellect combine, and a 'deep anatomy' occurs. This notion applies Richard Sennet's discussions on craft to the work of athletes and artists, where a physical act or process is invested with deep ethical values through material consciousness and care-full action.

"History has drawn fault lines dividing practice and theory, technique and expression, craftsman and artist, maker and user; modern society suffers from this modern inheritance." (Richard Sennet, 2008, *The Craftsman*, 11).

Similar divisions have been referred to in other texts on cross-disciplinary dialogue, as early as CP Snow's (1959) *The Two Cultures*. Sennet's specific discourse draws on sociologist George Simmel's discussion on 'the foreigner', citing displacement and estrangement as deeply affecting and redemptive affects in the process of cross-disciplinary dialogue, that "can drive the actual practices of change and reduce our consuming desires; the dream of dwelling in equilibrium and at peace with the world risks, in my view, leading us to seek escape in an idealized Nature, rather than confronting the self-destructive territory that we have actually made"(13). In Deep Anatomy, this idea has strong implications for the sport, the art, and the communities involved. A glance at the stunning images of freediving photographer Daan Verhoeven testify to many notions of an idealized nature that pervades the sport, but also reminds us of the same preoccupations that occur in many aesthetic practices. The concept of the sublime emerged often in the works and dialogues presented here. Many of the artists worked against this to maintain a tension between romantic intentions or readings and the physical, strenuous, and visceral realities found in the free-diving act as much as the performance acts documented here. In this way a play between surface and depth occurs, that echoes the geography of the project. In these islands (Bahamar: "shallow sea") of flat unthreatening depths and long sands, the sudden abyss of Dean's Blue Hole is an invitation to look beneath the surface of things, and dive into unsettling inhospitable places beyond the reach of breath and sunlight.

Rather than imposing a conference format within this environment, the aim for Deep Anatomy was instead to engage with the 'genius loci' of Long Island, as defined by NZ ecologist Geoff Park in a way that 'has more to do with ecology than architecture' (52). As such, the event laboured at engaging with the spirit, nature, atmosphere, and routines of a space more than introducing its own system or schema. Thus, Dean's Blue Hole and the many spaces of the island all became 'symptotic' environments, providing an array of sites for investigation and encounter between athletes, academics, the local community, and nature – from abandoned salt farms, to sheltered lagoons, flooded caverns, wrecks, and sea-beds. The programme resisted defining these activities as touristic 'excursions', and rather used them to seek out discursive insights and dialogues: thus initiating 'incursions' into the various ecologies of the island, and 'incursions' into a deep anatomy.

As an extension of this same process, this article moves through diverse modes of reflection upon the event: gathering voices from sources in performance art, creative writing, critical analysis, sociology, photography, and free-diving. Tensions between poesis and analysis are performed in this gathering of texts, between the implicit and the explicit, that mirror other dialogues that occurred in the event itself through various liminalities: between life and death, shore and depths, art and sport, theatre and performance. This collection of texts has

been arranged in a vertical format, inviting the reader to immerse themselves in the material to whichever depth they choose. As such, it becomes a curated artefact of the event that attempts to re-perform the dynamics of the event and the various interdisciplinary dialogues that occurred. Moreover, it encourages the reader to explore and experience the complexity of the material produced without favouring a critical, analytical voice over the embodied, poetic, and performative reconjurings of the event that other modes of writing provide. As the reader goes deeper into this article, they will experience different accounts of the same event: views from above and below the water, gazes through the mirror or veil of that mobile surface – from the tiny depths of the microscope to the giant underwater lens of Dean’s Blue hole. In this way texts overlap and at times repeat ideas between contributions. These devices assert the rhythmic, cyclical quality of language, allowing ideas to ebb and flow in a tidal pattern between sections, where knowing through poetic prose, analysis, and critical reflection flow together in a fluid document of increasing depth, from 0 to 100 metres... and back.

UNDROWNED

by Jess Richards

ACT ONE: Wasteland / Paradise

Can anyone tell the difference between a wasteland and a paradise, between a view and a wilderness, between a horizon and a line? Not you, and not me, or not right now. We’re still landing to our bodies being frazzled by jetlag and exhaustion after travelling on five consecutive planes. This is a jumble of confusions: of place and movement and baggage, and you and I are quickly unpacked. Is there anything needing washing? Does anything smell? Do either of us care enough about this? You don’t seem to think these things are important, and I’d only care if it was something which made you angry.

Herons fly past this screened window changing the view of shallow waters and palm trees into a sky filled with black and white wings. How near they are, how far. Is that an insect or a bat, do bats live here, or should we be watching for flamingos – the ones from the murals at Nassau Airport?

There’s trouble in distance and rumours: what is said of the Bahamas in brochures and enhanced photographs, those envious messages from your remaining and my absent friends, is different to what seems to be really here when vision is blurred. On this tropical island our Facebook messages show that other people think that we’re in paradise. But both of us know we’d never have usually chosen to come here even if we’d stuck a pin in an atlas, blindfold. All the same, you’ve caught a piece of the Caribbean ocean in your eyes and I’m



Fig 99: Morgan, Sally J (2015) *In the Hollow of Your Hand* (drawing).

wearing the Atlantic in mine. We're pale-skinned and allergic somewhere between oceans on this narrow strip of land.

Those stems might be burnt bushes or mangroves or no-human's lands. We are raw from our journey to get here and insect repellent is our shared perfume. It makes lips go numb, but not blue. There's a cockroach and a gecko in our room and we've been discussing which one will kill the other first.

We're on a veranda shading our eyes from a bright view of sea and sky. Is that a boat or a branch over there? By those rocks, or are they skulls? My eyes fix to and blur whatever seems stuck. There are mouthwash-coloured waters and scar-pink pools. You would know the right names for those colours, but for now I'm not asking because you've got your arm around my waist and I like it best when we're quiet like this.

There are three different time zones being shown on your watch, our phones, and my laptop. Time seems mixed-up, with jetlag. Memories become recent things, recent things seem like memories.

The boy in the grocers' shop tells us he won't ever afford a plane flight and you or I say that he lives somewhere beautiful. We've not slept for long enough to say anything complete. We buy enough to eat for a few days – flatbreads and jars of tomato sauce, cheese and jam. Carrots and apples. The packaging seems like a garble of word and colour and you pace the aisles looking confused. The only thing I want to eat is porridge oats, and you remind me to get honey.

Returning to our accommodation, we walk along decking and our movement switches on the emergency lights. They cast moon-whiteness into the shallow water. We pause to watch five bone fish swimming or fighting.

We climb wooden steps and return to our room. You truss the double bed with a white mosquito net. You use red parachute cord to tie it into peaks. It becomes a tent made from wedding veils. I watch you until I remember we need to eat something. I make pizzas in the microwave and pour wine into tumblers.

I turn off the bedside lamp with a switch which rotates. You're silent, with your arm outstretched.

In the dark I curl into you and put my arm around you. I can tell from your breathing you're already asleep.

Sleep drags me down with this thought:

It was four months ago that you lost your home, and four months ago my father died.

I dream of skeletal fish gnawing on something dead.

You wake in the night and put the covers back over us.

You say, 'we were cold.'

I ask, 'were we?'

I think perhaps the bone fish have given us bone dreams.

Usually, though nothing is now usual, you live on the other side of the world, or is it me who lives that far from you? New Zealand and Scotland are the new poles of our globe. After talking without speaking for months, smiling at emails appearing on computer screens, we met in York, then Chicago, then Glasgow.

Then I travelled to you in New Zealand, and that's when it was finally agreed that I would come to the Bahamas with you. I knew what you were planning to do while you were here, and wouldn't trust you in any other hands but my own. So we've crossed skies and time-zones and now we're on Long Island, eating raw carrots in a small hotel room.

Not venturing outside for the morning of the first day, I wash our flight socks with hotel soap as you make real coffee in the plastic cups I found on the way here.

You paint in watercolours while I write sentences in the wrong order.

Each night we've ever spent together I'm glad that we don't have to argue instead of sleep, and each day we're together you worry that sometimes you are not enough of one thing, or are too much of another. This is a peculiar discovery, or extraordinary alchemy: that I love you exactly as much as you love me.

It's been there all along, since we first began talking without speaking. It's as if love is mirrored and mirrored wherever we are, though neither of us spend much time looking at mirrors.

This island is a place we don't yet know ourselves in. We've been warned of the dangers and told not to stray from the road – there are scorpions and tarantulas, poisonwood which leaves rashes, and there's always the comedic threat of falling coconuts.

We won't stray from the road.

If I close my eyes for a moment longer with my arms around your tense shoulders,
if I close my eyes while I kiss tears off your eyelids,
if I close my eyes when I feel your palm stroking my spine in that place it hurts in time with my heartbeat... I still hear us talk without speaking.

We're not talking about what we're here to do, not yet. For now, we're turning it around in our minds in pictures and phrases. We explore this island on foot, and learn by hearing strangers talking. We can't travel far but we listen well. This island is poor. People smile often, have parties in caves, and talk softly. Derelict houses and white churches punctuate the eighty mile long Queens Highway. The salt harvesting industry shut long ago, but the salt still remains.

In our hotel room, you paint and tell me all the right names for colours, and I write till I find the correct order for sentences. There's a television on the wall but we've been watching the window instead – today it's showing fanning palm leaves and rain. We inhabit this room with thoughts about drowning, love and trust. We check on each other often, taking turns to offer water and food, affection and space. We fill the gap between our bodies with your pictures and my words. There is the occasional sound of someone else's door slamming.

SALLY MORGAN: I first met her twenty years ago and then I disappeared. Disappearing feels like drowning under brown water. Fingertips reaching for the air but not finding it. My feet feeling for sand, but not finding it. All I can see is brown water. There is no sound because there is too much sound. I've gone, and no one can see me.

Since we re-found each other, and our previous long-term relationships shattered into unfindable pieces, we have been lovers.

And now I have asked her to drown me.

I look out of the window again, trying to guess at the landscape beyond this alternating view of paradise and wilderness. We don't have a map of Long Island. We don't really need one: there is only one road. I look at your paintings. You read my writing. As your pictures meet my words, I think we might have to invent:

a map of love

and a map of trust

then we can peg these maps out in this offshore wind – the tail end of a hurricane that's happening elsewhere. We can step back and watch wastelands and paradises and wastelands flap along a line. Under torrential rain, my words will smudge their meanings through the colours of your paints as they run, diluted.

WILLIAM TRUBRIDGE: As siblings growing up on a boat in the Caribbean and Pacific, Sam and I experienced islands as places of play and discovery that catered for both science and fantasy. It was fitting that Sam's first theatrical production, as both designer and director, was the island-set play of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, performed in a swimming pool in Auckland. Although I was not a free-diver at the time, my role as King Alonso did feature an entrance swimming under water for 10 metres, escaping the shipwreck that marks the beginning of the play.

18 years later, our new collaboration in *Deep Anatomy* was a union of water and performance made in the same spirit as this production, taking place alongside the daily exploits of international freedivers in Dean's Blue Hole. Sports and arts are usually incongruous subjects whose intersections occur in specific, prescribed contexts with little space for much intersection beyond events like Superbowl intermissions and the opening ceremonies for international sporting events. The ingress of sports into art is even rarer. The word 'performance' is one of the few overlaps in their vernacular, and it describes the common ground upon which the idea of *Deep Anatomy* germinated, when Sam came to work (perform) as platform coordinator (master of ceremonies) during the Vertical Blue Freediving competition.

Sam's own addition, *Many Breaths*, drew on discovery (the retrieval of a ship's anchor of unknown origin), science (calculations of mass, buoyancy, lung volume), sport (free-diving to add breaths to the lift bag) and play (the challenge of lifting and recovering a huge anchor with only exhaled air). It was an improvised performance with an unexpected but dramatic result. The other pieces incurred on and extracted different qualities from the island and its surrounding water body. The idiosyncrasies of sea salt, the seaborne remnants of our plastic lives, the seaborne remnants of the lives of perished migrants, and the dissolution of neuroses left by water itself: these were all starting points for performances and installations that happened discreetly, in the beautiful bays and shorelines of Long Island.

Athletes and local island-dwellers who were involved in or witnessed the pieces were given access to look at their world and its associations through the eyes of artists and scholars. Happening far away from the galleries and big screens, this was an investigation of detail without affectations. Just as most of the freedivers were there to explore their own limits rather than compete against their peers, the artists of *Deep Anatomy* explored their own ideas and art in a timeless setting, and without any constraining agenda.

SAM TRUBRIDGE: *Deep Anatomy* operated somewhere between the models of the symposium, the conference, and the gathering. The athletes were already congregating at Vertical Blue for their own purposes, so in some sense their encounter with *Deep Anatomy* created was incidental on their part and opportunistic on my own, engineering various 'intersections' between disciplines over the programme of the event. This was the name given to the programme of public talks held at Lloyds Bar, on the crossroads by Dean's Blue Hole, where athletes, artists, scholars, and locals were invited to make short presentations on the 'off-days' between the three major 'acts' of the competition. The whole event emulated this model of the intersection, by inviting a small group of artists to work on the island and follow the competition, resolving their visit with a day of performances and interventions two days after the last dive.

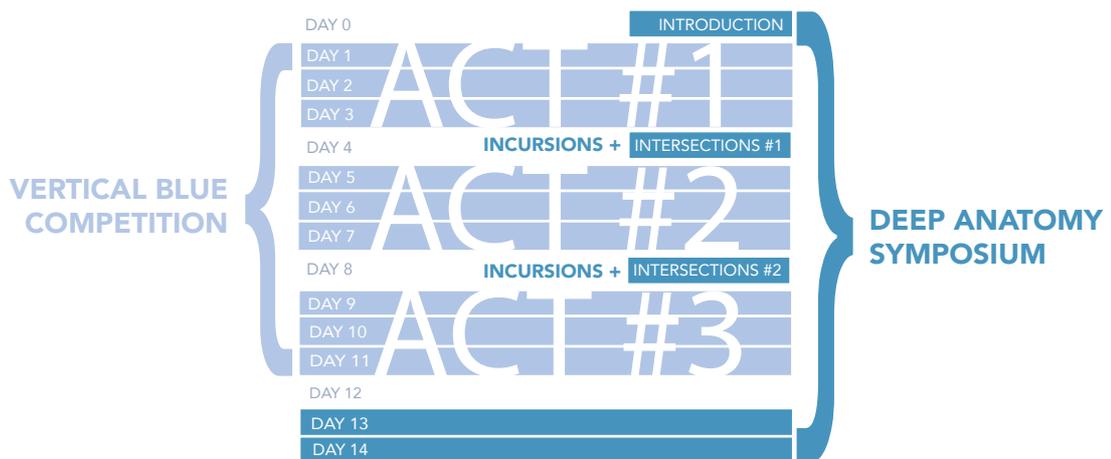


Fig 100: Programme structure / dramaturgy for Deep Anatomy and Vertical Blue 2015, Long Island, The Bahamas.

The competition itself provided a similar opportunity for intersection, where athletes gathered on the beach for nine days of diving, divided into distinct three-day groupings or ‘acts’. The Blue Hole itself provides a natural piece of performance architecture, where the sand rim and the cliffs around the space provide perfect opportunity to spectate feats of sportsmanship that are usually done beyond the coastlines where there is enough depth. The construction of the dive platform and its floating perimeter provides opportunity to watch the athletes up close as they descend into, then ascend from the deep. Also, next to this activity, the beach space provided another context for encounter, where people passed time in the warm shallows, stood on the edges of the hole to watch dives, bought conch salad from the small stand, or walked the length of the cove together. It was an environment not dissimilar to the concept of a ‘symptotic space’ derived from the ‘symposia’ of the ancient Greek philosopher/poets that David Wiles describes in his (2003) text *A Short History of Western Performance Space*. Perhaps this environment had less emphasis on food and dining, but it nonetheless bore many of the same social and spatial dynamics of Greek symposia that favor conversation, intimacy, friendship, and a relaxed interactive atmosphere. Other spaces around the island became similar sites for this kind of performance, often the crescent of a beach where the gaze ventured beyond the coastline to offshore actions and interventions upon the water, emerging from the water, entering the water, or working underneath its surface. Thus spectation and performance were regularly conducted in a half-clothed state (like Plato’s symposia) with all of the senses enlivened by the environment. Skin was wet from sea or sweat. In this warm place bodies experienced sensory details on a level with the eye and the ear. Even in the hastily rearranged apartment-cum-gallery that Mick Douglas used for his presentations, these senses became an overwhelming part of the work.

MICK DOUGLAS: Some of us are easily enraptured in the flux where water and land overlap. Witnessing a human entering the depths of Dean’s Blue Hole sends signals back to me, like a sound-wave bouncing back from a solid surface, back to the liquid surface where water meets air. This is the surface to which the free-diver seeks to return. This is the surface of the shallow sea that the islands of the Bahamas, a fluidity above an oceanic plateau of calcium carbonate (limestone). This is the dynamic surface of sea-level that islands of the Bahaman narrowly rise above. This is one location of the earth’s seventy-percent liquid

surface that gives possibility to relations of depth. This is charting a performance research process of sampling, salting, and sounding with a curiosity directed toward surfaces, transformation, and circulations.



Fig 101: Douglas, Mick (2015) *sampling, salting, sounding - part 1*, installation for solo audience performance, Apartment 3, Petty's Settlement, Long Island, The Bahamas. Photo: Denise Batchelor..

SPIRALLING

In response to Mick Douglas' invitation 'sampling, salting, sounding, part 1' at Apartment #3, Petty's Settlement, Long Island, The Bahamas

By Sam Trubridge

In colder places we protect our bodies from the touch of the air, from the wind, and from the rain. For most of us in Deep Anatomy, this is our usual experience of performance – with our senses muffled by clothing, buildings, and colder climes. On this hot island, a body opens its senses to the sun, the warm air, and the wet sticky sweat. It feels the relief that a breath of wind brings, even longs for rain, and feels the silky weightlessness of warm water. Bare feet find sand, hot asphalt, prickly grass, loose stones, and slide stickily over tiled floors, catching the inevitable grit, the ubiquitous sand. We are ushered in to Apartment #3 one by one, after waiting on furniture arranged in the car park outside. We're invited to walk along a thread with our eyes closed, following its path through the thick afternoon air of the apartment. Recorded, repeating sounds haunt the space with a looped fragment from some low-tech source: too short to be musical, too vague for any recognition, a child asks if it is a ghost. Breezes shift over the skin as fans whir overhead and an open doorway yawns its warmer air as we pass it. We follow the thread like the freediver, who close their eyes and relax, waiting for their freefall to finish. This small room goes on forever, like the slow three or so minutes that it takes to cast off and return from the depths. We wait, slowly groping the floor with our toes, reaching for the line, waiting for it to suddenly end. But it goes on,

weaving us on an impossibly long path, until it finally ends – and our toes swipe at nothing but the greasy tiles. We open our eyes – to find ourselves surrounded by a spiral jetty of assorted plastics arranged from blue to green – the limpid colours of these shallow waters, this shallow sea: Baha Mar. Through which the impossibly fragile line of our passage leads – this blue thread that we have walked upon – a tightrope, as thin as breath. Sounds echo from megaphones laid on the floor, on the kitchen table, by the door. I have been instructed to carry a bleached white conch shell in with me, held as if an offering. As I retrace my path back it weighs heavier in my hands, for it has not yet released the burden of its significance. It brings me to a pause, almost on the edge, almost upon exiting, and its unresolved weight compels my hand to bring it up to my ear, to listen for the sea. But instead of that familiar sound I find that the sound of the megaphones is channelled and condensed to create a something like a siren or the slow plaintive call of a submarine’s sonar. I sink in that sound, created by the spiral of the shell’s cavity that has transformed it into this call. I am in the deep again, at the bottom of the abyss. Turning on the edge of this hot room, just before my exit, I look back like Orpheus did, before turning to the door and the breath outside.

UNDROWNED

By Jess Richards

ACT TWO: Fear / Freedom

When you were about two and a half, you nearly drowned.

You were rescued by your pregnant mother, but the breath had already gone from your small body. You’ve told me about your memories of lying underwater, not able to breathe any more. You were staring up at the surface. This was shallow water, but you only need two feet of water to drown in, for an adult. For a toddler, it must be possible to drown in a ditch or a puddle.

Why was no one watching you closely enough?

I wanted to hold you when you first told me this memory. I wanted to cradle you and kiss your hair, as if you still were that small child. But I couldn’t physically hold you - you told me this story by email. So I held you in my imagination where you have always felt real.

I didn’t know about this memory or your plans to drown without dying, when we first started talking on computer screens from opposite sides of the world. I was on a writing retreat for a month on a remote peninsula in the Scottish highlands. There was a bridge and a river just outside the cottage, and I hadn’t spoken to any other humans for quite some time. You knew I was lonely. I’d been lonely for a while, and didn’t mind it. But even so, you kept me company by sending emails. We talked without speaking and I knew you were there with me, even though your real body was on the other side of the world.

We wrote to each other about art and writing. About relationships and death, ultimatums and images. We wrote about strength and fear, about how we both had our own terrors and courages. We talked about characters and animals. We made up strange places, beings, new objects. You said you were a small scruffy lioness. And that I was a dark lioness, perhaps because I was so often nocturnal. You emailed me a watercolour painting of two lionesses. I sent you a poem, and you sent me a poem in response. One night I sat outside on the cottage doorstep at around four in the morning, smoking a cigarette and thinking of you.

I heard the sound of two great rocks cracking together in the river, so loud and sudden it made me get up and walk towards the rushing water. Through half-dark, I watched a golden-

furred creature leap out of the river. It was a small lioness. She ran through thick grass, dripping water from her fur, and disappeared between birch trees.

I knew you'd be awake on the other side of the world, so I sent you an email. I said, 'I just saw your lioness. Everyone knows there are no lionesses in Scotland. But I saw her. She was in the river but she was terrified of the water, she ran away. I just need to know if you're OK?'

You replied immediately. You told me you'd just been working on a proposal for a new overseas project about drowning. You told me your memory of nearly drowning. You said you were going to drown without dying, all these years later, and that you would be terrified. You said that the terror in your face would be filmed as someone's hands held you underwater. You didn't yet know who those hands would belong to.

I stared at your email on my phone. I looked up at the stars and thought about how near and far away they seemed. My heartbeat stopped for a moment. I looked at my hands, they were shaking. I saw them around your neck, then stroking the terror from your face. I imagined that you would die, in a country you didn't call home, drowned by a pair of clumsy hands which felt unfamiliar to your body, with a stranger's eyes staring down at you. I imagined that this time, you would die, as an adult with the terror of a two and a half year old. I know from my own terrors that fear makes us time-travellers.

I imagined that if your mother wasn't watching you closely enough when you were a toddler, a stranger would not watch you closely enough as an adult.

At this point, our bodies had never touched each other, though we'd travelled through each other's imaginations from opposite sides of the world.

I wrote and said that I wanted to drown you without killing you.

You wrote back and said that you could not ask me to do this.

You told me that this project was about love and drowning and trust.

I told you that when my long term relationship ended, I ran away and kept running.

You said you'd been a runner in the past, and I thought that perhaps you still were.

I explained that now I was scared because I couldn't stop running, like an ostrich with no sand to bury my head in.

Soon after we wrote to each other of all these things, you told me you trusted me.

SALLY MORGAN: I do not speak to attack.

I speak to hear myself.

I speak to define myself.

When you discuss this project with others, you talk about exploring a fear you've had since you were small. You don't expect to conquer or cure this fear. You want to re-experience it. There is another layer within this project: can you trust someone enough to let them drown you without killing you - is it possible to love and to be loved, without drowning? You don't expect to conquer or cure love either. But I know, perhaps more than anyone else can, how deeply you experience it.

Now we are lovers, I couldn't let anyone else drown you. I trust my pale hands on you. I trust your pale hands on me. Our bodies understand each other. Perhaps this is because our minds and imaginations met each other long before our bodies even touched. I loved you before I held your hand, looked in your eyes, or kissed your mouth. Perhaps it had to start in this way, for us. I have my own terrors which I never speak about but you understand them all the same. Last night my thighs and legs were shaking. You held me in your strong arms and talked stories into my ears until I was still.

Tonight, there are storms. We've been filming, editing and writing all day, and it might have been dark for some time. Hunting for your watch, you check the time, and tell me it's now 3am. We watch the horizon as two storms rage at each other in sheet lightning flashes. I wonder what happens if storms collide. Does such a collision make a tempest, and could it make wreckage of this island? But though the winds rise to wailing gales, though the hinges of our door rattle and buzz, we're exhausted so we try to fall asleep. I half-dream that white sheets billow around our bodies like sails and we're up in the sky, looking into the eyes of two storms from the deck of a ship. You roll away from me and murmur, *be my parachute*, so I wrap my arms around your shoulders and hold your back tight to my chest. As I drift, a line from one of Shakespeare's plays comes into my mind, and changes its words and rhythm like some kind of Siren-charmed tune. I listen till your breath tells me you're asleep, and whisper, *Be undrowned. As you sleep, swim*.

This morning, the sunlight bakes down on your wide-rimmed hat. You're ankle deep in ripples on the edge of Dean's Blue Hole. Your hands are clenched behind your back. You're watching divers and I'm up in the shade on an amphitheatre of rocks, watching you. You're also looking at the place where light blue water darkens to black. That's where the sand ends and the deepest hole in the world drops to a depth of 202 meters. Your body shrinks and changes posture so slowly, that no one would notice unless they didn't blink or take their eyes away from you. You're completely silent as divers plunge to great depths using just one intake of breath.

You stand as still as a child seeing something impossible.

A child who once stopped breathing, remembering breathing.

It's the body, more than the mind, which remembers fear.

SALLY MORGAN: I'm standing in the water at the edge of Dean's Blue Hole, looking at the indigo depth of it. Sand, the colour of my hair, runs off the edge in barely perceptible strands. The shallows all around the hole are tinged with turquoise, and the sand under my feet is rippled and hard, making me clench my toes to be sure to remain upright. Tiny Angel Fish dart around my legs. Above me on a rocky ledge, concrete angels stare down at the place where three local women slipped into the blue hole and drowned, as each tried to save the other. The angels are wearing useless concrete wings. They could never have saved anyone. They look sad about it, embarrassed even.

In the water where the women drowned, the free-divers, who have collected here to break records, are darting in and out of the depths, taking their skins on and off like selkies. They are as graceful as seals and they are as fearless as I am terrified. I stumble on the rippled sand. I'm ashamed of my terror of the thing that they take so much joy in.

The hole mesmerises me. I have been watching the divers, but now I am watching the softness of the grainy sand and the seduction of that slope shifting so subtly into the deepest waterhole in the whole world. And all I know is that I want to step onto that slope, the way I stepped onto that other one when I was not yet three years old. I feel a memory moving through my whole body, so I stand as still as I can because I am compelled and cramping with fear. I am remembering drowning. I am remembering slipping so slowly backwards into shallow water. Remembering a rippled sun, and my lungs filling.

When I look up she is watching me from the top of a cliff, and the sight of her makes me step back from that edge. The intensity of her gaze makes me think I can see the pupils of

her eyes, dark in the centre like this hole. Just as deep and compelling, but that's not possible, she is too far away. Still, somehow I can see it. Somewhere in my mind I see it.

Her body is so still, poised as though she will dive off that rock. Watching me. Keeping me safe. Yet tomorrow she will do that thing that I have asked of her. She will drown me at Lover's Beach. Drown me without letting me die.

SAM TRUBRIDGE: By engaging with a so-called 'extreme sport' in Deep Anatomy it became possible to look at an activity that has been marginalised and defined as dangerous with label. The cluster attempted to discuss a contemporary symptom of this kind that is preoccupied with physical limitations and mental constructs such as fear and terror, recognizing the pervasive impact this has across society. Freedivers disregard these inhibitors in order to reach great depths, conquering considerable mental and physical boundaries in order to redefine the limits of human performance.

An alliance with this sport helped to consider the limitations that are imposed on our physical and mental lives by the performance cultures that we inhabit. The presence of a sociologist in the Deep Anatomy team also allowed for a more quantitative analysis of the sport to parallel other subjective, poetic responses. This intersection between arts and the sciences is also encapsulated well within the practice of the freedivers themselves.

On the one hand divers combine rigorous analytic processes with intimate knowledge of their physiology to their training: measuring oxygen levels in their blood, analysing dive profiles, understanding blood-shift, as well as CO₂ build-up, lactic acid, nitrogen narcosis, and hydrodynamics. Over the years of running Vertical Blue, medics working on the event have shared their knowledge, and in turn learnt from the divers themselves about recovery procedures and lung physiology.

On the other hand freedivers are aesthetes, revelling in the beauty of a dive. Frenchman Guillaume Nery's video of diving in Dean's Blue Hole has been watched more than 25 million times on Facebook, leading to music video commissions by Beyoncé. Moreover, beyond the obvious spectacle of the sport, these athletes also open up a political and cultural quality through these carefully prepared 'risk-acts' that change the way we see our bodies and what we are capable of. In cultures dominated by the 'new security paradigms' of health and safety, they open up new possibilities that would make us more able, more empowered, and more independent in our abilities to survive life's challenges and survive in nature.

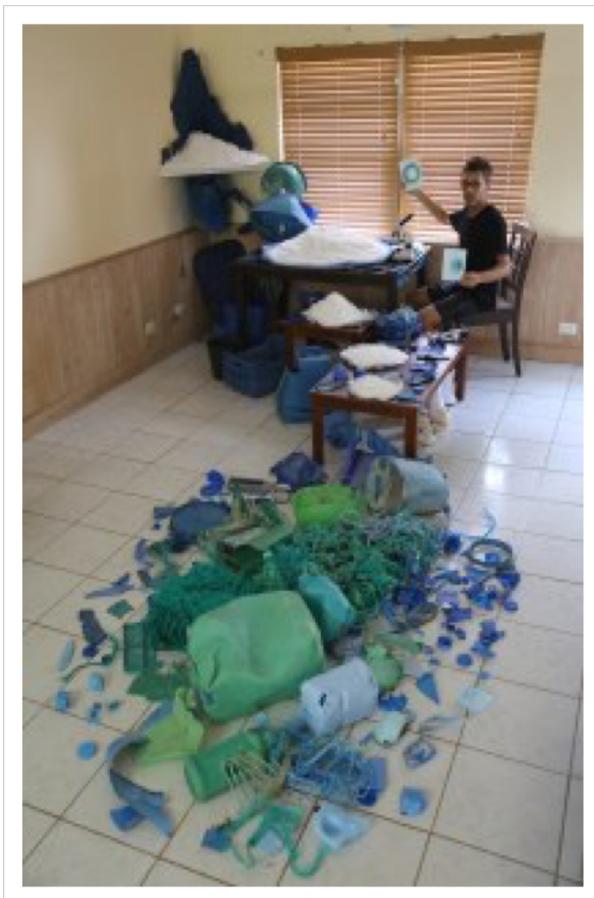
In this way the freediving athlete has both qualities of the scientist and the artist. As I have written elsewhere, there is a celebration of each dive and every achievement in Vertical Blue. Freediving, like every other high-performance sport, exists at the very edges of possibility – and all the athletes perform at the top of their game, exploring their individual potential: showing the world that we CAN do more than we ever expected, and not to be afraid of the demons that try to persuade us to settle for less. The victories of divers from all ages and abilities show that we can all be superhuman, if we only try, affirming the value of the sport today as a political, almost revolutionary act: proving our amazing potential to reach for the almost impossible.

MICK DOUGLAS: I am the sort who enjoys skin layered with salty traces of seawater that has otherwise evaporated to air. I am drawn to the vast tidal zones, mangroves and coastal wetlands of the west side of this Long Island, and to ponds that seasonally evaporate to leave behind encrusted surfaces of sea-salt that the locals freely harvest. Whilst the divers are oriented to explore a vertical plan of deep incursion, into liquid sea and themselves, I am interested to explore the horizontal plane of liquid surface and its residues for what might be revealed and what remains hidden. This is a surface of sensation and affective connection. This is the dive platform floating on the surface at Dean's Blue Hole, upon which a medic is poised with a sample of saline fluid, in readiness for thinning the blood of a re-surfaced diver whose heart has not adequately resumed its pumping job. This is the Atlantic Ocean's daily presentation of washed-up plastic fragments; a flow of human material by-product that uncannily corresponds to the oh-so-vivid blue-green colour palette of light refracted through these shallow waters. This is the saline sedimentation of Long Island's twenty-five year abandoned ruin of a salt ponds system in a wetland merging with the Bahaman shallow Caribbean Sea: a former industrial-scale foreign-owned operation that was once the primary employer and contributor to local economy. This is collecting elements that come to inform a process of responsive performance-led inquiry.

FATHOMING

In response to Mick Douglas' sampling.salting.sounding part2 at Apartment #3, Petty's Settlement, Long Island, The Bahamas

By Sam Trubridge



The rain falls all day. Water tanks and swimming pools brim over. Clouds of mosquitos gather at doorways and cars plough through puddles of chalky white water. Others who choose to walk leave puddles in the hall and make the sofas soggy with their repose. Mick is mopping – pushing more water around on the tiles, chatting as he does – mopping – wiping water – water wiping – swiping – smearing – cleaning – clearing. We taste salty Caribbean plums, banana bread, and bush tea. He begins: cataloguing the flotsam that he has arranged in a cascade across the apartment theatre gallery; cataloguing fragments of blue and green plastic, each smoothed and rounded by the action of sand and surf; cataloguing depths, measurements, soundings. Never quite fathomable, this rhythmic verse gathers, collects, and samples from the experiences of Vertical Blue, Deep Anatomy, and Long Island. When he passes me a shell, a green motor oil bottle, or a bag of salt from Croatia – can

Fig 102: Douglas, Mick (2015) *sampling, salting, sounding - part 2*, installation for solo audience performance, Apartment 3, Petty's Settlement, Long Island, The Bahamas. Photo: Denise Batchelor..

I quite fathom the intention? Inside the bottle is a secret underwater space – a green blue grotto and the muffled sounds from outside. The cracked plastic admits a shaft of light and Mick's words come to me as I peer into this hidden depth. We peer also into that hidden, sudden depth of the microscope – handed around – to witness salt crystals glistening in a circle of light. We peer into a drawing of a blue circle, water coloured, a blue hole in the paper – and seek to fathom the rhythm of the waves, the haunting call of the megaphones, the cataloguing. We are asked to define the objects ourselves, to speak our definitions into these devices so they may echo our utterances. What is this? – this bucket, this flattened bottle. It is a lung at 70 metres. This bottle top is a blue hole. Perhaps we float, on this sodden day of endless downpour in this room of sudden depth – this grotto, this lens. Perhaps we float and listen to the deep – to the echoing sonar and the call of the foghorn – waiting for that sudden intake of breath, and the silence after.

LATERAL KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN AN EVENT OF THALASSOGRAPHY:

Sociology meets freediving, performance art, medical research and media professionals

By Sara Malou Strandvad

Immersing bodies into the deep and letting the water take over, freediving is a game of superseding the urge to breathe and exploring the bodily sensations of being touched by the natural element of water. Sinking into the sea lets water affect bodies by increasing pressure and activating the mammalian dive reflex. Literally being in deep water affects bodies differently than on land and reconfigures understandings of what humans are capable of.

As a sociologist (and under-water rugby player with a love for water and the emotions of being submerged in this element) I was interested in participating in Deep Anatomy as it provided a unique opportunity for studying a community of freedivers, which have not been portrayed by sociologists before, and doing so in collaboration with a group of performance artists with a different approach than mine.

Before going to the Bahamas, I was preparing for my research at home in Copenhagen, Denmark. To do so, I was reading about freediving online and in books, besides doing a literature review of sociological studies on water sports and other lifestyle sports. Also, I attended the Danish Championships in pool freediving March 7-8, 2015 as an audience member. On the second day of the Danish Championships I was introduced to the two freediving clubs in Copenhagen and presidents of both clubs told me I was welcome to attend the training in their clubs to learn more about the sport. In fact, one of the clubs (Herlev Dykkerklub) had a one-month introductory course beginning next week. I signed up for this course to gain an understanding of freediving and to get a sense of which questions would be relevant to talk to freedivers about during Vertical Blue.

Over the next month, approximately two evenings per week, I began doing auto-ethnography, which has become a common method for researching sport and other physical practices. Apprenticeship in the form of being a novice freediver was used as a means to get closer to the phenomenon of my study.

When arriving at Long Island, I spent the first days at the beach observing the competition. As I had brought my partner and young son with me, freedivers with families who were playing at the shallow beach next to the competition site became a point of entry. To differentiate my approach from the performance artists' and making it visible what I was doing, as well as making my research accessible to all participants in the competition, I had

planned to use questionnaires as an object to encounter participants with. Printed on cardboard and put on clipboards accompanied with pens with the name and logo of my university, I asked participants if they would fill out my questionnaire. I had crafted the questionnaire so that it was only one page long and focused on questions about training. In the questionnaire, the final question was whether you would be interested in doing an interview. Handing out the questionnaire, getting it back and clarifying questions provided a chance for me to meet everyone and exchange a few words about free-diving and my research. Most participants filled out this questionnaire in a tent on the beach where divers were waiting before and after their dives.

Besides me, former freediving champion Stig Severinsen, who holds a PhD in medicine, was carrying out research on behalf of the medical technology company Masimo in an attempt to improve the safety protocol of freediving. One of the most dangerous injuries that can happen during freediving is the so-called 'lung squeeze'. When a diver descends, the increasing pressure of the water compresses the lungs. At 100 meters below the surface of the ocean, the pressure of the water squashes the lungs to one eleventh of their size on land. When the lung cavity is compressed beyond its residual volume (the normal volume of the lungs when a person completely exhales) pulmonary capillaries can rupture and leak blood into the breathing space. Under-pressure in the lungs draws fluids from the capillaries into the air spaces and makes the diver cough blood. Since the contestant Nick Mevoli died after a national record attempt during Vertical Blue 2013, presumably from pushing himself too much and experiencing numerous lung squeezes over a longer period of time, precautions have been installed to avoid future accidents. Rules of freediving competitions authorized by AIDA have been changed, so that, for example, judges can now prohibit a contestant from diving after having experienced a lung squeeze (based on recommendations by medics), contestants are not allowed to attempt sudden progressions in depth during competitions, and contestants are no longer allowed to make turns during their decent (to help equalization) as this increases pressure on the lungs. Furthermore, freedivers have

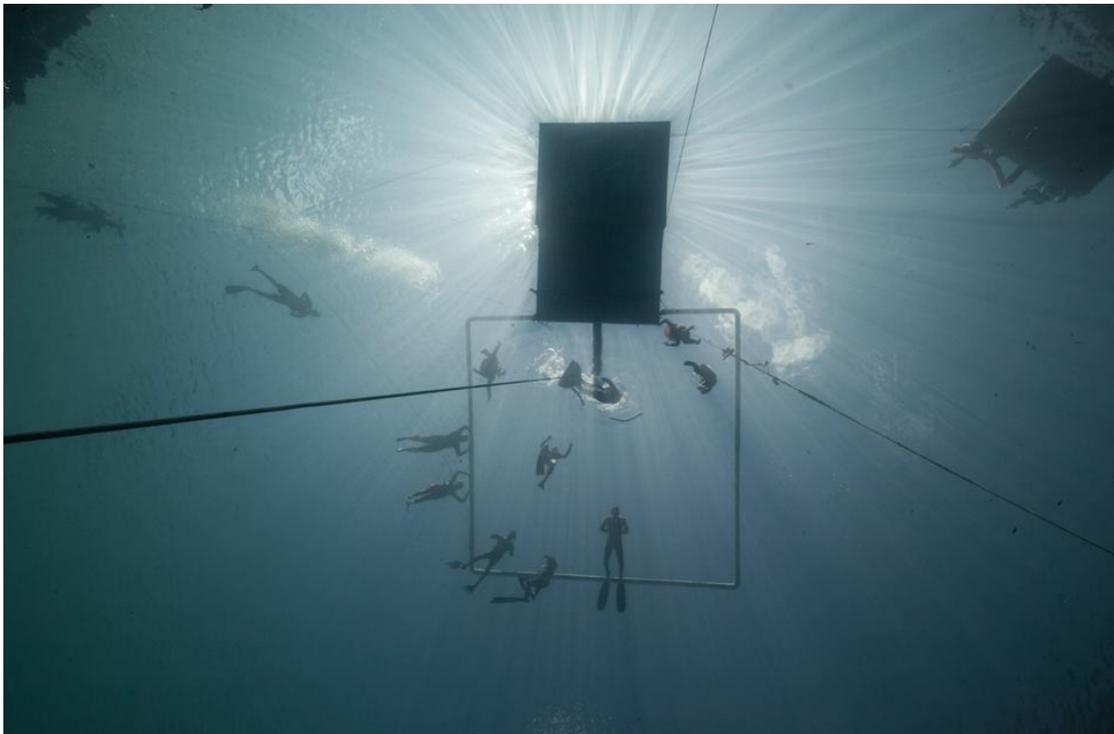


Fig 103: Photo: Daan Verhoeven

become highly interested in research into lung squeezes and how to prevent them. Masimo's medical device MightySat pulse oximeter can measure a person's blood oxygen saturation. The MightySat clips onto the end of a person's finger, and works like other pulse oximeters. In healthy individuals, blood oxygen saturation should be somewhere between 95 and 100%, but if something, such as fluid in the lungs, is preventing the transfer of oxygen into the bloodstream, the value will drop. In the tent on the beach, Stig Severinsen tested all contestants' blood oxygen saturation immediately before and after each dive throughout Vertical Blue 2015.

My questionnaire became an object that participants filled out after having their blood oxygen saturation measured after their dives. In a few days, almost all contestants and the whole safety team had filled it out. At the second 'Intersections' talks I gave a presentation of my findings, showing graphs and figures of the answers from the questionnaires. During the next days, even more people filled out the questionnaire: judges, photographers, freedivers' partners and medical consultants. Also, in addition to issuing questionnaires I began interviewing freedivers.

Interviews were planned ad-hoc and were carried out at various locations: on the beach (under an umbrella, in the tent for athletes or on the cliffs), in informants' residences (at Harbor Breeze Villas near Clarence Town and at Petty's Settlement), and in bars (Rowdy Boys Bar & Grill and Max Conch Bar). All interviews were individual, except in one case where two friends were interviewed together. Interviews lasted between 15 minutes and 1 hour. An interview guide was used so that interviews followed the same basic structure (asking firstly about development in free-diving career, then training practices and finally emotions during dives). Yet, the interviews were semi-structured and followed the course of the conversation which meant that some topics were brought up in some interviews but not all (e.g. diets, breathing routines, injuries and nitrogen narcosis). 21 informants were interviewed by the author. In three of these interviews Denise Bachelor, a video artist participating in Deep Anatomy, was a co-interviewer, and in three other interviews Tracy C. Davis, professor of performing arts and visiting correspondent from Performance Studies international, was a co-interviewer, and in one case both Denise and Tracy were co-interviewers. Three interviews were carried out by Denise Bachelor, one of them together with performance artist Mick Douglas. Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by the author. One recording was lost and notes were made about this interview afterwards, and for that reason this interview is not used for direct quotations.

In some ways, my research interview resembled the journalistic interviews that were also carried out on the beach with the freedivers, for example when asking informants about defining moments of their free-diving career and emotions during a dive. Some of these questions had obviously been answered numerous times before by some of the informants. For example, when I asked about feelings when diving, an informant replied:

"You know, a lot of people ask me 'how do you feel before dive', 'how do you feel during dive', 'how do you feel after dive', and I'm like, 'you know, I really enjoy deep free-diving because in that time, in that moment, when I'm doing my deep dive I think about nothing' (...) basically I just try to be as relaxed as possible, before my dive, during the dive. Of course, after the dive, if it was a nice dive, I have this feeling of happiness, of newborn, I'm happy you know" (Interview with VB15 participant, informant M).

As this quote illustrates, elite freedivers are not only used to being asked the same questions repeatedly (e.g. ‘how do you feel when diving so deep?’), they moreover know the expected and hackneyed answers (e.g. feeling ‘newborn’ when returning to the surface and taking the first breath of air again), and they reflect critically on these stereotyped ways of portraying their sport and produce different stories based on their own experiences (e.g. that deep diving is enjoyable because you ‘think about nothing’ during a dive).

To express their views on freediving, many of the informants do not restrict themselves to giving interviews, they also author their own accounts, participating in online-forums as well as having personal websites, blogs, Facebook-, Instagram- and Twitter-accounts. In other words, these informants produce knowledge about freediving alongside being subjects of my study, thus entangling our practices and giving us a shared interest in freediving (Riles, 2006). By auto-documenting their activities and developing theories about their practices, freedivers imitate the practices of ethnographers. As an informant responded when I asked what freediving feels like: “I asked the same question on one competition. I had a camera and I was going from person to person asking them ‘what is freediving for you? Is it good, is it bad? Do you enjoy it?’” (Interview with VB15 participant, informant N). What this example of informants’ own knowledge production practices illustrates is that the work of the sociologist is one form of knowledge production among many.

At Long Island, during Deep Anatomy and Vertical Blue 2015, freedivers, performance artists, medical researchers, media professionals and I, the sociologist, all produced accounts of the events, our own experiences, and our encounters with the other participants, athletes, and locals. With its foundation in free-diving, this event provided a unique opportunity for learning to start thinking from the water, contributing to the ‘new wave of thalassography’, a perspective from the sea in opposition to traditional land-based thinking (Steinberg 2014, xvi). Moreover, this event enabled an interdisciplinary exchange, an opportunity for starting thinking laterally about one’s own knowledge production by putting it in relation with other forms of knowledge production, thus not only viewing the practices of others as ethnographic objects, but also treating one’s own knowledge production as an ethnographic object.

SAM TRUBRIDGE: To echo the diver’s journey into the depths and back, Deep Anatomy coined ‘the incursion’ as a term to describe an activity or experience within a specific landscape that is exploratory, speculative, and research-oriented. It resisted the touristic preoccupations of the ‘excursion’, turning voyeurism into self-inspection, turning entertainment or distraction into inquiry. This may describe the journey of the diver as much as the scholar or artist, where seductive allure (of the water or an aesthetic experience) is surpassed to find something that challenges romanticism or complexifies a simple reading of the situation. This after all is the dread-full character of this island. There are the familiar idyllic qualities that characterise any tropical location, which easily conceal the tensions and undercurrents that move underneath, where the limpid shallows give way to a sudden depth, where shipwreck and ruin sit on beautiful shores. Not far away from Long Island is the spectre of Haiti’s crisis, evidenced in floating gyres of third-world garbage, and the remains of refugee boats along its Southern coastline.

The privileged positions and backgrounds that Strandvad observes in freediving athletes may problematize this scenario, revealing tensions between two faces of migration and global circulation that Caren Kaplan refers to in *Questions of Travel* (1996) between contemporary first world nomadism (the tourist/expat) and displaced populations (the exile/refugee). Without purporting to remedy this situation, this cluster and its various devices like the

‘incursion’ attempted to bring new narratives or perspectives to the local community – where the predominant sympathy is more aligned with USA right-wing politics on the matter of immigration.

The attitudes among many freedivers and their role within Long Island’s ecology is significant here. As a distinct sub-culture, members of the freediving community generally live simple lives, with many uniting their athletic pursuits alongside environmental and social causes. On Long Island, in a small subsistence economy with little tourism or industry, the competition brings more people to the island than any other single event – with 40-70 athletes, crew, and their families spending around 4-6 weeks on the island every year. They teach islanders water safety, promote care of local ecosystems, and contribute to the local economy. This is the action or gesture at the heart of the concept for the ‘incursion’, where the touristic excursion is inverted – demanding something of the traveller at the point of their greatest immersion, where affect, change, and insight occur at that deepest turning point of the dive into a foreign space, and when return begins.

CAST AWAYS

By Amelia Taverner

Garments for this work were gathered from the wreck of the Miss Shirley which ran aground at Gordon's Beach in 2013. The boat was registered in North Carolina. It probably carried refugees from Haiti to the USA northwards, and second-hand merchandise in the other direction, such as the mattresses heaped on its deck.



Fig 104, Fig 105, Fig 106, Fig 107: the wreckage of the Miss Shirley, Gordons Beach, Long Island, The Bahamas.



'The Kanté' is the Haitian word for the illegal boat journey that many refugees make north from Haiti through Turks and Caicos or The Bahamas. There is not much documentation of how many take this journey each year, how many are sent back, or how many survive. However, in an article on 14 October 2016 The Pacific Standard documents 6,000 Haitians waiting on the Mexican border in Tijuana, and 130,000 undocumented Haitians living in the USA who have been granted temporary protection status (TPS) until July 2017. Accounts in Long Island are anecdotal, with stories of a shipwreck in 2005 where 50 bodies washed ashore south of Clarence Town. More recently there is documentation of 31 migrants who landed on Long Island on 4 December 2013, then caught by police and immigration officials and flown back to Haiti.





The patchwork made from salvaged garments was presented in three stages for *Deep Anatomy*: first strewn on the beach of Turtle Cove in the first act of *Vertical Blue*; then as a single surface, stitched together and floated in the lagoon next to Dean's Blue Hole; finally it was returned to the remains of the *Miss Shirley*. The fabric was stretched between the rigging posts that still remained above the water of the wreck, amongst the broken ribs of its hull. From the sea and the shore the familiar shape and colours make it seem like another ship at sea, arriving at this southernmost point of the island, or just about to fill its sails with wind and depart.



Fig 108: The wreckage of the *Miss Shirley*, Gordons Beach, Long Island, The Bahamas.
 Fig 109: Taverner, Amelia (2015) *Cast Aways, Part 1. Deep Anatomy*, Long Island, The Bahamas. (Photo: Denise Batchelor).
 Fig 110: Taverner, Amelia (2015) *Cast Aways, Part 2. Deep Anatomy*, Long Island, The Bahamas. (Photo: Denise Batchelor).
 Fig 111: Taverner, Amelia (2015) *Cast Aways, Part 3. Deep Anatomy*, Long Island, The Bahamas. (Photo: Denise Batchelor).



Fig 112: Taverner, Amelia (2015) *Cast Aways* (detail) Deep Anatomy, Long Island, The Bahamas.

MICK DOUGLAS: I have told myself that I will enact a three-part cycle of generating performance installations that interlace with the Vertical Blue's three-act structure. This is a process of following global circulations in local instances. This is a way of sampling local fragments charged in relation to a greater whole, a way that poises the immediacy of embodied senses into relation with larger human concerns of ecological systems and the earthly cycles. This is the transformation of seawater into sea-salt and back again, reminding us that whilst human negotiation with natural systems and resources has in recent centuries been commonly containing and capitalizing, circulations of salt continue to exceed control. This is working with sound waves as a medium of measure, interaction, translation and affective encounter between animate and material forces. This is tracing an iterative path of temporary site-specific performance installation events, each seeking to afford a resonant encounter in a field of relations between material fragments, sound waves, and the powerful material force of local salt and its cultural histories. This process manifests a third performance installation at Long Island's Diamond Crystal Salt Ponds.

This leaves you having witnessed the recurring event of a man repeatedly emerging from the sea to land himself ashore with his idealised desire, who deflates into a state of encountering the real, who returns to the sea to again submerge himself, only to re-emerge and submerge, again, and again.

CRYSTALLISATION

In response to Mick Douglas' sampling, salting, sounding part3' at Diamond Crystal Salt Farm, Long Island, The Bahamas

By Sam Trubridge

Turn left at Hard Bargain. Past the abandoned buildings that hum with the ingress of insects. A kitchen alive with bees. The varicose veins of termite tracks. Rake and Scrape bands played here. Tradesmen were trained. Back in the days of the salt farm.

"Crystallisation is a chemical process of solid–liquid separation , in which mass transfer of a solute from the liquid solution to a pure solid crystalline phase occurs" (Wikipedia).

The road rides a network of crumbling causeways: crossing culverts and sluice-gates through the broad salt pans. Here the super-heated sea water was spread thin after its long journey through the canals and salt ponds, on a path carved by the Diamond Crystal company all the way from the ocean at Deadman's Cay. 35 kilometres of shallow sea water, slowly heating in the tropical sun, on its way to the sky. Down by the stand of casuarina on the sea's edge there are broken down factory buildings, there is a harbour full of sand. One tugboat remains, half-way up a slow rise of sand as if it were riding this slow-moving tide, or frozen in some heroic crossing of some great ocean. Mick has left a trail of blue plastic along the track that leads to the sea – a kind of tidal mark left by his passage, declaring the path that he wants us to take. We pass the tugboat and its parched harbour, where a haunting sound has been installed, drifting from open doors and portholes – a plaintive beckoning, a 'karanga', or the fog-horn of a ship lost at sea.

"The magnamity of the sea, which permits no record" (Herman Melville, 'Moby Dick')

Under a stand of casuarina by the beach is an abandoned camp-fire. Paper tags are tied to items strewn on the sand and pine needles. THIS IS... A sandal dried by sun sand and salt. THIS IS... the branch of a casuarina tree, whispering in the wind. THIS IS... a plastic bottle. THIS IS... a stone. THIS IS... an empty lobster shell. THIS IS... a small campfire by the sea. THIS IS... random objects demarked by small tags and an endless intonation. THIS IS... a megaphone's empty classification with no subject or noun, just an endless THIS IS... We measure. We measure with pronouns and meters and metres, holding these rules, these rulers up against the world to know it – THIS deep hole is 202 metres, THIS storm reached wind speeds of 125km/hr, THIS fragile line we hold up to the tempest, or lower into the abyss, to scale and give scale to its unbelievable scale, this is 10 metres, this is 20 metres, this is 30 metres, this is 40 metres, this is 50 metres, this is 60 metres, this is 70 metres, this is 80 metres, this is 90 metres, this is 100 metres, this is 110 metres, this is 120 metres, turn, and return, this is 110 metres, this is 100 metres, this is 100 metres, this 90 metres, this is 80 metres, this is 70 metres, this is 60 metres, this is 50 metres, this is 40 metres, this is 30 metres, this 20 metres, this is 10 metres...

"Diamond Crystal®: It's more than just salt—it is a solution that transforms something in your home to make it better. It provides your family with better tasting food; with soft water for your skin, dishes and pipes; with safety when you walk in winter, and a refreshing experience when you swim in summer. Diamond Crystal®Salts are a brilliant way for you to take care of your family and home, in a way that is generally unseen, but certainly missed if absent. Diamond Crystal®: A Brilliant Choice® Since 1886"

(<http://www.diamondcrystalsalt.com/>)



Fig 113: Douglas, Mick (2015) *sampling salting sounding – part 3*, performance installation, Diamond Crystal Salt Ponds, Long Island, The Bahamas (Photo: Denise Batchelor).

THIS IS... a microscope balanced on a wooden table above the sand. A lens. An inward eye on the inner world of inner scale. A miniature theatre where tiny little specks of salt sit in lamplight, silently revealing their shape, their crystalline surfaces, their tiny secrets. A looking glass for “this is, what’s that, what’s in there, what’s it like, let me see, look inside, look closer, look deeper, go deeper”. Here on a plate of glass a single grain of salt.

There beyond the trees the rolling gatorade-blue salty sea, sighing onto the sugary sand. And more calling from the ghostly megaphones, hanging in their branches. With the tread of their fine needles under our feet we pass along the sea’s bright edge to where a man floats, where a man breaks the surface, where a man bounces joyfully to the dry edge of the sand, where a man lets his face fall and returns again to the ocean, striding out past his depth to float again, face down, in the electric blue swell. And again. And again. The megaphone drones the shortest sampling from a familiar song, indistinct for the technology, oceanic in its repetition, for the swelling rise and fall of its broken meter, and for its unison with the sounds of the trees and surf.

“yesterday was a — nother day when I — saw you — ; yesterday was a — nother day when I — saw you — ; yesterday was a — nother day when I — saw you — ;” (Mazzy Star, *“She’s My Baby”*). He turns and returns from the sand to surf, from standing to floating, coming and going, coalescing and sublimating, back and forth, saturating and crystallising in this sparkling, shimmering panorama of Bahamian blue, full of scattered light, fragments floating, plastic fragments of blue and white and bright on the swell.

DENISE BATCHELOR: As a child I watched my older brother from the rocky shoreline, taking a breath and diving over and over until finally he would make his way ashore with his

shellfish bounty of paua (abalone). This would become his livelihood for over forty years working as a professional fisherman, where the first freedivers began.

In preparation for my participation in Deep Anatomy, I joined him on an unusually calm day on the Wairarapa coast in New Zealand. Clad in a wetsuit from head to toe and completely out of my comfort zone, I followed him into the water and watched him dive through prolific kelp, seaweed, and murk to hunt and gather. Until this moment I hadn't realized how my familiarity with his freediving had never extended into the world he entered under the surface.

At Dean's Blue Hole, with its pristine white sand and seaweed-free, clear warm water - the contrast could not have been more profound. Swimming across the hole for the first time, looking down into its dark depths, I felt alone, a foreigner in an unfamiliar country. However, over the days that followed, my focus turned to breath; my own breath, the breath of many competing freedivers, and even Dean's Blue Hole, which appeared to me to breathe as it inhaled then exhaled each competing freediver. These observations evoked a quietening of my own breathing, and instilled a new understanding of my brother's lifelong connection to the ocean.



Fig 114: Batchelor, Denise (2015) *The Shallows*.

VIRTUOSIC INCURSIONS

By Tracy C. Davis

Many global sports—football, rugby, cricket, lacrosse—emerged from one ethnos (a village, a school, a tribe) competing against another. As wider and wider networks of players emerged, codification set in: rules and timekeeping were enforced by referees and judges. Now, when we tune in to watch a match, we no longer think of these sports' connections to pre-industrial communities but naturalize the leagues and governing bodies that adjudicate competition and the logos that adorn uniforms. Village affiliations have been replaced by metropolises and nations. Virtuosity sustains the games but we know about them because they are not just big sports, they are big business. At Vertical Blue 2015, big sport was announced by the Suunto banners that spanned part of the beach and bedecked the diving platform. Yet this was window dressing. Cameras were particularly noticeable at the dive site—at the water line and below—and thanks to telephoto lenses they were also on the cliffs above and at the shoreline. Professionals and amateurs documented assiduously. Good

documentation will promulgate the aim of publicizing, proliferating, and recruiting into the pursuit of freediving, but the lack of a network film crew indicates it is not yet big business.

Somewhat like golfers, divers compete against themselves, many striving to set personal bests in the various disciplines, but they also compete on behalf of a nation. Despite aspirations to attract sponsors (which were tangible) and set national records (which were enthusiastically noted), and notwithstanding the multinational field of divers and the legitimacy of operating under the direction of the international regulatory organization AIDA, Vertical Blue 2015 had more of the flavour of small-town rodeos I watched in western Canada the 1960s than an emergent sport seeking an audience. At a small town rodeo spectators amble back to the chuck-wagon to plant one cowboy boot on the fence rail and watch the bronco riders come out of the chute; clowns are in the arena to distract the animal away from its (inevitably) thrown rider; a timekeeper clocks the seconds; and a judge posts the scores. Vertical Blue's site was accessed by a rutted sandy road. The concessionaire had a small BBQ and cooked conch and hamburgers to order. There were two small children with water-wings dashing in and out of the shallow surf. Spectators could swim out to the dive site and hang onto the square perimeter. Socially, and as a horizontal *mise en scène*, Vertical Blue was approachable, laid back, and improvisatory. Even though what is most interesting about free-diving probably cannot be magnified into a commodity, as competition technology, daring, and expertise were in abundance.



Fig 115: Photo: Denise Batchelor.

The dives were scheduled about ten minutes apart, the diver's aspired depth and time pre-announced. Each diver suited up and progressed to the preparatory platform a few meters from the dive site; executed their dive; emerged to be authenticated (or not), congratulated (or carded), and if necessary oxygenated; returned to shore, and took their time to unsuit and join the community as observers. Meanwhile, Sam Trubridge called the time from the dive platform like a preindustrial town crier who kept the entire community informed in sync. Here in the Bahamas, time is mutable: you are told to arrive two hours ahead of your flight time yet wait an additional forty-five minutes, but this does not mean the plane is late. Nothing is ever confessedly late, or busy, or quiet. There seems to be tacit agreement about this. But the time that Sam called could not be gainsaid. Everyone's rhythm was set by his

countdowns. And when a diver flipped and began their descent, a new set of times, interpolated with distances, began. Sam read the sonar and announced depth while judges operated their watches. Depending on what the diver specified as their goal we knew whether or not they were on track. When the diver re-emerged from what was sometimes much-stirred and murky Atlantic water, and performed specified acts signifying health and mental composure, the judges determined whether the dive was successful or had demerits. The safety divers who had accompanied divers on the last 35 meters of the ascent kibbitzed and gracefully floated in the pen.

These death-defying acts that took place at ten-minute intervals were sustained in the midst of exquisitely orchestrated camaraderie. In epic poetry and drama, such deeds are depicted in the *aristeia*: the scene where a hero's finest moments are exhibited. The freedivers reminded me of Diomedes, one of the Achaean kings who waged the Trojan War. Diomedes epitomizes traditional heroic values, striving for glory but never succumbing to hubris. For some critics, Diomedes' *aristeia* is in battle, but for me it is this passage that shows his great wisdom. When Nestor proposes that someone reconnoiter the Trojan camp to look for stragglers and listen for helpful intelligence all the Greeks remained "stricken to silence." Then, only Diomedes of the great war cry spoke forth among them:

'Nestor, my own heart and my own proud spirit arouse me
to go into the host of the hateful men who lie near us,
the Trojans; but if some other man would go along with me
there would be more comfort in it, and greater confidence.
When two go together, one of them at least looks forward
to see what is best; a man by himself, though he be careful,
still has less mind in him than two, and his wits have less weight.'
(*Iliad*, trans. Richard Lattimore, Book 10.219-26)

Rather than seeking solitary valour, Diomedes takes the collective approach, finding greater strength and cunning in comradeship. He ventured forth with Odysseus.

The virtuoso/a is another ancient concept embodying power, strength, and moral goodness. Additionally, the virtuoso/a has extraordinary technical skill, and hence we associate this term particularly with musicianship. Other artists and artisans can qualify, but differentiating between the prowess of the virtuoso/a and the lesser mortal is a helpful way to contrast the accomplishments of *aristeia* from other, lesser, deeds. Music's quality of sound is dependent not merely on the instrument but also in how it is wielded: muscular control of the diaphragm, chest walls, throat, jaw, and face determine how breath is collected, held, and expelled on notes. The ear, of course, is important but its discernment and calibration is a matter of mind as well as optic acuity. The virtuoso/a is also a master of coordination: for instrumentalists this means the hands but they are connected to arms and shoulders that must have the optimal relaxation, poise, and grace in the midst of exertion and precision. In ensembles the musician coordinates with others but takes ultimate responsibility for their improvisation within the fluid discipline of concerted sound-making. And in all cases awareness of how sound resonates in a locale, and is affected by the presence of absorbent and non-absorbent surfaces, remains tempered to pitch, and requires ongoing adjustment is a matter of discernment but also the ability to activate infinite calibrations while playing. But virtuosos too find greater resourcefulness in company, relying continually on teachers and coaches to temper their approach and other musicians to temper their pitch. In a sense, they go into their *aristeia* always with the fuller resource of this fellowship.



Fig 116: Photo: Denise Batchelor.

Valorous combatants, virtuosi, and freedivers do what the rest of us cannot, in part because they are trained by experts, hone technique through long practice and experience, through which they also hone superior mental and physical apparatuses with which to execute their cunning. Some of the divers at Vertical Blue exhibited physical ideals: carve them in marble and they would be readily recognized as goddesses and gods of old. But not all are thus—there are phenotypes of all sorts excelling in the pursuit of the deep—and excellence is not the product of an ideal physique. Most avow that freediving is an interior-focused pursuit, adrenalin is antithetical to their needs because it increases respiration and oxygen utilization, and so mantras of peacefulness, tranquility, and surrender are preferred. In the yoga sutras, surrender leads to greater attainment, and with steady practice comes greater comfort; deep contemplation leads to mastery and triumph over dualities (Patanjali, Book 2.45-8). Certainly, a reckoning with duality is necessary: as an instructor of the Eskimo Roll once told me, “water is a low-oxygen environment.” But freediving is more profound and agential than dodging a rock or righting a kayak after a watery broadside: it requires not just righting oneself without the panic of a push-out, but takes a sustained will over many minutes that requires calibrated physical and mental adjustments at specific depths on the descent and ascent. Without these the consequences are more than a dousing and sputter. At a certain depth gravity takes a body downward and the mind must remember not only when and how to turn toward the surface, but also to marshal enough energy and oxygen for the effort of ascent.

Some divers say that this epitomizes freedom. They must be right, because only they could know, though this is not all I perceive in the ontology of this pursuit. Freedom is not commensurate with agency, agency is not commensurate with technical ability. The divers must free themselves through self-knowledge that releases them from fear. They practice with effort, they execute with effort, and though this eases and naturalizes with repetition it

is always an exertion of some facet of their virtuosic apparatus such as body, mind, or *sattva* (lightness or clarity).

This is facilitated by the community. When William Trubridge arose from his 120-meter dive his tanned face was ash-coloured: blood had pooled to his core and brain in a mammalian survival instinct, and specific kinds of breath were requisite to expel the pallour. His coach commanded: “hook, William, hook!” And he hooked. The ability to execute the physical act of diving, return, and restoration in optimal sequence, infinitely calibrated to the circumstances, is the virtuosity of this pursuit. Like Diomedes, divers strive for honour and glory but do so in partnership in order not succumb to madness or hubris in the depths or at the surface. Perhaps the way to convey this is not as big sport but through epic poetry.

UNDROWNED

By Jess Richards

ACT THREE: Drowning / Breathing

And here we are, waiting, in our air-conditioned hotel room. You’re sitting at a small round table cluttered with laptops, notebooks and biscuit crumbs. You’re playing a computer game to try to calm down and distract yourself from what we’re about to do. Outside, the air is moist and heavy. Your face has gone grey, the colour of fear. I’m asking myself if you’ll go through with this, because you’re not even in the water yet but you’re on the verge of hyperventilating.

Today we will go to Lovers’ Beach, a place neither of us have ever been to before.

We will go into unknown waves, in an unfamiliar place, no matter how shallow or deep the water is, no matter how hard the undercurrents push or pull.

We wear red clothing in two shades - arterial blood and deoxygenated blood.

You have two lengths of red parachute cord to tie our wrists together with.

On Lovers’ Beach I will push you under the water and hold your body down.

I don’t know how I’ll be able to tell if you’re drowning or screaming, when you’re underwater.

Will I be able to see your face if the surface is moving?

You abandon your computer game, get up from your chair and stand beside me. You say, ‘I might have a heart attack. I could have a heart attack.’

Inside, I’m churning because this feels possible. I take your hand, stand up, hug you and say, ‘no, you won’t. Dying is banned.’

I am trying to stay calm for you while knowing that fear is contagious. I don’t know if I will be able to remain calm. But I will try to, because you will be two and a half years old when I drown you. And I will be my own age, drowning the one lover I’ve had who knows exactly what to do when my body remembers terror and can’t stop shaking.

Without you, I wouldn’t be able to keep breathing.

So if anyone can be trusted, you can trust me to drown you, and yet still keep you alive.

SALLY MORGAN: I draw her into the picture-perfect sea with red ropes. She plunges me backwards into the salt water, and holds me under.

We’re on Lovers’ Beach, a pale basin of blue sea enclosed within a circle of tall rock formations. A narrow gap shows a darker ocean, just beyond us. You are waist-deep in salt water, I am on the sand. We face each other. You have led me here by tugging on red

parachute cord, red rope, red threads, or are these veins which bind our wrists together? I walk slowly towards you. Wrapping red lines around your wrists - as you pull, I am drawn to you. You pull. I step. Again, you pull, and I step.

Everything else falls away. For a moment, I think there should be some kind of music, but all noises are echoes and thuds.

When I am close enough to touch you, fear translates your face. You're trembling, and you look at me as if I will hurt you.

My hands are on your shoulders and you are breathing so fast my throat clenches. I place my feet steady because my body has to feel strong for yours. Sand shifts under the balls of my feet. You are looking into my eyes and I watch you shrink. You are unable to hide anything you feel from me, and I am trying to hide everything I feel from both you and myself.

You say 'no.' Again, you say 'no'. I don't know if you speak this, or feel this. I can no longer tell the difference between emotions and these vanishing sounds. All I can hear is your breath. Water sends no tune of undrowning to my ears, not when fear can make your eyes look at me like this.

I can't breathe. I hate this. I have to breathe.

Your body needs to feel that my body is safe and that means all of my breathing is now going to seem slow and you are going to believe that I am incredibly calm. I tell you, 'I've got you, it's going to be all right.' These are nothing words but I have to mean them as I say them, so I mean them.

Your pupils shrink. Your pulse thuds through my palms. You sink a little as I gently move your head back towards the water. You whimper.

You say 'no,' yet again.

Your forehead has broken sweat. You're so pale. The skin under your eyes darkens. You are still above the water, and you already look like you're dying. I can't look away. The wind blows our hair over our faces and I hold yours back with one hand and mine back with the other so I can look into your eyes and tell you without speaking... trust me.

I push you gently on the shoulders, downwards, and release the pressure. My body is trying to teach your body that it is safe, though it isn't. Your breathing quickens. The fear in your eyes flashes away and I see determination there, but only momentarily. I inhale, and add more pressure to your shoulders.

You let me push you further backwards this time. In whispers I talk to you as if you are a frightened child. You're crying, I think you are. I'm not quite sure.

Your hair spreads on the surface of water like unravelling rope. I ask if you're ready, with my voice or thoughts, I can't tell the difference.

You aren't ready. You will never be ready.

But you have pulled me here to drown you. And I love you, so that is what I will do.

I keep my eyes on yours, barely blinking, voice steady.

I add more pressure through my hands, trying to teach your body a direction.

I tell myself that your heart will not attack you.

I tell myself that this is your fear I've caught, and not my own, so I will hide it from you.

I tell myself that I will not become your killer, I will remain your lover.

SALLY MORGAN: I am not other. You are not other. We whisper in waist deep water. We talk about our fears and desires. You have kicked off your heavy boots and left them in the sand. I can hear my own rapid breathing. We are the colours of blood flowing to the heart, and flowing from the heart. We speak the truth, as we know it, with our bodies.

I tell myself that as long as I trust myself not to ever hurt you, I won't ever hurt you.

I tell myself that I can trust your body enough to fight for itself, if it needs to.

I tell myself that there is no danger, other than the danger that is terror.
Your eyes, nose and mouth are the only parts of you which remain above water.
Your eyes, a slight narrowing, a widening.
Now.
An intake of breath through your mouth.
My hand pushes down hard on your chest.
You're submerged.
There is silence. In this moment, not hearing your fast breathing is a relief.
I don't believe in relief.
I can't read your emotions. Blue water makes your skin corpse pale. Suddenly you look calm, as if the water has drawn all the fear out of you but I don't trust that this is the right way to think...
The water could be lying.
There are beads of mascara on your eyelashes which look like black feathers. Your eyes are open, unfocussed, I can't even see if they're trying to focus. Bubbles flip as they leave your mouth and rise towards me.
Water makes your eyes look distant because they can't see beyond it.
Water pretends calmness by making your face expressionless.
Water wears you, or you wear water, like a mask.

SALLY MORGAN: my body performs itself: its own fears and desires, its own embodied compassion and tenderness: its own longings.

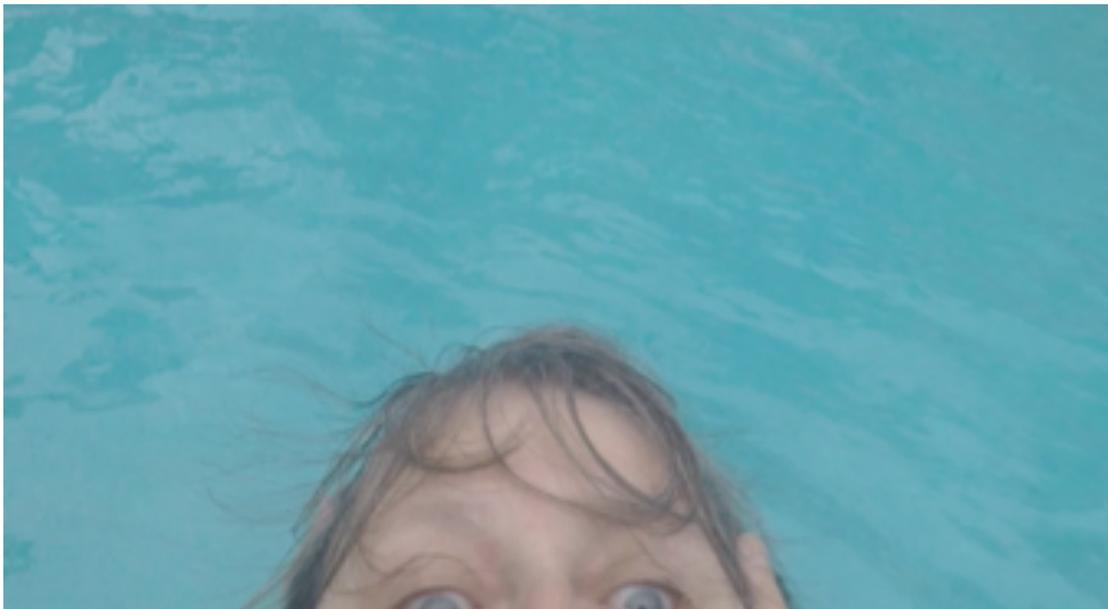
It is almost peaceful, up here in air, looking down at you in water.
I don't trust this sense of peace.
The ocean is lying.
I trust you more than oceans.
I can feel traces of panic between your skin and my hands, like electricity.
This is how I don't really drown you: not trusting water, but trusting my hands to listen to your body and your body to talk to my hands.
A flicker somewhere between your breastbone and my palm.
Your expression changes. The mask of water slips away. You're terrified.
The water becomes waves and now I can't see your face. My heart thuds in my throat. I was right not to trust water. It is volatile.
You reach out and grip my shoulder. I push down on your chest.
Your fingers and palms find the edges between air and water.
Still, I hold you under.
The remaining tight breath escapes from your lungs.
I can't bear to hold you down any more. I release your chest. As your body emerges, it gasps, flails, grabs me and lets itself be held.

SALLY MORGAN: I cannot heal my fear of drowning. Can I heal my fear of love? All love.
Drown without dying.

You inhale and I exhale and your breathing fills my ears.
Your arms are trembling.
Your hands are trembling.
Your skull is trembling.
Your spine is trembling.
Somewhere beneath these cold shudders of skin, there's warmth, a heartbeat, blood and bones. Your body has terror living in it. Terror is far more dangerous than water. Your mind

has courage. The body hangs onto its memories, no matter what damage they cause. You nearly drowned as a small child, but you're not drowning now. When you're ready, I will lead you out of this ocean. This isn't any cure, it's your body trusting the body of your lover. It's your body trusting your mind to trust. It's your body allowing your mind to look at the edges of fear. It's the edges of fear which allow you to love and be loved without drowning. As we stand here waist-deep holding onto one another, we are no more than two bodies in water. You are a body full of fear and I am a body which offers safety. Burying my feet in the sand, I hold your trembling back and stroke you with the palms of my hands.

Fig 117: Morgan, Sally J + Richards, Jess (2015) *In the Hollow of Your Hand* (Video still).



SAM TRUBRIDGE: In this small gathering of artists, academics, and athletes a new model for inter-disciplinarity emerged in an unexpected place: many of the collaborations and dialogues in *Deep Anatomy* were informed by or catalysed by relationships – within families or between lovers. This revealed the inter-disciplinary power of these close connections: such as photographer Denise Batchelor's interest in her brother, a diver and fisherman; the new love between writer Jess Richards and performance artist Sally J Morgan; freediving photographer Daan Verhoeven's relationship with his father, the Dutch philosopher Cornelis Verhoeven; and my own ongoing work with my brother. In these spaces new dialogues and new languages are made possible. Familial bonds bring practices together where they may not do so otherwise, and disciplinary regimes are relaxed in this space. In these contexts practices engage with states of play or playfulness that characterise the relationships between siblings, between parents and children, or between lovers. As I have discussed in other texts on art/science collaboration, play is a 'pre-disciplinary' state, wherein the subject acquires new knowledge by testing their physical abilities, examination of the environment, and by expressing themselves in equal measure. In adult terms these intermingling processes may be called athletics, science, and art respectively – but that would be to make these qualities into terms, to make them behave, or discipline them. Here in play, all assumptions are suspended, as we test ourselves in the world and with one another. While

the more formal, stated structures of Deep Anatomy produced some exciting new implications for how the arts can intersect with other disciplines, this other dynamic was subversive but also poignant, providing a surprising and sudden depth to many of the relationships that were performed and examined throughout the symposium.



Fig 118: Photo: Daan Verhoeven.

DAAN VERHOEVEN: ‘Deep’ is a word with many facets: you can have deep conversations or deep pockets, you can be deeply in love or fall into deep depression, you can look deep into the eyes of somebody and touch their soul deeply, you can have a deep voice or listen to Deep Purple, you can go deep into a cave or deep into sleep, you can take a deep breath and dive into the deep blue sea, or you can have deep thoughts.

So you can be deep both literally and figuratively, deep both physically and metaphysically. I’d like to focus on that last bit, because I have been thinking about that word ‘deep’ and ‘deeper’ since the year 2006, and I’d like to explain why. My father was a professor in metaphysics, and when he died in 2001 he was on the news. He was described as the most original thinker in Holland and in a way the deepest man in Holland. When he died he left 3750 published works. As I was going through his work I discovered even more. I discovered 5 folders of 200 essays that hadn’t been published yet. So I started copying these essays. I saw that he worked every day. From the time he was about 8 or 9, he started writing things down. Every day he wrote and wrote. It was an inherent need for him that he write every day, think every day, and process those thoughts every day. I had to deal with this enormous quantity of work. Personally I have never been that deep. I have always liked fart jokes more than I’ve liked philosophy. So I was dealing with something that I could barely comprehend. I remember when I was 5 or 6 I learnt how to read, and I thought I could read my dad’s work. But I got stuck on the first sentence and couldn’t understand it at all. I tried again when I was 12, but not much better. And by the time I was 15 I realised my father was much deeper than I am. I realised that I was never going to get to that level, and was never quite going to be able to get that deep.

After my father died I had to take care of his work, to make sure it was still read, published, and available to libraries. The load of that task, and barely being able to do it, and missing

him at the same time, sent me into a depression. That was about as deep as I could get, I figured at the time. The thing that got me out of it, after a couple of years, was freediving. I discovered something I could play with, that I could naturally do. Philosophy was such an alien thing to me that when I reconnected with water, and rekindled with my own passion for being underwater, and that feeling of flying, it brought me back to the surface in a weird way. In freediving you have to train a bit, so you get healthier, and you take better care of your diet. All of those things helped me pull myself out of my depression. So by 2006 I had been freediving for a year. For some reason, mostly because I am Dutch and Dutch were not deep freedivers at the time, I set a National Record. So my dad was the deepest man *metaphysically*, in Holland, and all of a sudden I was the deepest man, *physically* in Holland. And that baffled me, because I drown in the first page of Heidegger, and my dad couldn't swim at all. And yet both of us go deep, and end up being the deepest.

So what is it that connects my father and I, other than genetics? I look physically a little bit like him, I have his knobby knees, and I have his nice hands. But I didn't get his brain at all. So I keep wondering – there must be something that connects us – why we both go deeper. Looking back on those unpublished essays, (I copied them all, and there was thousands and thousands of copies) I started noticing that he must have really loved this, he must have really loved doing this. I connected that to the hours and hours of training I put in. I never thought of it as training. I never set a record or anything, I just loved being underwater: you do what you love. It's a passion. So it started clicking for me, if you have a passion, if you are passionate for something, then you go deeper. You go deeper into whatever it is you are passionate about. People who are into astronomy will gaze into that night sky, and will completely lose themselves. People who collect stamps, will completely lose themselves in that connection they feel. That's where the physical and the metaphysical meet each other. We've all been there, when you follow your passion, and you do something you really love, and there comes that moment when you lose yourself. I think that if you go deep enough you reach a core where the metaphysical and the physical, words and images are all the same, it's all one.

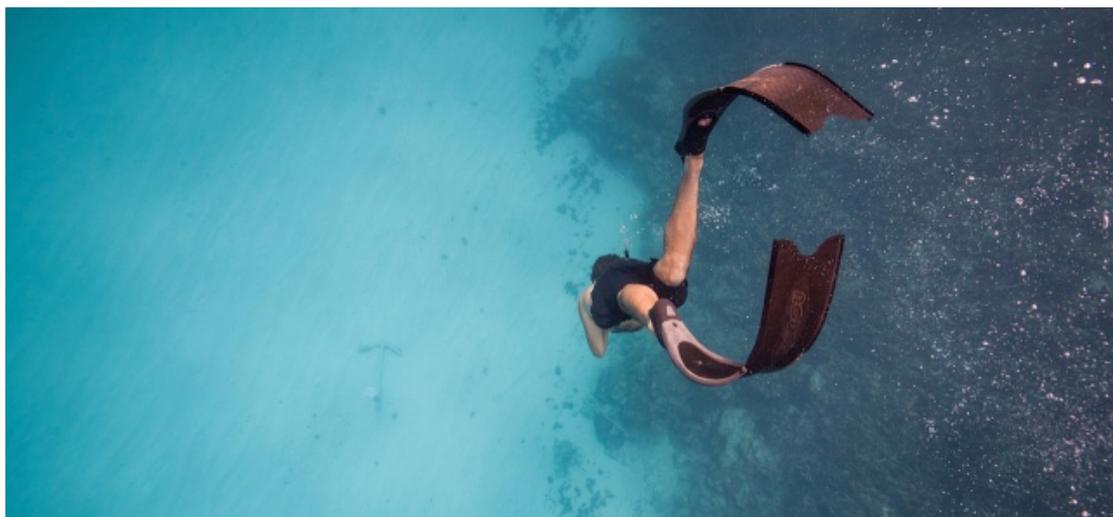


Fig 119: Trubridge, Sam (2015) *many breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)*. Photo: Daan Verhoeven.

MANY BREATHS
By Sam Trubridge

On the bottom of a lagoon near Clarence Town is an anchor, covered in coral and weed. Deep Anatomy participants and members of the island community were invited to fill plastic bubbles with their breath and attach them to a growing cluster of bubbles affixed to its shank. Thus, piece by piece, their individual breaths lifted the anchor from the sea-bed and returned it to the surface. However, the wave action on the surface stretched and snapped the rings attaching the anchor to the buoy, and after moments on the surface, it plummeted back to the sea-bed again. The instant that the anchor surfaced on Long Island remains as a moment of victory and euphoria where breath brought the below above, to break the surface of the ocean with this heavy object.

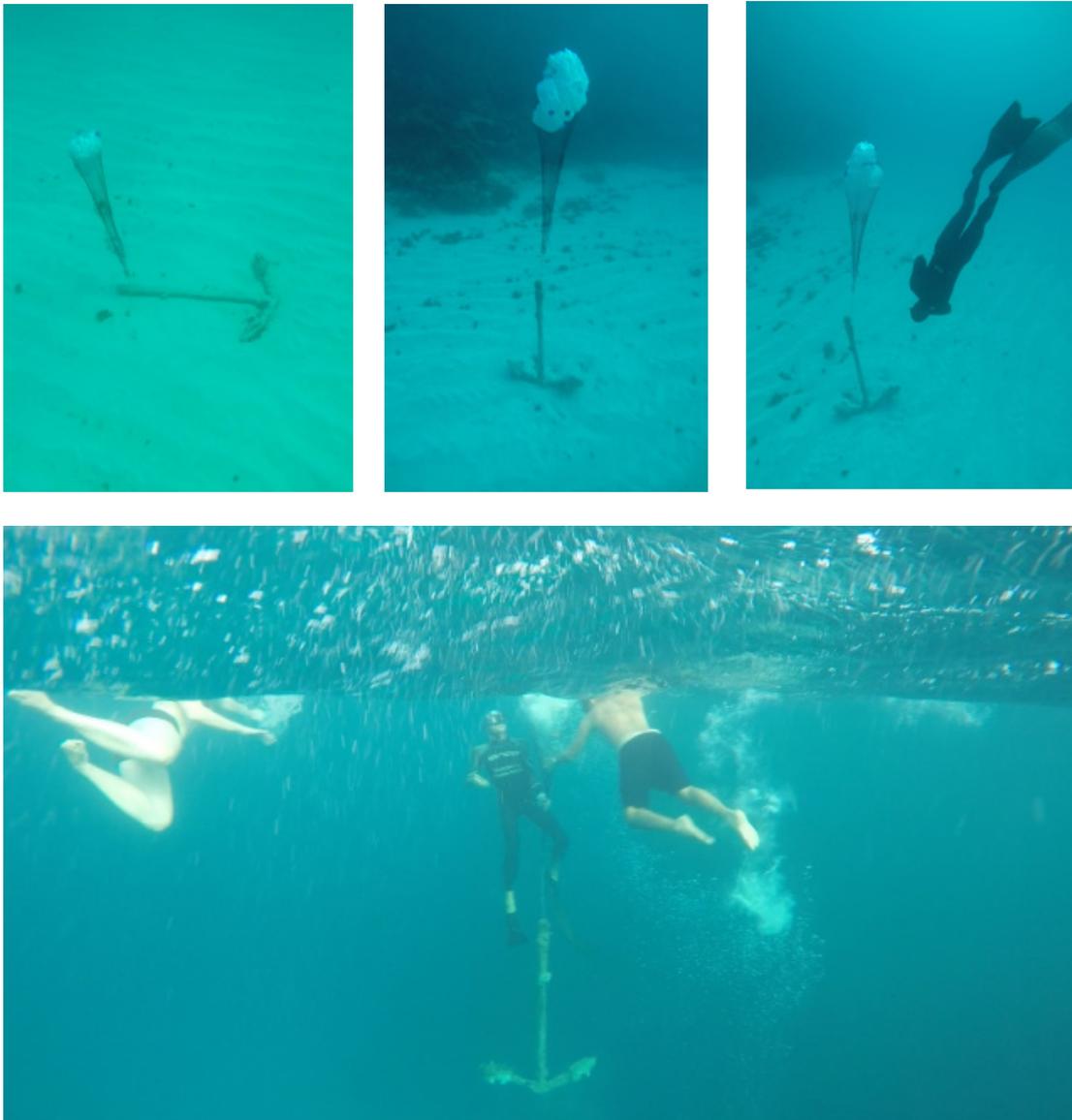


Fig 120, Fig 121, Fig 122, Fig 123: Trubridge, Sam (2015) *many breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)*. Photos: Stephen Keenan.



Fig 124: Trubridge, Sam (2015) *many breaths (to lift an anchor from the sea bed)*. Photo: Stephen Keenan.

An anchor is a boat's connection with the earth through the sea-floor. It creates a link between the floating fluid state above and the safety and security of terra firma below: holding a boat fast in storms, and keeping it in harbour. The anchor is also that quintessential symbol of old maritime culture and seafaring. It reminds us of the passing of this era that Steve Mentz describes: "The end of the age of commercial sail and the advent of airline travel, airborne warfare, containerization, the automation of ports, and even the romance of outer space have displaced the sea from the centre of our cultural imagination" (2009, *At the Bottom of Shakespeare's Ocean*, ix). At seventeen metres deep, the anchor is twice the full fathom five where fathers lie and bones grow coral. It is not a space where performance often ventures, except the athletic performance of divers and their minds. But there is great potential in bringing performance to this place where we should not go as an audience. The sea's surface is like a stage curtain or veil that we must struggle to look through, and one breath of air will raise an anchor to this veil as a messenger from old ways of travel.

The moment that the anchor reached the surface was a moment of sudden appearance and exposure – a dramatic stage entry perhaps. On the beach, spectators applauded. For it to disappear again was a disappointment, but one that preserved the mystery of that moment and the mystery of the sea as an untameable element that will not be stage-managed, directed, or coerced. This is the 'Orphic' nature of the sea that Mentz describes. As it dislodged from the cloud of breaths and plummeted back to sand, the bodies watching from the rolling surface of the water all relaxed in dismay. In a cloud of sand it landed back where it started. Except now, its arrow pointed East, out to sea, back to Europe, whereas before it had pointed South. The plan had been to send the anchor to Greece, as the 'Vessel' for the next Fluid States cluster, and as a gift from an older era of seafaring, and from an island with a large population of Greek immigrants who have built churches here in the style of Santorini. But the sea did not yield the anchor in the way we had planned. It is in this way that *Many Breaths* – unable to produce an artefact or trophy – became the story that would be told about it. Like the one that got away, performance art thrives on the myth, and the retelling of that myth.

So it is with many of these works in *Deep Anatomy*: performed on a small island, to small audiences, in difficult to document circumstances. Each undergoes an almost alchemical transformation into the storytelling and recounts presented here: a direct transformation from matter into the intangible, a 'sublimation' perhaps. Mick Douglas lost a kayak laden with salt during his performance. Untethered, it drifted away from the shore at Diamond Crystal and into the Caribbean Sea between Cuba and The Bahamas to be documented only in search notices that were issued at the Fluid States cluster in Rarotonga, at PSi#22 in Melbourne, and in *Performance Research 18.2 On Sea / At Sea*. Amelia Taverner's patchwork shroud of garments was lost to the elements as well, quickly shredded by the wind and tide around the jagged remains of the Miss Shirley.

While this article and this cluster has resisted romanticism we cannot help but idealise that which is lost or unreachable. So it always is with the sea that 'permits no record'. Wherever there is water there is romance, forever entangled with the risk of drowning, of places too deep for breath, where we lose things that are close to us, and where we cannot be found.

In this article the sequence of texts and images have attempted to reanimate the various contributions made by participating artists and academics. By naming these explorations 'incursions', the *Deep Anatomy* cluster attempted to resist the notion that new knowledge or methods resides completely within 'the other' or through external sources. By contrast, traditional academic, touristic, or creative excursions seek knowledge elsewhere, by means of an ingress into foreign or unknown territory. However, in this event where athletics, academia, and creative practice met with and within an isolated local community, it was necessary to resist exoticism, using the concept of incursion to re-centre any journey that ventured too far into novelty or voyeurism. Thus Tracy C Davis found a familiar dramaturgy and epic poetic performance within the structure of the freediving event and its disciplined competitors. By venturing to the abandoned edge of the island Mick Douglas came across a salt farm, and found himself back in the circulation of ideas around issues of global capital and trade that powers his ongoing body of work about salt.

It is a poignant and melancholic discovery that on this island 'the exotic other' has been erased, with the extinction of the Lucayan Indian, as well as a number of indigenous animal species, such as the Caribbean Seal. So it is that the touristic excursion only ends amongst ruins such as Diamond Crystal Salt, the old cotton mills and churches, in the silent uninhabitable depth of the Blue Hole, the wrecks of boats, the wreckage of coral die-off, or with the absence of a First People. In this space of ruin Mick Douglas returns to the communities in Clarence Town and seeks knowledge and history within. Similarly with Tracy C Davis, Sally J Morgan, and Jess Richards – they do not pursue their inquiry at the bottom of a diver's trajectory, in that dark compressed space at the bottom of the sea. Instead they look within, like the diver does, and find a startling and sudden depth in that closest space – in a childhood memory, in a lover's touch, or upon the surface of the water where preparation and subtle decisions make the dive. Here is the paradox of this space, with its misleading shallow waters and patterns of light blues, greens, and bright sand that open suddenly into the dizzying darkness of that Blue Hole. 'Here be monsters' the cliché goes – where Lucayan beliefs describe a terrible beast 'Lusca' and where many contemporary Long Islanders will not set foot. Here, where a bright lagoon gives way to depth we may face the terror or the unknown of the other, and perhaps return changed.

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Fig 125: William Trubridge at -125m in Dene's Blue Hole (2012), Long Island, The Bahamas. Photo: Vertical Blue.

