

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.

A monochromatic blue-toned landscape painting. The scene depicts a wide body of water in the middle ground, reflecting the sky and the dark, silhouetted trees of a forest in the background. The foreground is dominated by dark, textured shapes that suggest a rocky or uneven shore. The overall mood is serene and contemplative, with a strong emphasis on light and shadow through the various shades of blue.

Tell it Again: Repetitions from the Archive

Antonia O'Mahony

2019

Tell it Again

Repetitions from the Archive

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the Master of Fine Arts
at Massey University, Wellington, New Zealand

Antonia O'Mahony

2019

Abstract

'Tell it Again' is a project focused on the process of piecing together a community narrative of the industrial/residential suburb of Moturoa, New Plymouth from archival material, both public and private.

I have used traditional hand-based printmaking processes because they are slow, contemplative and repetitive and I equate this with life itself as process. The seemingly ordinary repetitions in daily life that neverendingly come and go and appear to amount to little are represented here in the test proofs, the trials and errors along the way to the finished piece, of the etchings, woodcuts, monoprints and plate lithographs.

However, just as with the many small repetitions and labours of making an etching or woodcut, it is on reflection that the stories become the quiet background of community and place or the lovingly crafted print.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my supervisors Caroline and Lisa for your hours of support, live and virtual, while I untangled my thoughts into this work.

Thank you to the Puke Ariki Trust and to the staff at the Puke Ariki Museum Research Centre, Taranaki. Always helpful with my questions and much needed people contact to break the writing grind.

Thank you to Rebecca, Nina and Séimí for letting me stay at yours when in Wellington.

Thank you to long time Moturoa people my Dad and his friend Don.

And thank you and remembrance to my most special and loved Aunty Sandra for entrusting the family photos to me for their return to Taranaki, wherever you are now may there be many horses and dogs to love.

Contents

Introduction	9
Chapter one: Repetition as Narrative	11
Chapter two: Repetition to Avoid Change	22
Chapter three: Repetition leads to Change	28
Chapter four: Repetition as Anti-order	31
Chapter five: That Which Fell Away	43
Conclusion	54
Appendix 1: Glossary of printmaking terms	
Appendix 2: Interview transcript with Don Harris and Gary Vinsen	
List of Images	
References	

Introduction

In my first year of the MFA our cohort stayed at a retreat near a river that flowed through a gorge and out to the west coast. We had been told to bring our togs but as it happened the weather was not so good. More importantly though, there was a rahui on the river after two men had drowned at its mouth that week. One of those men was a person I had known in childhood. The contemplation of this and the reminder of my past reinforced ideas I had around uncovering, through the process of printmaking, what it means to watch the river flow past from a single point. In other words, how to tell a story that has no beginning or end. I started with my own story of daily rituals and where it fitted in this endless flow of the quotidian and life as process.

In the second year I got the opportunity to mine the archives of Puke Ariki Museum in Taranaki. My research has focused on the western New Plymouth suburb of Moturoa where my family lived for many generations. Moturoa is a suburb where industry butts up against the residential. Its unique characters and ramshackle structure led it to be nicknamed Tiger town. I wanted to uncover some of the subtleties of its uniqueness. The best place to uncover the nature of this hard working, hard living community I remembered was through its ordinariness. The repetition of its everyday that is both specific and universal.

A community flows on and it is only within its many little endings that it is possible to reflect on its story. It also flows on never endingly, appearing to change little as we observe from a fixed perspective in time. But this is not how it really is, the flow of time in a community is no more linear than the cyclical flow of a river. With each infinitely divisible moment change is afoot, imperceptibly, until there is another curve in the rivers path, another generation standing on its banks, another storm swelling its sides to run ruin over our attempts to control its presence. I have chosen to explore this perpetuation of the mundane through printmaking because hand-based mediums such as etching, lithography and woodcut, are heavily invested in time and process. Investigations into a subject are slowed to a pace that channel their centuries old history and the lineage of artists who have used the medium to express their ideas. It is alchemy, it is repetition, it is labour, it is contemplation on surprise revelations, and it is an instinctive pursuit to the heart of subject and process via the paper and plate. I have used its methodology to draw an analogy to the repetitions of daily life and to build a narrative of sorts that speaks of both the universal ordinary and that which is specific to this community.

One of the unique aspects of this medium is that it leaves evidence of its history, what are termed proofs in traditional printmaking, trials and errors along the way to the finished piece. It was these paper trail markers of process and time that I felt could best answer my research question:

Can the etching plates potential to reveal hidden information and the repetitive actions of printmaking be a metaphor for the everyday as process and the uncovering of subdued narratives within the quotidian?

In chapter one I discuss the sources I used, both public and private, for the retelling and building of narrative and how archives can facilitate nonlinear and multiple viewpoints in story. I examine trial proofs as a metaphor for historical trace and question the matrix's ability to be the definitive truth of the print and compare that with the archives inadequacy to be the definitive narrative.

Chapters two and three investigate repetition as a method to be used in the retelling of the archive via printmaking. In these chapters I discuss repetition as perseverative, to stave off change, and difference inherent in repetition which leads to change. I go on to speculate on repetition's potential to overcome dualisms of subject and object allowing fluidity between archive, artist and time.

Chapter four looks at how I applied this research to my project of archival reflection and the everyday repetition in the work 'Pecking Order' and the retelling and building of narrative in 'Tell it Again'. I also talk about apophenia with regards to repetition and order and how rejecting pattern seeking in favour of disorder could be a valid tool for reflecting the uncertainty of the archive.

Finally, chapter five talks of retrieving the lost stories, lost marks and the unclarity of memory and using the methodology of layering in print as a metaphor for time as process and uncertainty of meaning.

Chapter One: Repetition as Narrative

'Tell it Again' is the process of piecing together a community narrative from archival photos and documents and how that relates and runs parallel to the process of making the work. When artists work with traditional printmaking, their considerations of content and technical process are slow, contemplative and repetitive. These were the qualities I proposed to use when equating the crafting process to that of life as process, particularly the seemingly ordinary repetitions in daily life that neverendingly come and go and appear to amount to little but on reflection become the quiet background of community and place or the lovingly crafted print. Working from archives that referred to Moturoa, the suburb of New Plymouth that my family have lived in for many generations, to produce the visual and written work, I wanted to raise the story of the quotidian above that of commerce and industry.

Within Puke Ariki Museum I was to find many images of the industrial development of the area but not so many of the people themselves, the everyday of people at work, school, home or pub. Instead, these types of images were to be sourced from family albums and embellished by the stories I gathered when talking to and interviewing local people. The combining of these different sources was to form a ground for an installation which would display the private against the public. Juxtaposing commercial repetitions, such as trucks moving to and fro through residential streets and container ships that went in and out of the harbour perpetually, with the everyday routines of domestic daily lives, both of which had underpinned the Moturoa suburb for many generations. When comparing the public with the private, much of how these two aspects of culture are portrayed is through stories told and perpetuated by either viewpoint. A type of folklore in the making.

After Googling Tigertown, a colloquial name for Moturoa, I watched a YouTube video of a real estate salesman using the name as a selling point. As he told a quaint and incorrect history of the area it became apparent that the name that had described Moturoa's nature for years was now being drawn into the meta narrative, becoming meaningless and hollow in its use as a brand (fig. 1).

Roland Barthes writes in *Mythologies*, 'Popular proverbs foresee more than they assert, they remain the speech of a humanity which is making itself. Not one which is. Bourgeois aphorisms, on the other hand, belong to metalanguage; they are a second-order language which bears on objects already prepared.' (Barthes, 1973, p168)

As the salesman regales the wonders of this beautiful seaside suburb a local character wanders into the frame, maybe having come across the road from the Salty Dog pub. His demeanor is Tigertown, his clothing a working man's and as he advances into the foreground of the video his presence tells a different narrative of place than that of the salesman (fig 1).

As Barthes says, ".....the farmer does not speak *about* the weather, he 'acts it', he draws it into his labour' (Barthes, 1973, p168)

So too then, the old man does not speak *about* Tigertown, he acts it. Is this then his story to retell if he wants or is this a story that will repeatedly be rearranged to suit the perspective of those who may draw on its archives? This suburb's narrative is unlikely to be stable in its many retellings and just as with the river we can never know of its beginning and end from one point of view.



Figure 1; Still from real estate promotional video, 2018, Retrieved from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjtjiKONu8Y>

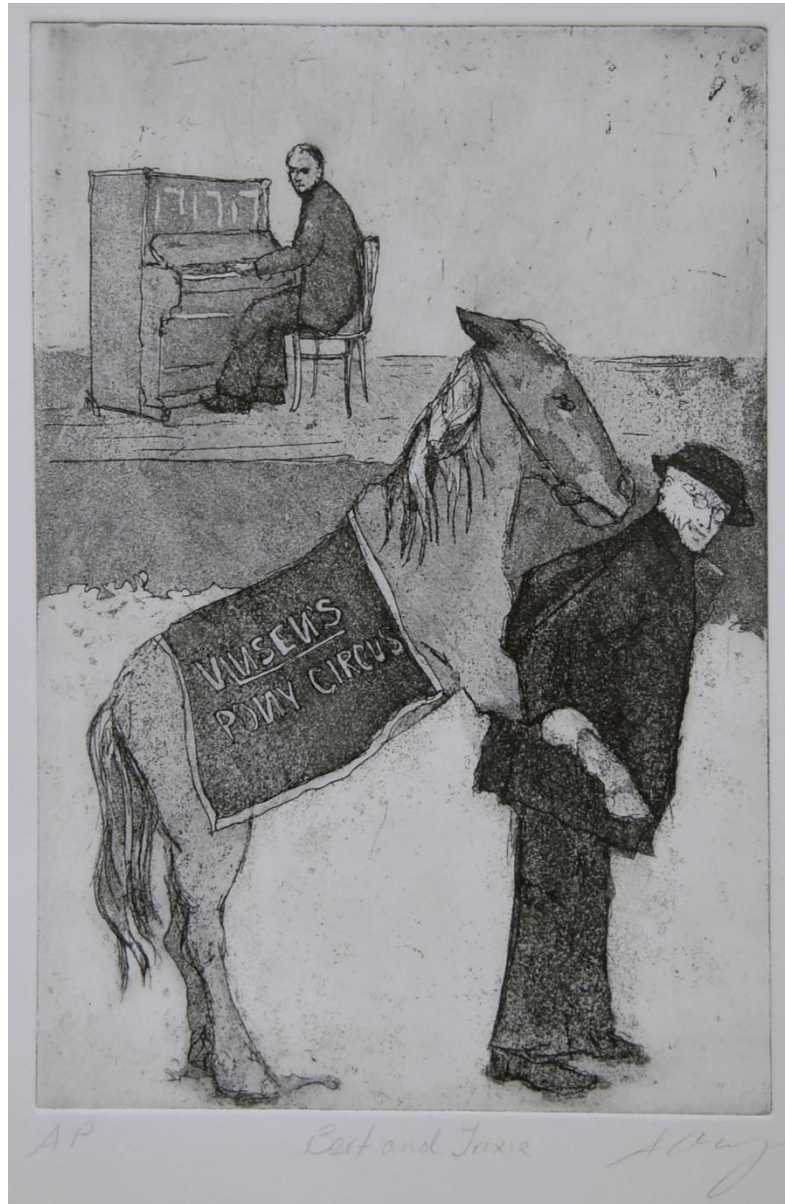


Figure 2; Antonia O'Mahony, *Bert and Trixie*, 20mm x 30mm, 2019



Figure 3; *Vinpepo's Circus*. C1940, author's photo



Figure 4; *Snow Vinsen and Taranaki Dance band*, c1945, Author's photo

What we have of the private narrative will often be held orally and in family folklore. When I decided on the focus of my project I started to look for ways into the research. My research would always be a reflection back and forth between imagery, both sourced and from my own drawing, archives and listening to and reading anecdotes, historical and present, from the community of Moturoa. I became very interested in the locally written book *Moturoa: a social history* by Don Harris. There were anecdotes about my father, my grandparents and even my great grandparents.

My Great Grandfather, Bert Vinsen, ran a pony circus at Ngamotu Beach in the days of the palladium. He was an entertainer, musician, ventriloquist and a man with a special affinity for horses. He was able to train them to count and fetch, to sit like a pet dog, to nod their heads yes and shake them for no. Once, unable to manage it, the big travelling circus gave him an unbreakable stallion named Commodore, he led him away as if it were a docile kitten.

During World War Two, Bert and Commodore would stand on the main street asking the horse if he thought a passerby was good for a bob or two, to which the once uncontrollable stallion would nod yes. Embarrassed or charmed the person would donate to Bert's WWII fundraising.

He died shortly before my birth, but he was made known to me many times over from family stories, from the sugar lumps, still in the cupboard, that he used to train the ponies and by the ginger headed, cigarette smoking ventriloquist dummy under the bed I slept in. Even to this day I hear memories from people who knew him, especially those that were among the many children who joined him every weekend at the Ngamotu palladium, cultivating a lifelong love of horses themselves. My image of this man feels so tangible, so true to who he was, but really it is built of all these repetitions in the telling, and from these, I have made my own version of him.

The idea that narrative attaches itself to timelines seems to speak of an order that is determined and contained for our consumption through information about linear events and a filtering of reflections that suit our time. In the process of planning a new print, however, I have the freedom of imagination as I collapse the timeline of the images I have pulled from the museum files and from the pages of family albums. Contemplating them spread simultaneously on a table before me gives a vantage point from which I can analyze beginnings and endings in a singular moment. The table top surface alludes to other surfaces on which objects can be scattered and information can be received and imprinted with any degree of confusion or clarity of meaning. (Steinberg, 1995) In the making of the etching *Bert and Trixie*, the printing plate in its process of being made was not yet the print dependent on vertical orientation but rather still a mode of operational processes as it acted as an equally nonhierarchical repository for the nonlinear and freely associated musings on the archival images layed out on the table top. This is then how an etching as a collage of two historical family photos from different events at different times could become a speculative representation of the narrative that surrounded the family archive as a whole. On the flatbed plane of the table and the print matrix there is a levelling of narratives, objects, stories, times and places.

What then of the possibility that everyday narratives of the past could be perceived to run parallel to our present, to weave themselves in and out of the repetition of our lives? What if the voices from those stories guided us now, what if they were visible to us as we walked our streets? My father remembers

the old Kuia on the Breakwater road and when he told me his memory, it became an image in my mind. Now whenever I am in that place I see them, in my mind, as if they never stopped walking that road, as if they walk it over and over beside every generation that will walk it.

The sense of something other than what is visually reflected to us could be equated with Lacan's Mirror stage. With this he explains the process of seeing oneself from the outside and cutting off access to other selves. Once the child is shown its reflection in the mirror it begins to see its externalized self as others see it, therefore, cutting off access to all other selves. In turn they, also, begin to see an externalized version of others. (Leader & Groves, 1995) Could this tendency be extended as an analogy for the way we view our world in general, that is, prescribing our external interpretations to objects, stories and matter based only what is visible on the surface? When I pull an image from the archive I am trying to imagine that the story does not begin or end at the moment the camera clicked. That there may be other pictures within this one.

As I work to develop the matrix, printing proofs to assess and perfect it, I leave a paper trail that is the history of my process. Within the course of this project I have used these markers of time and process as an analogy to the paper trail of archival information. This trail of trial proofs is evidence of erasure and addition as I work from the sourced image and represent it from my perspective, just as I also do with my retelling of the stories I uncover. I found the repetitions and the differences inherent in working and proofing a plate had the potential to rupture the symbolic order of the original imagery. The constant returning to the plate to adjust and correct meaning and its representation, intensified by the prolonged process, disrupted the surface of the original image and gave space to reveal other readings. And like the stories I am told of my own past I can only ever put my own version of these revelations together.

Printmaking, at its most traditional, is the process of crafting a matrix from metal, wood or stone and from that hand printing a limited edition of works on paper. At the completion of this process the plate is destroyed, for example, by scarring the surface of an etched copper plate with the cross of an engraving tool. Some of the most creative and concentrated moments happen while making the plate which, on this journey, is never anything more than a byproduct of the intended prints. It is inescapable though that the matrix is a skillfully crafted object itself and a much more durable and immortal one than the resulting paper prints. Alan Loney writes of Australian printmaker Bruno Lettie's work as he resurrects his historic printing plates, 'The question whether the plate can be a work of art in itself without reference to any image that may have been pulled from it, is one of the major questions that has been occupying Bruno Lettie's mind and art in recent years' (State Library of Victoria, 2010).

It would seem the metal matrix that I make becomes the inerasable recorder of this mark and moment, with a permanence unlike its reflection on the paper print which will deteriorate and be lost. The heavily etched mark aligns itself with constraints of manmade time; the deadlines, the master's tasks, the ledgers. It is the document of the meta narrative that strives to keep order on the tendrils of vitality and the spontaneity of the organic mutations of day to day living culture. Are we to lose the marks that are not so heavily etched into the material world, moments passing unrecorded because at the time they seemed so ordinary and taxing in their repetitiveness? If this is so then the heavy mark of etched steel or cut wood matrices, and the light mark, such as those laid on a monoprint matrix or the resulting paper print, could stand as metaphors for stories preserved and stories lost.

The press in matrix to paper, the heat to melt the lard, a stitch to hold garment together, the artist reassembling the archive and moments to hold story together. All those listed actions could be the catalyst for excavating those spaces between consciousness, between the lines of poems where we insert our

own meaning when we read or view. Without these wordless spaces that invisibly contain the ephemeral, the mundane and the personal, the printed word could not exist. These spaces between contain no text but serve to hold up the words above them. Existing in those spaces are the things which fall off the official record, which rarely make it to the archive.

Breathing between binding,
To escape like air
And seep silently from edges of print
Till some never even knew you were there.

The matrix is the originator of the multiple, the truth of which we hope to spread via the repetition of the print but as Australian artist Mike Parr said of his repetitious portrait project (fig. 7), 'it is always a disappointing replica as we search for the essence of the original', (MCA Australia, 2016). Be it the marks, random or determined, on the copper plate or the being we were at the moment of our birth when the purity of sensation is our only language, the original will gather detritus with time and reiteration.

Just as it may be accepted that the matrix cannot always be completely true to itself, due to the multiplicity and differences of the impressions taken from it, perhaps it is also the case with the document in the archives, the record of the official truth. With every reworking and retelling, narratives will change with the interpreter's perspective, their association with the history and the times they live in. In the following chapters I discuss the embracing of change and the resistance to change and difference and how these concepts relate to repetition in the process of making prints and the consequent expression of narrative.

Journal notes: June '19, I have engraved roughly into the steel plate. With my scraper, burnisher dry point tool I work to break the surface, to dig down into the guts of the metal and expose what is beneath. Next to me as I work there is a freshly hunted blackbird on the sodden grass, the prey of pet cats.

I lay the steel flat and onto it pour the mordant. But the corrosive sludge is not contained by the resistant coating as I thought it would be. Rather it seeps beyond the area intended to contain, molecules breaking through the barriers, the porousness of an eggshell and the stillness of the acid biting the plate slow, soft and silent. The heavily etched mark in steel is the antithesis of the ephemeral marks that will be printed on paper.

I am building a relationship with this hardened steel matrix. It is one of force and permanence, our moments of harmony at this point are few and it is damage that cannot be undone, forever etched to be forever visible. However, as much as this humanmade

heavy mark postures itself as permanent, it is not comparable to greater markers of time. The lungs breathing, the pulse, the heart, the days and nights and the seasons. Its claim to permanence and truth is a charade, it is not the originator but, just as any other manmade system of record keeping, it is only the minutiae.

The dead blackbird that was killed a week ago is slipping into the ground next to me. Wet, soft, silently submitting to a mutation of dirt and flesh that is the world as process. Temporality and impermanence.

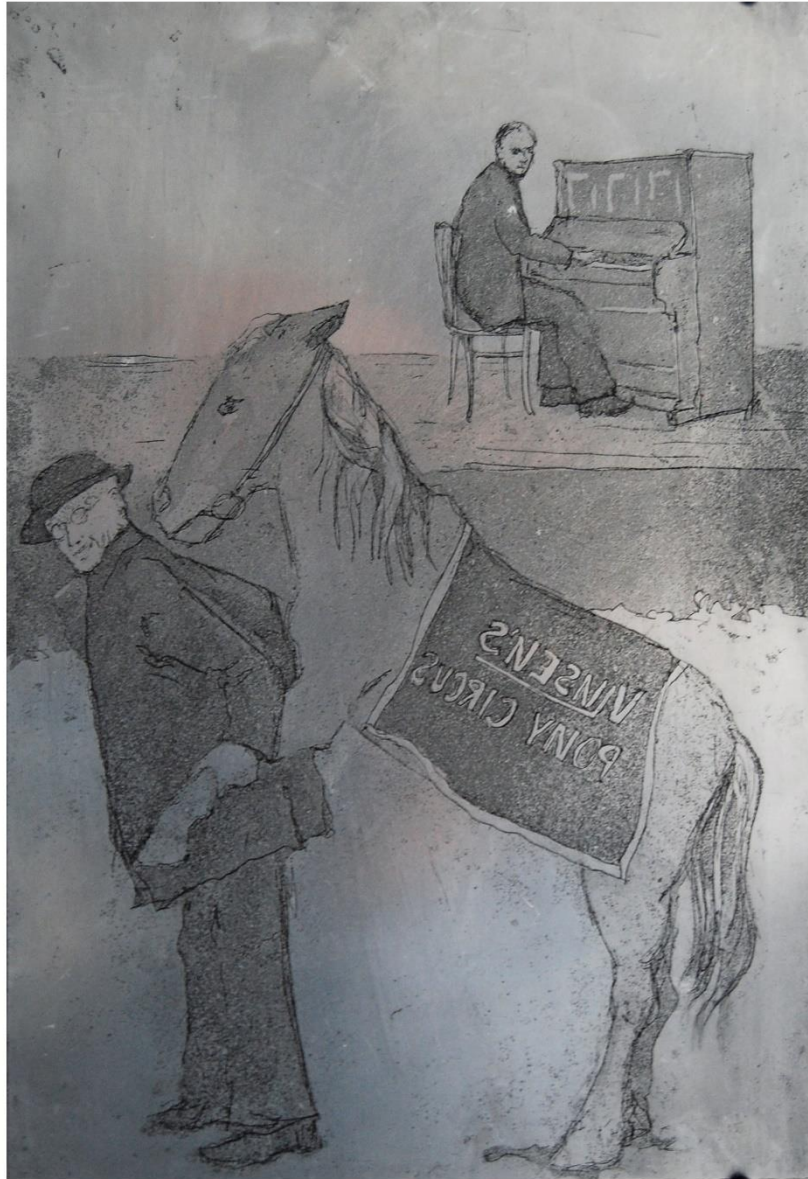


Figure 5; Print matrices made for this project, 2019



Figure 6; Print matrices made for this project, 2019

Chapter Two: Repetition to avoid Change

In search of stability there can be a focus on nostalgia and a longing to hold on to things the way they were. Security is sought in many ways, such as to repeat familiar actions and the ways in which we have always done things, hence, imagining we can stave off change. If we feel change is imminent or it happens suddenly there is an element of trauma and we strive to hang on to things as they are. Repetitive actions may become the fetish, the perpetuation of a moment we don't want to leave. This can be the perpetuation of an action indeterminately, attempting to avoid its end and imagining we can postpone its passing into story/history.

Perseveration is defined as 'the continuation of something (such as repetition of a word) usually to an exceptional degree or beyond a desired point' (Collins, 2019). If we were to apply perpetual repetition to making and crafting of an object, in this instance the repetitive labours of etching, woodcutting and printing, then that object would always be in its process and never completed. The copper or steel etching plate is an apt example of a crafted object which holds the possibility of performing endless repetitions, the plate is almost indestructible, and an edition can number in the hundreds, depending on the stamina of the printer. Many historical plates, such as those of Rembrandt and other masters, lie waiting in archival storage full of the potential to restart the repetition of a printer's making and consequently redistribute the image.

In a blog post written about the Rembrandt etchings held in Te Papa's collection Anna Rigg writes '*The New Hollstein* lists more than twice as many copies as previous catalogues, devoting two entire volumes to them. And yet three of Te Papa's eight copies after Rembrandt were unknown to the editors of the catalogue. As they state in their introduction: The research carried out for *The New Hollstein* volumes [...] has always focused mainly on Rembrandt's own work. During our visits to print rooms, we did not always have time to catalogue every copy after his etchings [...]. 'New copies' surfaced in almost every collection we visited, and we hope that the present catalogue will lead to the identification of many more.' (Rigg, 2016)

She extends the discussion to reflect on the differences in the subsequent states of Rembrandt's prints. In reference to the version held by them of '*A Blind Hurdy-Gurdy Player and a Family Receiving Alms*' she writes of the reworking of the plate by hands other than Rembrandts and how this inevitably leads to subtle differences with each repetition. What of those copper plates now? Do they wait in storage for future printers to create many more states, projecting their potential for unending repetition far into the future? The beautifully crafted copper plate, an archaic mode of reproduction, which resurfaces perpetually to satisfy a yearning for a past, so far gone, we only imagine its elegance and integrity and we reproduce it in a manner which affirms that story. I imagine that, as a printmaker, if I was to find, or be offered the loan of a Rembrandt matrix it would be irresistible to not set to work printing as many as I could from the original. But without Rembrandt by my side, or even the bon a tirer for the original edition, my reproductions would be susceptible to the difference rendered in my own interpretation.

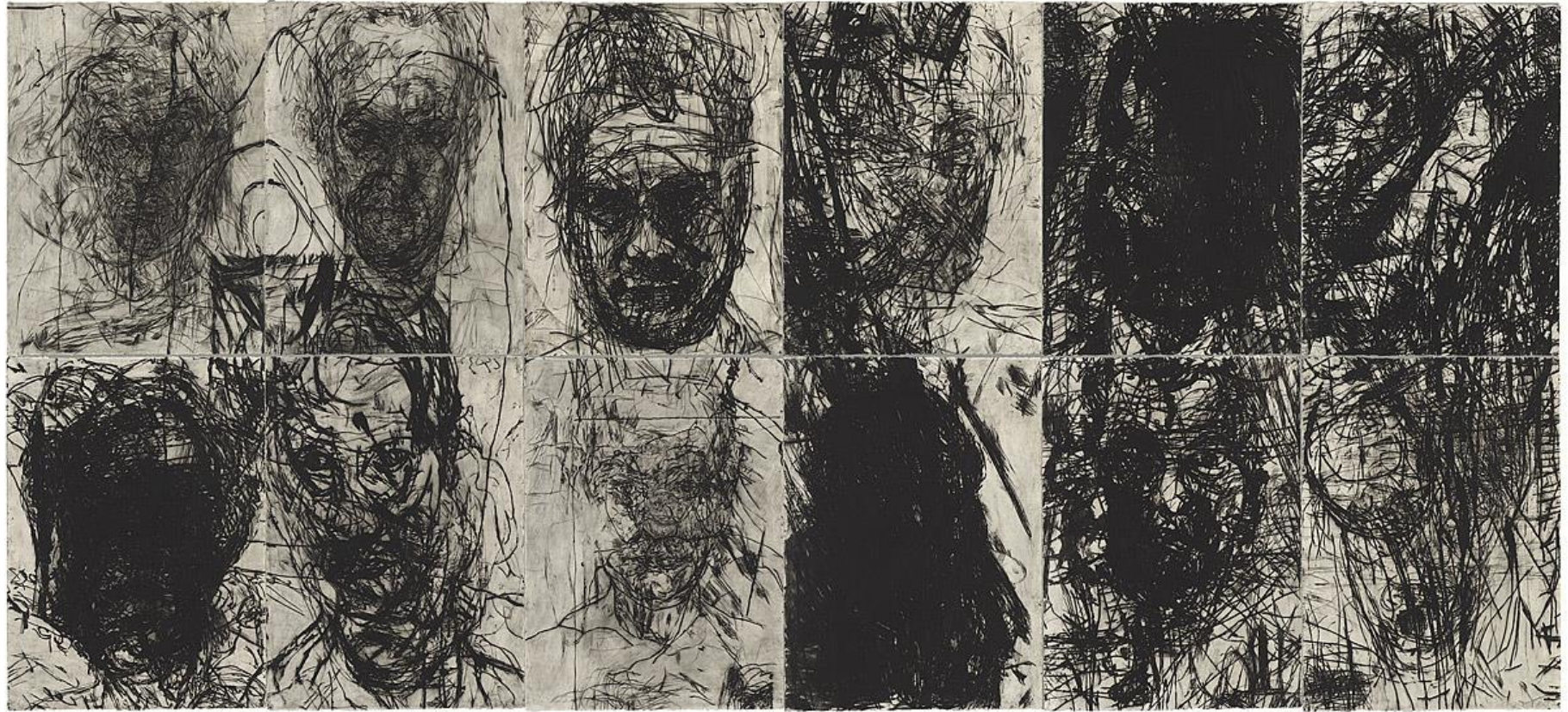


Figure 7; Parr, M. (1990), *Language and Chaos I*, [drypoint], Collection of the National Gallery of Australia, N.S.W.

In a perseverative search for the original the Australian performance artist and printmaker Mike Parr used the repetitive action of making daily self-portraits to explore the meaning of repeating the self as an unending, unlanguage entity. Of his 2006 exhibition *Volte Face*, Graham Coulter Smith writes, 'Parr has embarked upon a search for something which can never be found, a self which is inherently lost. Our Being, being in general, is lost - that's why we are so obsessed with finding it. The human irony is that we are strongly motivated by a quest for identity, but our very mode of seeking prevents us from ever finding it. We seek ourselves via self-representation, but the very act of re-presentation is the antithesis of that self-presence we hunger for. Each act of self-representation is a disappointment because it can only ever produce a trace, a burnt-out replica of that self-presence we desire' (Coulter-Smith, 1994, p.22).

Parr has made thousands of these self-representations over the decades, distorting and drawing every day on scraps of cardboard, etching plates and paper (fig. 7). It is a quest perhaps to remember oneself, the original before the Mirror stage. Performance artist, Anthony Howell interprets Deleuze's thoughts on repetition when he writes, 'Deleuze considers repetition to be the unconscious of representation. He speaks of 'an inverse relation between repetition and consciousness, repetition and remembering, repetition and recognition...' The less one remembers one's past, the more one repeats it. He goes on to say, 'In analysis, repetition identifies sublimation, or the transference of one's feelings about one object to another. Thus, it is associated with obsession' (Howell, 2000, p.30).

An activity that endlessly perpetuates can become obsessive. Laborious and mundane tasks that occupy so much time in the domestic realm for example can, if allowed, be disengaging from the wider world, becoming automatic in the hours spent performing them. Performed obsessively they may be used to deceive ourselves that things stay the same and to stave off the end, but with each scrub of the apron, each potato peeled, each walk to the hen house, each meal served there is a shifting and building of narrative. Things do change, however slowly, it is inevitable. An object like the matrix, with its permanence of mark and purpose of reproduction, can be perceived as an inherently stable surface, ideal for endless repetitions of sameness. However, it is in our anticipation and imagination that potential for difference is held. The changes in how we might reproduce it when proofing and editioning are already present in our perception of the object. A similar analogy could be applied to the representations we create of ourselves and the narratives we tell around that. Elizabeth Fortescue writes of Parrs' self-portraits, 'Parr's theory of self-portraiture -- or one of them -- is that incessant repetition does not produce sameness, it produces difference. So, a one-off self-portrait means nothing to Parr. "It's just a territory or a carapace or a convention, which is worthless in my view," he says. But repetition inadvertently produces the truth by throwing up subtle variations" (Fortescue, 2006, p.68)

In Parrs work his intent is not to be stuck in a repetition of sameness but rather to use repetition to uncover the almost imperceptible differences of his self from day to day. Action is a contraction of repetition's elements, between memory and projection lies difference and it is the contraction of these that constitute the reflective self (Deleuze, 1994). It is only in the imagination and contemplation of future and past self that repetition is possible. We act in accordance with what we know and with what we hope.

Perseveration perpetuates an act obsessively, paying attention to repetitions of process only, rather than the end object. Avoidance of reflection appears to hold off the ending and a trauma or unwanted change stays present failing to pass into language and stories to be told. Holding it instead in our bodies and not on our tongues, it can be a part of us we don't have to let go. In the many little everyday repetitions there is often security, a knowing that each day will play out the same and the things we hold precious or obsess about will still be there tomorrow. 'Endings seem to provoke ambiguous feelings: when things do not end we might think of them as incomplete. On the other hand, when things do end the ending may be experienced as difficult...' (Kartsaki, 2016, p.197)

However, it is the very repetition that is used to avoid change that acts as the catalyst for change. The perseverative act as repetition for repetition sake and its motive of delaying the end and committing the memory to story, ultimately fails because of the change that is inherent in time and repetition itself. Deleuze writes, 'perpetual synthesis refer back to organic synthesis', our bodies being constituted of nature's elements. At this organic level we are also the sum of our retentions and expectations (Deleuze, 1994, p.73). Perhaps then perseverative acts could overcome the dualism of subject and object if they were to fall into synch with base repetitions such as day and night, seasons and breathing. Easing ourselves into our histories with a cyclic understanding of time, in which endings and beginnings become inseparable and interconnected and rather than an archival image being a definitive story of one moment, or a printer striving for the same print from a matrix when editioning, perpetual repetition could open possibilities for infinite iterations. For a new interpretation to begin, another does not necessarily need to end, it could just keep remaking itself alongside its former self.

Printmaker Irena Keckes explains her 2013 exhibition, *Presence of Absence*, as being concerned with the amalgamation of mind and body while in the process of carving and printing her large-scale woodcuts (fig. 8). In her PhD thesis she talks about a practice based in repetition and bringing together of subject and object. Her writing considers both Western and Eastern concepts of repetition and of Deleuze's writing she says, 'repetition takes place in the imagination. It signifies a connection between one who performs an act of repetition and the repeated. Put differently, this is a relationship between subject and object' and 'Since repeated elements are not the same but different, repetition therefore contains difference within itself, that indicates that subject and object are, in effect, one entity, even when it occurs in a different time and space' (Keckes, 2015).

Could repetition with intent to amalgamate subject - the one that acts, with object - the one acted upon, be used in my reflections and retellings of the archival information I was gathering? It could allow me to build layers of story and print without regard for conventional retelling but more an acknowledgement that retelling produced difference because the maker and the made would always reflect each other.



Figure 8; Irena Keckes, 2013, *Presence of Absence*, woodcut. Reproduced with permission of the artist



Figure 9, *Samuel Beckett, 1981, still from Quad*

Chapter Three: Repetition leads to change

Quad, a short play by the Irish playwright Samuel Beckett which I first saw aired on mainstream television in New Zealand in 1981 (fig. 9), presents pattern and change in repetition as its shrouded figures, each in a different colour, monastically make their way around the stage in a pattern reminiscent of Celtic knotwork or decades on a rosary. The play, filmed from a slightly elevated angle, starts with the white figure entering the square at the bottom left corner, making their way up to the top left then diagonally to the bottom right etc. Once completed the yellow figure enters the scene and repeats the pattern while the white figure keeps tracing it from a new corner. The red figure enters then the blue, they are all on the quadrant and tracing the pattern from the corner to corner. Then on its last round the first figure, the white, has completed and leaves the stage from the bottom left. This pattern of exit then plays out until they are all off the stage.

This rhythm of repetition and calculated change in the scenario sees the mysterious faceless figures completing some form of ritualistic existential communion between space and being. The scene plays out in relation to the human compulsion to repeat our actions in an attempt to hold onto a moment and therefore delay its end, a compulsion that if followed to extremes can lead to the perseveration of certain actions when attempting to make sense of trauma and sudden change, or the need to revisit sites of nostalgia in an attempt to reclaim something meaningful but inexpressible in the present. Yet, at the same time this play illustrates that our desire towards progression and change is an underlying drive. Watching the colour coded players fall into and fall out of the scene with such order and rhythmic repetition is compulsive. This drive towards an end is a contradiction in our nature. We are unable to conceive of ourselves as history but we, nevertheless, are at our most hopeful when life is progressing and looking forward to its unfolding. It is also during the process of making a plate that I am most engaged, my interest sustained by the anticipation of what each new adjustment will reveal when inked and run through the printing press. I am in the moment but always looking towards a completion of the image.

The first two boxes pulled out of the museum archives for me to research were the Moturoa Country Women's Institute records. In one of these I discovered mentions of my Great Grandmother and a pattern that played itself out to an end in the attendance record. The following is my journal notes from that research:

Moturoa C.W.I./Little Nana

I spent the morning trawling the two boxes of the Moturoa CWI archives (fig. 10). In them were mainly minutes from meetings but one ledger I read thoroughly was the attendance record. Itself a timeline and document of the everyday goings on in the suburb of Moturoa. A record of some of the activities of the women and their social, musical, crafts, domestic arts and gardening circle. I followed the attendance book through the 70's from where I saw my great grandmother's regular attendance marked. Things from my childhood fell into place as I read the minutes detailing making of crochet bed socks, coat hanger covers, pom pom making and peggy squares to be made into blankets for crippled children. This was the lineage of those skills taught to me as a child.

Up till May 1978 her presence is marked with a tick in a square lined up with a date, her absence marked with an X. There are four months of X before someone, who it seems is a born record keeper but not one to remember a face, draws a line through her name and then next to it writes DEAD. My Nana has been absent for many years but never has a line been drawn between her time and mine. Her absence, not an erasure with a symbol that's meaning couldn't be mistaken for anything but 'the end', but rather a place where words and defining points don't exist. She continued her essence in my memory but more precisely in the mutable space of embodiment.

After her death the repetition of days continued to play out, biking to school, playing on the street, feeding the animals, everything but the new hollow space in my being, carried on unchanged and when the years became decades her living days still resonated through my life. But now with this word, efficiently written in the documents, there was no room left for ambiguity, and to paraphrase John Berger, I was the storyteller handed her file by death. (Berger, 2016) I was looking at history, a story that could be told because, now, it had been given an end and I could start to write about how things were done not how they are. All the while searching for the traces left behind in this community, the threads running through and regardless of the records and their keepers, those who preferred to tidy it up for plain and concise presentation, untied endings persisted.

My story and her story were woven through with a thread of intangible value counter to the norm of equating time with money. We had sat together for many hours, three generations apart, both of us at ends of our lives where we could dismiss the urgency of the timetable. My child self that didn't yet know what it was to be mortgaged to the hilt and she who came from a time simple enough to never necessitate being mortgaged to the hilt. I often walk home from school with my daughter on the main road that leads from Moturoa. She retells her day with the same dawdling pace of our walk, the trucks thundering back and forth from the port on the road beside us. Commerce dictates our landscape, but I am reluctant to let go of that thread from a time, my Great Grandmother having been born in the 1800's, when we could live by our own clocks.

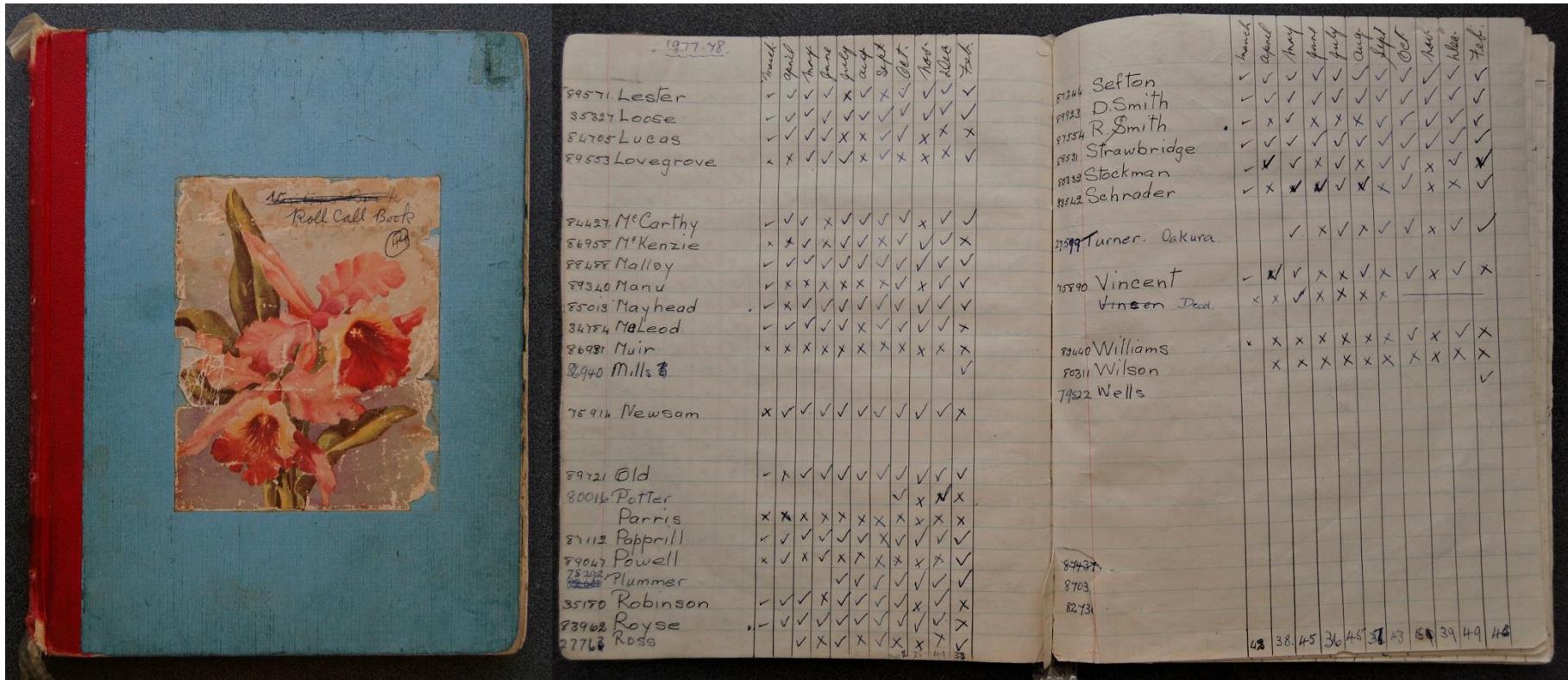


Figure 10; Moturoa Country Women's Institute roll call book, image: Puke Ariki Museum, Taranaki, Accession No. ACR 2002-950

Chapter Four: Repetition as Anti-order

After thinking about repetition to avoid change and repetition for difference, I could see that I might use these structures, when creating a visual reflection of the archive, as analogies of printmaking's methodologies. These chapters examine my practice in relation to this.

The series, *Pecking Order* (fig. 11 & 12), was an investigation into perseverative ideas of repetition. It consisted of monoprints created by the activity of hens during the everyday task of feeding. Paper was placed on an inked plastic sheet and the chicken's food scattered on it, the resulting print shows where they have impressed the ink onto the paper with their pecking and scratching. Each print in the series recorded the trace of that day's feeding with their mark making and when all the prints were brought together on the wall the impact of that recording seemed greater than if each day and its trace was viewed individually. I was attempting to create an analogy to utilitarian tasks we perform over and over without them seeming to accumulate into something bigger until we reflect on them. The elements important to this work were repetition, the everyday and trace as historical recording. Michel Maffesoli writes of the importance associated with the word banal in the mediaeval French term 'banal' baking day, 'It was a day of common bread, a day of quiet celebration when life was not owed to the powers that be. It is precisely these innocuous activities and daily rituals that constitute the eternal bedrock of 'being together'. We should remember that when nothing is important everything assumes importance, to speak of the importance of the everyday.' (Documents of Contemporary Art, 2008, p.77) The small banal rituals of the everyday are analogous to the ephemeral marks made on the monoprint matrix and the transfer of ink to the easily degradable material of paper.



Figure 11, *Pecking Order*, process photos, 2019



Figure 12; Antonia O'Mahony, *Pecking Order*, 6000mm x 900mm, 2019

Journal notes: May '19, Daily I head down to the garden to feed the chickens the scraps from our family meals. I try to filter out the chicken from our meals, so the cycle of waste is not so closed. Chickens, if allowed, will eat each other, for food and for dominance.

They scratch and peck, forage and reveal what is on the surface and what lies just below. When they find what they want in the ground the retrieval is determined by their pecking order, the weakest grabbing what they have found and running to safety from the boss who otherwise will bring the gang and peck the weak chicken around the head and body till it is driven from the site of the find and left to starve on the fringes.

When I drop the scraps for the chickens they all run to the pile, the hierarchy plays out in the most vicious way, to the point where a chook can sometimes become featherless. The frenzy calms as they settle into a repetitive pattern of pecking through the food, taking the pieces they have grabbed away from the group, returning and pecking through the food, grabbing what they want and retreating away over and over.

On the last few feeds I placed Fabriano etching paper on top of an inked mylar sheet. On that I have been placing the food. The frenzy, the feeding, the fighting, the pecking, the calm, the repetition is all recorded as a monoprint as they feed.

Chicken's live in the moment, their marks are light, their memories short, their stories told not by them but by us, the makers and documenters writing and making from our world view.

This routine has been part of my life, on and off, since I was a child. An activity illustrative of time and repetition in the everyday, many of us in this neighbourhood kept domestic hens and other small livestock and ruled less by regulations and fear of dirt than today's urban chicken keeper, our approach was organic by necessity and our concerns the practicalities of food production. Our animals fitted within the same daily structures as ourselves; sunup, sundown, organic waste in, product out. Nesting in recycled packing cases rather than expensive pens purchased from the pet shop, they ate food scraps rather than specialised sacks of commercial grain. This daily activity of feeding, collecting eggs and mucking out, maintained itself. It was a complete loop, everything that came from earth could return to earth. And if an animal was destined to return to earth, rather than purchasing pet insurance, there was an acceptance of that process. Chicken keeping had very little to do with outsourcing to the commercial world. It is an activity that is inseparable from the rhythms of nature, an accumulator of moments and a theatre of life as process. As the monoprint project progressed through the weeks I amassed a stack of recordings that reflected how the everyday collects itself into evidence of story and presence of object.

The motivation to repeat has some grounding in the need to find order, perhaps another defense against the unstableness of endings. This led me to examine my process for pattern seeking, during the making and in the reflection. At a workshop run by artist Nicolais Paris that I attended we looked at pattern seeking and how we could take an object and re purpose it via mathematical and geometric connections and transformations. I asked him about randomness with reference to chicken monoprinting and he said that if we look hard enough there will always be a pattern. I am not convinced of this. To me it somehow reiterates my thoughts on how we determine the narrative based on our own world view and our need to control the chaos of our world for our own comfort. A biologist told me about how he topographically maps correlations in species mutations over a geographical area and I wondered if it would be possible to imitate this method to measure chicken feeding patterns from the monoprints. Is it possible to find hidden information in pattern, or if not, can we conclude that not all things are patterned and quantifiable?

When the prints were installed together in chronological order, each matched with its inverted proof taken from the remaining ink on the mylar, they made a display harmonious in its iterations but in no way traceable as a definitive pattern. To the question of always finding order- I could mix and match to my will but it seemed evident that randomness is inherently contained within the quotidian and the artist, is powerless to always be able to quantify and control that perpetuation.

The need to put order on randomness is called Apophenia, a tendency to mistakenly perceive connections and meaning between unrelated things (Miriam-Webster, 2019). With this implied human tendency towards Apophenia it is perhaps hard to surrender to randomness and chaos. Within the making of chicken monoprints I set up the same technical parameters that ensure the best recording of this random information. Also, there is the unavoidable repetitions of the chicken's natural rhythms (sleep, feed, lay) but disorder may be present despite these precautionary controls. However, it may be valid to respond to perceived chaos with a certain confidence that a natural order underlies the perpetuation of the minutiae and the everyday. There may not be quantifiable patterns that can be charted and then adjusted to fit the needs of a commercial world but there are patterns that play out in the circadian rhythms of life itself unfolding and these are the patterns of nature, not ones that should be forced to fit a manmade structure. It is, instead, an order that exists not in a Cartesian separation of selves and what exists in the world outside our bodies, but rather in the order of nature's rhythm as keeper of time and narrative.

Jane Bennet writes of the vitality of matter and the extent to which our own bodies are inseparable from all other matter and how consequentially harming one part of the dense network of relations could only have repercussions for another (Bennet, 2010). This natural order that we are inseparable from, is a vitality that results from difference within repetition and a degree of acceptance of this unruliness could be a way of perceiving and responding to a world always in the process of becoming. As a methodology for the making of matrices it manifests in the readiness to draw on the many small differences that the process throws up over time and it equally can be applied as a strategy for finding meaning in the objects and images that the archive reveals with time.

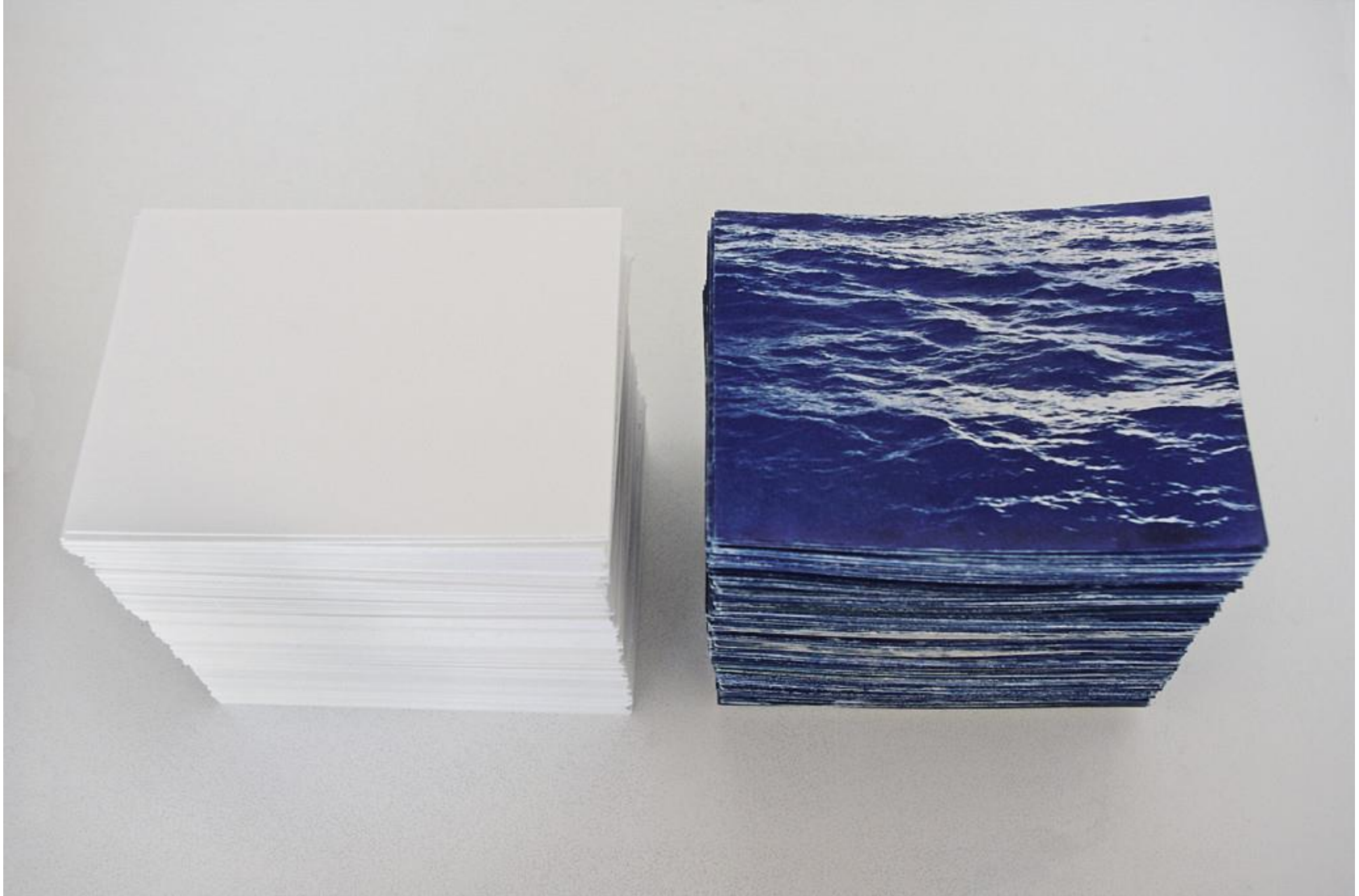


Figure 13; Rebecca Mayo, *645 Hands*, 2011, reproduced with artist's permission

Rebecca Mayo's work *645 Hands* (fig.13) was a dynamic installation that examined not only archival research but also the role of time, repetition and difference in history and process. This work commemorates the 645 lives lost in the sinking of HMAS Sydney and HSK Kormoran in WW2 off the coast of Western Australia. It consists of 645 postcard size cyanotype prints and an historic logbook of all the sailors. The piece was arranged as a stack of blank paper that diminished in size as the stack of prints next to it grew as each was printed. The images were sourced from photographs she had taken of the sea over the sunken ships' watery graves. Making these cyanotypes using the rhythms of the Western Australian days and its intense sunlight, tied the act of making into the circadian repetition and time of the elements. On her website it says that Rebecca is, 'particularly interested in how such repetitive processes might articulate or correspond with ways of thinking, being and acting.' Of this work itself she says, 'In focusing on the process and performance of print, the work seeks to engage with the ritual of grief and remembrance through the temporal and physical relationship among memory, making and place.' (Mayo, 2011)

In the associated work *645 Rubbings*, the artist and her father, in an act of ritual, repetition and remembrance walked the avenue of trees and plaques created for each of the lives lost and took rubbings of each plaque with graphite on baking paper. She noted how the physically demanding task of squatting repetitively in the hot sun to take so many imprints became a sort of 'commemorative ritual'. Like a penance or pilgrimage in which the body being pushed to its physical limits, distilling it to its most basic and essential rhythms of breath and movement, subject and object becoming one. This is the form of mindful perseverance that interests me in Irena Keckes' wood blocks or the burnishing and scraping of metal in my own practice.

For Rebecca and her father, it was also a ritual that drew attention to the minutiae at their feet during the slow and prolonged making of the work, the many tiny plants and animals on the ground. It was the everyday perpetuating next to the metanarrative of historical memorials. And it is on these minutiae that my own work is focused. These works are analogous with the everyday act in which we are making without fully realizing what we are making in the moments of creation. It is after an accumulation of the quotidian that we can reflect and select the best of what has become and create the narrative around that which in the moment was miniscule or perceived of lacking importance. The disappearing blank papers and the growing prints are an artistic metaphor for this. The liminal fades and the lucid becomes. The moments of the story begin to appear as told and the object begins to manifest in its making.

Anne Kirker talks of this investment of time towards the coaxing of the matrix into life as a print when she writes of Australian artist printmaker Bruno Letti's process and the moment the matrix, 'leaves the artists intimate handling and enters the press to become the resulting print. This then is the relationship that occurs between the artist and his mater. The necessary bonding and nurturing of an idea and sensation, the time and labour invested in scouring, attacking and coaxing the matrix to life, is perhaps, not dissimilar to raising a child to adulthood. For the matrix (or mater) is the source holding and guiding the ink to the point where it is transferred to paper and becomes the final artists statement: the print.' (State Library of Victoria, 2010).

I identify my own making with this, as she speaks of the accumulation of many small actions of care that coax the object and narrative into being, it is in the piecing together of those small moments and the subsequent reflection on the whole which creates the new narrative. Rebecca Mayo's project focuses on moments of process to create the work as well as being an investigation into history and a retelling of that archival information as a performative work.



Figure 14; Antonia O'Mahony, *Test Installation*, 5000mm x 1800mm variable, July 2019

Hal Foster writes in his essay *The Archival Impulse* "In the first instance archival artists seek to make historical information, often lost or displaced, physically present. To this end they elaborate on the found image, object and text, and favour the installation format as they do so. (Frequently they use its nonhierarchical spatiality to advantage...(Foster, 2004, p.144). The nonhierarchical structure in one of the test installations of my prints made as a result of reflecting on archival material (fig. 14), acts as an exploded image archive of repetitious juxtapositions intended to suggest untold narratives and the usefulness of the printmaking aesthetic of multiples in setting these up differently each time. These images could be rearranged over and over shifting those moments into an undefined and infinite narrative. A perpetuation of retelling in its sameness but with much difference manifesting in the new associations. Repeating prints in different orders sets up multiple readings of content, but not without confusion as the viewer's reading of meanings are disrupted by consequently viewing each similar but different grouping. Mutations and differences in the retelling of an archive and rearranging of the multiple as a methodology for revealing subdued narrative is in itself archival. Reproducing archival images produces new representation and new readings, thus bringing to attention the archive's nature as simultaneously public and private, fact and fiction. (Foster, 2004, p.145) The reinterpretation of the archive will, in turn produce further subjective reinterpretation.

Foster speaks of a 'quasi-archival logic' in the work of archival artists, who "are not concerned with critiques of representational totality and institutional integrity' and 'less with absolute origins than with obscure traces' so that when presenting the contents of the archive through visual means, the intention is often to remain indeterminant, allowing the work to act as prompts for future scenarios. This approach to archival art, though seeming to lack logic, is rather an exercise in questioning the public archive with the private archive. The archives are eternally open to new interpretation and forever incomplete. Artists approach them with an inquisitiveness towards the formal structures and methodologies of collecting, against which they question the modes of representation and attempt to produce new meaning and knowledge with their work. The questioning of the public archival narrative with the private histories of the artist and consequent viewer's interpretation is a constant fluctuation of meaning and a never-ending retelling with each resurrection of its contents (Stanthorpe, 1999). The archive as a definitive recorder of fact comes under scrutiny and just as a story book is read with our own sentiments, its meaning is in a constant state of flux. Beth Jackson in her essay *Wanderkammern: actual and virtual*, talks of Deleuze's observations of a rhizomic perpetuation of meaning (Jackson, 1999). His multifarious view of information streams is also relevant to the impossibility of fixing meaning when drawing on and retelling the archives which places multiple layers of time, place and people on the flatbed plane of the present where all is observed from one point on the continuum. To delve into the archive and attempt to retell it is to expose it to the 'dynamics of chance' not in simulation of its nature but, rather multiplying, complicating and releasing other forms and pathways.

As discussed in chapter one, the matrix is the flatbed plane and the prolonged process of its making sets up the time gaps to contemplate the information's possible undocumented connections. My considerations when researching archival images were not to represent an 'authoritative symbolic totality' but to make connections between the signifiers of this suburb and its history to those of the 'other' and inserting the ordinary into the meta narrative as a strategy to accentuate the importance of the private against the public. As I contemplate the anecdotal, the stories I am told and the ones I assume from my own connections to this landscape, against the institutional, archival documentation of the museum, I mutate the boundaries and I collapse its order. And

disrupting the surface of the public archive is, for me, analogous to disrupting the surface of the matrix via perpetual repetitions. *“perhaps all archives develop in this way, through mutations of connection and disconnection,”* (Enwezor, 2013)

The following chapter discusses the resurrection of the micro narrative via archives and printmaking and how the process of repeating images and rearranging those repeated images with difference sets up new associations and equity of mundane subjects, such as hands and people working, with those of land and commerce.

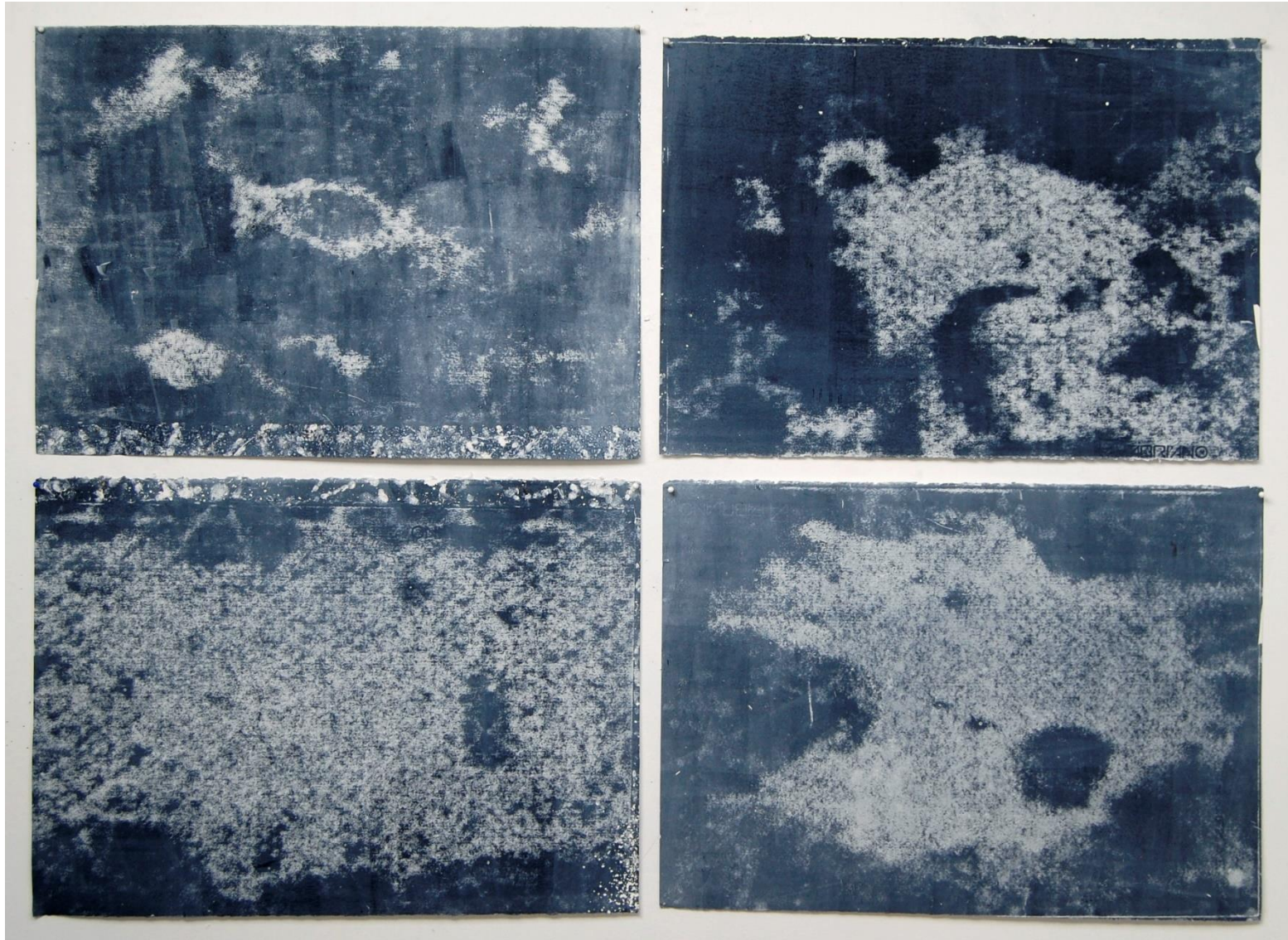


Figure 15; Antonia O'Mahony, *Pecking Order* (detail), individual prints 400mm x 220mm, 2019

Chapter Five: That which Fell Away

My journal for *Pecking Order* notes of retrieving lost information from the residue left on the matrix after the printing:

The paper is lifted with a result of a positive print of the hen's delicate mark making. What I find more pleasing though is to run the Mylar through the etching press and create a negative image. An area of white space surrounded by the ink left behind after their feet have printed off their activity. This white space is a blank, a record of what's not recorded during the making. An area in the narrative with the information missing.

The surrounding ink left on the plate after chicken feeding wasn't the intended recording of information but rather, what remained on the periphery after it. A residue to be washed away by the garden hose if I chose not to run it through the press as a monoprint (fig. 15). Some things may stay subdued, lost in the everyday of the past, but many can be excavated and reinstated into the visible world and community knowledge. Just as I may dig and burnish at the surface of my etching plate to reveal the marks I want, so too I can dig for the nearly lost stories and document them in art and writing. But that we might keep and memorialize everything in an infinitely manifesting world is surely an impossible task. In Pierre Nora's 1984 essay *Realms of Memory*, he writes of the overwhelming accumulation of information clogging archives as we attempt not to lose even the most banal stories. 'Now that historians have abandoned the cult of the document, society as a whole has acquired the religion of preservation and archaization. What we call memory is in fact a gigantic and breathtaking effort to store the material vestiges of what we cannot possibly remember, thereby amassing an unfathomable collection of things' (Nora, 1984, p.61).

Many things be they archived or present, objects or memories, will be forgotten. Most of the exactness and personal emotion of memories will fall away with our passing. Perhaps, though, there is another way of remembering that is more organic than striving to provide documented evidence of anything and everything? The lost may be retrievable in the most unexpected incidents within the banality of doing what we have always done generation after generation. I tell my children funny memories of my grandfather, but it is when something of that past manifests that they may truly comprehend them. My son, on finding the glasses that my grandfather lost forty years ago while digging the garden, may in this moment, emotionally connect the preserved object with the stories I recount of his great grandfather. There is rather, not total loss, but instead a layering within which circumstance, present at just the right time, can restore receded histories to the surface. The trueness of those lost layers not within the catalogued documents but rather in the depositing of dirt, upon dirt, upon dirt and the concurrent turning over of that soil. The soil that grew the food that grew us.



Figure 16; Antonia O'Mahony, *Dig*, 2019



Figure 17; William Kentridge, *Drawing from A History of the Main Complaint*, 1995-96, Collection of the Contemporary Museum Art, Chicago, gift of Susan and Lewis Manilow, image by Nathan Keay

Within my research of the archives and the oral recording of information there are many layers of Moturoa which resurface from subjugation. Such as stories of the Hongi Hongi stream that in my father's school days ran free above ground but now lies piped under the layers of tarmac and petroleum tanks or the memory of the settlement that was removed in 1939 to make way for port development. But even though the river can't be seen in its present underground state it does not mean that it doesn't exist. Much of what is hidden from the visible layers is retrievable, and though out of sight, has not gone, its presence is as strong as ever in some of the community's memory.

The charcoal animations of William Kentridge speak to this understanding of a world as process and a layering of time (fig. 17). The traces of erased marks from previous frames while drawing on the same paper over and over leave the image's history. The drawings blurring and evolving in unstable transitions which mimic an unfolding of life itself. Dan Cameron writes of Kentridge's films, 'the notion of a drawing in a constant state of metamorphosis is visually hypnotic: it permits us to see, or think we see, the creative process behind each change in line, contour, texture or subject...' (Cameron, *A Procession of the Disposed*, 1999, p.38).

They speak of an ephemeral world but also one where the presence of lost moments may sit alongside the new. A fragment from fifth century philosopher Heraclitus' doctrines states, *As they step into the same rivers, other and still other waters flow upon them*. This doctrine speaks of the view of a world in flux but one that simultaneously holds its structure and identity despite constant change (Kahn, 1979, p.166). It also aligns with Kentridge's distrust of certainty, whether polemic or political, and his aim to reveal ambiguity and contradiction in these positions through the erasures, layers and mistakes in the work (Tate, 2018). His animations reveal that process itself is an exercise in uncertainty.

Throughout this project I have been trying to align archival reflections with process printmaking and process philosophies such as those of Heraclitus and Deleuze. Layering was a print tactic I used to investigate how trace of the print process might speak of process of place and time. When making prints, based on historical images of the port area held in the museum archives, I used drypoint on aluminium for ease of making and erasing marks. With sandpaper, drypoint tools, scrapers and burnishers I worked each new image on the same plate, erasing the previous iteration to a state that would leave only pale background marks on the new etching. Fragments of other prints, such as a woodcut of the removed settlement and some monoprinted textures taken from surfaces around the area, were used for overprinting and chine colle (fig. 18). Though not all plate combinations were successful, it was a valuable exercise for developing an analogy between layering and excavating through repetition in printmaking to retrieving, layering and retelling of narrative from archives.

Where does the Hongi Hongi flow now?

There is a piece of land for sale on Harbour St. It's a hole really, a strange symmetrical quarter acre dip in the land. I've seen it in the real estate agents' aerial shot and it looks as if the ground has been vacuum packed around the land. As if the petroleum industry that was originally responsible for the hole had pulled all the air from the community it occupied. Was this where the Hongi Hongi Lagoon had been hidden under the land?

I ended one of my walking searches for its trace in front of this piece of ground, before this I had asked my family if they remembered its location. My Aunty only remembered she would cross it to get to Moturoa School, removing her shoes and leaving them on its edge, spending the day in bare feet and putting them back on when she walked home. My search that day had started across the road from the site of the dairy I worked in as a teenager. That was gone now, as well as houses on this block that had belonged to the owners extended family, cleared by the harbor board for reasons that weren't obvious from the emptiness it now left. I had always thought this land belonged to those people, working for this family and knowing their generational connections to the area, it had always seemed natural that this was their standing place. Instead, it was the harbor boards to clear, on paper, at least. Had they also made the river I searched for a trace of run under ground, reducing it to an industrial standard drain at the port end of Ngamotu Beach?

Almost imperceptibly many things had gone, and people had been moved on. The settlement opposite the Breakie pub bowled in 1939 for the harbor, the creeping restriction of public access to the shoreline, the lagoon that teemed with life piped underground. The erasure continues, the expectation is that we will forget and therefore fail to anticipate and head off the next swipe at the land by commerce.

The road from the cleared site to the beach is blocked off now too, though there is some compensation of a path. I started searching next to a monument listing the first European settler boats that arrived at this point in 1840. My own ancestors were among the passengers, young and strong enough to clear land themselves. They were the labourers the land companies needed to establish the agrarian richness they planned for their version of this land. Offloaded onto the shore to find the promised town still nothing more than an imaginative engraving distributed by a London publishing house, they established themselves, clearing and burying what they perceived as useless. Subduing forests, rivers and voices and molding the landscape to their own purpose. But much still persisted within the repetition of everyday life, for decades, always remembered in the retelling of histories. The recording of my father and his friend's recollections from their schooldays and beyond was to add the final layer to the work. I was told the things I looked for had not disappeared, they were in the shadows that resided in the layers I had been excavating.



Figure 18; Antonia O'Mahony, *Untitled*, 500mm x 350mm, 2019



Figure 19; *Hongi Hongi Lagoon with shell petroleum depot, c1955, Collection of Puke Ariki Museum, Taranaki*

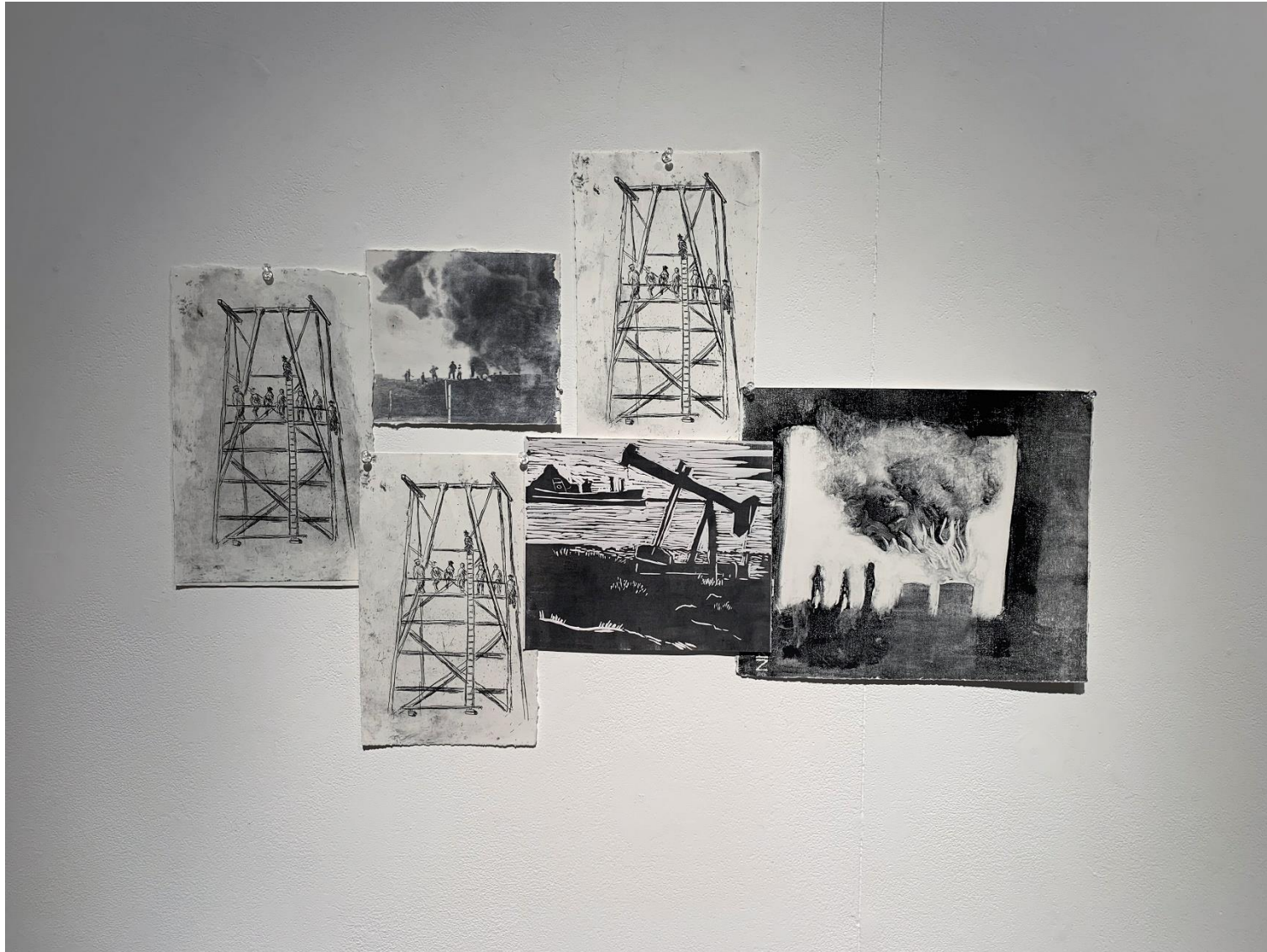


Figure 20; Antonia O'Mahony, *Test installation view*, 2019



Figure 21; Antonia O'Mahony, *Test Installation view*, 2019



Figure 22; Antonia O'Mahony, *Test Installation view*, 2019



Figure 23; Antonia O'Mahony, *Test Installation view*, 2019

Conclusion

'Tell it Again' comprises of a selection of the many trial proofs made during the research displayed as groupings, reinforcing how each small repetition creates the greater whole. The groups are industrial scenes familiar to Moturoa, reflections of people in the community mostly sourced from family archives, and hands performing repetitive tasks. Around the walls there are miniature etchings of small freighters going both back and forth imitating the everyday of the local Port traffic, thus intending to create a rhythmic background to the installation. There is a group of prints built up of layers of indefinable images, textural rubbings from the Moturoa area and gestural drypoint and carborundum marks to suggest a river. Intended to speak of overlays of time and space they, as pieces which imitate reflection and memory, facilitate a pause in the relentless repetitions. The voice recording plays in the background, not with prominence, but rather as a floating veil of time and histories told. It reinforces the aspect of memory within the work and reflects the indeterminant narratives of the layered works.

The boundaries between the personal and the public mutate in the stories the men tell and in their recollections. Many lesser known and, to some degree, deliberately suppressed histories are brought to our consciousness. Has the process of printmaking, therefore, been advantageous for uncovering and representing the subdued narrative? So much has been revealed to me in the course of my research and when I write about it I can retell it in concise and linear language but my aim was to use print as a metaphor for how we process this archival information while we are embedded in its creation. This project could have evolved in other mediums but using printmaking had some distinctions that revealed it in a particular way.

The slowness of the medium and the intensity of craft process enforced long spaces of contemplation, particularly useful in the layered works. When planning and hand making each new iteration there was a physical manifesting of time which could be compared to the physical layering of the community and landscape itself. They achieved the condensing of moments onto the plane of paper that I felt was prints advantage when condensing the layers of the archive into a visual representation. The actions of repetition inherent in the making of the matrix and the proofing of the print were able speak of the repetitive and small actions of life and the ability of multiples to illustrate, when installed en masse, that accumulation of mater and narrative.

Sourcing archival images mainly within the time frame of early - mid last century led to a vernacular reading of the everyday as process. However, the rhythms of the past speak to the rhythms of the present. The repetitions of process have enabled me to demonstrate the links between daily repetitions such as cleaning and labouring, work, school and social lives and those of the bigger rhythms such as the industry and commerce and the circadian rhythms of ocean tides and the flow of the river. The manmade rhythms of ships coming and going, trucks thundering back and forth in ever increasing numbers threaten to imitate circadian rhythms as a dominant timekeeper but in excavating and retelling the story of a river subdued by industry its vitalness to the community is reasserted. This study has brought into the light not only the narratives of the public archive but also those, amongst others of labourers versus colonial town planners, pubs and parties versus shipping schedules and a river versus industry. The Hongi Hongi is piped, it runs underground, the small settlement is

flattened, but the families remain, and the community of the archives exists alongside the community of the present, never gone only sometimes forgotten until it is told again. Regardless of our efforts to control and subdue the river, it ceaselessly flows and although we are unable to step into the same waters twice, it's form and presence always remains in the stories told of it through the generations.

Glossary

Aquatint	A specialized etching process used to create tonal variations
Bon a tirer	(BAT) The proof that is the standard to be followed for the edition
Chine colle	Tissue, usually Asian papers, printed and glued to the etching under the press pressure to form collage elements
Drypoint	Intaglio print made by drawing directly into the metal plate with a sharp tool to make the line that holds ink.
Edition	A pre-determined number of identical copies taken from the matrix
Etching	<p>A metal plate is covered with a ground that is impervious to acid. This is drawn though with an etching needle exposing metal.</p> <p>When immersed in the acid, groves will be bitten in the exposed areas. The ground is then removed, and the plate is inked and printed onto paper by hand on an etching press under high pressure.</p>
Ground	Protective coating applied to the metal matrix that prevents the acid etching it other than where it has been exposed by scratching through with a needle
Intaglio	A matrix where the mark, in which the ink is held, is recessed by etching with acid or engraving
Lithography	A planographic process made on stone, aluminium or polyester plate which depends on the resistance of grease (the drawing) to water during the inking and printing
Matrix	The printing plate, metal, wood, stone, or other surface, created by the artist to carry the information for the print
Mordant	Acid or corrosive used in the biting of the etching plate. May be nitric, ferric chloride or, as used in this work, copper sulphate/saline
Monoprint	One off printed image often unrepeatable due to the inking or combinations of plates.
Proofing	The process of testing and exploring what is on the matrix at different stages of its creation.
Trial Proof	A proof taken of the matrix during the development of the proof

Transcripts from Interview with Gary and Don from Moturoa

The River

Don: Mum used to say 'don't go there when it's raining' cause the cause the river, the stream's higher and the log moves, so when its

Dad: They must have piped it all now

Don: Yeah we've just ah..been doing some research on it. It's actually um.....the petrol station up at um Spotswood is it, the petrol station, it sort of starts in there.

Dad: Ah Yeah yeah, where the houses are?

Don: You know where the houses are, it sort of starts in there, and it comes down through that gully,

Dad: I wondered if it was in the back there behind all the

Don: and there's actually a paper road in there coming out at, um Parris St.

Dad: So that paper road would go in front of the houses there, you know where the houses are.

Don: You know where the houses are on Pioneer Rd, down behind them, in the gully there. So, we just found that, every ten years the council do a sites of significance, and Wahi Tapu and we've been working on it a couple of years now and finding out all this stuff about things Maori that Mum and Dad never talked about. I got some photos of your Mum and Mrs. Salisbury. And Pop Vinsen and his ponies, I used to stay there.

Harbour Board (West Gate)/the village

Don: That West gate, as I said I think they can take the bottom ground of the school, and go across to Mt Moturoa, just those things we don't know about. See that too, Centennial Drive, the only property owners there are the Magogs, I think George Curson's had his plastering business there, right up to Paritutu belonged to the hapu.

Dad: Well they own up on the hill too, to those flats there.

Don: they're like a bloody cancer, parasites in paradise, you know Forgive me, I just tell it like it is. I see where these big places you know um, and, and our beef is you know that we were, as I was saying to your daughter, my sister was born on the beach behind the sound shell. Can you remember where the yacht club used to be? Between there and there.

Dad: Ah Wiki was it?

Don: Wiki, and my brother Jock as well they were both born on the beach

Me: Was that the village was it?

Don: Yeah, 1935, I think they made up some story about, ah there's typhoid or some bloody you know. And um our family made a thing about it and we tried to get the hapu to put a claim in, but they wouldn't, so our family went ahead, and we never ever put the claim in but the claim is there ready to go. And ah, but we couldn't afford it, costs \$200,000. See that's the thing that would scare people off, taking on West gate.

The thing that was really good though, was that we decided we didn't want any money. We wanted recognition, that it exists, that people had a right to live there.

Don: Just recently I was talking to a man down at the um, worked for Westgate, and um, he said 'ah you got a minute'. I said, 'yeah course', he said 'I'm the night watchman here'. I said, 'you must see some interesting things?'. And he looked at me and he said, 'I do". I said, 'I'm sure you do' he was talking about seeing these images, you know, down the cemetery down Baley Rd, drives along there at night and he sees people there, and he sees a few other places. Before they started building their office down there and then they uncovered some old paua shells and he got them to stop and thought that it really needed to have an archaeological assessment done and they found a village there. And there was all these little things that came out. Lasting memory was sitting in a fireplace there, and the ash was still in the fireplace. Amazing. It was a little wee one, there would be six people sit around, and you could see the land was just a dip, where their backsides were sat. That'd be round about 1830, just to have stepped back and been there.

The Sea

Dad: Remember he had that Banana boat, and he'd go out in all sorts of weather, no one else would go out in.

Don: He had a boat that he'd designed, and what he used to do was, he used to launch it, he used to take the boat down to the beach, with a tractor, I think it was, and he would back in up into the, um, the boat still on the trailer, push it well into the sea and then drive the boat out into the sea with

the trailer attached, detach the trailer go fishing, come back, put the boat on the trailer, line the boat up to the shore and boot it. Come flying out of the water

Dad: Yeah, I can remember that. (laughing)

Don: I was down there one day, and I used to train racehorses for this guy, and I saw Frank coming in and I was bare back and I was riding one and leading two. I thought, shit, I'm in trouble. So, I turned the horses round going back towards Bayley Rd, Frank got there quicker than I did, but the noise of the bloody whoosh as the boat came outa the water. One horse went that way, one went that way and I fell off. Took us two days to find the bloody horses.

Stowaways

Don: One day Dad said, ah, put your shoes and socks on, and a coat and a jersey. We went to watch the boat going out. I remember the policeman was there in his Morris A car, we were only small. And um, so the boat goes out, all of a sudden this black dot comes off the back of the boat. Swam over, dried himself, changed his clothes, policeman took him away. He did three months jail. It was Bob Fraser, I saw him jump ship.

Dad: Oh yeah. Yeah there was a lot of that, a lot of them jumped off the ol' um phosphate boats.

Me: Where did those boats come from?

Dad: Ah there was a lot of Scots crew actually.

Don: Nauru Island eh. Dad: Yeah Nauru Island, on the old liberty boats.

Me: What are liberty boats?

Dad: They were made during the war. They were just pushed out and welded up.

Don: And I think, later on, they were more called liberty boats because they gave people their liberty.

Dad: But we used to go onto those boats and climb all over the them and climb around the engine room, you know. You'd never do that now! That's so stupid, they won't let anybody go round there but somebody can go up Paritutu and turf something over.

Sharing

Me: The stories about Poppa and Mr. Salisbury's homebrewing! Poppa used to be known for the parties on the hill. (laughing)

Don: They used to put the brew down for Christmas and they used to drink it all before Christmas! (laughing)

Dad: That's right. (laughing)

Don: Do you remember Waka and Ruth? They used to give us a watermelon. They used to have them growing all over the place

Dad: That's right, yeah..

Me: Even when I was a kid neighbours living in a caravan, they kept building rooms onto the caravan. And in the end these rooms ended up being filled with live turkeys or pigs or whatever was hanging from hooks after home kill. But I think now it seems like people just don't do stuff like that in town now, maybe it happened down there more than anywhere else in town

Don: I know that as a fact, I think that, um, the area has something about it. Some mystique, it has an identity. I mean there'll never be another Moturoa. It's the only suburb with its Maori name. I know that Mr. Carrington (New Zealand Company) was like 'Belt Rd that way and we'll worry about this place later.' You know, the structure was put in place over there and we were left.

Image List

Figure 1. McFadden, Ryan, Still from video *What's happening in Tiger Town*, 2018, (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjtjiKONu8Y>)

Figure 2. O'Mahony, Antonia, *Bert and Trixie*, etching and aquatint, 2019.

Figure 3. *Vinpeppo's Circus*, c1940, author's private collection

Figure 4. *Snow Vinsen and Taranaki Dance band*, c1950, author's private collection

Figure 5. Print matrices made for this project, 2019, Author's image

Figure 6. Print matrices made for the project, 2019, Author's image

Figure 7. Parr, Mike, *Language and Chaos I*, 1990. Collection of the National Gallery of Australia, N.S.W.

Figure 8. Keckes, Irena, *Presence of Absence*, 2013. Reproduced with permission of the artist

Figure 9. Beckett, Samuel, video still from *Quad*, 1981. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LPJBlvv13Bc>

Figure 10. Moturoa Country Women's Institute roll call book, Collection of Puke Ariki Museum, Taranaki, NZ. Accession No. 2002-950

Figure 11. *Pecking Order*, Process photos, 2019, Author's photos

Figure 12. O'Mahony, Antonia, *Pecking Order*, monoprints, 2019

Figure 13. Mayo, Rebecca, *645 Hands*, Cyanotype, 2011. Reproduced with permission of the artist

Figure 14. O'Mahony, Antonia, *Test Installation view*, 2019

Figure 15. O'Mahony, Antonia, *Pecking Order*, monoprints (detail), 2019

Figure 16. O'Mahony, Antonia, *Dig*, etching and aquatint, 2019

Figure 17. Kentridge, William, Drawing from *A History of the Main Complaint*, 1995-96, Collection of the Contemporary Museum Art, Chicago, gift of Susan and Lewis Manilow, image by Nathan Keay

Figure 18. O'Mahony, Antonia, *Untitled*, etching and chine colle, 2019

Figure 19. Hongi Hongi Lagoon, c1955, collection of Puke Ariki Museum, Taranaki

Figure 20. O'Mahony, Antonia, *Test Installation View*, 2019

Figure 21. O'Mahony, Antonia, *Test Installation View*, 2019

Figure 22. O'Mahony, Antonia, *Test Installation View*, 2019

Figure 23. O'Mahony, Antonia, *Test Installation View*, 2019

References

- Art Gallery of NSW. (2018, October 5). *William Kentridge in Conversation*. Retrieved from Art Gallery of NSW: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWsM-QF92Dg&t=2673s>
- Ausstellung (Graphische Summlung Albertina). (2016). *Anselm Kiefer, The Woodcuts*. Vienna: Albertina.
- Barthes, R. (1973). *Mythologies*. London: Paladin.
- Bennet, J. (2010). *Vibrant Matter: a political ecology of things*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Berger, J. (2016). *Landscapes, John Berger on Art*. London: Verso.
- Bollo, D. (2014). A Book for my Guide: The Artists Book and the Exploration of Memory. In P.L. Harrison, E. Shemilt, A. Watson (Eds), *Impact 8, Borders and Crossings: the Artist as Explorer* (pp. 69-73). Dundee: Duncan Joedanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee.
- Cameron, D. (1999). A Procession of the Dispossessed. In C. C.-B. Dan Cameron (Ed), *William Kentridge* (pp. 39-81). London: Phaidon Press Ltd.
- Cameron, D., & Antoni, J. (2000). *Janine Antoni*. New York: Ink Tree.
- Coldwell, P. (2018, October). Traces of Time. *Printmaking Today*, pp. 6-7.
- Collins. (2019, August 23). *Defination of Perseveration*. Retrieved from Collins Dictiionary: <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/perseveration>
- Coulter-Smith, G. (1994). *Mike Parr: The Self Portrait Project*. Melbourne: Schwartz City.
- Coulter-Smith, G. (1988). Mike Parr's self portraits: Unma(s) king the self. *Eyline, Vol. 5*, 22-23.

- Crawford, M. (2013). The Print and Impossible Morning. In Morgan, L. (Ed), *Intersections and Counterpoints: proceedings of the Impact 7 International multi-disciplinary printmaking conference* (pp. 138-143). Melbourne: Monash University.
- Crawford, M. (2013). The Print and Impossible Mourning. In Morgan, L. (Ed), *Intersections and Counterpoints: Proceedings of the Impact 7 International Multi-Disciplinary Printmaking Conference* (pp. 138-143). Melbourne: Monash University.
- Deleuze, G. (1994). Repetition for Itself, *Diference and Repetition, translation* (pp. 70-128). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Documents of Contemporary Art. (2008). *The Everyday*. London: Whitechapel Gallery.
- Documents of Contemporary Art. (2012). *Memory*. London: Whitechapel Gallery.
- Enwezor, O. (2013). Phtography and the Archive: 1980-2013. In E. Cavazzini (Ed), *Photography: The Contemporary Era 1981-2013* (pp. 89-107). Milan: Skira.
- Fisher, J. (1997). Interperformance, the live tableaux of Suzanne Lacy, Janine Antoni and Marina Abromovic. *Art Journal*, winter, 1997, 28-33. <https://about.jstor.org/terms>
- Fortescue, E. (2006, February 24). *Self Centres on Parr*. Retrieved from The Sydney Daily Telegraph: <http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.massey.ac.nz/login.aspx?direct=true&db=anh&AN=200602241068788427&site=eds-live&scope=site>
- Foster, H. (2004). An Archival Impulse. In Meriwether, C. (Ed), *The Archive* (pp. 143-148). Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Hogan, J. (2013). On Commoning. In (. 2. International Multi-Disciplinary Printmaking Conference, *Intersections and Counterpoints: Proceedings of the Impact 7 International Multi-Disciplinary Printmaking Conference* (pp. 233-237). Clayton, Victoria: Monash University.
- Howell, A. (2000). *The Analysis of Performance Art: a guide to its theory and practice*. Amsterdam: Harwood Academic.
- Humphries, C. (n.d.). Relational Surfaces: The Tissue of Materiality. In I, *Intersections and Counterpoints: proceedings of the Impact 7 International Multi-Disciplinary Printmaking Conference* (pp. 243-249). Monash University.
- Jackson, B. (1999, March). Wanderkammern: actual and virtual. *Artlink*, pp. 27-30.
- Kahn, C. H. (1979). *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kartsaki, E. (2016). *On Repetition, Writing, Performance and Art*. Bristol: Intellect.
- Kavanagh, G. (2000). *Dream Spaces, Memory and the Museum*. London: Leicester University Press.

- Keckes, I. (2015). *Mindful Repetitions: Ecologically informed Buddhism and contemporary printmaking*. Retrieved from The University of Auckland: <https://researchspace.auckland.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/2292/27508/whole.pdf?sequence=2>
- Langerman, F. (2014). Cover to Cover: The Contribution of the Book to the Reproduction of Linear Hierarchical Models of Natural History. In *Impact 8: Borders and Crossings, the Artist as Explorer* (pp. 144-149). Dundee: Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee.
- Leader, D., & Groves, J. (1995). *Lacan: a graphic guide*. London: Icon Books.
- Louisiana Museum of Modern Art. (2014). *William Kentridge, How we Make Sense of the World*. Retrieved from Louisiana Channel: <https://channel.louisiana.dk/video/william-kentridge-how-we-make-sense-world>
- Maltz-Leca, L. (2018). *William Kentridge: process as metaphor and other doubtful enterprises*. Oakland: University of California Press.
- Mayo, R. (2019). *Projects: HMAS Sydney II: Fremantle/Geraldton Residency*. Retrieved from: <https://rebeccamay.com/hmas-sydney-ii-fremantle-geraldton-residency/>
- MCA Australia. (2016, December 13). *Mike Parr interviewed 2006 for his solo MCA exhibition*. Retrieved from MCA Australia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ynlNnlZHpo4>
- McFadden, R. (2018, April 17). *What's happening in Tigertown, Moturoa, New Plymouth*. Retrieved from Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qjtjiKONu8Y>
- Miriam-Webster, (2019, July 08). *Apophenia*, Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/apophenia>
- Milburn, F. (2005, October 12). *12 Untitled self portraits (set 6) (Polish Mud) by Mike Parr*. Retrieved from Christchurch Art Gallery, Te Puna O Waiwhetu: <https://christchurchartgallery.org.nz/blog/collection/2005/10/12-untitled-self-portraits-set-6-polish-mud-by-mik>
- Nora, P. (1984). Realms of Memory. In I. Farr, *Memory* (pp. 61-70). London: Whitechapel Gallery.
- Rigg, A. (2016, February 06). *Faking Rembrandt: Copies in the Collection*. Retrieved from Te Papa: <https://blog.tepapa.govt.nz/2016/02/16/faking-rembrandt/>
- Ring, C. (2012). *Emil Nolde, The Painter's Prints*. Koln: Bumont.
- Shilo, A. (2014). The Shadow Chaser: of colportage, printmaking and folk tales. In *Impact 8, Borders and Crossings, the Artist as Explorer* (pp. 192-197). Dundee: Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee.

- Stanthorpe, Z. (1999, March). The Mirror in the Archive Box. *Artlink*, pp. 8-9.
- State Library of Victoria. (2010). *Bruno Leti: The Matrix*. Melbourne: Macmillan Art Publishing.
- Steinberg, L. (1995). The Flatbed Picture Plane. In S. Yates, *A Critical Photographic Anthology* (pp. 197-207). Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press.
- Steyerl, H. (2016). A Sea of Data: Apophenia and pattern (mis-) recognition. *E-Flux Journal*.
- Taranaki Herald. (1906, May 11). *The Hongi Hongi Stream, Moturoa*. Retrieved from Papers Past: <https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/TH19060511.2.58>
- Tate. (2018, April 25). *William Kentridge: 'Art must defend the uncertain'*. Retrieved from Tate Shots: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/william-kentridge-2680/william-kentridge-art-must-defend-uncertain>
- Te Papa. (n.d.). *Banks' Florilegium: Collections online*. Retrieved from Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa: <https://collections.tepapa.govt.nz/topic/576>
- The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles. (2005). *Robert Rauschenberg Combines*. Los Angeles: Steidl Verlag.
- Thomson, A. (2014). Making a Place: art and the multi-modal, multi-disciplinary approach. In *Impact 8, Borders and Crossings: The Artist as Explorer* (pp. 210-215). Dundee: Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art & Design, University of Dundee.

