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THE PATH OF LEAST RESISTANCE

Decorative Pattern as an Analogue of Dis/order in Everyday Life

*An exegesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand*

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Introduction

Allowing decorative pattern to *take flight* is a theme that has preoccupied my art practice ever since becoming infected by Deleuze and Guattari's writing, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, while completing a Bachelor of Fine Arts, majoring in Textiles. It is evident as an underlying thread or feeling in my making processes and thinking. According to Deleuze and Guattari (1987), to think new thoughts involves 'a wrenching of concepts away from their usual configurations, outside the systems in which they have a home and outside the structures of recognition that constrain thought to the already known' (p276). In this project I have found myself continually challenged by the intent and consequences of 'shaking things up', as I believe this quote implies.

A wrenching of concepts away from their usual configurations has come through drawing a comparison between the conceptual structure of decorative pattern and the orders and structures of everyday life. What has emerged is a synthesis of ideas which create a picture of the *dis/order* that is evident within decorative pattern and in everyday life. I have come to conclude that decorative pattern is *passive aggressive*. It occurs to me that I could have described decorative pattern in a more positive tone in terms of *passive resistance*. But, in my mind, this implies a heroic gesture of superseding dominant orders. In this project I consciously employ the term 'passive aggressive' as an analogy because it acknowledges human flaw as a pattern that is inherent in everyday life. It alludes to the actuality of a relation to order and subsequent disorder that is not heroic, but rather implies humanness and the everyday struggle.

While my challenge has been to present a new way of thinking about decorative pattern, underlying this has been a questioning of the structures that define my practice itself. This is evident in the experimental works that I have produced. It has been an evolutionary process that has played out according to a rhythm of shattering and shoring up. I see the resolution of this exploration coming in two parts. One is as the sum of my experimental works and how these artworks inform each other and are read in relation to the text. The other comes through a final installation of work which employs the system for making that has subsequently evolved, moving according to '*the path of least resistance*'.

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