

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.

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*

Vanessa Crowe

2008

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*'.

Acknowledgements

I would like thank the people who have supported me during my Master of Fine Arts study. Firstly to my supervisors Richard Reddaway and Julieanna Preston, thank you so much for sharing your time, wisdom and expertise and bearing with me through the ups and downs of my project. And to my peers and the rest of the Fine Arts faculty, thank you for your support and critique.

Thank you to the artists and staff at Pablos Art Studio and ROAR Gallery for hosting me on your residency programme. You provided such an enriching start to my year. A huge thank you to Emily Pauling for the marathon effort you put in to install my work at the Blue Oyster Gallery and for your enduring support.

Thank you to other friends and family who have helped and supported me in one way or another; particularly Susan for also helping to install my work, Genevieve for sharing your aesthetic and technical expertise and Fiona for cheering me on from across the world.

And thank you to Owen for being my rock and Jacob for being my sunshine.

Contents

<i>I waz here</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>the ornament of our days.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>difference inhabits repetition.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>individuality vs the greater good</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>an island of precarious stability.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>unproductive, uncultivated, degenerate and uncivilised.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>the problem that had no name</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>the path of least resistance.....</i>	<i>24</i>
<i>appearance and duplicity.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>the function of a facade.....</i>	<i>39</i>
<i>a calm and stable pace.....</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>a line of flight.....</i>	<i>53</i>
<i>bibliography.....</i>	<i>55</i>

I waz here

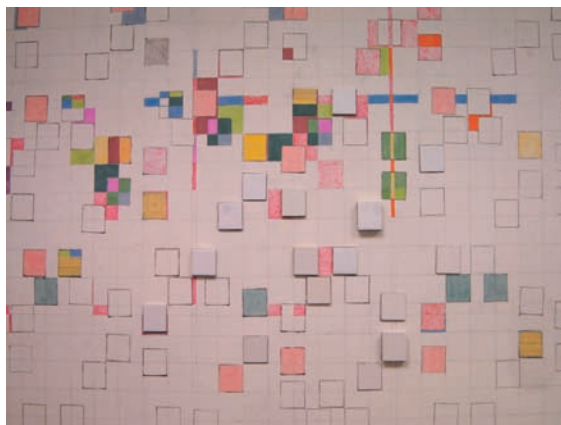
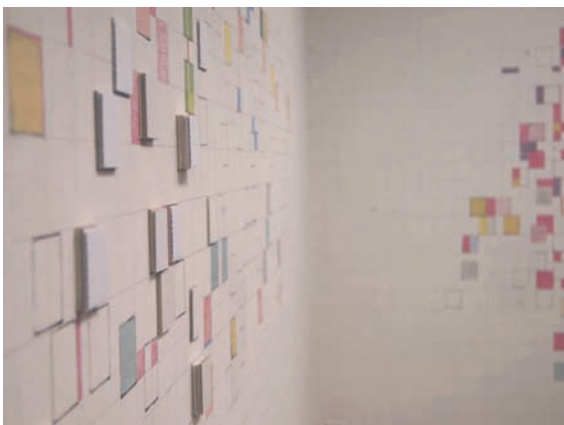
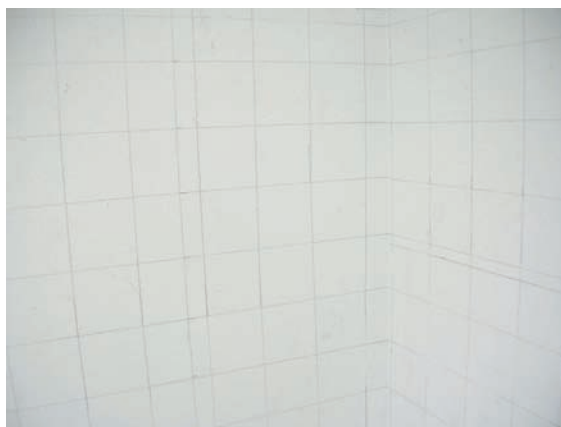
As a starting point for my Master of Fine Arts year, I took up a three week artist residency at ROAR Gallery/Pablos Art Studios¹. My intention was to inhabit the space and allow a pattern to unfold onto the walls in that timeframe. I decided that it would be a pattern of squares, as a response to the pattern of squares that adorned the ceiling tiles and as a means of paring back decorative pattern to its basic structure. I had a square stamp made to make the pattern, envisioning a repetitive and monotonous task of stamping the walls, unfolding a pattern that I saw as being analogous to monotonous tasks in everyday life. I drew a grid over the walls of the space, to guide my stamping. A set of rules for working was established; to find my way through the banal and repetitive process of drawing lines, stamping and colouring, cutting up my time as do our daily routines. I employed 'school stationary' as my media, colouring the squares with felt pens and pencils.

I intended that it would grow and unfold in relation to the space, but I didn't really know what the outcome of the work would be. It was a *becoming*, taking its course according to the rules I had established. Some of the Pablos artists found the contemplative nature of my colouring squares appealing and similar to aspects of their own practices. When some artists expressed an interest, I invited them to become part of the project and help me colour in the squares. The choice to allow participation made me aware that the Pablos artists had quite particular relationships with the order and control instilled by the grid. For some it was grounding, providing them with a sense of control and allowed them to express and make sense of their own complex relations with order and control in their day-to-day lives; for others the order of the grid felt oppressive and confining.

While some of the artists enjoyed the methodical colouring, others could think of nothing worse. I did not want to enforce a rigid order on those who found this oppressive. My rules for colouring were subsequently stretched and bent to accommodate those who were not so interested in obediently colouring inside the square. The regularity of pattern slipped as people's enthusiasm to participate increased. It shifted from being a delineated pattern of repetition to becoming a rhythm and balance of colouring. The pattern that emerged seemed an apt analogy for our routines and orders in everyday life; which must accommodate all sorts of bending, slipping and surprises; rather than rolling out like a predetermined script. This pattern revealed routine and repetition in everyday life as being far from homogenous and linear.

¹ 'Pablos is an art studio for people who have experienced mental illness. We have been running for over ten years and we support up to 100 artists a year. The aim of the organisation is to 'Promote healthy self – identity', and part of how we do that is by providing people with the opportunity to build a new identity and community which is based on wellness and creativity rather than institutionalisation, hospitalisation and unwellness.' *Pablos Art Studio mission statement*.





opposite page: figure 1. Vanessa Crowe, *I WAZ HERE*, 2007, installation view, pencils, pens, felt tips and cardboard.
 above: figure 2. Vanessa Crowe, *I WAZ HERE*, 2007, work in progress.



Embroidery

Child, when I swing you up and down
You make a chevron pattern traveling over time
Like the embroidered zig zag stitch that I use to seam
The shallow yoke of your night gown;
And when I walk along lifting and lowering you
On the walls and in the air you make this pattern too.

You are the ornament of our days
Your life so pattern-regular, your looks so pretty
They seem a gold thread embroidered on our city².

E.J. Scovell

opposite page: figure 3. Vanessa Crowe, *I WAZ HERE*, 2007, detail, pencils, pens, felt tips and cardboard.

the ornament of our days

In *Embroidery*, E.J Scovell captures how ornament ‘is utterly entangled in premodernist notions of domesticity and family feeling’ (Steiner, 2001, p60). This poem captures a connection between the routine and the order of everyday life and that of decorative pattern. In this piece, the repetitive and contemplative act of embroidering mirrors familiar moments of repetition that make up the rhythm and routine of domestic everyday life in that time.

As a conceptual tool the structure of decorative pattern can mirror our relations with order and routine in everyday life. While Scovell’s poem stitches together a picturesque scene, the actuality of contemporary everyday life is often quite different. Ever-changing technology provides us with the means to live increasingly complex and faceted lives. Our relations to order are far from homogenous and linear; we do not necessarily obediently follow orders or live an ordered life. It is more likely that our day-to-day lives involve a rhythm or negotiation between order and disorder, forming a pattern of twists, turns and contradictions at the same time enduring banal repetition. An unpacking of the conceptual structure of decorative pattern shows it to be similarly complex and faceted.

In *The Sense of Order* Gombrich (1979) discusses the psychology of decorative art, revealing it to be a means for us to make sense of the world through instilling order. He alludes to basic human behaviour in describing the symmetry and order of decorative pattern as a rhythm of ‘restlessness and repose’ (p120). This phrase hints at the tension that is immanent in the structure of decorative pattern, referring to the relation it has with order within itself. The conceptual structure of decorative pattern is an intertwining of ornament and the grid. Ornament refers to our desire to adorn, a basic form of human expression. The grid infers absolute order. This entwinement is similar to a meeting of chaos and order. Ornament is like ‘a lot of wallowing seaweeds in fullchase’ (Perkins 1992, p6) while the grid is ‘antinatural, antimimetic, antireal’ (Krauss 1999, p9). They come together as a ‘taming of a wild profusion of things’ (Foucault 2001, p xv).

However the relations between the order of the grid and ornament are far from tame. In ‘Ornament and Order’, Jacques Soullou (2002) reveals this relationship to be both dependant and volatile. He suggests that ‘order can never ultimately establish itself because ornament works to undermine it’ (p93). In ornament, ‘order looks like an island of precarious stability’ (p87). Far from being a dominating order, the grid is vulnerable and reliant, because ‘ornament is essentially chaos that threatens to subvert order if the latter doesn’t pay attention’ (p87). But at the same time, the grid provides ornament with stability and structure, which suggests that this is an enduring reciprocal relationship, of precarious balance:

One of the formal means of preventing ornamental display from degenerating into chaos is by containing it in a more or less defined grid system (grille ou maillage). Without such system [...] the display would run off in all directions. In twentieth century art which has done much to eliminate all ornament, minimalism laid bare this formal substratum like no other movement before it. The absence (le vide) of the ornament is not nothing, it is the grid. However, when we reduce ornament to its formal properties of symmetry and repetition, we have already surreptitiously introduced order into ornament. To reveal itself, ornament has no need for symmetry and repetition, which form specific modalities of appearance [...] Order through ornament gives itself an air of symmetry and repetition.

This signifies simply that it takes the path of least resistance, consistent with the objectives of power (p 87-88).

To take *the path of least resistance* infers a reluctant compliance to order, a struggle with order that is expressed through subtle subversion. *Passive aggressive* is a term used to describe such behaviour in everyday life that could in turn be used to describe the nature of decorative pattern. To name decorative pattern, passive aggressive, provides an analogy between the nature of order within itself and human relations to order in a contemporary context. The term was coined by the U.S. military during World War II, when military psychiatrists noted the behaviour of soldiers who displayed passive resistance and a reluctant compliance to orders. While 'passive aggressive' is a term used to reference a psychological illness, it is also a widely used term to refer to less severe patterns of behaviour, ones that may even be rational ploys to avoid confrontation that most of us would admit to adopting at some point in time. It comes as a conscious or unconscious aversion to a dominating order. Some traits include contradictory and inconsistent behaviour, procrastination, intentional avoidance of responsibility, working inefficiently on unwanted tasks and forgetting obligations. It suggests that the actuality of how one feels is consciously or unconsciously masked to fit within an imposed or dominant order. It is from within this order that resistance occurs.

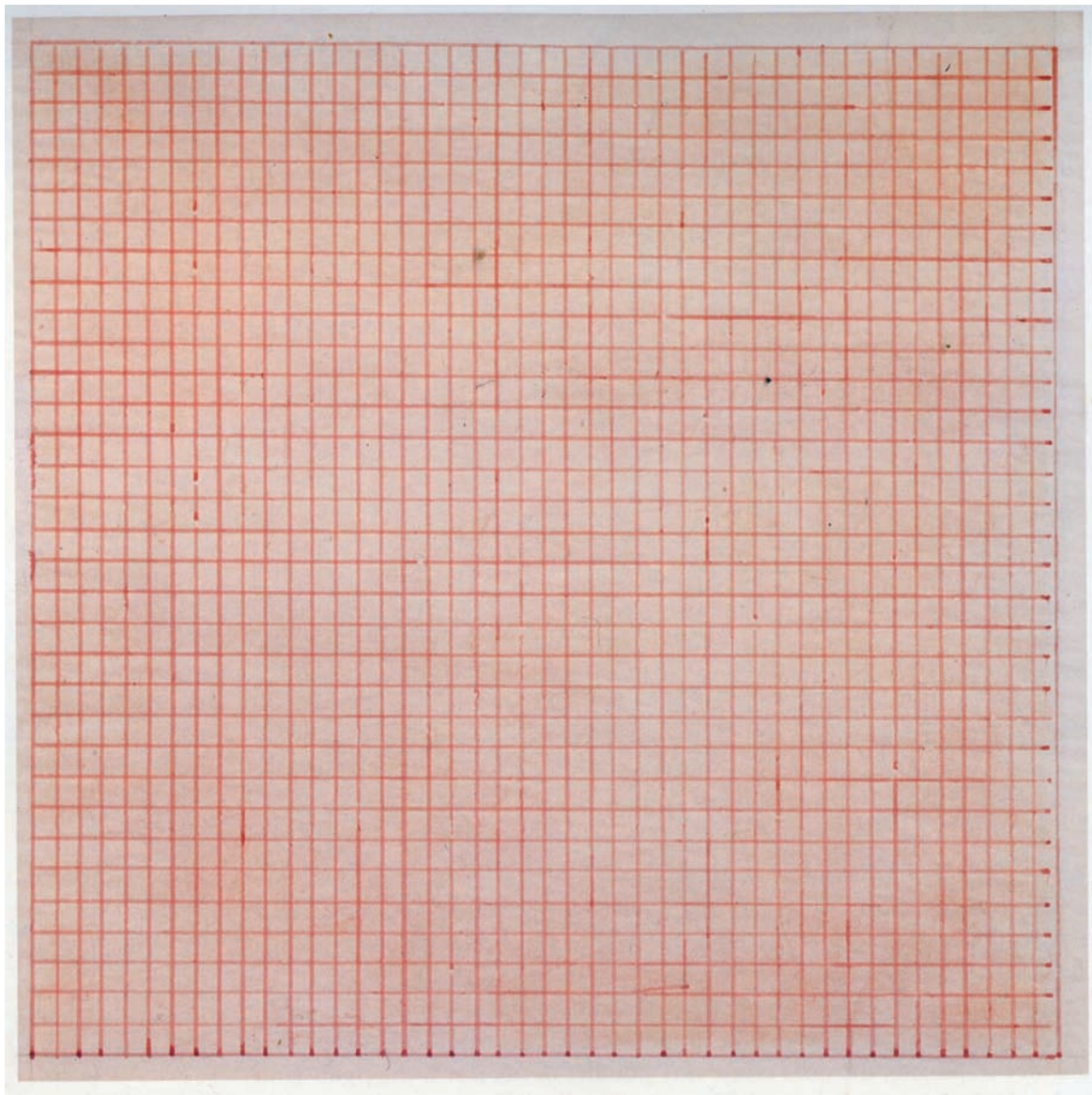


figure 4. Agnes Martin, *Untitled*, 1963, ink on paper, 21x21cm.

difference inhabits repetition

The repetitive nature of decorative pattern mirrors familiar routine and banal repetition in everyday life. It opens up a plane for contemplation, daydreaming and procrastination. It can contain inconsistent and contradictory readings.

Ornament also implies multifunctionality. Insofar as a building can never be purely ornamental without becoming a statue, architectural ornament introduces heterogeneous purposes in an artwork, and hence multiple and inconsistent interpretations. (Steiner, 2001, p62)

In *Difference and Repetition* (1968), Deleuze discusses the multiple registers of repetition, marking a significant shift in thinking that occurred at that time. Deleuze links repetition to contemplation and habit revealing how repetition opens up a space of 'inbetweenness' inhabited by difference. He speaks of the complexity of repetition through connecting it to the faceted nature of human experience. The exploration of such ideas is also evident in artists work from the late 1960s. The perfection of the grid was rejected in favour of an exploration of everyday materials and processes, evoking a more humanised, relative order. Through embracing the infinite peculiarities of the human hand, a link is forged between difference and repetition.

If we are lost without repetition, we are also lost to it and in thrall to it. At the very ground of consciousness, repetition cuts both ways, both shoring up and shattering its fragile and precarious hold. It is a means of organising the world, it is a means of disordering and undoing. It can be utopian and dystopian (Fer, 2005, p2).

In *The Infinite Line*, Briony Fer (2005) discusses the work of artists who have employed repetition in the 1960s to explore the potential grid as a reference to our human relation to repetition and order. Agnes Martin's work provides an example of humanness within the grid. Through drawing a pencil line across the clear surface of the page, she marks a moment passing in time, her own particular marking according to the steadiness of her hand and rhythm of her movement. In time these lines repeat over and over on vertical and horizontal planes, all of them are subordinate to the repetition of the grid, but with infinite differences in their lines and edges; as if to capture infinity in a web of lines, despite the fact that infinity is not a thing, 'it is precisely what escapes being a thing' (p37). At the same time the paper, the pen or marker, the instruments of her everyday world, have become both the subject and medium. Martin grounds the conceptual nature of the grid in the everyday, utilising its structure to 'work through' the aesthetics of the ephemeral and the everyday - balancing regularity and irregularity, precision and imprecision, accent and interval, referring to 'humanised' structures of order. In weaving series and surface, Martin opens up a field of contemplation that is grounded in the everyday through its materiality. She utilises repetition and all its difference to evoke contemplation.



figure 5. Vanessa Crowe, *Forms in Space*, 2007, foam, screen, cloth, card, mdf, dimensions variable.

The role of the imagination, or the mind that contemplates in its multiple and fragmented states, is to draw something new from repetition, to draw difference from it (Deleuze, 1968, p76).

All our rhythms, our reserves, our reaction times, the thousand intertwinings, the presents and fatigues of which we are composed, are defined on the basis of our contemplations (p77).

To contemplate and dwell in the imagination can be a form of avoidance or escape. Daydreaming and procrastination can become a habit formed as a means of avoiding unappealing chores. Deleuze suggests that our relation to order and repetition occurs in the subconscious. He links repetition to contemplation and habit, referring to it as a passive synthesis that occurs in our imagination. He uses the term ‘passive synthesis’ in reference to our comprehension of repetition occurring in the imagination. It is through passive synthesis that a ‘contraction’ of instances and the anticipation of future ones occur. According to Deleuze, contraction refers to the ‘fusion of successive tick-tocks in a contemplative soul. [...] Passive synthesis constitutes our habits of living, our expectations that ‘it’ will continue, that one of the two elements will appear after the other, thereby assuring the perpetuation of our case’ (p74).

We hear music and replay the rhythm of its tune over and over in our mind. We look at a pattern and can anticipate how it will continue. We develop rhythms in our day and in our work. Repetitive tasks can become automatic; we do them without consciously thinking about them. Such repetition can provide order and stability, or it can be controlling, monotonous and oppressive.

Deleuze sees habit stemming from contemplation. Through repetition unconscious acts can leak through, to have active implications in our everyday life. On the other hand, Gombrich sees habit stemming from another origin, actively formed to instill order, as is our preference for continuity over change. ‘Where everything is in flux nothing could ever be predicted, habit establishes a frame of reference against which we can plot the variety of experience’ (p171). These are two very different types of habits: one is contemplative subconscious and hard to kick, one is ordered and requires discipline to maintain. The former is like the chaos of ornament; the latter is like the regiment of grid in its active imposition of order. Agnes Martin’s work provides an example of a synthesis of the two – her grids are formed through a habit of order and discipline while each line is made as a contemplation allowing her to become lost in the process of making. Through this process another layer of pattern is evident, of flaws and inconsistencies, breaks in the line or ink pools marking distractions and pauses occurring within Martin’s making process.



figure 6. left: Rudolf Stingel, *plan B, Vanderbilt*, 2005, Grand Central Terminal, New York. right: Micheal Lin, *Palais de Tokoyo*, 20.10-20.08.2002.

In my practice I am drawn into repetitive-making processes as an outlet for such contemplation and daydreaming. *Forms in Space* (figure 5) came as an extension of the work I had done in the Pablos residency, in response to Agnes Martins use of the grid to capture humanness and as a means to work through the idea of difference inhabiting repetition. The process of printing and colouring of fabric became an indulgence in flaws and inconsistencies, a mindless play. The cutting up of foam and construction of boxes was similarly done with the intent to make evident a pattern of irregularity that nudged at the boundaries of the grid, to see how many inconsistencies they could contain before becoming something else. This work was like a sketch, an idea that looked to explore the potential of decorative pattern as an analogue of the order and disorder, contemplation and procrastination that is part of everyday life. There were endless possibilities for how it could be configured. The modular pieces provided a means to play an installation game. It had the potential to be an interactive work, but its materiality was not inviting, the foam coming from second-hand mattresses and holding the remnants of other people's wearing and living. This gave the work a repellent edge. The work demonstrated my initial ideas in an open-ended way, bringing to light the endless potential for how this project could unfold.

individuality vs the greater good

Rosalind Krauss (1999) draws the conclusion that the grid is schizophrenic. Her use of the term 'schizophrenia' does not suggest that artists who work with the grid are schizophrenic, nor is their work; rather she utilises medical terms of disease as an analogy to provide us with a means to think about the grid in a more complex way. She makes this comment when discussing its bivalent nature, in that it can be read as being both centripetal and centrifugal at the same time. Centripetal, as the grid operates from its outer limits inwards; it is contained, mapping the space inside the frame itself as something that is complete and internally organised. Centrifugal, as a given artwork can represent a fragment of an infinitely larger fabric, operating from the work outwards as we imagine it to continue out beyond the frame into the world. The grid has the ability to refer to two opposing things at the same time.

In *Paul Klee and the Decorative in Modern Art*, (2003) Jenny Anger makes a similar observation of ornament. She draws on the writing of Kant and Heidegger to form an argument that the decorative can vacillate between the thematizable and non thematizable, the world and the earth, form and matter, even though Kant said these were intransferable fields. She uses an example of a richly decorated carpet that forever switches between the two roles: it engages the eye with its beautiful design and fades into less attentive consciousness as one steps onto it in order to cross the room. Rudolf Stingel's installation *plan B, Vanderbilt, Grand Central Terminal, New York 2005* and Micheal Lin's installation *Palais de Tokoyo 20.10-20.08.2002* (figure 6), provide excellent examples of this through their installations of decorative pattern in public spaces. Viewers find themselves in the midst of an artwork while enroute to wherever their daily paths lead.



figure 7. clockwise from top left: Do Ho Suh, *Who Am We*, 1997-2000, detail, four colour offset wallpaper, twenty-five sheets, each 61x91.4cm. *Some/one*, 1998-2001, stainless-steel military dog tags, copper sheets, steel structure, dimensions variable. *Floor*, 1999-2000, installation view and detail, PVC figures, glass plates, phenolic sheets, polyurethane resin, forty parts 100x100cm.

This reveals that decorative pattern can speak in both conceptual and representational terms at the same time, binding the tangible and intangible, the conceptual and the everyday. While the grid in its perfection seeks to supercede the everyday, decorative pattern is embedded in the everyday. In light of Krauss' reading of the grid, passive aggressive is an appropriate term for decorative pattern in that it shares a similar polarity to schizophrenia, but as a form of behaviour it is more common within everyday life. Through entwining the order, control and infinite nature of the grid with a subject of representation, the conceptual structure of decorative pattern provides a means to speak of very particular relations to order in everyday life specific to a particular subject.

In *The Sense of Order*, Gombrich (1979) discusses what happens to a motif when it is repeated in a pattern. The underlying structure of decorative pattern (the grid) has the effect of normalising or standardising what it repeats. In doing so, the individual motif loses the meaning it has on its own (its individuality), becoming part of a larger body or system. Gombrich suggests that meaning is lost for the sake of order. At the same time another layer of meaning is added, which refers to the interrelationship between the individual and the multiple.

This is an inherent tension within decorative pattern that has been used by artists as a tool for social commentary. Pop Art made it a convention through utilising the depersonalising effects of multiplying media to making comment on the consumer culture of that time; perhaps the most famous example are Andy Warhol's works such as *Marilyn Monroe, 1962*. More recently Korean artist, Do Ho Suh, has drawn on the potential of decorative pattern to refer to the significance of the individual versus the greater good in Korean culture through his works such as, *Who Am We?, 1997-2000*, *Some/One, 1998-2001* and *Floor, 1997-2000* (figure 7).

As the first two titles indicate, Suh plays on the interrelationship of the individual/multiple. In *Who Am We?, 1997-2000*, he creates a wallpaper pattern made up of approximately 37000 reduced school photographs cut from student yearbooks. From afar the faces are indecipherable, looking like a wallpaper of dots. Up close they become clearer, but the children in uniform are uniform, they are all too alike to be distinct. The work evokes the question of individual identity; can the one be separated from the many? *Some/One, 1998-2001* is a traditional suit of armor made from thousands of military dog tags symbolising the sacrifice of many for the sake of the One. Individual identity is both mere detail and integral structure. *Floor 1997-2000* makes a similar play: thousands of human figures are cast in resin with their arms stretched above their heads to hold up glass panels that make up the floor of the gallery. The work alludes to both the heroic nature of the collective and the oppression of the working class. A photograph from a show of this work in New York in 2000 reveals the poignancy of the work as the viewer steps onto the floor, literally being held up by the hands of many. By just walking into the space, the viewer becomes both the dominant order and an individual supported by the collective group.

All of these works play with the pluralities of one and many, through their utilization of repetition and order they evoke multiple readings. The works seem to imply a collective thinking, presenting 'a people' that prides itself on its unity, with all its strength and stability. It suggests that the collective, family unit, social group or institution is of more importance than the individual, which in turn insinuates a repression of individuality. Suh's position on this is



not clear: are these works a celebration of cultural unity or an exposure of individual oppression? They allude to both things at the same time. This is in keeping with Suh's practice that speaks of his trans-cultural experience; he evokes traditional Korean values at the same time as drawing on a 'western' obsession with individuality. While assuming order in the work there is an obvious tension that seeks to undermine it. Suh seems to intentionally avoid the responsibility of a singular position; perhaps this is a rational ploy to avoid direct confrontation. Through compliance and subversion Suh's works provides an example of how decorative pattern can play in a passive aggressive way.

an island of precarious stability

So many women artists are using geometry of the grid primarily to blur its neat edges, to alter its meaning, to subtly screw with the kind of order that runs the world. The most convincing women's art I see, of any style, is very personal, and being very personal it finds a system of its own. (Lippard, 1995, p79)

Lucy Lippard articulates my interest in how the grid can be used to define our relation to order within everyday life. I became aware that to speak about its order in relation to human experience, I needed to be more specific. I looked to my own life to see where the grid revealed itself within the chaos of my everyday, as it does within ornament. As a mother of a one-year-old son, I mostly worked from home. In my attempts to find time to for my art practice, there seemed to be a constant movement at play in my ordering and disordering of time and space. I saw a grid of sorts reveal itself in my home; a constant cycle of laundry mounting up, to be washed and hung out, accumulating again to be folded and put away. In this chaos an infinite pattern of ordering and disordering was evident. It is a perpetual task, a cycle of repetition that punctuates our moving through time. While everyday life is not homogenous and there is not a singular 'norm' doing the laundry spans the particular and general through its universal necessity. It reveals the pared back intimacy of everyday life. It is primary in its necessity; when everything else stops, it continues.

Doing the washing reveals a rhythm of good and bad habits that govern my everyday life. I try to maintain an active habit of discipline through doing a load of washing in the morning to be folded in the evening. But every other day this might slip and the washing remains left on the floor, or washed in the machine but forgotten to be hung out. This is my tendency to leave things lying around; my unconscious habit of disregard. When I am busy or distracted it is always the habit of discipline that is dropped, the habit of disregard remains as my default setting. In washing I could see the interrelation of chaos and order that Soullou used to describe the relations between ornament and the grid; chaotic by nature, it taunts order to reveal or instil itself. Washing is like ornament in all states of being, from chaos through to order and back again. Like ornament, washing can be contained within a grid-like order. But left to its own accord, my washing runs off in all directions.

opposite page: figure 8. Vanessa Crowe, *Washing Habits* 2007, pattern detail, digital compilation of pencil drawings, A1 size.



figure 9. Vanessa Crowe, *Washing Habits*, 2007, installation images, digital prints on A3 size paper, dimensions variable.

I see traits of passive aggressive behaviour in my relationship with doing the laundry, though it sometimes seems ambiguous whether it is me or the washing itself that demonstrates it: does it order me or do I order it? Surely there could be nothing less violent and threatening than my own clothes, but if ignored they persist in silently mounting up to a point of dysfunction and then passively comply with my ordering, while at the very same time undermining it. Comparing laundry to ornament it seems to literalise Soullou's suggestion that 'order can never ultimately establish itself because ornament works to undermine it' (2002, p93).

unproductive, uncultivated, degenerate and uncivilised

Passive aggressive behaviour can manifest as a result of some sort of emotional repression in the past, when the actuality of how one feels is masked to fit within the imposed order. When considering the nature of decorative pattern, modernism can be shown to have had a significant impact.

In modernism, just as woman was banished and yet not banished, so was ornament prohibited and yet constantly an issue. Manifesto after manifesto vilifies artistic ornament: from Pound's Imagist manifesto to Hemingway's writing on artistic honesty, from Adolf Loos to Le Corbusier in architecture, and in virtually every movement from Futurism to Dadaism to Surrealism.' (Steiner, 2001, p57)

At the same time ornament was being vilified, the grid established itself as an emblem of modernist ambition and ultimately becoming an immanent part of twentieth century art². The appearance and dominance of the grid in twentieth century art provides a significant development in our readings of decorative pattern, as does the repression of ornament in modernism. A shift in dominance suggests again the relation between ornament and the grid as being polarized but connected, like two sides of a coin.

From this point in its history, decorative pattern carries residual readings of being 'mere' decoration that is 'superfluous' and without meaning. Its nature is suspiciously pleasing to the eye, but such suspicion stems from manifestos such as Adolf Loos' (1908) *Ornament and Crime*, which deemed decoration to be unproductive, uncultivated, degenerate and uncivilised. Loos sought to remove ornament from surfaces as a means of clearing away superfluous messiness, in favour of cultivated simplicity and pared back sophistication. He believed that banishing ornament was key to establishing some sort of utopia; an ordered world without mess.

² '...the grid is an emblem of modernity by being just that: the form that is ubiquitous in the art of *our* century, while appearing nowhere, nowhere at all, in the art of the last one' (Krauss, 1999, p10).



Loos saw time spent adorning surfaces as a pointless waste of time and resources. Pointing to the apparent irrationality of ornament, he suggested that to pay a cobbler extra for a pair of shoes that are plain rather than ornamented with notches and holes is to rob the cobbler of all his pleasures. He further elaborates that to adorn surfaces is to satisfy an inner urge (an urge he declares to be criminal and degenerate). While his text has been seen as one of the cornerstones in modernist thinking, influencing developments in modernist art, it is interesting to note a contradiction. Loos suggests, this urge to adorn 'is the origin of fine art. It is the babble of painting.' (p 29). The suggestion that ornament both comes from an inner urge *and* is the origin of art, is perhaps key to understanding why, despite many modernist manifestos declaring the banishment of ornament in favour of the pure form, ornament was repressed, yet remained a significant source of inspiration for many modernist artists.

Jenny Anger (2004) suggests that ornament was in fact central, rather than peripheral, as a source of inspiration within modernism; she outlines this through a detailed study of Paul Klee's work, revealing contradictions to the then accepted premise that modernism was pure and absolutely independent of the decorative. Her study of Paul Klee and other artists' work reveals a pursuit to capture 'pure form'. Her careful documentation brings to light repeated instances where a decorative or ornamental source of inspiration for artists' work was suppressed.

However these artists found that the pure form in ornament which for all its promise is forever sullied by connotations of materiality, domesticity, femininity, decadence and excess. It is no wonder in retrospect that, to maintain their fiction of purity, many modernists fought hard to suppress their source. (Anger, 2004, p2).

The adjectives that Loos uses to describe ornament are what first made me see the potency in drawing a comparison between decorative pattern and everyday life in a contemporary context. *Unproductive, uncultivated, degenerate* and *uncivilised* could be similarly used to describe the messiness and chaos of everyday life, or at least one that struggles with order. They aptly describe the state of my mounting piles of laundry that lay in the wake of the juggling act that is my everyday life.

Through the intimate nature of the washing I see a connection to the 'inner urge' that Loos suggests is the origin of ornament and Judy Attfield's observations of textile objects. In *Change: The Ephemeral Materiality of Identity* Attfield (2000) suggests that textile objects, such as clothes and soft furnishings, are a particular type of material in two senses of the word – both material and cultural. '[T]extiles present a particularly apposite object type to illustrate how things mediate the interior mental world of the individual, the body and the exterior objective world beyond the self' (p123). Doing the washing seems an appropriate metaphor for the negotiation of the inner self with the outside world through the ongoing ordering of intimate belongings necessary for day-to-day living.



figure 11. Vanessa Crowe, *Washing Habits*, 2007, detail, digital prints on A3 paper.

the problem that has no name

'Doing the washing' became a means to work through the ideas that unfolded as I looked into the structure and nature of decorative pattern. It provided a tangible example of my relations to dis/order in everyday life and a source of inspiration in what lay in front of me. It came from a necessity of circumstance; in looking to my own life, I am following in a long tradition of women who have used domestic imagery to inspire their art practice. As Lucy Lippard (1995) suggests,

probably more than most artists, women make art to escape, overwhelm or transform daily realities. So it makes sense that these women artists who focus on domestic imagery often seem to be taking off from, rather than getting off on, the implications of floors and brooms and dirty laundry. They work with such imagery because it's there, because it's what they know best, because they can't escape it (p62).

In the 1960s Betty Friedan (1963) brought it to light: *'the problem that has no name'* (1963, p61). Without a name it was articulated, 'I feel somehow...incomplete', 'I feel as if I don't exist' (p61), or as a silent question: 'is this all?' (p59). This was the problem that faced housewives oppressed by their defined gender role. In a contemporary context, women are not so defined by gender roles, but the problem has not necessarily been solved. Without a name, it has morphed; no longer generic, it has varying guises and one of these is a problem of choice.

In my domestic domain it is a juggling act, the precarious balancing act of living in and at the same time defining a domestic domain that attempts to avoid the pitfalls of traditional gender roles. In my decision to be both Masters candidate and Mother, I declared that I was not a housewife. A certain type of chaos seemed to erupt from this, which has become both central and peripheral to this project. While I am following a tradition of women who make work with a domestic and decorative theme, it is not exclusively a gendered question that I am answering; rather I draw on my particular experience to speak of a contemporary condition. While it is not necessarily a gendered method, I am looking at what lies in front of me and this is a domestic scene. As a mother working from home this is where my gender situates me at this point in time. Acknowledging this female domestic position is important as I discuss decorative pattern. Historically, ornament is linked to feminine, beauty, craft and the domestic, however these links are no longer inextricable, nor are they mutually exclusive of each other.

the path of least resistance

As a marker of my own habits of living, I began drawing piles of washing, to somehow to pin down or define this desire for order and control, or lack of it. I used Photoshop to layer and repeat these drawings to form a repeating pattern. I made a concerted effort to hiding the repeat structure; developing a pattern which looked chaotic, yet had many layers of order imposed upon it. The resulting image was as convoluted as the relations between order and chaos that I have found in everyday life. The process of seamlessly stitching together layers and layers of drawings to create a repeating pattern is similar to the repetitive stitching an elaborate piece of embroidery.

As a true reflection of everyday life in a contemporary context, I looked to employ materials and processes that are a reflection of our time. I began with the idea that the wallpaper lining the walls of our homes acts like a passive backdrop to our patterns of living, silently echoing its repetition. In wallpaper, motifs repeat over and over according to the structure of its scale (the pattern must repeat to fit within the width of the paper), mirroring ingrained patterns of behavior and imposed systems of order. Wallpaper is a familiar material that equates with everyday life, but in actuality it does not line the walls of homes in the same ubiquitous way as it has done in the past. Our papering of pattern in space is more inclined to be with posters on billboards, patterns forming through repetition of the same image plastered over and over. Digital printing is more commonplace than the screen printing techniques that previously dictated the production of pattern. To mirror our relations to order and repetition in a contemporary context, I employ both tradition and technology, drawing the well-familiar conventions of wallpaper while utilising the potential of current digital technology.

I adopted A3 paper as my media, as it is a standard digital print size. A pattern tile was made to repeat according to an A1 format (figure 8). Printed onto A3, four sheets joined together to form a template that repeated over and over. After printing I installed the washing pattern in a 'test space' with white walls that mimicked a conventional gallery space. The A3 format gave the pattern potential to move in both vertical and horizontal directions (as opposed to a conventional linear wallpaper format) the work flowed off the walls and onto the floors, over and around existing forms in the space. It was like a growth, its limits determined by the print run (120 sheets) and five hours of installation time. I started out paying careful attention to matching up the pattern, and then moving at speed, it fell into chaos on the floor (figure 9 & 10).

The installation, titled *Washing Habits*, was repeated a few months later as part of *Drawn* at the Blue Oyster Gallery in Dunedin (figure 13 & 14). As I could not make it to Dunedin at that time, this work was to be installed by the show's curator. This situation led me to consciously articulate the rationale for installing my work: the pattern should be allowed to take flight, moving in both horizontal and vertical directions, not bound by the usual constraints of the wall; it should flow to consume as much of the space as it can, while at the same time moving to accommodate forms in space and avoid points of function.

I saw allowing someone else to install my work as a way to see the effects of relinquishing some control within my practice. After visiting the gallery two months prior, I did a lot of planning to prepare how the work could consume its allocated space. Through experiments in my studio, I developed rules for how the pattern should cover forms in space, cutting vertical and horizontal lines into pages of pattern according to the dimensions of forms that it would consume (figure 13). In this case, it was to be situated on the wall outside the gallery. My intention for the work was for it to grow over the walls of the gallery's entrance, flowing over an outside window and onto the door and entrance floor, meaning the viewer would have to walk through and over the work to enter the gallery. The curator sent me detailed measurements of the window outside, from which I pre-cut the pattern so that it would accommodate the wooden framed panes and metal bars on the window. Using Photoshop I produced detailed images of how I envisioned the work being installed (figure 12).

I was interested in seeing how my system would be translated by another person. What became apparent was that the curator couldn't possibly attend to the detail of the work as I would. The system that I had articulated, an automatic function for me, became a consuming process for the curator. The work succeeded to cover the door and its frame, giving it a presence inside the gallery alongside the other artwork in the show. But its flowing onto the window and floor was abandoned as the curator did not have the time to follow through with my elaborate instructions. This whole process made me aware that this system was an articulation of my own particular way of making sense of things. What had become an automatic creative process for me looked like a complex mathematical equation when explained to someone else. It made me see that the systems I employ in my art practice evoke a similar negotiation between inner self and the outside world that Attfield (2000) discusses when referring to the mediating nature of cloth.



figure 12. Vanessa Crowe, Photoshop sketches suggesting how *Washing Habits* could cover space at Blue Oyster Gallery, 2007.

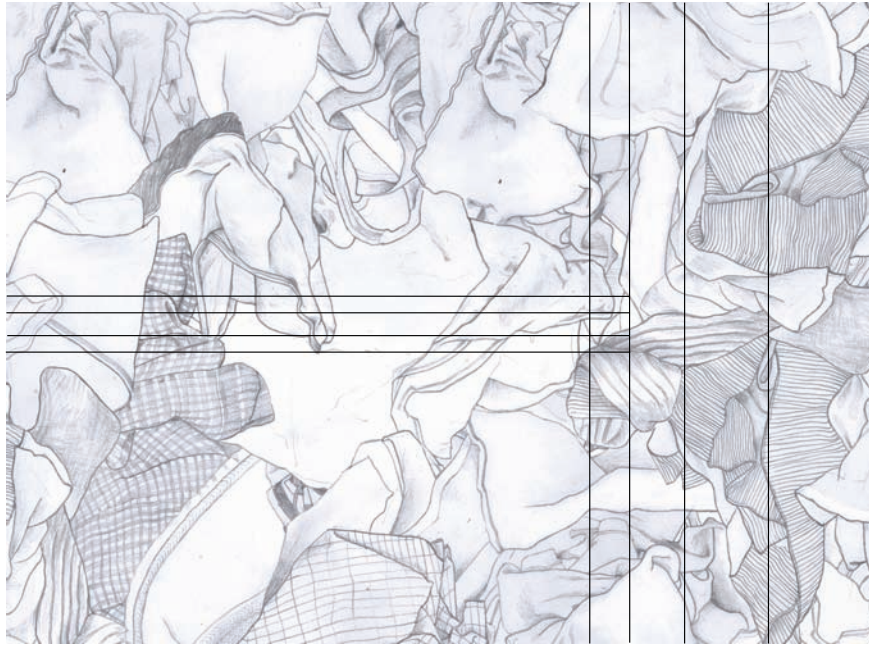


figure 13. Vanessa Crowe, images demonstrating how pattern is folded and cut along vertical and horizontal lines to accommodate forms in space, 2007.
 Page 28 & 29: figures 14 & 15. Vanessa Crowe, *Washing Habits*, Blue Oyster Gallery, 2007, digital print on A3 paper, interior & exterior views, dimensions variable.

DRAWN

Tony Bond
Michele Beevors
Vanessa Crowe
Adrian Hall
Jonathan Otley
Mark-Antony Smith
Curated by Emily Pauling







figure 16. Cadets clothing on display in living quarters at US Air Force Academy, Colorado. Sanders (1996).

appearance and duplicity

With the intimacy of cloth in mind, it is interesting to return to the origin of the term ‘passive aggressive’ as a US military reference to a reluctant compliance to orders. In *Stud: Architectures of Masculinity*, (1996) John Lindell and Joel Sanders provide an example of a connection between military order and the grid in their discussion of a modernist building designed by Skidmore, Owings and Merrill Architects as cadet quarters for the US Air Academy in Colorado. Here the grid acts as an architectural manifestation of the order and control of the military; it is a literal example of the human subject living according to the rigidity of the grid. Images of the building reveal clean lines, immaculate surfaces and a paved grid in the courtyard which ensure bodies march in straight lines and turn at precise right angles. In the cadets’ rooms, drawers, cabinets and closets function to display military uniform; underwear, socks and shirts are carefully folded around cardboard to display logos and insignias (as well as the regiment, hierarchy and control that such insignias symbolise).

But as Lindell and Sanders reveal, the clothes that the cadets actually wear are stored in cardboard boxes out of sight and are ‘tacitly’ overlooked during inspections, according to the unspoken rule of ‘appearance and duplicity’ (p76). It brings to light that even under the most extreme conditions of order and control, the mess of everyday life is not eliminated, but hidden away and overlooked to assume order and control on the surface. Despite (or because of) the quest for pure functionality, the clothes on display have become ‘ornamental’, as their usual function has been subverted for the sake of order. They become part of a façade of order, signifying the function and nature of the institution while simultaneously masking anything that might contradict this.

This hiding away of the clothes that the cadets actually wear could be symbolic of the repression of individuality imposed by military order. It subsequently seems an apt metaphor for the repression of ornament in the modernist era. Jenny Anger’s argument that ornament is integral to modernism could be symbolised by the cadets clothes, which while hidden, are in fact integral to the maintenance of military order.



figure 17. Vanessa Crowe, *An Island of Precarious Stability*, 2007, installation view and detail, artist's family's clothes, dimensions variable.

My domestic space is in stark contrast to the rigid order of the military institution. Surfaces are seldom clean, clear and static; rather they are the site of constant oscillation between order and disorder, requiring constant attention if appearances are to be maintained, holding both utopian and dystopian potential. Washing is like ornament taking flight. Never stationary, it is like a tide of chaos that sweeps in and out of my house, adorning my floors, piling up in corners of the bedroom, bathroom and kitchen waiting to be washed; and then in the lounge, now clean and crisp brought in from the line and waiting to be folded.

Washing reveals both my desire and disregard for order. I procrastinate about doing it and through doing it. The potential of washing being contained and completed is like the potential to suspend or supersede the everyday, like the perfection of the grid. This is a potential that holds some allure. When paying the washing some attention after having ignored it for too long, I switch into pedantic mode: hand washing and whitening, separating wools and silks, sorting piles of whites and particular colours, with enough clothes to do a red and pink load, a green load, a black and blue load. Eco-friendly detergents and cloth nappies reveal a defined set of values that I find myself indulging in when focusing on this task. While being a chore, this act can be immensely satisfying; in the washing, hanging out and folding I can become lost in thought and day-dream. Through making it a subject of study my relationship with washing has become particularly convoluted. I disregard it to a point of threatening dysfunction in our lives because of my research, or I become immersed in it as a mode of procrastination in itself, avoiding study, under the guise of conducting research.

In one of my artworks, I flirted with the possibility of achieving the perfection of the grid. I gathered all of my family's clothes, washed and pristinely folded them, ready to be installed in a gallery space. In the time leading up to this installation, it felt like I had indeed achieved absolute order, as my cupboards became filled with perfectly folded washing. My folding became obsessive, as I discovered techniques to fold perfect squares, ordering piles according to colour and pattern. But with all its promise of concurring in my ongoing battle with washing and folding clothes, it failed *grandly* when installed in the gallery³. It was critiqued as being too contained and proved the futility of an attempt to make a literal transference from the domestic space to the gallery. The installation was in itself a point of suspension, or pause, that gave me perspective on what I was attempting to master in this project. In many ways, its failure felt like a victory for my practice, in that the merit of my usual imperfect systems that I had been developing became more apparent. It reminded me that my research was not about polarising order and chaos, but an ongoing oscillation; a rhythm of shattering and shoring up.

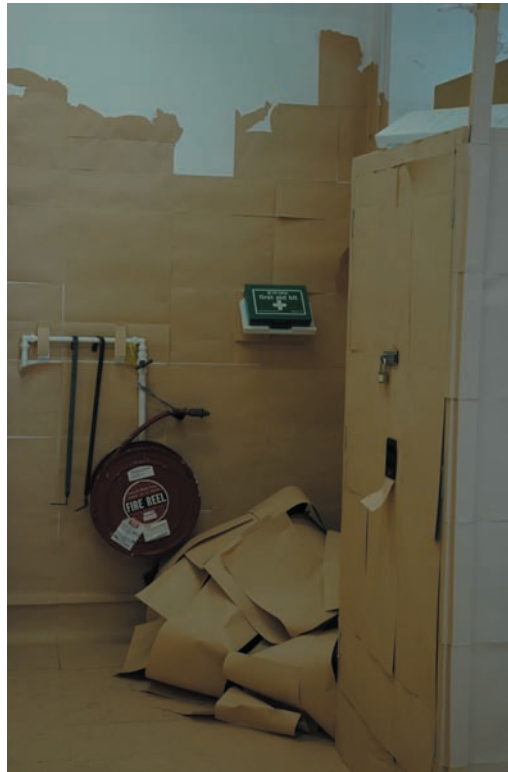
3. A comment made by Professor Jeremy Diggle as a critique of this work.





figure 18. Vanessa Crowe, *An Island of Precarious Stability: Repeating Patterns*, 2007, digital photograph collage, dimensions variable.





page 36 & 38: figures 19 & 21. Vanessa Crowe, *Beige Space*, 2007, installation view, A3 sheets of beige paper, double-sided tape, dimensions variable.
 above: figure 20. Vanessa Crowe, *Beige Space*, 2007, detail, A3 sheets of beige paper, double sided tape, dimensions variable.



the function of a façade

Façade : fronting a building, outward appearance.

: appearance, exterior, face, front, frontage, guise, mask, presence, semblance, show, veneer⁴.

In modernism ornament was considered a mere façade, superfluous to the structure to which it clings. When considering the nature and function of a façade, it is far from being merely superfluous. It has multiple functions and interpretations. As an ‘outward appearance’, a façade can act to signify the nature and function of the structure it clings to, revealing itself to be integral and necessary. Alternately, the term also evokes an expectation that things are not as they seem, pointing to its potential to mask, guise and subvert. It carries a dual meaning as an outward appearance it can refer to human behaviour as well as an architectural structure. In this way, it provides another link for thinking about decorative pattern as passive aggressive: a pattern may have the appearance of busyness and order but when this is observed closely, it does not move toward a point of conclusion, but turns in on itself as a pattern of pointless procrastination.

In another work, I looked to refine my system and draw together the similar passive aggressive traits that I had found in decorative pattern and in doing the washing. Over a five-week period I papered the entrance of the Masters Studio space with two reams of A3 beige/flesh-coloured paper. Beige-coloured paper was chosen because of its homogeneous and banal quality; an artificial and generic tone for skin or flesh. Like a persistent and engrained pattern of behaviour, a pattern of inconsistency and contradiction revealed itself through my system of installation. In parts, pages seamlessly lined up in careful attempt to maintain precision and order. This then slipped into areas of crudely taped-down pages, revealing gaps of various sizes resulting from a flippant and fast covering of surfaces. A play between both Gombrich and Deleuze type habits was evident, of dreamy contemplation and disciplined ordering. According to my system, the papering could move outward in any direction, opening up the potential for endless active procrastination. The installation system resisted the responsibility of working towards a finite point of resolution; its end point was only bound by a decision to stop.

In its consumption of space, the paper began to cover over material and forms from other people’s projects and also met with points of necessity and function (first aid box, fire hose, lighting fixtures etc). Referring back to the relationship that decorative pattern has with order, as suggested by Soulillou (2002) I used *taking the path of least resistance* as a rule for my installation. As a rational ploy to avoid confrontation (from my peers who shared the space and anyone interested in health and safety issues), I covered over what could be covered, passively accommodating objects of function and bringing to light the order and controls that exist within the space. Covering over other people’s materials temporally shifted their meaning as they became part of my system of order. This offered another take on Gombrich’s suggestion that in pattern meaning is lost for the sake of order.

4. from Combined Dictionary and Thesaurus (1999). Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishing.



Figure 22. Vanessa Crowe, *At Home: Bedroom*, 2007, digital photograph collage, dimensions variable.

The materials shifted between being matter and form. In covering a pile of branches that were being stored in the space the 'stickness' of the stick was revealed ⁵, or as Deleuze would suggest its *haecceity* or *thisness*⁶. The papering of the space formed a temporary façade that covered over the underlying chaos, imposing an order of its own. In allowing the papering to flow onto the floor, I was interested in making a work to be walked on, that would wear, mark, grow and disorder over time. The viewer had no choice but to be in the work as they walked into the space, passively undoing its order.

a calm and stable pace

In keeping with Krauss' definition of the grid as schizophrenic, in this project I found myself employing the grid in both centrifugal and centripetal ways. I extended on the centrifugal idea through a system of papering space, according to a structure that continues out beyond the frame into the world, bound only by a decision to stop. As a parallel exploration, I adopted the grid in a centripetal fashion to make patterns of dis/order that are complete and internally organised. This comes as a photographic mapping of my domestic space.

To capture the oscillation between order and disorder that I saw as a pattern in my everyday life, I began photographing the floors and surfaces in each room of my house according to a loose grid that divided up the space into square metres. This was meant to capture the actuality of the pattern of my day-to-day living. It provided proof that washing really does invade every room of my house, pointing out the dysfunction of not having a laundry room, but instead having a washing machine in the kitchen. Photos were pieced together into a grid, deconstructing and reconstructing each room, revealing a domain that is a constant site of de/reconstruction.

My intention was to present the mess of my everyday life according to the relationship of ornament and the grid, revealing a site of oscillation and capturing the space at a position somewhere between order and disorder. These works presented my home at a point of becoming between order and disorder that is its usual state of being, in contrast to a static image of order (which is as it 'should' be for a public showing). In capturing my rooms in this state of becoming, it reveals the intimacy of the space: as it is when I am not aware, or least conscious of the state of my surroundings. It was like revealing what lies beneath the façade of order that I would present when expecting guests. It proved order to be in my domestic space as it is in ornament, 'like an island of precarious stability'. Through this process, I became more focused on the surface. I started to see the constant rhythms that were being played out on the surface, clothing falling, drifting coming to settle and being swept into corners like 'a lot of wallowing seaweeds in fullchase' (Perkins, 1993, p6).

5. the *stickness* of the stick was suggested in a critique by a visiting artist, Matt Hunt.

6. According to Wikipedia *Haecceity* is a term from medieval philosophy first coined by Duns Scotus which to the discrete qualities, properties or characteristics of a thing which make it a *particular* thing. *Haecceity* is a person or object's 'thisness'.



figure 23. Vanessa Crowe, *At Home: Kitchen*, 2007, digital photograph collage, dimensions variable.



figure 24. Vanessa Crowe, *At Home: Lounge*, 2007, digital photograph collage, dimensions variable.

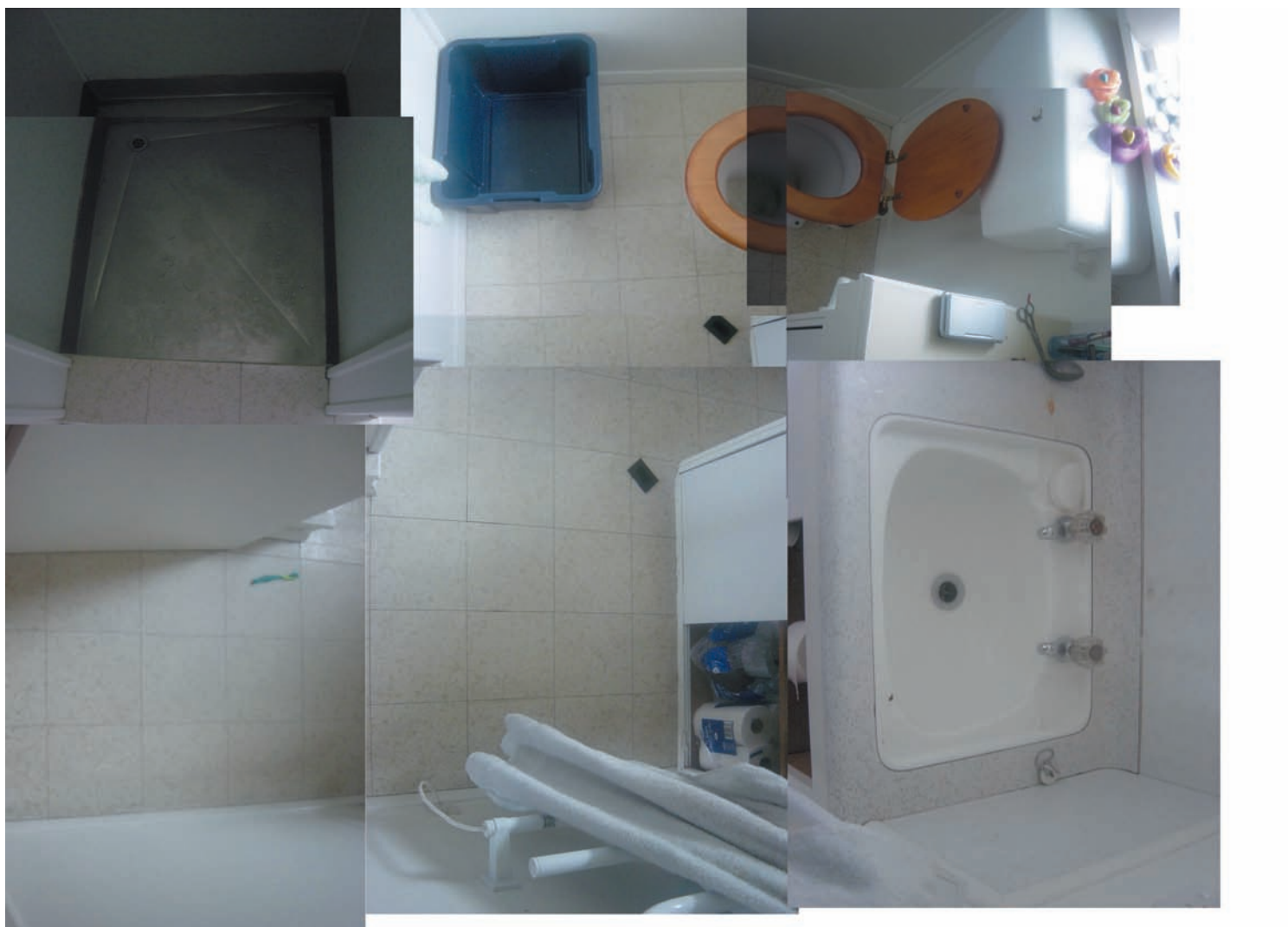


figure 25. Vanessa Crowe, *At Home: Bathroom*, 2007, digital photograph collage, dimensions variable.

[N]ow we are at home. But it doesn't pre-exist: It was necessary to draw a circle around that uncertain and fragile centre, to organise a limited space [...] The forces of chaos are kept outside as much as possible, and the interior space protects the germinal forces of a task to fulfil or a deed to do.

A child hums to summon the strength to do schoolwork she has to hand in. A housewife sings to herself, or listens to the radio as she marshals the antichaos forces of her work [...] a mistake in speed rhythm or harmony would be catastrophic because it would bring back the forces of chaos, destroying both creator and creation (Deleuze and Guattari 1987 p311).

In 'Of the Refrain', Deleuze and Guattari (1987) seem to best describe the nature of our contemporary domestic domain. Their likening of antichaos forces to a rhythmic hum suggests a movement between order and chaos. What chaos and rhythm have in common is the in-between, a rhythm-chaos or *chaosmos*.

Between the two, at the boundaries, an oscillation constant is established: an active rhythm, a passive endured rhythm, a witness of rhythm (p320).

Sometimes chaos is an immense black hole in which one endeavours to fix a fragile point as a centre. Sometimes one organises around that point a calm and stable 'pace' (rather than a form): the black hole has become a home (p312).



figure 26. Vanessa Crowe, *At Home: Jacob's room*, 2007, digital photograph collage, dimensions variable.



figure 27. Vanessa Crowe, *At Home: Living Area*, 2007, digital photograph collage, dimensions variable.

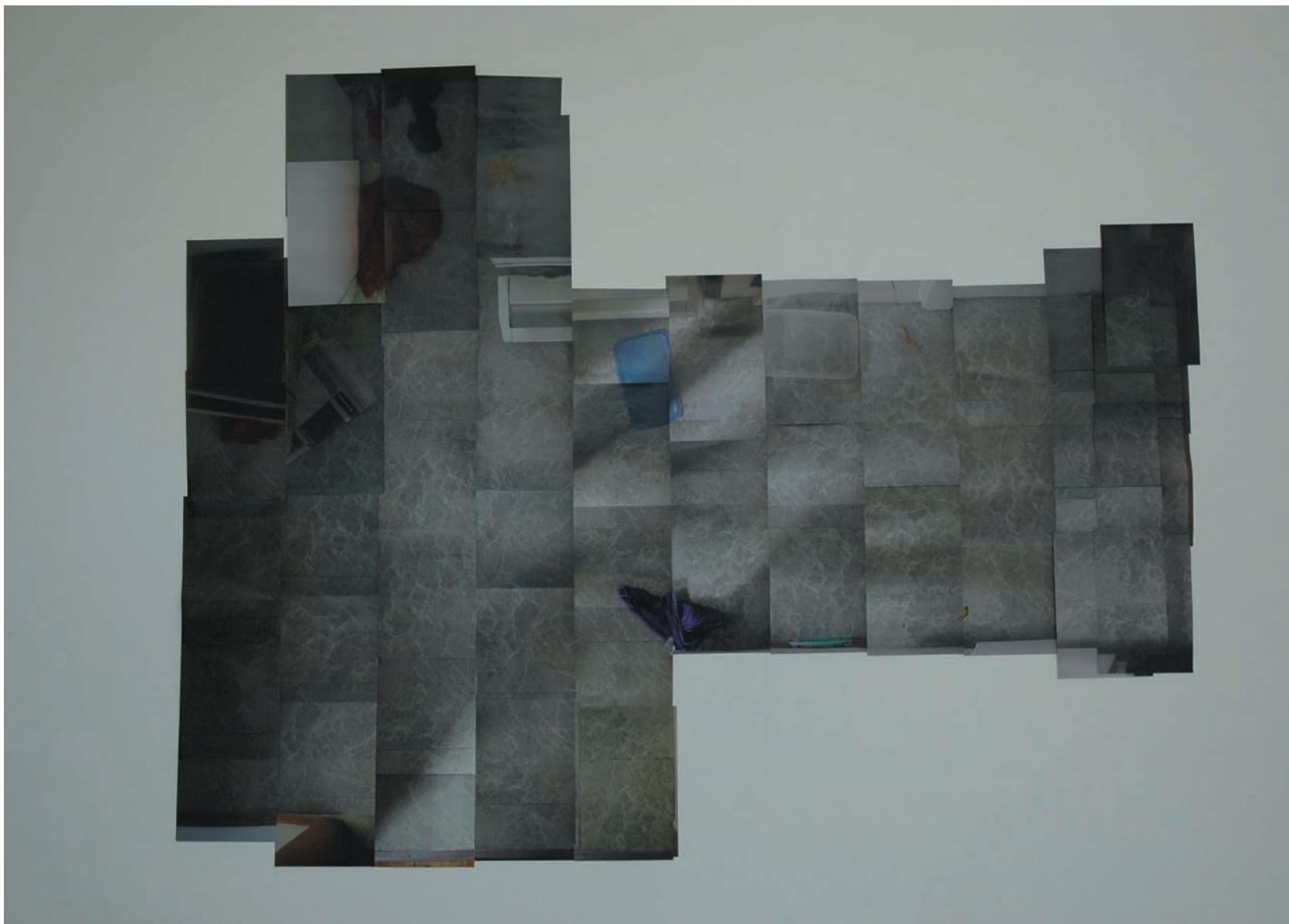


figure 28. Vanessa Crowe, *Kitchen Floor: 1:1 scale*, 2007, A3 digital prints, dimensions variable.

The photographing of my space was at first intended to capture the space when I am least aware, least conscious. The tension of dis/order is further reiterated through the piecing together of photos that don't quite match up through shifts in points of focus and scale as the space is flattened into a 2D image. The piecing together of the photos echoes the establishing of 'a calm and stable pace' fixed on a fragile and uncertain centre. The photographing of the space and arranging of subsequent photos imposed new layers of order onto the rooms. Again, this process of repetition and order had a similar rhythm to stitching embroidery. In this process, a pattern emerged through a repetition of inconsistency and flaw, in a similar way to the system I evolved to paper spaces.

My system evolved from an approximate dividing up of space to a more considered capturing of A3-sized portions of space with an SLR camera and tripod. With this evolution in process came a different focus of intent. The initial works were done to capture a state of dis/order, containing it centripetally within a grid, like ornament being contained within decorative pattern. The later photographing of A3-sized portions came with the intent to map the space at a 1:1 scale, to be installed within another space, as a means of bridging the centrifugal and centripetal functions of the grid.

I made a 1:1 scale map of my kitchen floor (figure 28). When printed out and reassembled, it revealed a set of issues that needed be resolved. Laid out on the floor, it did not engage with the space it was in, instead presenting itself as a space within a space. It was not clear whether the mapping of space or installation in space was driving the work. Printing out the work to scale did not suffice in moving it to function in a centrifugal way, as it was still confined by the parameters of the kitchen floor, rather than responding to the space in which it was installed within.

To allow the *Kitchen Floor* work to move past its static uncertain presentation on the floor, I cut into it, separating out the items that lay adorning the floor at the moment I chose to capture it, and the edges that confined the patterned tiles to the floor. On their own, the lino tiles had a watery soap-like pattern. When freed of the structures that had confined them, they were given liberty to grow and cover my studio space, having been disentangled from the original site in which they were captured. It formed a façade on the white walls and floors of my studio space, infecting it with domestic residue (figure 29 & 30). The tiles, now liberated from their functionality within the domestic abode, became a pattern that could move according to *a system of its own*, as I had developed through papering spaces. It took *the path of least resistance*, pooling in the corner, flowing up the walls and across the floors, over objects in the space that were again the discarded materials from other people's projects, their untapped potential as material for becoming art unleashed through being covered over. With its boundaries removed, the pattern of kitchen tiles could move in any direction, with no point of conclusion except for the confines of the space. The pattern became dependent on the space for order and containment; the reciprocal relationship between order and ornament was established in space.

page 50: figure 29. Vanessa Crowe, *Kitchen Floor: de/reconstructed*, 2007, installation view, A3 digital prints, dimensions variable.
page 51: figure 30. Vanessa Crowe, *Kitchen Floor: de/reconstructed*, 2007, detail, A3 digital prints, dimensions variable.







figure 31. Vanessa Crowe, *The Path of Least Resistance: Bathroom/2E05*, 2008, exterior view, digital prints on A3 paper, double-sided tape, dimensions variable.

a line of flight

My final installation involves a mapping of the patterns I have observed on the surfaces of my bathroom, captured at a 1:1 scale printed and transferred into the Masters study room. Through a series of de/reconstruction, the pattern is freed from the site of its capture, allowing it to move outward in everyday direction, along the floor, walls, doors and the discards of other people's art projects, to settle within the confines of its new inhabitancy. Being both contained and flowing outwards into the world, it functions both centrifugally and centripetally. This is reiterated through the viewer being required to walk into and onto the work, passively contributing to an undoing of order.

The pattern that repeats holds multiple layers of order and disorder being played out at the same time. It reveals a contradiction in its uncultivated messiness and desire for order. Demonstrating a passive aggressive attitude, it has the appearance of busyness and order whilst at the same time undermining order. It covers what it can cover, masking and disguising, where necessary revealing function so to avoid confrontation. Through its compliance, subversion and layers of contradiction it is an exposure of humanness, of what is intimate, personal and universal. It comes as a reflection of the actuality of patterns of dis/order that I see in the everyday.

The capturing of this pattern of *dis/order*, and its de/reconstruction as it comes to flow and inhabit another space, feels like the consequence of Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) taunt that has dwelled in the back of my mind: to wrench '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).

What has become clear to me is that when concepts are freed from the structures that confine them, new systems and structures quickly emerge to define and *reconfine* the concept that has taken flight. This process is required, for the flight to become a journey. My project has come to clearly define systems that make sense of my analogy that decorative pattern is passive aggressive. I allow decorative pattern to take flight, now with a clearly defined *path of least resistance* for it to follow.





opposite page: figure 34 and above: figure 35. Vanessa Crowe, *The Path of Least Resistance: Bathroom/2E05*, 2008, interior view, detail, digital prints on A3 paper, double-sided tape, dimensions variable.





opposite page: figure 36 and above: figure 37. Vanessa Crowe, *The Path of Least Resistance: Bathroom/2E05*, 2008, interior view, detail, digital prints on A3 paper, double-sided tape, dimensions variable.

Bibliography

- Attfield, J. (2000). *Change: The Ephemeral Materiality of Everyday Life*. Oxford: Berg.
- Anger, J. (2003). *Paul Klee and the Decorative in Modern Art*. Cambridge: University Press.
- Bachelard, G. (1969). *The Poetics of Space*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Bonami, F. (2007). *Rudolf Stingel*. Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art.
- Krauss R. E. and Bois, Y. A. (1997). *Formless, a User's Guide*. New York: Zone Books.
- Cixous, H. and Calle-Gruber, M. (1997). *Rootprints: Memory and Life Writing*. London: Routledge.
- Deleuze, G. (1994). *Difference and Repetition*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Deleuze, G and Guattari, F. (1987). *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Dexter, E. (2005). *Vitamin D: New Perspectives in Drawing*. New York: Phaidon Press Ltd.
- Fer, B. (2005). *The Infinite Line: Remaking Art After Modernism*. London: Yale University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1998). Of Other Spaces. In Mirzoeff, N. (Ed). *The Visual Culture Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Gleick, J. (1993). *Chaos Making a New Science*. London: William Heinmann Ltd.
- Gombrich E.H. (1979). *The Sense of Order*. London: Phaidon Press Limited.

- Haecceity. *From Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopaedia*. Retrieved on October 20 2007 from: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Haecceity>
- Heiser, J. (2006). Rudolf Stingel: Medium and Membrane. *Parkett* 77, 122-129.
- Hickney, D. (2004). *Sol Lewitt: Structures 1962-2003*. New York: PaceWildenstein.
- Highmore, B. (2001). *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge.
- Hoptman, L. (2002). *Drawing Now: Eight Propositions*. New York: Museum of Modern Art.
- Hoptman, L., Tatehata, A. and Kulterman, U. (2000). *Yayoi Kusama*. New York: Phaidon Press Inc.
- Kee, J. (2003). The Singular Pluralities of Do-Ho-Suh. *ART Asia Pacific* 34, 44-51.
- Kirby, K.M. (1996). *Indifferent Boundaries: Spatial Concepts of Human Subjectivity*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Krauss, R. E. (1999). *The Originality of the Avant Garde and Other Modernist Myths*. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Lippard, L. (1995). *The Pink Glass Swan*. New York: The New Press.
- Loos, A. (2002). Ornament and Crime 1908. In Ward, M and Miller, B. (Eds). *Crime and Ornament: The Arts and Popular Culture in the Shadow of Adolf Loos*. Toronto: YYY Books.
- Mukarovsky, J. (1977). On the Problem of Function in Architecture. In Burbank, J and Steiner, P. (eds). *Structure Sign and Function*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Passive Aggressive Behaviour. (2007). Wikipedia The Free Encyclopedia. Retrieved August 29 2007 from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Passive-aggressive_behavior

Perkins C. (1993). *The Yellow Wallpaper*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Reddaway, R. (2006). *Chaos/Appearance/Baroque*. Paper presented at the South Eastern Art College Conference, Nashville, USA.

Richard, F. (2003). Home in the World: The Art of Do-Ho Suh. *Art Forum*, 40. 114-118.

Sanders, J. (Ed). (1996). *Stud Architectures of Masculinity*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press.

Schmidt, P., Tietengerg, A. and Wollheim, R. (Eds). (2005). *Patterns in Design, Art and Architecture*. Boston: Birkhauser.

Scovell, E.J. (1988). *Collected Poems*. Manchester: Carcanet Press.

Soulillou, J. (2002). 'Ornament and Order', In Ward, M. and Miller, B. (Eds). *Crime and Ornament: The Arts and Popular Culture in the Shadow of Adolf Loos*. Toronto: YYZ Books.

Taylor, M. (2006). 'Architecture and Interior: A Roam of Ones Own', In Taylor M and Preston J (Eds). *INTIMUS Interior Design Theory Reader*. Chichester: John Wiley.

Townsend, C. (Ed). (2004). *The Art of Rachel Whiteread*. London: Thames and Hudson.

Wetzler, Z. (1993). *Living with the Passive-Aggressive Man*. New York: Fireside.

What is 'Passive Aggressive?' (2007). The Straight Dope.com. Retrieved August 29 2007 from:<http://www.straightdope.com/columns/030530.html>