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Conversations with Strangers

Performing
the broom &
the bricoleur

Malcolm Doidge





ABSTRACT

Conversations with strangers

Within a workshop or studio, Bricolage is a process where the artist-as-bricoleur finds *ad hoc* collections of items and recombines them in unusual ways. A bricoluer uses simple tools for many tasks. This thesis considers how a contemporary bricoleur might step away from the workshop and into the everyday, taking only a broom as a familiar tool.

“*Conversations with strangers*” performs the bricoleur at five sites, where the broom is a device that collects fragments of memories from conversations recorded there. These conversations form an inventory or collection that is a palimpsest merging human dialogue with a layer of sound from the sites as the broom sweeps. Together with the broom, these fragments are repurposed within a sculptural installation and post-studio performance of the Bricoleur.

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In memory of my father: Arthur Bailey Doidge

Bricoleur *and* Engineer.

1923 - 2013

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Preface:

This broom was one amongst many in-store, but together we became the Bricoleur¹: using ready-mades and recycling second treasures, I have performed the Bricoleur in a post-studio era. By introducing a dialogical method I propose new ways to consider sculpture and installation.

Introduction: To have Conversations with Strangers

My research this year was with a broom (Go Pro cameras attached) traveling to five sites, each specifically selected for their historical and cultural significance.

SWEEP(ing)² at each site developed a dialogical method through performance of the bricoleur within a post-studio context that was new to me.

We can come to understand sites in various ways. So, I took my broom with Go Pro cameras mounted on its shaft and, with some prior knowledge of these sites, went in search of conversations with strangers.

Here, strangers³ must be understood not just as people, but also as conversations with things, surfaces, and objects that represent ties to the past and perhaps gesture towards the future. Where people, places and things are connected, everything becomes an object with a connection to the past.

At each site I recorded an inventory of images, as a digital collage, and re-purposed these as creatively gained knowledge within an installation.

This means that both recordings at sites and my agency are understood as creative research. Throughout this exegesis, visual images, maps and are used not as documentation but to shed light on the method.

These on site performances are works in themselves, but it is through a shared agency with the broom, that sculpture and installation exists as a result. That process enlists a methodology of both the bricoleur and bricolage⁴ as being manifest in the treatment and use of objects in the installation.

Keywords: Bricoleur, Bricolage, Repurposing, Post-studio Site, SWEEP(ing), Ontology, Conversations, Palimpsest, Ready-made, The everyday, Consumer.

¹ Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss introduced the bricoleur as a metaphor to English language humanities. The Bricoleur, “spoke with things and through the medium of things” (Levi-Strauss, 1966) and “throughout my description of the Bricoleur” its agent the artist “is not very far away” (Wiseman, 1998).

² NB: “SWEEP(ing)” is used in this exegesis to denote the performed action, distinguishing it from the verb “sweeping”.

³ Timothy Morton uses the phrase “Strange strangers” to describe the strangeness of human encounters with other entities such as animals and objects as being uncanny. For Morton, the distinction between object and subject is irrelevant. Everything is an object (Morton, 2010).

⁴ Bricolage is a combinatorial process bringing together ad hoc collections of items, in unusual combinations, all within a workshop environment that was a defining habitat for the bricoleur (Johnson, 2012, p. 361.).

Performing the Bricoleur in a post studio era:

Sweeping as an action is performed in many different parts of the world. Its utilitarian purpose is to collect, move and also keep clean. Sweeping can deploy both nonchalance and reveal a deeply inquisitive function. Our thoughts drift while sweeping and quietly, a broom becomes a prop to lean on - the road worker for instance - to engage in chats with his or her co-worker or passers-by. Hence, although SWEEP[ing] as a method engages conversations with strangers, the broom is also materially engaging in conversation with a site and producing inventory to consider. In 2006, Daniel Buren reprised his argument for a post-studio practice, first made in 1971 with "*The function of the studio*". The studio was an archetype, a "stationary place where portable objects are produced" (Buren, 2010). He stated the key point of this text was that the work produced in a studio was made for an unknown and idealised destination, the art gallery (Buren, 2010, p. 163). I was interested exploring a post-studio context for myself, where location is not a surrogate studio and mobility a process of selecting a site to support a hybrid sculptural practice of engaging the social.

Again, the concept of *strangers* assists with engaging the social, and it must be understood as representing not just as people but, things, surfaces, and objects connected to the past and perhaps also projecting into the future.

Consequently, I can engage with an artistic and sculptural language where humans use objects but, in response, objects articulate a reply through humans. So the broom itself comes into contact with things and surfaces in ontological ways that the human subject does not and cannot. I refer to Object Oriented Ontology, where ontology refers to being-in-the-world as the subjective experience of existing with objects. This ontology is represented in this thesis as the aesthetic relationship between the readymade broom and myself as performer and consideration of the broom's Go Pro record of inventory as a sculptural object.

By incorporating a contemporary⁵ view of the world within a post studio context, Go Pro technology radically changed my understanding of the broom. It also revealed to me a dialogical context provided by the broom. It recorded all conversations: the incidental, the compelling and the nonsensical, as much as genuine cultural, political, and historical reflections of sites.

At each site an inventory was generated as recordings, accumulating as knowledge. These were digitally cut up or - as a bricoleur might collage - edited or re-purposed into narrative segments. Eventually, digital collage became a sculptural assemblage, a bricolage of stacked images within an installation. Subsequently, my findings at these sites and my agency were understood as creative research, in that these creative methods provided me with new knowledge and may also shed new light on the world around me.

My performances at these sites are works in themselves; Therefore, as with transcripts of conversations found in Appendix I, visual images and maps throughout this exegesis are presented to support and strengthen my method. It is hoped that through this approach, my long-standing fascination with sculptural objects becomes extended with a new perception, arrived at because of taking a broom to sweep and talk with strangers.

⁵ Go Pro camera development has, over a decade, burgeoned within the miniature, HD quality, camera industry. Software development since 2014 include apps for audio and video, streaming live recorded events etc.

The catalyst for this approach was a question I posed for myself in February 2015:

What would happen if the bricoleur walked out of the workshop and into the everyday?

Initiating a post-studio era in 1971,⁶ Daniel Buren described the studio as a private and stationary place where portable objects are produced (Buren, 1971, p. 51). By then, Buren had not so much left the studio as completed his identification “between the studio, the world and himself” (Davidts & Paice, 2009, p. 15). As Buren reflected later, it’s the people you meet and the things you see (or not) that locates a work in that place and no other.

Roselee Goldberg in “*Performance art. From futurism to the present*”, notes that live gesture in the 1970s brought to life many formal and conceptual ideas on which art making was based⁷ (Goldberg, 2011, p. 7). To implement this meaningfully as a post-studio context, I chose a broom as a tool and SWEEP(ing) as an action to perform the bricoleur. The utilitarian is always latent in the broom and that is a very important qualifier in viewing my work. Addressed in my practice this year, is the vernacular of the everyday regarding a contemporary, New Zealand Do-It-Yourself culture (DIY). I chose a broom is because it was an all-purpose tool. As Richard Sennett in the “*Craftsman*” states, by adapting the form of such tools, they become “arousing tools”, improvised or making-do like a bricoleur, an all purpose tool and one that:

“...[...]... admits all manner of unfathomed possibilities;”
(Sennett, 2008, p. 194).

This reflects my thinking, throughout two years of research, about the relationship between tools, objects and the human. I believe the ontology of objects can be thought of as possessing not only efficacy, but also their own ontological experience. This means the subjective experience of humans is not thought of in hierarchal terms (i.e. the human dictates what the object/tool will do).

While not a closely discussed concept in this exegesis, object-orientated-ontology has provided an important touchstone for theoretical ideas of the everyday and the bricoleur. Dialogical aesthetics have also been an influence as introduced and discussed later in this exegesis.

These theories form a practice shaped by a post-studio experience. But as with how I look at using a broom, any tool imparts a story, as Tim Ingold writes,

“to name a tool is to invoke a story”
(Ingold, 2011 p 56).

For Ingold, nothing is prescribed or “prepackaged” about a tool but neither is a novel use adopted without a “history of past practice” (Ingold, 2011, p. 57).

⁶ I refer to Daniel Buren’s influential text “*The function of the studio*” published in English in 1971.

⁷ Goldberg also notes the first history of performance art was published in 1979, demonstrating a long tradition of artists turning to performance (Goldberg, 2011, p. 7).

I was certainly not satisfied with the broom in itself but needed to develop an innovative way to record and document what I was performing on site. Selecting Go-Pro cameras modified the broom, customising it as an artwork and a unique tool. It allowed conversations with strangers to be a connection born of post-studio mobility, where the broom - a design not fundamentally changed in millennia - was became further technologised and newly re purposed.

Here, the rhythm of sweeping needs to be commented on. It embodies an action, the stroke of a beat seen, heard and recorded by Go Pro cameras on the broom's handle. A broom's sweeping bristles sends vibrations up towards cardioid microphones. It's a fibrillated sound, a harsh leitmotif, repeated again and again. The scratchy irritation of a broomhead bumping along, like a stylus stuck at the end of a vinyl record.

This logic is carried through to conclusion within the final installation, a process that has only been arrived at due to undertaking numerous tests throughout the year.

Theoretical framework and methodology: Looking for the bricoleur

What follows is an overview of select theoretical perspectives that I have found both useful and influential in shaping my research. Where I am aware that bricolage has moved through structuralist and post-structuralist schools of thought, my research is about performing the bricoleur in a post-studio context. I attend to a range of intellectual figures as well as contemporary practitioners and attempt to highlight the dialogical and conceptual as well as the very real capitalist modes of production within the everyday. In doing so this section - and the following section on methodology - provide for a wider body of knowledge that my research sits within as well as offering original creative research.

As recently as 2012, Claire Bishop in "*Artificial Hells*" mentions Michel de Certeau and Grant Kester as one of a number of theoretical reference points for participatory and collaborative art (Bishop, 2012, p. 11.). Bishop offers a description of an art worker who is "a flexible, mobile, non specialised labourer" (Bishop, 2012. P.12). My performance interpretation of a post studio art worker as bricoleur reflects a contemporary, New Zealand DIY context influenced by Michel de Certeau's elusive everyday by combining the action of SWEEP(ing) with Claude-Levi Strauss's "intellectual DIY" (Wiseman, 1998, p. 78). This bricoleur records a concrete, embodied sensorial experience with the broom that is "speaking with things and through the medium of things" (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 21).

Bricolage is a combinatorial process bringing together ad hoc collections of items, in unusual combinations, all within a workshop environment, that was a defining habitat for the bricoleur (Johnson, 2012, p. 361.).

Working as a creative technologist in a trade school, the workshop for me is a comfortable zone for my practice with collections of bits and pieces of useful things just 'handy'. Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss first described⁸ the bricoleur as:

“...[...]... someone who works with his hands and uses devious means compared to those of the craftsman”
(Levi-Strauss, 1966, p.16-17).

⁸ Levi-Strauss, C. (1966). *The Savage Mind*. English translation.

In 1966, Levi-Strauss's translator, struggling to find an English cultural equivalent for bricoleur, settled for "DIY" as the closest definition⁹ for what used to be the recycling trade of a "rag and bone man" (Doniger, 2009, p. 203) Monica Kjellman-Chapin in "*Traces, layers and palimpsests*" saw Levi-Strauss's bricoleur as:

"less of a *pasticheur* or collagist than tinkerer; though overlaps and contiguities exist, they cannot be surrogates".
(Kjellman-Chapin, 2006, p. 95)

Levi-Strauss also thought of bricolage as "intellectual DIY" (Wiseman, 1998, p. 78) a metaphor for how human form myths. Myths are stories retold from scraps of previous incarnations (Doniger, 2009). Claude Levi-Strauss somewhat contentiously thought myths were a primitive form of scientific hypothesis (Latour, 1991, p. 98). Here Levi-Strauss's intuition of the bricoleur - as - artist used intellectual DIY to make sense of the world's chaos through a logic of concrete experiences, received through touch, smell, sound and vision etc, (Wiseman, 1998, p. 76).

British sculptor and photographer Walead Beshty, in his 2008 exhibition "*Science Concrete*", discusses Levi-Strauss' bricoleur, comparing another use by French structuralist Michel de Certeau:

Beshty argues that "all this talk of totality, of repressive power as an inescapable force" (Carl, 2011, p. 11) only strengthens any myth of oppression. Beshty argues in favour of Michel de Certeau's notion of the consumer also being a producer:

"to use bricolage and détournement...[...]...is to take bits and pieces of the dominant and rescript them, changing the way elements are linked together. What's important is to use what immediately surrounds you, not to deal in abstraction and with ideological premises, but to deal in the concrete."
(Carl, 2011, p.11).

My leaving the studio/workshop behind and SWEEP(ing) with a broom was a concrete post-studio action that provided an opportunity to perform the bricoleur wherever the site.

Michel de Certeau in "*The practice of Everyday life*", identifies bricolage as poesis or a process of "artisan like inventiveness" (Certeau, 1984, p. xviii).

In "*Post production*" (Bourriaud, 2010), Nicholas Bourriaud cites Certeau's "*The Practice of everyday life*" arguing that as a form of capital, production is where consumers are "renters of culture" (Bourriaud, 2010, p. 37). Consumers are not passive, manipulated recipients but actively employ various procedures:

"...poetic ways of 'making do' [Bricolage], and a re use of marketing structures"
(Certeau, 1988, p. xv).

⁹ "The 'bricoleur' has no precise equivalent in English. He is a man who undertakes odd jobs and is the jack of all trades or a kind of professional do-it-yourself man, but, as the text makes clear, he is of a different standing from, for instance, the English 'odd job man' or handyman (trans. Note)" (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 17).

Walead Beshty, in his discussion of “*concrete science*,” co-opted Guy Debord’s notion of détournement as ‘rescripting’ (Sheringham, 2006) where deflection or a ruse can also be inventive in ways that relieve the ‘deadness of repetition’ (Sheringham, 2006, p. 235) in the quotidian or everyday.

My performance was rescripted by adopting a persona of DIY art worker, with a vest of Hi Vis safety orange. Together with a Hi Vis orange contractors broom, this costume formed a ruse as way of “seizing the opportune moment” (Sheringham, 2006, p. 234) for conversations with strangers.

SWEEP(ing) in a post-studio way

“You never know how good an artist you are, but you always know how good a sweeper you are”.¹⁰

In this section, as a bricoleur theorist - as - researcher, I highlight how my research methods impact on findings and artistic practice in a post-studio context. Here I reference Gillian Whiteley in “*Junk art and the politics of trash*” where she cites a profile of the bricoleur researcher in the “*Handbook of Qualitative Research*” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000).

“The product of a bricoleur’s labour is a bricolage, a complex, dense, reflexive, collage like creation that represents the researchers images, understandings and interpretations of the world”.
(Whiteley, 2011, p. xii).

Representing this methodological outline in my concerns includes understanding the broom as a tool engaging with an ontological causal aesthetic. My role as bricoleur or performer-come-conversationalist, how does a dialogical method engage an aesthetic in my interactions with individuals at site(s)? What role does collecting inventory play in a sculptural context.

My use of bricolage as a sculptural methodology is not so much a critical or activist paradigm as used by Gillian Whiteley but more of an interpretive enquiry (McGregor and Murnane, 2010, p. 2). This interpretive paradigm reflects how I gain knowledge of the world through understanding a context rather than actively changing it.

This methodological concern results in collecting and recycling a bricolage of ephemera as inventory - a collection of Go Pro - recorded human inventiveness from recreational skate boarding to drawing water from a Petone aquifer. This methodology concerns questions of how this inventory of knowledge is accumulated and how a broom with a camera becomes a mnemonic device of cultural, individual and collected memories.

Performing the bricoleur is an opportunistic research method where dialogical exchanges are chance encounters in public as “*Conversation with strangers*”. Grant Kester in “*Conversation pieces*” (2004) considers the “face-to-face” as an experience

¹⁰ Carl Andre in conversation with Robert Morris, sweeping steps after an art strike, 1970. Howard, C. (2014). “*Box with the sound of its own making*”.

central to a dialogical aesthetic (Kester, 2004, p.119). I was interested in exploring Kester's notion of reciprocal exchanges between object and subject, viewer and artist. Where the broom oscillates between having its a priori function (the performer engaging casual conversations - small-talk even) the broom then becomes a dialogical tool also because it carries a camera that records and becomes more meaningful when this function is later recycled into other contexts.

Tinkering as a medium of things.

SWEEP(ing) became a tactic by "spotting the right moment" (Sheringham, 2010, p. 216) to engage and record dialogical exchange in a public space facilitated by Go Pro camera. This sort of tactical opportunism is described by Mechtild Wildrich in "*Perform, Repeat, Record*" as, " 'Presence' ", where a dual significance of immediacy plus being in the right place at the right time, " has long been considered the key term in for artists and historians conceptualising performance art" (Wildrich, 2012, p.89).

Go Pro cameras are compact high definition cameras with extreme wide-angle fixed lenses. Because they record views of the world not otherwise obtained, they assist my ontological investigation as a DIY means to capture action video where the camera's extreme lens frames the performer and performance environment with whatever the camera is mounted on.

Recontextualising the bricoleur as a DIY consumer, I have looked for opportunities to collect and record fragments of personal histories about site(s) and associated places. Here, I consider SWEEP(ing) to be an action or performance that facilitates the collection of dialogue as a mnemo history. In 'Perform, Repeat, Record', Mechtild Wildrich describes the re-enactment of one artist's performance by another as:

"[s] history not necessarily based on facts (whatever these may be) but rather on myths and traditions associated with the "original" performance but also its subsequent narrations and documentations"
(Wildrech, 2012, p.100).

Wildrech is discussing a cultural memory where - as Jan Assmann in "Collective memory and cultural identity" (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995) notes - the difference between cultural and communicative memory is that, the participants in the original event have dispersed or even died. This leaves their once shared and heterogeneous everyday memories as a trace so that, over time and becoming distanced from what was once everyday, the trace in turn becomes a dispersed cultural memory (Assmann & Czaplicka, 1995). Mnemo history is the past as it is remembered, also embedded sometimes in a material object or place as a mnemonic trigger to remembering (Tamm, 2008). The action of SWEEP(ing) has also produced a rhythm of memories, another conversation through the Levi-Strauss's "medium of things" where sweeping becomes a record of the broom probing, scuffing and scratching the surface of the ground.

The remainder of the exegesis is now divided into eight sections. I articulate in fuller detail the significance of the broom to my research by introducing the specific nature of two sites (Bunnings Rongotai, site of the 1940 Centennial Exhibition and secondly,

the Taranaki Wharf in Port Nicholson). In addition, I highlight three other performances undertaken in 2015 titled “PARK(ing) day”, “SWEEP(ing) Te Puna Wai Ora” and “Te Whare Hera”. I then address these and the final installation using critically reflective terms that draws my research this year to a close. Thereafter I offer discussion and remarks and conclusion to this exegesis.

To name an object as a tool: The Broom

Performance Document 1: <https://youtu.be/4gz4z2AOZpU>

“To name a tool is to invoke a story”.
(Ingold, 2011, p. 56).

Since the first year of a part time MFA, 2013 I have appropriated tools and used them sculpturally in a variety of ways. My method began as a DIY “chop-shop” an assemblage technique of cutting and rejoining tools in a way reminiscent of Jacques Rancière’s description of bricolage in “*Aesthetics and its discontents*” where any object of use or commodity in becoming unfit for consumption or obsolete, can be separated or conjoined and used for art:

[...] born of the abolition of borders between the ordinariness of commodities and the extraordinariness of art”
(Rancière, 2009, p. 49).

Below, I discuss the particular characteristics of the broom selected as an object that becomes a ready-made. I think of it as an aesthetic declaration (Duchamp, Rancière) and I make specific commentary on its use at specific sites and in specific performances. I also draw parallels with the work of Francis Alÿs and Certeau’s theories of the everyday.



(Fig. 1) L-R: Malcolm Doidge: 2013: M.F.A Installation, Engine room, Massey Wellington.

This broom is an appropriated ready-made that, while surrendering its accustomed commodity status, was selected by me for another purpose. Its unfitness for consumption or deployment of its ‘use value’ was made redundant as a result. But in other ways, different to Duchamp’s original ready-mades¹¹, I am aware that this

¹¹ Monica Kjellman-Chapin indicates the similarity of collage to Duchamp’s ready-mades, but argues the difference is the artist chooses the readymade and attributes a new meaning without altering the object, whereas the collagist juxtaposes and alters material to create new narratives, similar to the bricoleur. (Kjellman-Chapin, 2006, p. 90).

broom is an assisted ready-made that serves a function of its utilitarian design. It is a tool for sweeping. My selection of the broom directly traffics Rancière's border between a commodity's ordinariness and the extraordinariness of repurposing the broom which is a ready-made tool (Rancière, 2009).

I am mindful here to draw reference between two ideas already highlighted, those of Ingold and Levi-Strauss. We recall that Ingold believes a tool's use is analogous with storytelling. Its function also produces a narrative of use through being deployed in ways not intended by its design prescription (Ingold, 2011, p. 60). For Levi-Strauss, the bricoleur's tool kit is contingent on whatever comes to hand whereby:

“the ‘bricoleur’ is still someone who works with his hands and uses devious means compared to those of the craftsman”
(Levi-Strauss, 1966, p. 16-17).

These two proponents provide tenets that underpin how I imagine the broom to be, and how it was indeed deployed at sites.

My post-studio actions of SWEEP(ing) are mobile embodiments of a workshop or studio practice. As Kim Paice argues in *“The fall of the studio. Artists at work”*, Daniel Buren had not left the studio so much as he completed his identification “between the studio, the world and himself” (Davidts & Paice, 2009, p. 15).

Iterations and transitions

My choices of brooms are from Bunnings and two types of broom were selected for different tasks. For the 2015 PARK(ing) day installation performance, this was a Brown's budget 'Eco broom' made from imported Rubberwood tree waste from plantations that provides rubber worldwide for car tyres¹².

After this event, I further aligned performing the bricoleur - as Rancière's rag-picker/*chiffonier* in combination with a local DIY context - by becoming a 'collector of conversations' with a New Zealand made “Raven Contractors Yard broom”, a rag-picker and dialogical opportunist, collecting conversations from his own back yard.



(Fig. 2) L-R. R: M.Doidge. PARK(ing) day extended broom: L. Raven Contractors Hi Vis broom.

¹² My concern choosing the broom was the green washing of plantation waste as an Eco material (See p. 22). The works “Over reach”, 2015 and “New brooms”, 2013 (fig 2) were a response.



(Fig. 3) L-R. M. Doidge. Over reach. 2015: New brooms. 2013

Performing the bricoleur was a method that engaged face-to-face conversation as well as walking and sweeping, collecting conversations that connected people to sites and the sites to each other. Nothing is prescribed or ‘prepackaged’ about a tool but neither is its novel use adopted without a “history of past practice” (Ingold, 2011, p. 57). SWEEP(ing) developed out of my performance contribution to PARK(ing) day in March 2015.

My research process of SWEEP(ing) is similar to Latour’s notion of “bricole”¹³ as a detour from the main road, a haphazard route between locations.

Lucy Lippard in the *“Lure of the local: Senses of place in a multicentered society”* describes locating traces of ‘ruins’ in the landscape. She questions the maps ubiquitous “you are here” (Lippard, 1997, p.125) being able to locate a sense of connection to a place. She argues that walking a map’s cartography is a way of *looking beyond* to how land is used. I investigate this aspect at Bunnings Rongotai through my own palimpsest. Here, I digitally overlaid a 75 year old architectural site plan on top of a ‘Google map’ of Lyall bay. Matching their scales, I located the perimeter and foundations of the lost Centennial Exhibition complex. On the ground however I became disoriented in the landscape. A conversation with a local was needed to locate the site (see Fig. 4).

My performance in (Fig.2) features a navy blue ‘shop coat’ worn in the trade school where I am employed as a creative technologist. In preference my feet were bare to the trace of Wellington’s 1840s shoreline, crusty with sand taken from Petone’s Beach and swept during performance. Tim Ingold argues in *“Being alive, Essays on movement knowledge and description”* that, walking provides a perception or a “form

¹³ Comparing the French word “bricole” Bruno Latour denotes a detour from the main road (Latour, 2009, p. 252). Levi-Strauss noted also that the verb “Bricoler” was used to describe extraneous movement such as wandering or swerving (Levi-Strauss, 1966, p.16). The comparison is with the linear thinking of scientific epistemology

of circumambulatory knowing” (Ingold, 2011, p. 45) which is contrary to a bias he believes is shown by Western thought towards the head as the centre of vision over walking feet. Karl Marx in *Grundrisse* is quoted by Ingold who argues that this Marx’s statement that “organs of the human brain, created by the human hand, the power of knowledge objectified” (Ingold, 2011, p. 46) represents a dualism that put simply represents what is below the waist - including feet - belongs to nature and is controlled by the hands and head above. Ingold is arguing instead for our perception of intelligence to be redistributed so that we use tools with the rhythm of a whole body not just the eyes and hands. (Ingold, 2011, p. 46). As any welder knows, positioning the body to relax is crucial for a good weld¹⁴.

In “*Aesthetics and its discontents*”, Jacques Rancière describes the “plastic artist” (Rancière, 2009, p. 55) as an archivist of collective life in combination with the trope of the rag-picker or chiffonier. He writes:

“the inventory gives a prominent place to the potential of objects and images in terms of common history; it also shows the kinship between inventive acts of art and the multiplicity of inventions of the arts of doing and living that make up the shared world – bricolage, collections, language games, materials for demonstrations, etc.”
(Rancière, 2009, p. 55).

This is what the persona of bricoleur/art worker, (appearing in public as council worker) seeks to provide: a way of collapsing the boundaries between people and the street.

Here, the Belgian artist Francis Alÿs is a good example - he has been a sweeper too. In a 2013 *Artnews* article, he is described as an “Architect of the absurd” (MacAdam 2013) and of the satirical purposelessness attributed to his performed actions, it is Alÿs’ 1997 “*Paradox of praxis I (Sometimes Making Something Leads to Nothing)*” that I believe resonates closely with SWEEP[ing].

This action by Alÿs has him moving a large block of ice around Mexico City for nine hours. Beginning by pushing with both hands, he finally finishes by dribbling a small block with one foot, until the ice finally melts. In Alÿs’s work, I interpret the “paradox” of praxis in reference to Aristotle’s *Nichomachean Ethics* (Aristotle, 1985).

Where praxis is *only* the accomplishment of an objective. Poetics in contrast is the action itself or the process *only* of production (Aristotle, 1985). Alÿs identifies poetics through,

“[...] the gratuity or the absurdity of the poetic act, art provokes a moment of suspension of meaning, a brief sensation of senselessness that reveals the absurd of the situation...[...]...and revise your prior assumptions about this reality”.
(Medina, Ferguson & Fisher, 2007, p. 40)

“*Making Something*” documents Alÿs’s burgeoning effort to move an ever diminishing block of ice. This process or poesis is absurd in Alÿs’s own terms

¹⁴ I use GTAW or “Tig” welding for metal sculpture. When sitting using a foot pedal, setting up a successful weld run requires the entire body to be relaxed and comfortable before starting.

evidenced by this record of a poetic act of futility. This metamorphosis from utility to futility occurs with SWEEP(ing) where the broom is a mnemonic tool attracting and collecting conversations as live action or ephemera. These “*Conversations with strangers*” - records of live gestures - become inventory for another site in a sculptural installation.

Alÿs has also organised a collective action of sweeping. Instead of a reduction towards an absurdity, Alÿs’s 2004 work, “*Barrendeors*” (Sweepers), documents the progress of a line of street sweepers, absurdly moving forward until an unmanageable pile of street refuse accumulates, as if to engulf them.

Writing about Alÿs’s actions, Russell Ferguson in “*Francis Alÿs*” compares these to Michel de Certeau’s concept of urban practices or activities that oppose the regimentation of a city.

Alÿs also states that his actions intend to create a fragmented narrative, inventing maps of the city from temporary interventions. Ferguson suggests that these interventions, like “*Barrendeors*” (Sweepers) opens up urban ‘space to something different’ (Medina, Ferguson & Fisher, 2007 p 76).

Ferguson’s reference here is also further described by Certeau as:

“Stories about places are makeshift things. They are composed of the world’s debris.” (Certeau, 1984, p. 107).

For Certeau, walking and intervening within the spatial fabric of a city provides:

‘leaks of meaning: it is the sieve order’
(Certeau, 1984, p. 107).

Recording “*Conversations with strangers*” documents what Certeau describes as ‘verbal relics of which the story is composed’ (Certeau, 1984, p. 107).

Whereas Alÿs is an artist who champions the intervention, my political and cultural conditions are not the same as they were for Alÿs. I have performed the bricoleur with the broom as an intervention only where this device is scraping away, uncovering or reading one site through another as a palimpsest¹⁵.

Overview of four sites:

Through my introduction - in the MFA programme - to the term post-studio practice, I consciously took the decision to step out from the studio/workshop that had in all honesty become something of a comfort zone for me.

As already indicated in this exegesis, post-studio practice is more than a site-based or contextually driven creative work; it is a manner of working in which a practice is

¹⁵ Craig Owens 1980s essay “*Allegorical Impulse*”, describes allegorical structure or palimpsest as ‘one text being read through another’ (Owens, 1980, p 69). E.g. This drawing of peasant clogs represents peasants an eternal national identity, blurring fiction with reality

generated outside of the studio. As Mechtild Wildrech notes, ‘Presence’ represents both immediacy and alertness to being in the right place at the right time, something she asserts as important for an artist conceptualising performance art (Wildrich, 2012).

The studio here is understood to be too much of an insular environment, one not at all open to chance and serendipity that occurs performing in a public place. Each site provided opportunities that I responded to with the ready-made broom. For example, fishers on the ships fender at Clyde Quay Wharf became my reference point for a waterfront installation of figurative brooms. The positioning of fishing rod holders and broom sculpture in the installation was in consultation with fishers (Figs. 15 & 16). This was my response to the “plonk” factor i.e. installing sculpture in a community without face-to-face consultation. Performing and recording this installation site provided opportunity for chance encounters with pedestrians and other “strange strangers” that included a floating television and lapping water (see performance documents: 6 & 7).

Throughout the year I took my work to four sites in search of such encounters, Bunnings Rongotai; Taranaki Wharf; Te Puna Wai Ora; Petone and Clyde Quay wharf. These sites share my thematic concerns, as an artist in conversation with them, through both the presence and absence of their latent histories, cultural currents, indigenous custom, their unique landscape heritage, and the peopling of them.

Bunnings Rongotai.

In Rongotai Wellington, the Bunnings Rongotai site is part of a light industry zone built over an earlier, much larger complex, the 1939-40 Centennial Exhibition Building. Built in 1940 by a Labour government that, having brought an economy out of a serious depression, wanted a national display of unity to celebrate the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840 (see Fig. 4). Reading one site through another, I draw/walk/sweep Architect Edmund Anscombe’s original site plan for the complex, based on a Maltese cross representing New Zealand’s four main maritime ports (Martin, 2004, p.56).

My interest in SWEEP(ing) the site was to locate and trace the overlap of both buildings activating the broom as mnemonic device within this “big box” reliquary.

Taranaki wharf. From Centennial to Millennial.

New Zealand sculptor William Trethewey’s the “*Coming of the Maori*” was prominent in the Centennial Exhibition. The sculpture is now on Taranaki wharf, outside the Whare Waka, “*Te Raukura*”. It was cast in bronze as part of the millennial celebrations in 2000 (Harper & Lister, 2007) in partnership with Taranaki Whanui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika, representing the tribes who migrated from Taranaki in the 1830s to Te Whanganui a tara. I responded to the site by employing a different post-studio method to engage dialogical exchanges and also performed a bronze Go Pro simulacra with Trethewey’s legacy in bronze as a souvenir.

Te Puna Wai Ora: Buick st, Petone.

Located on Buick Street Petone this is a public spring supplying fresh water from an aquifer under the Wellington harbour basin. It is a popular site for a large diverse community collecting substantial amounts of filtered, untreated drinking water. Its location on Buick Street is close to the Petone Settlers Museum, originally the Regional Centennial Memorial associated with the 1940 Centennial Exhibition. I performed the bricoleur at Te Puna Wai Ora as recognition of taking water from this site together with sand from Petone Beach, to an earlier PARK(ing) day performance at Cuba Street, Wellington.

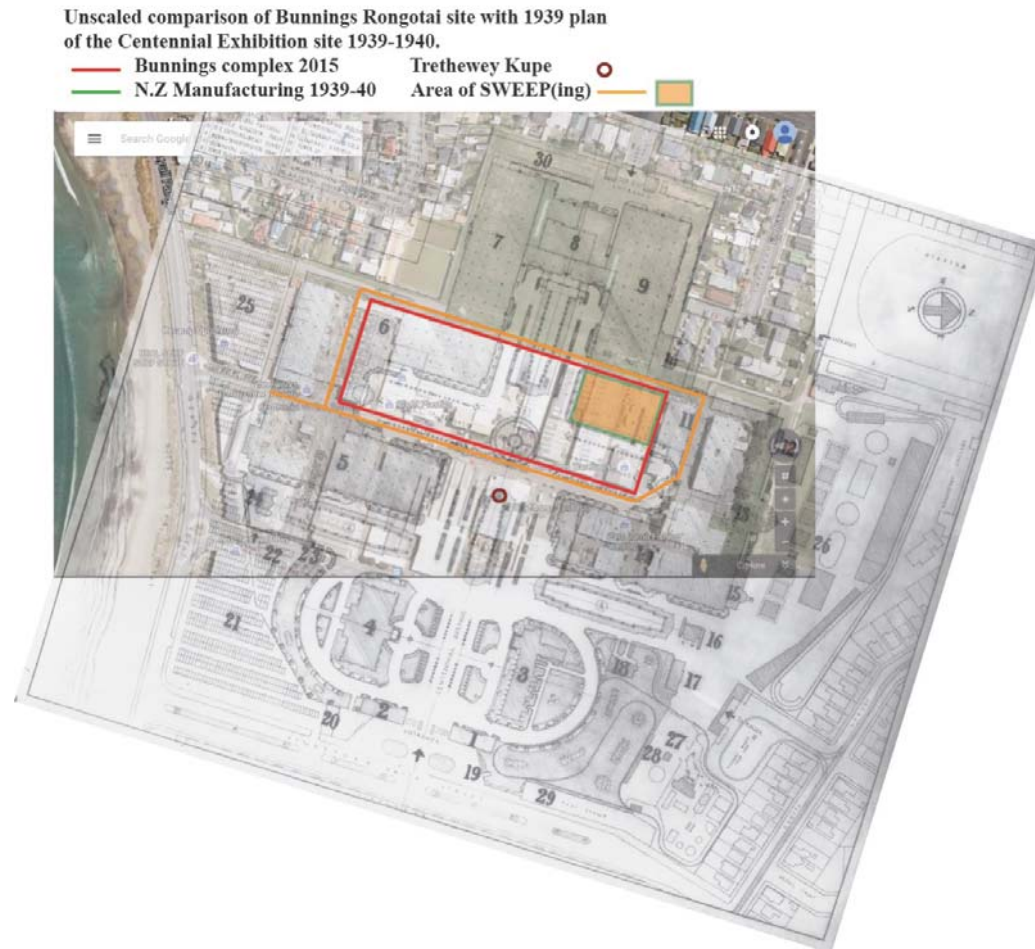
Clyde Quay wharf, Te whare Hera Gallery.

Te Whare Hera Gallery is a residency and exhibition space for artists with post-studio practices at the seaward terminus of the Clyde Quay Wharf apartment complex. Access to a public fishing jetty developed my dialogical method. Together with the fishers on the wharf, the site developed a social focus for a sculpture installation.

Site 1: Bunnings. Everyday Quotidian

Performing the bricoleur as a post studio exploration *is* all about the broom on site. The broom recorded the bricoleur as a subject within *its* sphere of its activity. This was a crucial deflection. I became a “strange stranger” - enmeshed walking with the broom - through *its* record of broom activity.

As Tim Ingold notes, walking provides a perception or “form of circumambulatory knowing” (Ingold, 2011, p. 45).



(Fig. 4) Location of Bunnings Rongotai in relation to Centennial Exhibition Complex.

Reading the two sites this way produced a palimpsest (Fig. 4) of relevant locations for performance. The overlay of two types of map, the original 1940 scaled-architectural plan and a Google aerial view, allowed me to select discrete locations for performing based on the 1939 Centennial Exhibition architect's plan (see fig. 7).

Take for example, SWEEP(ing) down Kingsford-Smith Street and the length of Bunnings car park. Beginning outside the Centennial Café and traversing the footpath on what was once the Court of Progress. This transit crosses over the Court of Pioneers where Bunnings shopping trolley park reveals a palimpsest of the 1940 Centennial exhibition, the overlapping architectural foot prints of one building on another's past. Elements of that past were revealed when I had a conversation with 'Grant' who owns the auto repair business across the road. He had gone to Rongotai College and remembered his father had visited the Exhibition as a child.



(Fig. 5) Grant and the Bricoleur at Bunnings

In this instance (during an unrecorded conversation) Grant recalled his father reminiscing about a large, spiral copper slide that children would slide down together in large groups. Friction burns would melt synthetic fabric and the girls who wore dresses had holes burnt in their knickers.

Such a moment is an exchange of a mnemno histories. Cultural memories that are shared in communities or families and repeated long after the original participants have died or dispersed. This conversation with Grant was triggered by SWEEP(ing) the footpath and the exchange transpired after the bemused “what are you doing” led to enthusiasm for directing me to other areas of the site, with grant taking responsibility to guide and alert me to the direction of the College football field he identified as the “exhibition ground”.

[See appendix. Transcript 1:]

Performance document 2: <https://youtu.be/6qWvB5hFSew>

SWEEP(ing) inside Bunnings.

Recording SWEEP(ing) as a performance inside the Bunnings store was negotiated with the store manager. I explained my filming of the floor as recording the sound of sweeping down broom aisle 43, where I had purchased the Hi Vis broom from. This area within the Centennial complex was once called “The Court of New Zealand Manufacturing”. This location occupied no. 11 on the legend of the site plan for the Centennial Exhibition building (Fig. 4 & Fig. 7).



(Fig. 6) SWEEP(ing) Aisle 43 at Bunnings Rongotai.

The ready-made broom - selected from this store - and SWEEP(ing) as a performance action was an aesthetic that materially engaged the Centennial Exhibition complex. It can be argued that the broom was witness to the Centennial complex site *through* the present Bunnings concrete floor and its layout.

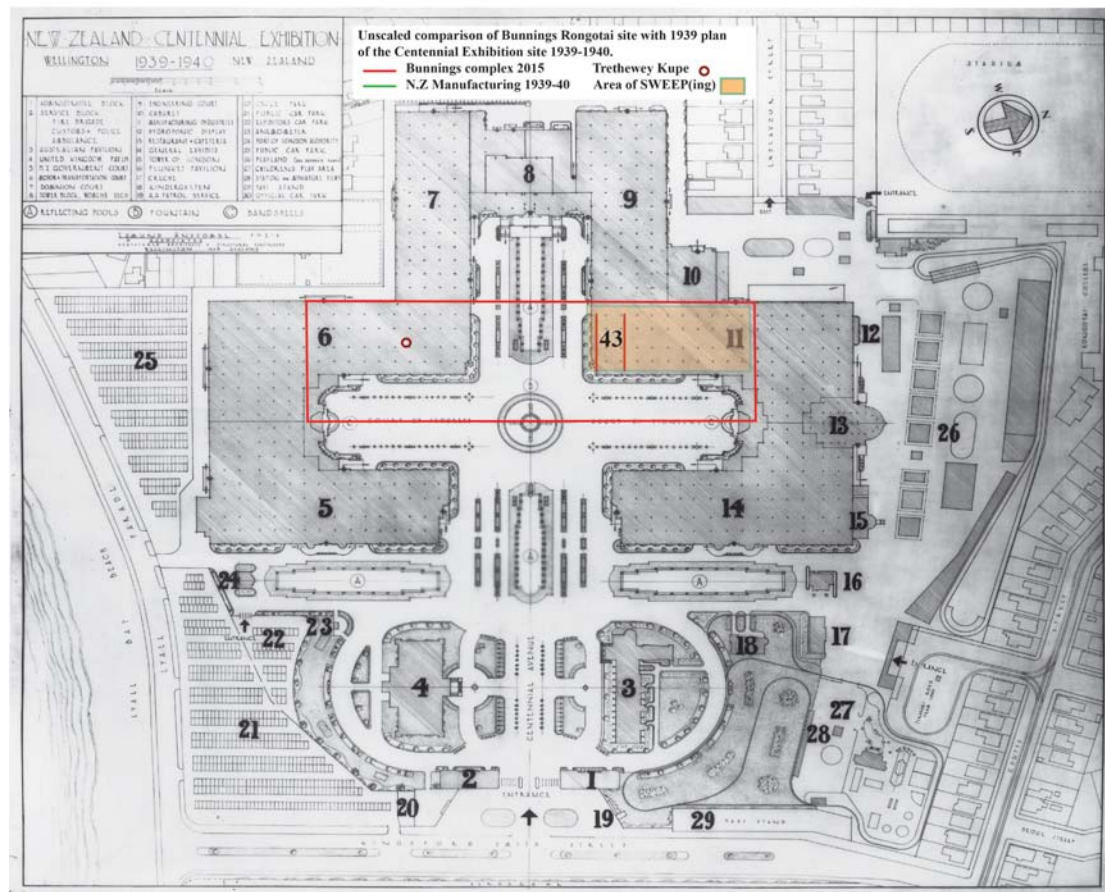
This is not so strange as it may at first appear. For the past to be interconnected with the present through materials, Timothy Morton argues that: “*the aesthetic dimension is the causal dimension*” (Morton, 2013, p. 20), a dimension that is a “region of traces and footprints” (Morton, 2013, p. 18). By this, Morton means causality is an aesthetic phenomenon, an object in the world. For example, consider the broom and myself. When “we” are sweeping Bunnings concrete floor, this aesthetic act reveals the trace and the history of the Centennial Exhibition complex. Morton calls consciousness “action at a distance” (Morton, 2013, p. 22). This is because my consciousness of being there - in that moment with the broom - can be also considered an object alongside this thing sweeping. With the broom, together we perform and establish an aesthetic link to the past in that moment the bristles “*scraaaatch*” the floor.

Architect Edmund Anscombe’s site plan for the Centennial Exhibition complex was based on a Maltese cross (Martin, 2004, p. 56). It is now straddled by Bunnings megastore across the former Courts of Progress and Pioneers. Amidst the sea change of global container trade, the Court of New Zealand Manufacturing now echoes to the sound of Bunnings’s “everyday low prices”. In this feedback loop, DIY was once a national identity myth¹⁶ now returning a tinny pre-fabricated individualism. In the words of performance artist Mick Douglas:

¹⁶ The mythology of individualism and self-reliance, as a national identity in 1930s New Zealand, was a practical outcome of cushioning a small economy against global economic shocks (James, 1992, p. 15-16).

“CARRIAGE through container-scaled
global trade and distribution
through the city’s big-box warehouse retailers
through Bunnings for hardware
through Pak’n’Save for groceries
through New World for groceries
through the mouth and through
CARRIAGE through the working lifetime
of a father who laboured for Bunnings...[...]...”

(Douglas, 2014)



(Fig. 7) Location of the court of New Zealand Manufacturing and Aisle 43

Having attended Douglas’s Master class - earlier in this year’s MFA programme - his notions of mobility, carriage and transport influenced my consideration of the Bunnings’ site as a palimpsest. Douglas’s meter in “Carriage” accentuates “Big Box” retailers as just-in-time distribution machines. Brian Holmes describes this rhythm in *“Do containers dream of electric people?”*. Holmes argues that data collected about

consumers through *their* consumption is used by a “auto poetic” (self-processing) supply system to inform “global production systems” (Holmes, 2011, para. 15) about individual consumers - simply by aggregating data - to identify and supply fluctuating consumer desire, just-in-time.

Michel de Certeau’s response to this aggregation of inventory, totalising individual consumption, would be that consumers are not passive but resist. Consumers creatively respond to pressure through “the ruse”, a form of resistance (Sheringham, 2010, p. 234) that that spots opportunities where consumption is appropriated for other ends. For example SWEEP(ing) along the footpath outside the front of Bunnings, along the Court of Progress towards the court of Pioneers, across the road is the site of City Fitness gym - which occupies the former site of William Trethewey’s sculpture group - the “*coming of the Maori*” or “*Kupe, his wife and a tohunga*” (see Fig. 8) became a focus next for a set of concerns extending my practice and ideas.

Site 2: Taranaki Wharf. From Centennial to Millennial.

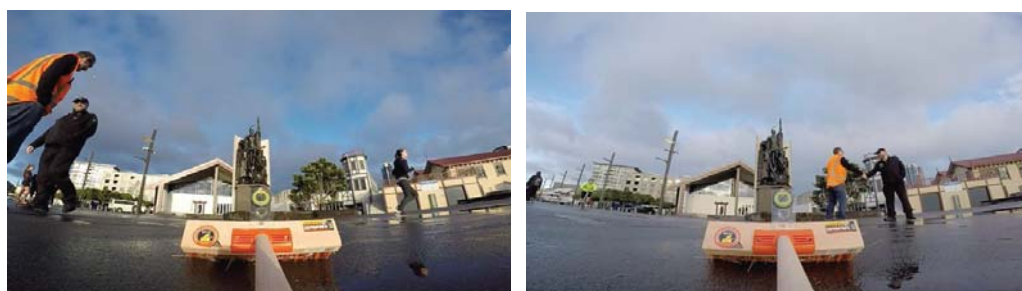


(Fig. 8) William Trethewey: “*Coming of the Maori*” Centennial Exhibition, Rongotai, Wellington,

The inclusion of the “*Coming of the Maori*” in the Centennial Exhibition was not part of sculptor William Trethewey’s brief but was the largest work of his in the Centennial Exhibition. (Harper & Lister 2007 p 58) see (Fig. 8).

This sculpture was originally made of plaster and was moved about Wellington to numerous public locations in the 75 years after 1940. The sculpture is now on Taranaki Wharf, outside the Whare Waka, *Te Raukura*. It was cast in bronze as part

of the millennial celebrations in 2000 (Harper & Lister, 2007). Taranaki Whanui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika represent the tribes who migrated from Taranaki in the 1830s to Te Whanganui a tara, and built the Whare Waka in partnership with the Wellington City Council in 2000.



(Fig. 9) Conversation with ‘Ross’ on Taranaki wharf.

SWEEP(ing) the wharf against the flow of the morning crowd walking to work, I realised that I could just wait to be approached, placing the broom on the ground watching as people flowed around it.

One conversation obtained this way was with “Ross”, an itinerant “local host” employed by the City Council to help with directions and events. We talked about the Trethewey’s statue and Ross’s recollections of being “Wellington born and bred”.

[See appendix. Transcript 2:] and

Performance document 3: <https://youtu.be/Pt3QcxM-zPA>

These recollections included a history of damage the work endured, repeating a common trope of a finger being snapped off. Conversations I recorded about the work referred to a history of sgraffito over 60 years where, during that time one common challenge was to climb and carve initials and dates into its dark surface to reveal the white of the plaster underneath.

William Renwick in “*Reclaiming Waitangi*” discusses a passage from the 1938 “*Short History of New Zealand*” in which he argues that this book, being widely read, also reflected a widespread Pakeha assumptions about New Zealand’s cultural future.

“As Maori became absorbed into the dominant white race, there will grow up a people rich in stories and traditions of both races looking back with equal pride to the Maori explorers and navigators and to the great leaders of the British people”

(Renwick, 2004, p.100)

Orphaned as a Centennial curiosity for 60 years, Trethewey’s family supported Taranaki Whanui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika in adopting “*The coming of the Maori*” as a Millennial project, enabling this fragment - representing the Centennial Exhibition’s assimilationist rhetoric - to be re-contextualised and re-appropriated as a toanga¹⁷ for a new millennium. The process of this transition - from plaster to bronze - erased the sgraffito - from the original plaster - when molds were taken for casting. As a

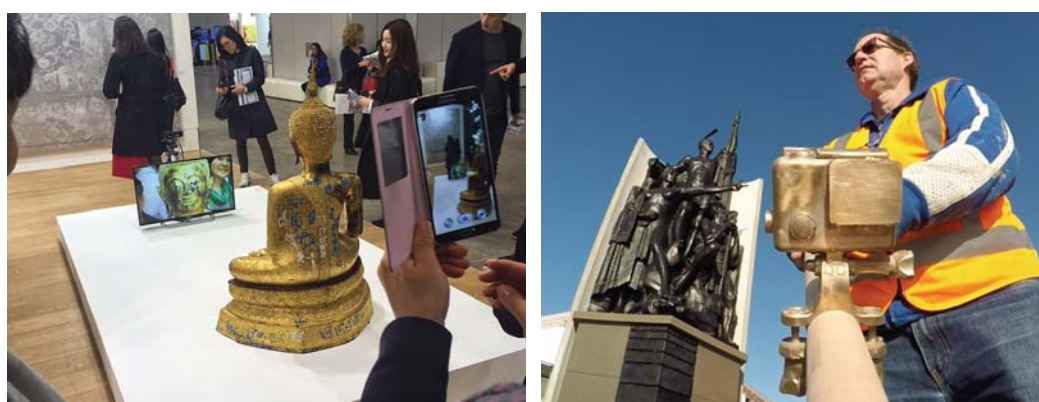
¹⁷ In conversation with Kura Puke (Te Atiawa), (K. Puke, personal communication, 25th August, 2015). She stated that Whanui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika ‘just love that statue’ (the Trethewey work) and treasure it.

palimpsest to a new millennia, the recast modernist orphan was adopted by Whanui ki Te Upoko o Te Ika (Harper & Lister 2007)



(Fig. 10) L-R. Foundry bronze pour Bronze Go Pro bronze on second ready-made broom

This notion of repurposing or reconstituting materiality to signify a cultural transition emerged playfully as a key notion. I made another souvenir of bronze, cast from the Go Pro camera being fixed to the broom handle. Reconstituting the Go Pro ‘Hero’ in bronze produced a simulacra - recorded against the backdrop of Trethewey’s bronze - this was prompted by seeing “selfies” taken with looped recordings of Nam June Paik’s trope “*T.V Bhuddha*”.



(Fig. 11) L-R: Nam June Paik. Golden Bhuddha at Gagosian, 2014.
Image by ARTNEWS.

Bronze Go Pro. Image by artist.

These statues are recorded by camera and displayed on the screens they sit in front of. The meditative circularity of Nam June Paik’s looping technology, combined with the mythology of Buddha mindfulness, led me “problematise the binaries of live and mediated ...[...]... authentic and contrived” (Bishop, 2012 p. 239).

I took a Go Pro “selfie” with Trethewey’s monument. My pastiche combined Go Pro’s sports action brand of ‘Hero’ media culture with Threthewey’s much larger bronze as souvenir.

Site 4: Te Puna Wai Ora: Buick St, Petone.

Performing the bricoleur at Te Puna Wai Ora returned me to the earliest performance of the bricoleur at the PARK(ing) day project. This was an annual, one day public event in March 2015, organised by the Wellington City council with Wellington Sculpture Trust.

Performing at PARK(ing)

Performance document 4:

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZ4kRVLMcgc>

Part 2: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_E2TvQpgo0

Returning sand to Petone beach: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GA-NIT6ONpU&feature=youtu.be>

For the PARK(ing) day performance and installation, I took water from the aquifer and sand from Petone Beach at the other end of Buick Street and swept them together on site in lower Cuba Street, Te Aro, Wellington. Relocating water and sand from Petone sought to connect the Petone beachfront (the site of the New Zealand Company landing in 1840) with the location of the 1840 shoreline in Cuba Street, Wellington My SWEEP(ing) of the road following the trace of the 1840 shoreline¹⁸. The Rubber wood broom was branded a sustainable Eco broom made from rubber wood plantation waste. Sap from Rubber-wood plantations feeds a burgeoning tyre industry leading to tropical deforestation, contributing to global warming and sea level rise.



(Fig. 12) PARK(ing) Day performance and installation.

This first iteration of SWEEP(ing), acknowledged Joseph Bueys 1972-85 political work “*Ausfegen*” or “sweeping up” and provided a formal precedent for my performance. For PARK(ing) day, my performance was didactic in that I used the broom as a sculptural prop to record the audio visual *affect* of sand and water being thrown, scrubbed and swept away.

I also sang in reference to the colonial history of the site, notably “*Rule Britannia*” in reference to the name of an aborted township founded by the New Zealand Company in Petone near Britannia St, not far from Buick St, Petone where the New Zealand Co. survey ship the ‘Cuba’ has a street named after her also.

¹⁸ One concern was the green washing of plantation waste as an Eco material. Rubber wood plantations are a significant contributor to deforestation and not sustainable. See Warren-Thomas, E. Dolman, P. Edwards, E.P. (2015). “*Increasing demand for natural rubber necessitates a robust sustainability initiative to mitigate impacts on tropical biodiversity*”.

A significant change in my performance method took place five months after PARK(ing) day where my engagement with sites had developed a dialogical method while performing and recording exchanges as an inventory from conversations with strangers.

SWEEP(ing) Te Puna Wai Ora.

Performance document 5: <https://youtu.be/dEJGPT8sNGM>



(Fig. 13) The queue at the spring.

The Te Puna Wai Ora site is a public resource in constant use from a diverse community of consumers who chat while queuing for water.

The community I met here considered drinking water from the aquifer an alternative, fundamental lifestyle choice. Their drinking water could *only* be consumed from a source like this aquifer, and certainly not from a tap, signaling a resolute faith in its purity (See Performance document 5)

Conversations about water dominated and ranged from health benefits (travelling long distances to collect water for children because it tastes better than soft drinks) to its usefulness in meditation or supporting ‘medium ship’ spirit channeling. One conversation shared this way at Te Puna Wai Ora turned to the other end of this street and the mosaic foyer of the Petone Settlers Museum, previously the 1940 Wellington Provincial Centennial Memorial. Proceeding from a “What is that?” question. The conversation uncovered a memory of a grandfather who laid this mosaic floor in 1939.



(Fig. 14). L-R. Conversation about Mosaic floor.

Mosaic floor at Petone Settlers museum.

[See Transcript 2 in appendix]

I have chosen to use people and conversations as material for an art that reconfigures this everyday through performance action. Performing the bricoleur at this site (and all sites) also engaged me in trying to understand and interpret what drew people here by realising there was an inter-subjective and ethical aspect to my performing the bricoleur.

As Claire bishop states in *“Artificial hells”*, “...[...]... ethics is the ground zero of any collaborative art” (Bishop, 2012, p. 238).

Grant Kester in *‘Conversation pieces’* considers that an ethical performative identity requires a direct experience, the face-to-face of “lived time and place” (Kester, 2004, p.119). This directness is central to any dialogical aesthetic (Kester, 2004, p. 119). He cites the directness of Mierle Laderman Ukeles’s *“Touch sanitation”* (1980) as a positive example. This work involved the artist shaking the hand of thousands of sanitation workers in appreciation of their un-recognised importance in keeping a large city functioning daily.

My presence performing the bricoleur was, as Mechtild Wildrech states, immediate and open to opportunity (Wildrich, 2012, p.89). Ethically, I felt I needed to be very careful that persistence did *not* perform an imposition. I was, however, performing in a way that solicited responses. The uncanny broom elicited observations and an invitation for others to open conversation, beginning with, “what is that?” Nicholas Bourriaud describes in Marxist terms the “social *interstice*” (Bourriaud, 1998) of human relations. This is based on trading where, once profit is removed from economic exchanges, its absence may facilitate a convivial discourse through promoting generosity. Such an interstice is ethically located in Wellington artist Eve Armstrong’s *“Trading table”* where, she acknowledges the role of chatting as a mode of engagement (Were, 2007). Her aim was not just to barter but also to engage in conversation and maintain this flow as a moment in “the arena of exchange” (Bourriaud, 1998). This is where producing an aesthetic indicates a ‘world’, a formal and coherent social outcome producing a momentary interstice which describing Eve Armstrong practice:

“...brings people, structures, ideas and information together and she enjoys the small moments of intimacy with strangers she experiences while facilitating her projects.” (Were, 2007)

Californian artist Kristin Lucas, in a coincidentally-named 2008 work, *“Conversations with strangers”*¹⁹ ironically performed and recorded conversations solicited through advertisement online, offering cash for face-to-face conversations²⁰. Her objective was to convince strangers they share nothing in common with her. Lucas’s work appears to parody repairing the social fabric, but her irony gently highlights the exchange value of capital that Bourriaud identifies as damaging the social fabric. Her contractual obligation (money is exchanged) is a token that playfully engages others in a genuine, convivial dialogical exchange. In common with Lucas and Armstrong, *“Conversations with strangers”* at Te Puna Wai Ora shares a dialogical context highlighted by Bourriaud’s ‘social interstice’ within an arena of

¹⁹ <http://kristinlucas.com/strangers.html>

²⁰ Lucas offered \$20 per recorded interview and \$5 bonus if the participant could convince her there was a remote connection between them (Lucas, 2008).

face-to-face exchange. While Armstrong's arena excludes capital in conversation by bartering and Lucas's arena of exchange playfully subverts the role of capital by drawing attention to it. My 2015 "*Conversation with strangers*" instead witnesses a convivial arena of exchange in the everyday where people collect water, brought together by a deep conviction of its absolute purity, 'nature' uncontaminated by capital.

Site 4: Te Whare Hera: Ships fender and the Fishers.

After the PARK(ing) day installation and performance, I organised an installation on Clyde Quay Wharf as part of a Te Whare Hera Gallery group show, "*Its our fault too*".²¹



(Fig. 15). *SWEEP(ings)* installation: *Its our fault too*. 2015. Te Whare Hera Gallery, Group show.

The Te Whare Hera installation "*SWEEP(ings)*" was four sculptures on the lip of a ships fender used by fishers to cast off.

This site was an exposed maritime environment so my "WorkSafe" plan to the owner of the site, 'City shaper', stipulated a steel armature for all works. A pipe bender was used to shape the broom shafts with orange Hi-Vis yard brooms from Bunnings inserted into pipe ends welded to 6 mm steel plate.

In critique of the work - a suggestion about others using this location - led me to consult with fishers about sharing this site. In "*Conversation pieces*" Grant Kester discusses the "plonk" factor, where an art object is deposited in a public space without consulting local communities (Kester, 2013, p.18). Here the objects "expressive content" (Kester, 2013, p.10) is analogous to a bank deposit where a withdrawal of expressive content the viewer occurs with no face-to-face opportunity for artist or viewer to meet, discuss collaborate in the work. (Kester, 2013, p.10).

Sharing the site with local fishers, we talked about who used the fender and discussed ways in which the installation and fishing could co-exist. One fisher in particular, Danny (D.B.) Brown, was interested in rod holders for his fishing rod.

²¹ The curator Petri Saarikko, was visiting with his partner, artist Sasha Huber who held the Te Whare Hera Gallery residency. Saarikko wanted to include a broad range of local artists and community responses to being in an earthquake zone.

Agreement with Danny and other fishers led me to make four fishing rod holders and fix them to the timber (Fig. 17). This sculpture installation was an opportunity to collaborate by discussing our shared use of the fender site. Ongoing exchanges about the installation and site lead to an accommodation amidst a transient community. This was still a work in progress as this fragment of conversation about fishing rod holder rod holders shows:



(Fig. 16) Conversation with Danny, Clyde Quay Wharf 2015.

Danny:

Cos I don't think you can have it like that cos the rod won't sit up straight and it needs to be a little back you know.

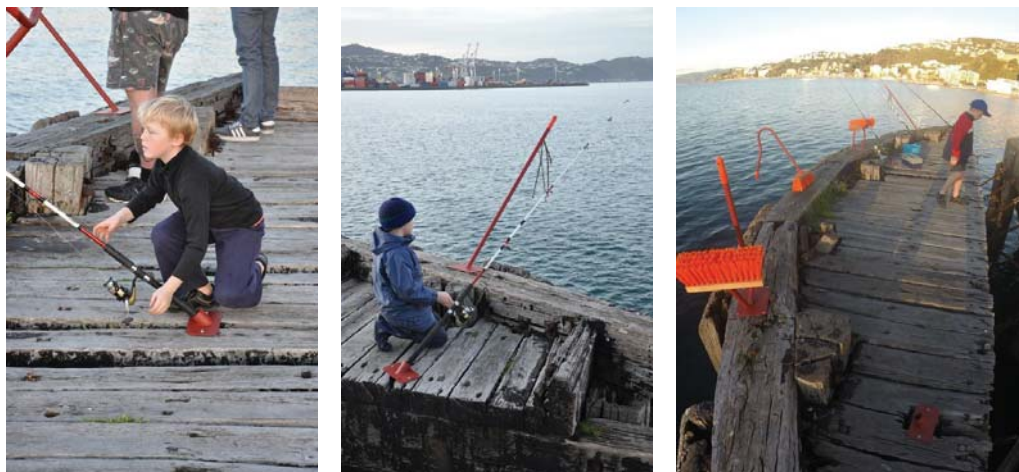
Bricoleur:

O.k ...well you see that one there, that was the idea to have them sort of leaning out and leaning in to the sculpture sort of thing.

Danny:

Yeah that's what good about it, thanks for doing that for us!

[See appendices: Conversation with Danny. Transcript 3]



(Fig.17) Fishers using rod holders made as part of *SWEEP(ings)* installation. 2015

Conversation with Ben.



(Fig. 18) Conversation with Ben, Clyde Quay Wharf.

Another conversation was with Ben, a middle-aged skateboarder who was interested in the *SWEEP(ings)* installation. Ben's opening line was, "Tell me about the brooms, I like to be in the know". We exchanged a conversation about the work but Ben was not interested in my theorising - voicing what Grant Kester calls the "I like" response (Kester 2013 p 10) - a common 'pleasure based' response to an art object. Ben had noticed a broom left in the doorway of the gallery and thought it was part of the installation but it was, in fact, a gift, left by a fisher after we had a conversation on Te Whare Hera Galleries' opening night (Fig.19 & Performance document 6). This man may also have left a present of two fish eaten by the curator of the show.



(Fig. 19) L-R Conversation on opening night.

Broom left near Gallery doorway.

Conversation with Ben: Part 1.

Performance document 6: <https://youtu.be/OCUKwMr4ptM>

Performance document 7. <https://youtu.be/x2xhlwFQJCI>

Performing the Bricoleur and *SWEEP(ings)* installation on Clyde Quay Wharf.

Performing the bricoleur here with a ready-made broom aligned it with Richard Sennett's "arousing tool". An all-purpose tool realigned with an extraordinary application and deployed to record "*Conversation with strangers*" alongside a convivial, multicultural and idiosyncratic fishing culture foraging from the wharf. Performance Documents 6 and 7 combine as a record of dialogical exchanges between myself and Ben. Ben shared his creative skateboard tinkering after we had discussed how the *SWEEP(ings)* installation was used by fishers. The broom also performed a third party interlocutor, recording the water under the jetty and later a television floating, circling next to the wharf. The sound of

SWEEP(ing) and small moments that emerge from the monotony of the everyday are recorded by noticing²², as Walead Beshty wrote about bricolage concerning intellectual DIY:

“What’s important is to use what immediately surrounds you, not to deal in abstraction and with ideological premises, but to deal in the concrete”.

(Carl, 2011, p. 11).

Walking, sweeping and talking with the broom, together we have tried to recover the faintest of memories of a place in an everyday made concrete through SWEEP(ing) the site.



(Fig. 20) L-R: Boy fishing and playing on *SWEEP(ings)* sculpture. 2015. Image courtesy of the artist.

Repurposing: The Installation as a repository for Post-studio inventory.

Installation test. Document 8. <https://youtu.be/2zzb2V74mwM>

Installation test. Document 9. <https://youtu.be/PttiP9k7PBk>

The decision to take a ready-made broom and perform an itinerant, post studio bricoleur as art worker was a positive liberation from the studio/workshop. But given that performance exists “live” at site, and was or belonged there momentarily, I had to attend to what documentation is - or rather, come to understand how the bricoleur would act toward documentation in keeping with post-studio tenets. As 2015 progressed, I realised the documentation of an event was not fulfilling my objective within creative research. Instead, this inventory of “*Conversations with strangers*” needed to be repurposed *as* installation. That was more productive and conducive to new knowledge of site and its relational concerns and its cultural memory - the broom’s interaction with people, surfaces, materials, the peculiarities of the everyday

²² The audio channels in these two mixes are at times deliberately split into left and right channels. I considered this sound of water to be ‘conversation’ made available by the broom as technological interlocutor collecting inventory.

(see list below). In this it must be clearly understood that I performed installation through a number of trials, and the final manifestation is but one result of a manifold number of potential outcomes. This means the installation in some ways is its own palimpsest, a logical conclusion of working in post-studio ways.

Performing SWEEP(ing) this year assembled an inventory that included:

Go Pro recordings of conversations:
SWEEP(ing) & PARK(ing):
Bunnings; Taranaki Wharf; Te Puna Wai ora;
Clyde Quay wharf;
Ready-made broom
Orange Hi Vis jacket
Material broom trapped in broom bristles
A cast bronze Go Pro
A tin shed; padlock
Other brooms
Broom sculpture
Monitors
Sundry etc.

The ready-made broom-with-a -view recorded the bricoleur as an appendage, it *was* all about the broom - Go Pro's framed the subject from below eye level - where Tim Ingold thought our perception of intelligence should be re distributed so that we might use tools with the rhythm of the whole body, not just hands and eyes (Ingold, 2011, p. 46).

This live post-studio practice was recorded at four sites as discussed in this exegesis and other sites folded within them. For example, PARK(ing) day at the beginning of the year overlapped Te Puna Wai Ora, connected by sand and water taken from Petone with the sand later returned²³ (See document 4. p. 22). A palimpsest occurs when one text is read through another so that the previous one is displaced or leaves a trace as a ruin (Owens, 1980).

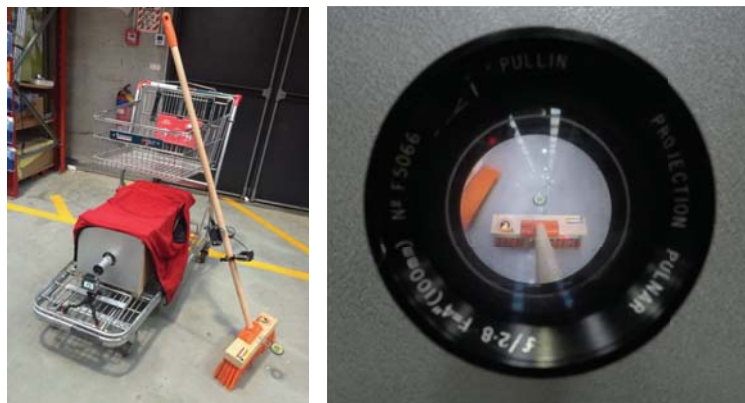
Reworking accumulated Go Pro recordings within an installation site suggested repurposing these as a palimpsest, in other words, collaging fragments from inventory that, as Craig Owens notes in *'The Allegorical impulse, Towards a theory of Post-modernism'* (Owens, 1980) becomes a site-specific supplement, replacing the earlier work of live performance.

²³ This was an acknowledgement of the Mauri of Petone sand. Mauri in a Maori world view is a spiritual life force acting as a universal, material attractant (Morgan, 2015). In conversation with Kura Puke (Te Atiawa) she confirmed returning sand to the beach was a correct action (K. Puke, personal communication, 25th August, 2015).



(Fig. 21) L-R: R. Illustration of shed for proposal to Petone Settlers Museum. Middle. Shed Test (document 8). L. Bronze globe, Petone Settlers Museum foyer.

Working towards installation, other proposals for sites were issued for consideration. One proposal was for the mosaic foyer of the Petone Settlers Museum, using wi-fi broadcasting of the broom's sweeping sound to speakers inside a tin shed, covering a bronze globe. This globe showed the 1840 voyages of the New Zealand Company settler's ships to Petone from England. Thus the projector lens, penetrating the shed wall - provided a view of this illuminated globe - upside down. (Fig. 21)



(Fig. 22) L-R: R. Go pro recording, Aisle 43 Bunnings, with Wi Fi signal to an i-Pad. L. Projector lens.

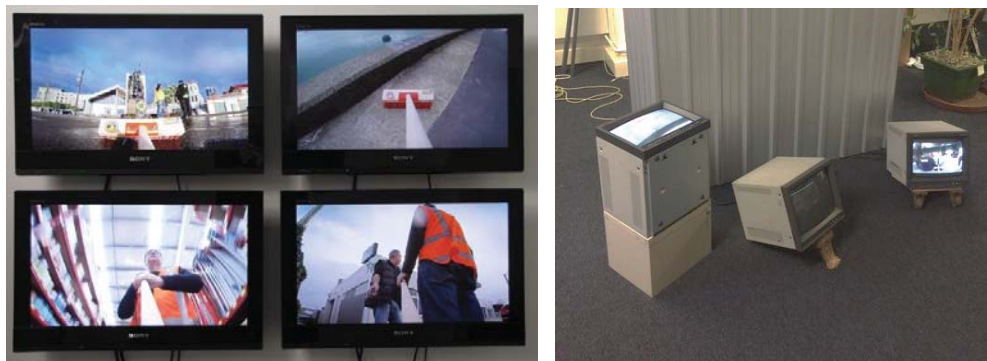
As a bricoleur continuing to tinker with technology, another SWEEP(ing) performance used two cameras with Wi-Fi. At Bunnings' one camera sent a signal to an i Pad screen that was recorded by another Go Pro through an old projector lens. At this time a significant critique offered feedback that refocused my attention on presenting a growing collection of documentation as the work in itself.

Earlier experiments with technology had referenced Kristin Lucas's work using digital technologies. Lucas's work, "*Air on the go*" (2014) was a walking monologue describing the ephemeral nature of the technological experience where used digital editing to produce a decentered view of the artist (Fig. 23) Lucas had provided me with a contemporary conceptual orientation towards using cameras and digital screens recording with SWEEP(ing).



(Fig. 23) Kristin Lucas. *Air on the Go*, 2014, Usdan Gallery, Bennington College. Image Retrieved from http://www169.pair.com/klucas/archive/air_go.html

After testing and in critique, this model did not work for my installation. I discovered flat screen LCD monitors, read together from a distance, privileged narrative by either forming a grid or a linear sequence. By acknowledging the importance of the broom as an object within an installation, the direction of the installation became sculptural. An inventory of images *and* the broom on the floor with monitors suggested a bricolage assemblage as an alternative to flat screens.



(Fig. 24) L-R. R:Flat screen tests

L: Cathode ray Monitor tests

10 year old, stackable cathode ray box monitors were used and still used on campus as others were borrowed for installation. I sculpted filing cabinet props to ‘up end’ or elevate the screens, ensuring they could not be read together. Editing intermittent gaps or starting players randomly further fragmented narrative so that, the installation as a palimpsest assemblage became a repurposed collection of debris to form a site. Performing the bricoleur and SWEEP(ing) reprises the sound of the broom as a leitmotif. This recorded rhythm of SWEEP(ing) and its performed live-ness are redistributed amongst these fragments of inventory, deposited as installation within this space.

Conclusion:

What would happen if the bricoleur walked out of the workshop and into the everyday?

Performing the bricoleur as a post-studio project aligned the broom as ready-made with Richard Sennett's 'arousing tool', an all-purpose broom repurposed to perform an extraordinary and mobile application involving the rhythm of the body, SWEEP(ing) across these sites. Choosing the broom as a ready-made deployed a bricoleur's tinkering by fitting it out to record conversations at sites. Engaging people as material for a recorded inventory was openly opportunistic *and* open to chance so that, without others generosity, I risked at least being ethically importunate.

On Wellington's waterfront, a convivial, multicultural and idiosyncratic fishing culture forages from the wharf. Where concrete *scratches* and *toks* as the broom sets down to start from scratch, another site records its signature. I became conversant with a pilgrimage to collect water from Te Puna Wai Ora, recording conviction as testament on hearing voices speak about water taken from *this place*.

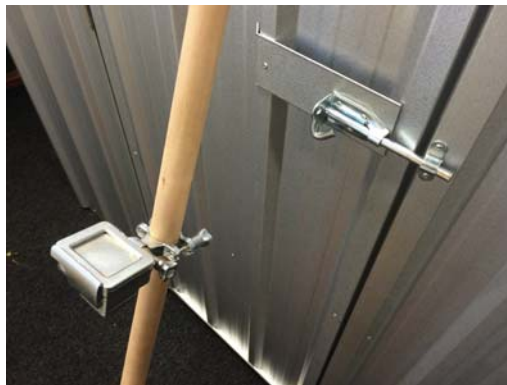
Within a sculptural installation of collected inventory, these dialogues are fragments that sit with the broom, a tool that when performed, records and frames:

"stories about places are makeshift things, they are composed of the worlds debris"
(Certeau, 1988 p107)

These narratives are not didactic narrations of colonisation, nor are they illustrative of bi-culturalism. Instead, the ready-made broom is a mnemonic device, a tool that elides or blurs periods of recorded time through a palimpsest of place and conversation.

The broom recorded conversations as ephemeral mnemo-histories so that "*Conversations with strangers*" is a mesh that sieves fragments of cultural memory, collected below as inventory (see appendix).

SWEEP(ing) sites recorded a materiality that is *causal within an aesthetic chain*, one link in a harsh audio signature, repeated in this installation, where the rhythm of bristles moving across a site invokes another story.



(Fig. 25). Blue zinc-plated bronze Go Pro and the broom

Appendix: Transcripts of dialogue.

TRANSCRIPT 1:

Transcript of conversation: Bunnings Rongotai 13.07.2015

Bricoleur:

What I am doing with the broom I brought from Bunnings? It's tracking the site out of the old building. So, they occupied this site here in Bunnings back through...do you know a bit about it...?

Grant:

Yeah yeah yeah.... cos I went to Rongatai College and that was all the exhibition ground - that's what they call it,...that's part of their exhibition as well...rugby grounds,

Bricoleur:

So they call it Exhibition Ground - what do you know!

Grant:

Yes that's the front part of it - Exhibitiion Ground, so it comes from there.

Bricoleur:

Yeah yeah so this is also presumably part of it as well, I mean not the whole thing but some of it. I gather it stretched all the way out the back here [pointing east towards airport]

Grant:

Yeah Yeah - its fairly large, have you been to the Café?

Bricoleur:

Yes, it [Exhibition complex] was in the shape of a Maltese cross to symbolise all the ports in New Zealand which I thought was pretty interesting - but it was big - it was monstrous.

Grant:

It was awesome for something then to be built so big - a frivolous thing - I think it is incredible!

Bricoleur:

In 1939 I think they said it was about \$48 million bucks the equivalent of todays money

Grant:

Yes, my father talked about it - he said it was really big and I am sure he went - - it was a big deal - what was in the exhibition?

Bricoleur:

From what I can remember they had the Government section, and... that's right, there was the Highway to health and happiness!

[laughter]

TRANSCRIPT 2: Taranaki wharf 16.07.2015

Bricoleur:

Well what is really interesting about this of course is as you mentioned, the old Centennial site is roughly where the old Bunnings building is now

Ross:

Yeah that's right

Bricoleur:

And the back fields in Rongatai College. I was talking to a guy who went to school there at Rongotai and he said it was Exhibition Field – that's what they called it.

Ross:

I have still got a couple of things at home that my grandmother got as souvenirs way back when.

Bricoleur:

Is that the posters and stuff?

Ross:

No no, just a little glass polar bear actually, of all things!

Bricoleur:

A glass polar bear!

Ross:

Yes and something else I can't remember what though.

Bricoleur:

That's hilarious.

Ross:

They were out in Miramar so just around the road

Bricoleur:

Do you know when it burnt down

Ross:

No it didn't burn down I don't think

Bricoleur:

Oh okay, I read somewhere that they stored a whole lot of wool bales in there and they ignited.

Ross:

Yes, yes yes – I remember that one but no, when doesn't ring a bell – it's amazing they had three times the population go through the place

Bricoleur:

Well that's right, it would have been a big thing in the day we have had the Australian pavilion and all that sort of thing

Ross:

All those things have happened out there though, there's the fun park at Miramar, there's the speedway at Kilbirnie

TRANSCRIPT 3: Te Puna Wai ora 16.07.2015

Bricoleur:

Have you been in the old Petone Settler's Museum? Well, on the floor there, when you go in, you have got the globe there and the 4 points of the compass in the foyer.

Man:

They use to have a mosaic there as well

Bricoleur:

Well I was talking to a guy there and he said there was a big courtyard up front there and the fountain was there also.

It is a shame there is no pictures of it, my great grandfather did the mosaics.

Bricoleur:

Oh really, did he work on the Centennial Exhibition show in 1939?

Man:

I don't know about that. I just knew he was a brickie and he did a lot of that mosaic stuff. There are a couple of other places, I will have to ask my mum, but he did a couple of other places in town that had mosaics on the wall and things like that but, I haven't got the dates on all of that.

TRANSCRIPT 3: Te Whare Hera. Clyde Quay Wharf 31.05.2015

Bricoleur:

D.B. Brown?

Danny:

Yeah, hows it going!

Bricoleur:

Your D.B. Brown, we have met a while back.

Danny:

What are these?

Bricoleur:

These are little Go Pros – they record these sculptures over here, they are mine and I am about to take them down today.

Danny:

Oh are you?

Bricoleur:

Yeah yeah, well the sites... but the exhibition has finished.

Danny:

Aww I use them'

Bricoleur:

Yeah yeah that's what they are for... I made those little fishing butts there, see those ones there, I stuck those ones there so you could stick the rod through the broom you know and that sort of thing...oh you have got one! (caught a fish)

Danny:

Yeah, I have got 2.

Bricoleur:

Oh wow that's amazing. I have seen people fishing off here, they have caught snapper, terakihi and that sort of thing.

Danny:

Are you going to taking these rod things?

Bricoleur:

Na, I am going to leave those

Danny:

They just need to come back a bit cos they are too close into the thing

Bricoleur:

Yeah, well I had a bit of difficulty trying to work out where to fit them 'cos ones like that over there worked but, I arranged them so that you can pop your rods up against the sculpture...but I'll think about propping them up against that bit at the front so that they are sitting more upright so you can drop your rods into it like that

Danny:

Yeah that's a good idea too...Just a tad more so it can sit up you know

Bricoleur:

Yip

Danny:

Cos I don't think you can have it like that cos the rod won't sit up straight and it needs to be a little back you know.

Bricoleur:

O.k ...well you see that one there, that was the idea to have them sort of leaning out and leaning in to the sculpture sort of thing

Danny:

Yeah that's what good about it, thank you for doing that for us!

Bricoleur:

Aww na na choice, hahaha that's alright – well its all part of it really. Have you fished here?

Danny:

Yeah – caught a couple of kahawai, caught a couple of snapper – but the snappers where too small – they were only about that so I threw them back in. Caught a couple of small snapper over there but threw them back in. But an old guy he caught a bigger one over there – 20 pounder bro!

Bricoleur:

Phew! 20 pound!!

Danny:

Yeah I couldn't believe it, couldn't believe it – I thought you would have to go way out in a boat to catch one that big

Bricoleur:

Phew! that's what I was thinking

List of YOUTUBE URL links:

Performance Document 1: <https://youtu.be/4gz4z2AOZpU>page 8

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Performance document 4: PARK(ING) Day

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZ4kRVLMcgc>

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List of illustrations:

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Malcolm Doidge: L-R: L. Wheel-barrows. 2013: R. Borrowed 2013: Steel, Rubber, plastic.
M.F.A Installation, Engine room, Massey Wellington 2013: jpeg

(Fig. 2)

L-R: Malcolm Doidge. L. SWEEP(ing) Performance at PARK(ing) day March 2015:
R. The Broom. Raven Contractors Hi Vis broom 2015: jpeg

(Fig. 3)

L-R: L. Malcolm Doidge. Over reach. Rubberwood 2015: R. New brooms. Rubberwood. 2013:

(Fig. 4)

Digital collage. Google map of Rongotai and Plan of the Wellington Centennial Exhibition buildings. Burt, Gordon Onslow Hilbury, 1893-1968 :Negatives. Ref: 1/1-015667-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. 2015

(Fig. 5)

Grant and the Bricoleur at Bunnings. Go Pro jpeg 2015. Images courtesy of the artist.

(Fig. 6)

SWEEP(ing) Aisle 43 at Bunnings Rongotai. Go Pro jpeg 2015. Images courtesy of the artist.

(Fig. 7)

Digital collage. Google map of Rongotai and Plan of the Wellington Centennial Exhibition buildings. Burt, Gordon Onslow Hilbury, 1893-1968 :Negatives. Ref: 1/1-015667-G. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

(Fig. 8)

Sculpture by William Trethewey at the Centennial Exhibition, Rongotai, Wellington, depicting Kupe, his wife, and a tohunga. Ref: 1/2-004298-F. Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand. <http://natlib.govt.nz/records/23161462>

(Fig. 9)

L-R: Conversation with 'Ross' on Taranaki wharf. Go Pro jpeg 2015. Images courtesy of the artist.

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L-R: R. Foundry bronze pour. 2015: L. Bronze Go Pro bronze on second ready-made broom.2015.
Images courtesy of the artist.

(Fig. 11)

L-R: R. Nam June Paik. Golden Bhuddha at Gagosian, 2014.
Image by ARTNEWS. <http://alphaomegaarts.blogspot.co.nz/2015/03/nam-june-paiks-golden-buddha-may-be.html> 16/03/2015:
L. Bronze Go Pro bronze on ready-made broom.2015.Image courtesy of the artist. 2015.

(Fig. 12)

L-R: PARK(ing) Day performance and installation. 2015. Image courtesy of the artist. 2015.

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L-R: The queue at the spring. Go Pro jpeg 2015. Image courtesy of the artist. 2015.

(Fig. 14)

L-R: L. Conversation about Mosaic floor. R. Mosaic floor at Petone Settlers museum. Image courtesy of the artist. 2015.

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L-R: *SWEEP(ings)* installation: *Its our fault too*. 2015. Te Whare Hera Gallery, Group show. Image courtesy of the artist. 2015.

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L-R: Conversation with Danny, Clyde Quay Wharf. 2015 Images courtesy of the artist.

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L-R: Fishers using rod holders made as part of *SWEEP(ings)* installation. 2015. Image courtesy of the artist. 2015.

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(Fig. 19) L-R: Conversation on opening night. R. Broom left near Gallery doorway. 2015 Images courtesy of the artist.

(Fig. 20) L-R: Boy fishing and playing on *SWEEP(ings)* sculpture. 2015. Image courtesy of the artist. 2015.

(Fig. 21)

L-R: R. Illustration of shed for proposal to Petone Settlers Museum. Middle. Shed Test (document 8). L. Bronze globe, Petone Settlers Museum foyer. Image courtesy of the artist. 2015.

(Fig. 22)

L-R: R. Go pro recording Aisle 43 Bunnings with Wi Fi signal to an i-Pad. L. Projector lens. Image courtesy of the artist. 2015.

(Fig. 23)

Kristin Lucas. *Air on the Go*, 2014, Usdan Gallery, Bennington College. Image Retrieved from http://www169.pair.com/klucas/archive/air_go.html 15/10/2015.

(Fig. 24)

L-R. Flat screen tests. L. Cathode ray Monitor tests. Image courtesy of the artist. 2015.

(Fig. 25).

Blue zinc plated bronze Go Pro and the broom in installation. Image courtesy of the artist. 2015.

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