

Copyright is owned by the Author of the thesis. Permission is given for a copy to be downloaded by an individual for the purpose of research and private study only. The thesis may not be reproduced elsewhere without the permission of the Author.





## **An Intimate Spectacle Dispersing the Theatre**

An essay presented in partial  
fulfillment of the degree of Master of Design

Massey University, Wellington  
New Zealand

Sarah Burrell  
2011

## Abstract

An Intimate Spectacle examines the intersection between the spectacle of the theatrical event and the subjective experience of the audience member or 'participant'. Departing from the dynamics of spectatorship prescribed by the traditional theatre, this exploration begins to wander through the rough and surprising terrain of the city in search of an intimate form of participation.

This body of work has been explored and disseminated through a series of urban workshops and performances in which a solitary participant is guided on a self-directed exploration of the city. Equipped with sound (mp3 players) and material (objects and suggestions) the individuals are invited to conduct interventions that cause them to perform a personal relationship with their urban surroundings. Participants become tourists of the everyday, dispersing traces of performance that reveal a mythic dimension in the habitual city.

Theatre is typified by binary distinctions: the stage and the auditorium, the fictional and the real, the prop and the object, and the actor and the audience. As this discourse moves outside the theatre, these distinctions begin to dissolve. The roles of the actor and the audience are disestablished through the design of performances comprised solely of participants who conduct their experience through interventions and enactments.

## Acknowledgements

**Dorita Hannah**

for your passion and love of books

**Sam Trubridge**

for always imparting inspiration

**Julieanna Preston**

for your calm presence and open door

**Mary Garner and Kevin Burrell**

for your unwavering belief in me

**Jesse Hansen**

for your support

**Andrew Simpson and Jon Coddington**

for your trust and the dedication you have given this project

**Tessa Peach**

for your involvement in the initial stages

**Joel Cocks**

for being there in my hour of need

**A Note to the Reader:**

Embedded within this PDF are buttons which allow you to listen to sound-scapes which are an integral part of the events described within this essay. To hear a sound-scape sample press the ((Listen)) button. Many of the tracks use binaural recording which is best heard on stereo headphones to provide the full three-dimensional effect. This feature requires Adobe Acrobat 6 or later.

## Contents

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Introduction           | 9   |
| Reading the City       | 25  |
| Framing the Everyday   | 41  |
| Affecting Objects      | 55  |
| Participating Bodies   | 65  |
| The Intimate Spectacle | 87  |
| Conclusion             | 115 |
| Appendix 1             | 128 |
| Appendix 2             | 130 |
| Appendix 3             | 132 |