Re-Shaping a First World War Narrative:

A Sculptural Memorialisation Inspired by the Letters and Diaries of One New Zealand Soldier

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(Cover)
Alfred Owen Wilkinson, *On Active Service in the Great War*, Volume 1 *Anzac*; Volume 2 *France 1916–17*; Volume 3 *France, Flanders, Germany* (Dunedin: Self-published/A.H. Reed, 1920; 1922; 1924).

(Above)
Alfred Owen Wilkinson, 2/1498, New Zealand Field Artillery, First New Zealand Expeditionary Force, 1915, left, & 1917, right.

Dedication

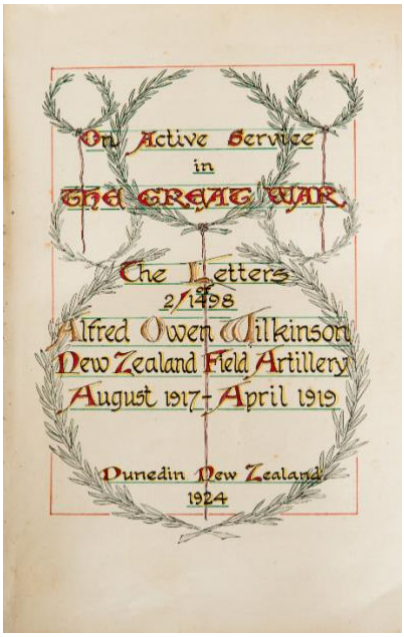
Dedicated to: Alfred Owen Wilkinson, 1893 – 1962, 2/1498, NZFA, 1NZEF;

Alexander John McKay Manson, 11/1642, MC, MiD, 1895 – 1975;

John Guerin, 1889 – 1918, 57069, Canterbury Regiment;

and Christopher Michael Guerin, 1957 – 2006;

And all they stood for.



Alfred Owen Wilkinson, *On Active Service in the Great War*, Volume 1 *Anzac*; Volume 2 *France 1916–17*; Volume 3 *France, Flanders, Germany* (Dunedin: Self-published/A.H. Reed, 1920; 1922; 1924).

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Research Proposition:

That miniature sculptures may be used to negotiate between the actual and the fictional, to memorialise the experiences of one New Zealand soldier who served in the First World War.

Chapter 1. Introduction

Remembering is central to this research. It begins with the remembering of war inspired by the recollections of an individual soldier who fought in a global conflict. This remembering takes the form of a fictionalisation of aspects and episodes of this soldier's experiences through the agency, and affectivity, of the miniature sculpture. My thesis also remembers the frailty and vulnerability of the human body and psychology when it is placed in extremis. This New Zealand artilleryman was a citizen who volunteered for active service and who, importantly, was also a survivor. At the centre of these works is an expression of both the sacrifices made by this, and many other soldiers, and also the costs extracted by war. The fragility I have sought in each work, offers a further opportunity for understanding, and a raised awareness of conventional preoccupations with the costs of war; the relationships of the war memorial with sculptural expression; and also the relationship of the small-scale sculpture with the site of exhibition and with the art-viewing experience.

"The history of the Great War is a subject of perennial fascination,"[1] writes eminent sociocultural historian of the First World War, Jay Winter. The war saw the creation of a plethora of 'sites of memory and sites of mourning' (to borrow Winter's phrase) as a response to catastrophic loss of human life and the need to recognise the sacrifices and contributions of combatants.

The memorialisation of war can take many forms including monuments, architecture, and military rituals, or performative, written, and other acts. War memorials contribute to (self or national) conceptions of identity and sacrifice in their acknowledgement of the costs of war. Often, they straightforwardly record and commemorate military service or deaths – mainly of combatants – and help define the public's relationship to these deaths, or survivals. Memorials may warn against future war or condemn conflict; they may take the form of counter-memorials and question the role of monuments, especially those of a didactic nature that celebrate heroics or glorify sacrifice. They might even reject the idea of the monument altogether.

My sculptural thesis is concerned with both the universal story of combatants in the First World War, while simultaneously being intimately bound with the imagined experiences of a particular soldier. The thesis is a series of fictional speculations that could be described as being "based on a true story". Here incidents and moments are deployed to say something that is more than an accumulation of the parts (of this soldier's story). As a sculptural memorialisation, the thesis has been inspired by the self-written experiences of Alfred Owen Wilkinson, 2/1498, New Zealand

[1] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1.

Field Artillery, First New Zealand Expeditionary Force – as contained in his letters and diaries. It is not known how many letters he wrote home to Dunedin, but two hundred and twenty five of them have survived, along with three of his diaries. The letters were written over a four-year period; 1915 through 1919.

Alfred Owen Wilkinson was a twenty-three-year-old in 1915 and had recently graduated with the first cohort of the Bachelor of Commerce degree from Otago University. Early in February of that year, he boarded a train in Dunedin bound for Trentham Military Camp in Hutt Valley, north of Wellington. There, he was to be trained in the art of war on a 4.5" Quick Firing Howitzer gun. The British Empire had sided with France and Russia against Germany, Austria-Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey to fulfil its treaty obligations to aid an invaded Belgium. Wilkinson, being a true son of the British Empire, was bound by the call of duty made on the able-bodied, male citizen to fight. He volunteered early as his regimental number, 2/1498, attests. He served first with the howitzers at Gallipoli, and for the rest of the war with the field guns on the Western Front in Belgian Flanders and Pays de Calais, Artois, and Picardy in northern France.

In framing my research, Wilkinson's letters and diaries enabled the creation and exhibiting of sculptures that are acts of memorialisation, not simply for one man, but for the First World War New Zealand soldier as a military 'everyman'. In these works I do not illustrate literal moments in Wilkinson's life, but use his words to trigger imaginative responses to his stories whilst combining them with a broader understanding and knowledge of the documented facts of the First World War. Therefore, the creative component of my research thesis uses the 'compressive' capabilities inherent in the forms of miniature dioramas in an attempt to make the unimaginable scale of the First World War landscape comprehensible. My method is the miniature sculpture, which combines the forms of the diorama and the model, not as prototype or precursor, but as ends in themselves.

As this creative arts research project has developed, it has been informed by a review of the works of other artists, an investigation into relevant histories concerning the First World War, and consideration of the theories and discussions of relevant scholars. These matters are discussed in depth in later chapters. For the theoretic framework of this thesis, special attention has been paid to the thinking of Paul Ricoeur in *Memory, History, Forgetting*[2], Slavoj Žižek *Event: Philosophy in Transit*[3], and Franklin R. Ankersmit in *Narrative Logic: A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language*[4]. These philosophical works have underpinned considerations of the roles of memory and

[2] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory History, Forgetting*, trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).
[3] Slavoj Žižek, *Event: Philosophy in Transit, (*London: Penguin, 2014).
[4] Franklin R. Ankersmit, *Narrative Logic: A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language* (The Hague: Martins Nijhoff/ Kluwer, 1983).

the historical imagination in commemorative and memorial ventures, and will be further discussed at appropriate points later in the thesis.

In May 2019, I exhibited *Re-Shaping a First World War Narrative: A Sculptural Memorialisation Inspired by the Letters and Diaries of One New Zealand Soldier,* in the 'sacred site' (and in the evocative resonance) of the Hall of Memories at New Zealand's National War Memorial, Pukeahu, Wellington; a site concerned with the construction of (national) identity formation through its proclamation of foundational myths.

The nine sculptural works presented were:

- *Soldier Sitting at the End of a Duckboard Track before a Skeletal Copse*
- *Deathscape/Push*
- *Multum in Parvo – Bello Vista*
- *Multum in Parvo – L'enfer*
- *Owen, Forward Observing Fall of Shot*
- *'There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray, love, remember'*
- *Dugout Entrances (Interior and Exterior)*
- *The Oneiric Dyad (Dreaming of Grandma W's Kitchen/Breastworks)*
- *Departure*

Differing modes of exhibition display (alternating plinth heights, or image dimensions) were used to draw viewers into various forms of engagement with the sculptures, and to provide for different types of experience. The god's eye viewpoint enabled an imaginative conception of a depiction of a large geographical space by looking down on the work to emphasise the vulnerability and fragility of the lone soldier in the landscape. Other works were displayed at a higher level to enable a 'looking through and across the landscape', which invited the viewer to be drawn into the environment depicted. These two approaches offered a means of eliciting an affective viewer response that asked for a contemplative consideration of this soldier's experiences, along with the possibility of respect for the endurance he, and others like him, displayed.

Of the nine miniature sculptures listed above, several are ruminations on the sustaining power of 'home' and family in times of profound adversity. The thesis-works were an antithetical response to the Hall of Memories, where they were exhibited, in their size, scale and mediation, and, in their response to an individual's record, as opposed to being a commemoration of national sacrifice. The works share an aesthetic and stylistic coherence, which is supported by incremental, episodic differences in each discrete work, linking with the impulse outlined in the research proposition. The layout in the Hall of Memories was designed to enable viewers to perceive the ensemble as a cohesive work. Some works – emphasised by the pairing of relief surfaces – stressed a 'before and

after', or 'presence and absence' in a dichotomous conversation that sought meaning through the partiality of two, predominantly frontal, surfaces.

The miniature sculptures vastly reduce the size of the places and spaces depicted and evoked. The intimate size and reduced scale(s) of the diorama and the model combine with personal aesthetic choices regarding mediation, in the coherent unravelling and manifesting of isolated aspects of this individual combatant's experience of service in the Great War.

Through his letters and diaries, Wilkinson provided intimate, mundane, and often repetitive details of his everyday experiences of military service overseas (and initially in New Zealand). Such quotidian detail provided inspiration for the sculptures. These were not concerned with conventions of portraiture or 'lifelikeness', and, after initially drawing their episodic subject matter directly from specific quotes and incidences noted in his letters or diaries, sculptural expressions developed into what I have called 'creative fictions'. In the enduring form of the imagined microcosm represented in the miniature dioramic sculpture, I have used the miniature sculpture as a tool of my 'historical imagination', which is informed by Wilkinson's contextualising narrative, although not been bound by this tract in any kind of didactic embrace. Rather, the artworks have operated as a conduit between a painful past and our own present. They are deictic objects that I have employed to show something about a particular individual in wartime by using variations on the built (or destroyed) war environment as mnemonic metaphors[5]. Through each of these objects I have sought to create a site (and a situation) that encourages a reflective moment for its viewer.

It is important to reiterate here that, in the context of this creative arts doctoral project, whilst the artworks may have a superficial similarity to hobbyist and museum 'factual' dioramas and models, they are better understood as miniature sculptures using 'found' objects – particularly in this case, plastic models that are adapted and reconfigured for the purposes of an artwork – to 'tell' stories. Further, in conceiving and making the miniature sculptures that constitute its thesis, I have used the form of military model-making to consciously invert the normal scales associated with the heroic commemoration of war. Their small scale has permitted perspectives that either offer a 'god's-eye' viewpoint, (otherwise known as a 'sovereign', 'bird's', or 'eagle's-eye' viewpoint), or a transverse vantage point of compressed events, incidents, places, or circumstances. These separate viewing perspectives embody selected 'episodes' and present a sculptural 're-shaping' of a lived experience. These responses are imagined renderings of Wilkinson's recalled experiences and, as 'creative fictions', are inspirationally derived from the 'factual' existence of an actual soldier. This

[5] The nomenclature for real objects that afford recall and remembering have been variously termed 'mnemonical analogues', mnemonic devices', or 'memory boxes', and their capacity to provoke detailed recollection is described by Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Pimlico, 2012 [1966]), 11.

'fictiveness' is an abstract representation of the merest of temporal fragments which, at the same time, rely on the conventions of realism – or miniaturised representational verisimilitude – to impart their meaning. As plastic transformations and interpretations of a written narrative, the miniature sculptures have deployed a range of iconographic tropes to achieve this 'realism' – entrenchments and sandbagged trench environments, shattered tree-stumps, or cratered and de-populated battle landscapes – to tell a stylistically consistent, visual story. The attributes and processes of narrative, episodic selection, distillation, and exploration that make this memorialisation explicable, will be discussed below.

As an act of remembering a single soldier, who faced death over a prolonged period of time in a world war, this thesis is an act of memorialisation. Each discrete miniature sculpture exaggerates, through diminution, in gradients in scale and in actual size, and as Rachel Wells claims, small objects are 'precious' often serving to emphasise private enjoyment (and handling)[6]. They also invite a concentrated reading or reception, and while the miniature sculpture operates as both an individual and separate artwork, it is also a part of a cohesive whole.

[6] Rachel Wells, *Scale in Contemporary Sculpture: Enlargement, Miniaturisation and the Life-Size* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2016 [2013]), 38-39.

Chapter 2. Background

Wilkinson's letters are contained in three separate volumes, and when his letters are combined with his diaries, this body of knowledge is usefully described as 'self-writing' [7]. This form is different from memoir or autobiography because of the proximity of the event or experience to the time of writing; it thus possesses a more immediate retrospectivity. Wilkinson's war-time letters are multi-faceted in the way they can be analysed, with each dated and headed with a geographical location, albeit often under imprecise titles – for instance, 'Somewhere in France' or 'Taylor's Hollow' – due to the strictures of military censorship. However, on occasions his self-writing places him, as a 'witness' in both time and space, with some degree of precision [8].

Wilkinson's letters and diaries have proved durable; not only as historical and material culture artefacts but also as *aides-memoires*. In recalling his own lived or 'direct' experiences, letter-writing helped Wilkinson to recount these for the benefit of his family, often in précised or downplayed form. Wilkinson wrote home to his family with dependable regularity, and he cherished the receipt of mail and care-parcels from home, especially cake and hand-knitted socks; the former he willingly shared with his mates, always feeding back their praise. His letters to his immediate family express all the banalities, confidences, and sureties of ordinary life lived in the extraordinary circumstance of war.

Wilkinson often headed his letters 'Dear Lovies and Dearies', or even 'my ain' folk'; his mother was Scottish and his father English, and 'Dearies' was his pet name for his sisters. Periodically, he specifically wrote to a particular relative knowing that these letters would, in all likelihood, be shared around, even beyond his immediate family. Once he wrote a letter to his new-born niece, calling her his 'little snooker'. He often bemoaned the backlog of letters he needed to reply to, and his inability to achieve this because of time restrictions or circumstance, and, as noted, he often asks his family to pass his letters on to a broader audience to avoid offence. Wilkinson seems deft at self-censorship, which protected his family from alarm, although he occasionally falls foul of the arbitrary blue pencil of the military censor.

Wilkinson's self-writing proffers a set of lived experiences of a frontline New Zealand combatant soldier, which provides a window into an individual's experienced reality. Today Wilkinson's self-writing provides a reminder of the many ways and aspects that a man's life was

[7] See Felicity A. Nussbaum, 'Toward Conceptualizing Diary', in *Studies in Auto-biography*, ed. James A. Olney, 128 – 40. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), and also Nancy Martin, ''And All Because It Is War!': First World War Diaries, Authenticity and Combatant Identity', *Textual Practice*, 29, no. 7 (2015), 1245 – 63.
[8] See Joan Scott, 'The Evidence of Experience,' *Critical Inquiry*, 17, no. 4 (Summer 1991), 773 – 97; 780. Also, Jay Winter, 'The "Moral Witness" and the Two World Wars', *Ethnologie Française*, 37, no. 3 (2007), 467 – 74.

consumed while on active service in the Great War. As it informs this research, his writing 'triggers' the imagination not only because of its freshness and intimacy, but also because his self-writing constitutes a unique historical archive that is a window back across the one hundred years since it was written. His self-writing therefore constitutes a type of durable testimonial 'truth', and although written specifically to his loved ones, his epistolary trace is a chronicle that has always possessed the capacity to be publicly shared.

Wilkinson's diaries differ from his letters, most obviously in their succinctness and length of entry, and that they were written 'to himself'. Each entry is a perfunctory and matter-of-fact notation that records how his days were consumed or any event of note, and although a surprisingly large number of days were left blank, the ordinary or everyday were often juxtaposed with the potentially mortally dangerous. For instance, the entry for Friday, 8 September 1916, places equal weight on a variety of experiences: as a quartermaster sergeant he collected his battery's stores in a G. S. [General Service] wagon; received a cake from his mother and sweets from his girlfriend; and went up to Fricourt Ridge to the rear of the New Zealand Division's position at Longueval on the Somme, to watch the German bombardment in the afternoon.

Wilkinson's writing therefore assists us to both remember (or, more correctly, to not-forget) and to memorialise. His letters kept his 'ain home folk' up to date with his doings, letting them know that he was still alive, or whether he had been stationed at, or near, the frontline, behind the lines with the wagons and horses – which was a presumably safer station – or away from the fighting zone altogether. These varying scales of geographical identification were a means of assuaging worry. His letters were also a reminder to himself of details of what went on and when, and were possibly intended to augment his diaries and were to be used for possible post-war memoir writing. He also noted that he wanted his letters kept so that he could fact-check the details of 'tall-stories' he intended telling upon his return to New Zealand; another means of sustaining confidence in his survival.

The episodes that are representative aspects of Wilkinson's story, connect with what has come to be called 'communicative' or 'everyday memory'. This is a cultural form of knowledge, which, according to Jan Assman (who draws on Maurice Halbwachs' ideas) is a 'collective' concept that:

> *Directs behaviour and experience in the interactive framework of a society and one that obtains through generations in repeated societal practice and initiation […] everyday*

communication […] characterized by a high degree of non-specialization, reciprocity of role, thematic instability, and disorganization [9].

Assman expands this concept with the inclusion of 'habits of speech', where each form of narrative enables memorialisations of salient, or even seminal, events, but still remains, however, potentially unreliable [10].

Because Wilkinson survived the First World War unscathed (save a recurring gastric ailment inherited from his time at Gallipoli), the project is a memorialisation not only to his service, but also to the very fact of his survival. His self-writing is an archive that does not appear in any other published or public form. The concrete presence of Wilkinson's archive enables a literal 'touching of the past', while, paradoxically, retaining an 'unreachability'[11]. While Wilkinson's witness testimony bears many similarities to other soldiers' tales, it is its particularity that is one of the essential ingredients that help establish the cornerstones of this project.

Wilkinson fought on the Gallipoli peninsula and in many of the New Zealand Division's difficult engagements on the Western Front, eventually being promoted to command his field artillery battery (with a brevet rank of Captain) as occasion demanded (as his superior officers were killed, wounded, on leave, seconded to other units, or detailed to attend training courses). His story changes accordingly: he was a battery billeting officer in the final 100 Days campaign in 1918, so had a lot of contact with the civilian population – he spoke French – as he rode ahead on his horse. He also had many a close adventure as the New Zealand Division kept up its pursuit of its German enemy over the same time period.

Because he was on active duty overseas for more than forty-eight months, I have compressed his story. In my interpretation of his experiences the device of the miniature sculpture reduces his experiences down to a small number of encapsulations, acting as mnemonic devices, or 'memory boxes' as Francis Yates has called them; tools for remembering and for transporting the imagination of the viewer back through time[12].

The three volumes of Wilkinson's letters are unique, hand-crafted books, typed-up, calligraphically title-paged, signed, leather-bound and hand-stitched, with gilt-embossed titles on their tan, suede-leather covers. I am aware of only one letter remaining in its original hand-written

[9] Jan Assman, 'Collective Memory and Cultural Identity', trans. John Czaplicka, *New German Critique,* 65, *Cultural History/Cultural Studies* (Spring–Summer 1995), 125 – 33, and Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992 [1941, 1952]).
[10] Assman, 125-33.
[11] Emily Robinson, 'Touching the Void: Affective History and the Impossible', *Rethinking History*, 14, no. 4, (December 2010), 503 – 20.
[12] Yates, *Art of Memory*.

form, and this is perhaps due to the oddity of what it is written on: a circular, cardboard 18-pounder shell coaster. This is one of more than a claimed seven billion picture postcards mailed cost-free from the frontlines of the First World War and home fronts [13]. Wilkinson's letters and diaries are durable – and at the same time, one-off and fragile – things that contain and preserve this soldier's narrative and prolong it into the present day. They possess the ability to transport the mind (or even to jolt the memory), and provide a platform on which the specifics of one man's lived trajectory in that war may be mused upon. For instance, his close-shaves, homesickness, love of family, unwavering Congregationalist/Protestant faith, efficiency as a soldier, and possibly his doubts about, or awe of, war's destructive potentialities. His trace, as evidenced in his self-writing, locates him at particular times and in precise (yet often unnamed) places.

That Wilkinson's letters have their own material culture presence can be evidenced in the letter he wrote to his father from the Gallipoli Peninsula on 8 July 1915. Wilkinson was seriously short of writing paper and envelopes, and had already written one letter on the back of another he had received from his sister. This scarcity explains the necessary conciseness of the one he wrote to his father on the shell coaster; a 100-word (circular) letter that survives in extant condition. Wilkinson's letters convey both the absolute alterity of the past and the 'absent presence' of a man who fought a century ago and who died in 1961[14].

Miniature sculptures, as visual memorialisations, are interpreted as manifestations and processes of transformation that allow research to translate a four-and-a-half-year-long written narrative into a small number of discrete sculptural episodes; collectively termed 'the episodic'. An episode is an event or series of events, which may be sectioned or serialised, and the episodic resembles or relates to an episode, in that it occurs at irregular or infrequent intervals. In this context the methods of the diorama and the model are able to mirror and embody the episodic nature of the narrative that Wilkinson's war catalysed. Through the agency of sculptural processes, the subsequent artworks have sought both 'an artistic integrity and a poetic force of meaning' [15].

During the research process I considered a number of ways of intervening with Wilkinson's texts. I reproduced his letters by photographing the originals then photocopying them into facsimiles. These pages could have been masticated then modelled into terrains or shredded, and then woven into landscapes. Instead, I chose to retain the pages of the letter volumes and have used

[13] Irene Guenther, *Postcards from the Trenches: A German Soldier's Testimony of the Great War* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 8. For this figure Guenther quotes Christine Brocks, *Die bunte Welt des Krieges: Bildpostkarten aus dem Ersten Weltkrieg 1914 – 1918* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2008).
[14] Hayden White, 'The Public Relevance of Historical Studies: A Reply to Dirk Moses', *History and Theory*, 44, (October 2005), 333 – 38; 336.
[15] Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1998).

them, as originally intended. It is the information they contain that has remained consistently important to this project, rather than the materiality of the volumes themselves. Wilkinson's writings catalysed the production of small-scale conjectural sculptures, intended to echo something of the ethos underpinning the war memorials that populate the landscape of this country. Not in form, but in intent. This intention is informed by Ken Inglis's expression 'sacred places', which he uses to describe the phenomenon of the war memorial in Australia (as does Jock Phillips in the New Zealand context[16]). Inglis traces three elements that converged to create this 'cult':

> *The special place of war in the European mind when nationalism was at its zenith; the colonial condition; and the death of so many young men in distant battle [whose bodies were not repatriated to home territory], and which impelled the bereaved to make substitutes for the graves of which history had deprived them* [17].

Episodic events selected from Wilkinson's data-set have enabled me to be locate episodes and match them to the project's chosen methodology of the miniature sculpture (which combine the methods of the diorama and the model) and so give this narrative sculptural shape [18].

As indicated earlier, by intertwining of the methods of the diorama and the model in the form of artworks initially assembled from found-objects, the miniature sculpture offers an opportunity to pay a kind of homage to this soldier as a kind of 'everyman'. By seeking out temporal moments of pathos, place-landscape, or event, it has used varying scales of both perception and representation, to achieve either the 'god's eye' viewpoint (viewing the miniature sculpture and its 'in-the-round' deployment of a compressed 360-degree representation) that possesses an omnipresent aspect to it, of being above, like an aviator. This viewpoint implies something more than the physical advantage of being able to 'objectively' take in a perspective not available to those at ground level (e.g., troop movements, armament positions, logistical infrastructure, the destructive effects of barrage, etc.), to physically see all things in relation to each other (Archimedean). It is also about being able to see and understand those things the eye is not aware of. The aviator sees a single infantryman (on guard?) in a copse; the 'god's eye' perceives the psychological setting that has been established.

[16] Jock Phillips, *To the Memory: New Zealand's War Memorials* (Nelson: Potton and Burton, 2016).
[17] Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places*.
[18] See Jane Robinett, 'The Narrative Shape of Traumatic Experience', *Literature and Medicine*, 26, no. 2 (Fall 2007), 290 – 311; 290, and Marc Crépon, *The Thought of Death and the Memory of War* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2013).

The other viewpoint may be described as a transverse perspective that emulates something of the terrain that Wilkinson may have seen of actual, or imagined, space or landscape, and which seeks out an empathetic response. Because this latter viewpoint relates to the one that the combatant on the ground had, it imbues the sculpture with attributes of familiarity and equivalence, and possibly of an easier route for the viewer to imagine actually 'being there'. This is partly achieved by the two plinth heights; with the taller plinth encouraging a 'looking through' for a viewer of average, adult height.

However, while both perspectives allow the viewer to gain a sense of spatial compression, the instantaneity of perception is not truly available because the back and sides of some works, while possessing their own 'frontality' and three-dimensional form, preclude the taking in of the whole scene from one viewing point at the same time. It is by the viewer moving around the sculpture that its full content – and meaning – is revealed, in the manner of 'sculpture-in-the-round', and which will be discussed more fully below. As an example, in *Owen Forward Observing Fall of Shot,* the uppermost spatial plane reveals a 'live' 72nd scale plastic soldier, who 'stands for' Wilkinson, and through Wilkinson 'everyman', in a trench/sap observing the effects and accuracy of his battery's artillery fire. The jumble of the trench and its immediate environs is apparent and unambiguous, but it is not until we walk around the work, however, that the dead bodies on the rear-most relief surface and literally 'beneath his feet' are revealed. Thus, the deeper meaning of the work has relied on the combining of 'in-the-round' considerations with the employing of relief characteristics, which generally work 'off the wall' and rely on flattened perspectives and picture planes to create imagined creative and aesthetic spaces. Relief is a sculptural means of telling visual stories, often in episodic form, of great antiquity. It combines illusionistic visual iconography that is similar to two-dimensional art in that it depicts 'action' that is reduced and contained within square or rectilinear parameters. Such 'fields' have clearly defined borders/frames or 'limits', in a similar way that a painting, or a sheet of paper (a drawing, or print) does. It is, therefore, both an object to look at, and a space to imaginatively 'live' in.

Miniature sculptures, as ends-in-themselves, stand in opposition to the global conventions of military modelling, the preparatory architectural scale model, the pedagogical or museological model, the prototype, and the sculptural maquette; all of which prefigure something larger that is yet-to-come. The miniature sculptures aim to transcend the agency and materiality of the material culture artefact or art historical object to be artworks in both intention and affect.

Through an interpretative 're-remembering' of one soldier's testimony in 'postmemory' times, the miniature sculptures represent (and memorialise) Wilkinson's story, which possesses attributes of the heroic, and which are often the subject of the war memorial. Such war monuments

typically represent and memorialise the stalwart, the valiant, and the masses who willingly (or otherwise) put their lives in peril at the direction of the state/nation/empire. But the war monument usually and particularly remembers the dead. Traditionally, it adopts figurative and representational means to symbolically or emblematically depict greater, or collective, narratives; for instance, a solitary private soldier who 'stands for' his regiment or division, or as synecdoche[19].

However, the dead, wounded, maimed or dismembered are less numerously depicted in public monuments, where spilled entrails, the stumps of severed limbs or splattered brain-matter are determined to be too visceral visual agents for the representation of the costs of patriotism and sacrifice to be enunciated for public consumption. Whether this was to safeguard public morale and maintain a narrative of heroic sacrifice that trumps futile waste, or a patrician power elite determining what was 'best' for the governed class, is moot. The end result, however, has bequeathed a representational commonality; the archetypal soldier standing stalwart and sentinel-like. The dead, in contrast, are more likely to be represented as merely 'sleeping'.

Elsewhere, however, public memorials specifically acknowledge those who served behind the lines, in the hospitals or factories, or on the land. They may also note, by way of example, the involvement of animals who suffered the burdens of war. They may denote state-sanctioned acts of infamy and shame, battlefield success or even, in the case of Gallipoli, 'glorious' (and consistently bungled) failure. As Michael Rowlands and Christopher Tilley observe:

> *Monuments and memorials provide stability and a degree of permanence through the collective remembering of an event, person or sacrifice around which public rites can be organized; […] a social and encompassing symbiosis maintained through objects and performances* [20].

The monument/memorial is an essentially conservative gesture that serves the 'searing reality' of the survivors of war; it can be grandiose or understated, existing as a means of 'fixing history'. It may be constructed utilising traditional media like stone or bronze, or commonly today, made from laser-cut and welded steel. Sometimes the memorial may simply incorporate the extant ruins of shattered architecture, as with the skeletal cupola at ground zero in Hiroshima. As a signifier of public memory, the memorial is mostly concerned with the generalised, pluralistic, and typical. It

[19] Michael Rowlands and Christopher Tilley, 'Monuments and Memorials', in *Handbook of Material Culture,* edited by Chris Tilley, et al., 500 – 515. (London: Sage, 2011).
[20] See Rowlands and Tilley, 'Monuments and Memorials', 500.

is intended to convey symbolic meaning, such as sacrifice, love of country, or the individual's obligations to their history [21].

Recently, there has been a trend away from literal figurative renderings of the martial warrior in war memorials. Such figures have been replaced with less explicit symbols, such as columns or stylised trees, and also with more pacifistic iconography, such as the olive branch deployed as a metaphor for peace. The First World War figures large in memorial forms: in the United Kingdom alone, Neil Oliver notes that there are supposedly over 36,000 dedicated to that conflict [22]. However, a review of Laurence Aberhart's *Anzac* (2014) and Jock Phillips' *To the Memory: New Zealand's War Memorials* (2016), while revealing a preponderance of figurative memorials, also shows that there is a strong abstract presence in the form of not only obelisks and crosses, but also functional (memorial) architecture. The latter takes the form of community halls, hospitals and even the odd bridge, notably in Christchurch and near Mount Bruce/Pūkaha Rangitāne o Wairarapa [23].

Internationally, the twin pylons of the Canadian monument at Vimy Ridge display all the attributes of the grandiose national monument, as does the American memorial at their cemetery at Chateau-Thierry. In a similar vein is Edwin Lutyen's gigantic *Memorial to the Missing* at Thiepval on the Somme, which is of a scale befitting the 72,085 names of British soldiers who were killed between July and November 1916 and who have no known grave.[24]. As an example of how such indelible and destructive costs of war are imprinted into the collective psyche by sculptures that memorialise, in *The Missing of the Somme* Geoff Dyer cites the memorial in St. Jude's Church, Hampstead, UK. This sculpture commemorates the 375,000 horses killed in the war, on the British side alone. Equally emotion-stirring is the sounding of the Last Post, bugled by members of the town's fire brigade each evening under the central arch of Reginald Blomfield's Menin Gate in the walled edge of the town of Ieper (Ypres) in Belgium. This daily ceremony (begun in 1928 with the unveiling of the Menin Gate, a tradition only broken by the Nazi occupation, 1940–1944) commemorates the nearly 55,000 'intolerably nameless names', 'whom the fortune of war denied the known and honoured burial given to their comrades in death' [25].

[21] Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), 6, & 12.
[22] Neil Oliver, *Not Forgotten: The Great War and Our Modern Memory* (London: Hodder, 2018 [Hodder and Stoughton/Hachette, 2005]).
[23] Laurence Aberhart, *Anzac: Photographs by Laurence Aberhart* (Wellington: Victoria University Press/Dunedin Public Art Gallery, 2014), and Jock Phillips, *To the Memory: New Zealand's War Memorials* (Nelson: Potton and Burton, 2016).
[24] Geoff Dyer, *The Missing of the Somme* (London: Orion/Hachette, 2009 [Hamish Hamilton, 1994]), 44 – 46.
[25] Lines written by Siegfried Sassoon and Rudyard Kipling respectively. See Julie Summers, *Remembered: The History of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission* (New York: Merrell, 2007), 21–23, 50–51, 98–99, 149.

Charles Sargeant Jagger's *The Royal Artillery Memorial* in Hyde Park, London, displays a stylised, heavy artillery weapon, and is adorned with bas relief narrative scenes, heraldry, and battle names in a conflation of cast bronze figures and carved Portland stone. This memorial depicts the weight of grief, mourning, and sacrifice, and its attendant soldiery help humanize the monument[26]. One of the bronze figures is an artillery ranker, burdened by his load of four 18-pounder shells slung in a long-pocketed waistcoat: the human beast of burden. The 'lifelikeness' of Jagger's treatment of this figure possesses a recognisable, typical, familiarity; he is metaphorically representative of the thousands of men who fought as gunners, and gives a face to the 49,000 of them who died. The 'final truth' of the collective deaths of this host is 'embodied' by another figure. This is a recumbent corpse, with its equally realistic rendering of this man's boots, puttees, British Warm (greatcoat), and his steel Brodie helmet reverently placed on his chest, whose concealed face beneath that greatcoat is symbolically representative of all British artillerymen who perished. Beneath the bronze 'bed' this man is laid out on is a stone plinth embellished with the Shakespearean epigram (from Henry V): 'Here Was A Royal Fellowship Of Death'. Although idealised, these figures are unambiguous and straightforward in their representation of the 'common soldier'.

Chris McLean and Jock Phillips's *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials,* along with Phillip's subsequent *To the Memory,* depict the range of First World War memorials in New Zealand: there are many heroic and idealised soldiers represented. The preponderance of infantrymen – in the latter category – is hardly surprising, although there is a strong presence of the obelisk, cross, and the cenotaph (or 'empty tomb)'. Another means of memorialising the effects is through the consideration of the ruin[27].

In the case of this writer's 'home town' of Hastings city, the district (Soldiers' Memorial) hospital with its Spanish Mission-styled chapel is, according to Phillips, 'one of the few utilitarian proposals for memorials that have survived from 1919' [28]. An unattributed bronze bust in the Hastings Hall of Memories depicts the First New Zealand Division's commander, Major-General Sir Andrew Hamilton [Guy] Russell, K.G.B., K.C.M.G., of Tunanui, Sherenden, Hawke's Bay, and the life-sized bronze of General Russell, by Margriet Windhausen, was unveiled at the Anzac Day dawn commemoration ceremony on 25 April, 2015 and stands adjacent to the Cenotaph.

[26] For a perceptive discussion of Jagger's monument, Geoff Dyer, *The Missing of the Somme*, 60 - 65, and also Herbert George, 'Memory', in Herbert George, *The Elements of Sculpture: A Viewer's Guide* (London: Phaidon, 2014), 166 -67.

[27] For the discussion of landscape as the site of collective and familial memorialisation see Hugh Clout, *After the Ruins: Restoring the Countryside of Northern France after the Great War* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2010 [1996]). Also Roze, *Fields of Memory,* and for a German context that conflates the ruin with the diorama/model, Helmut Puff, *Miniature Monuments.*

[28] Chris McLean and Jock Phillips, *The Sorrow and the Pride: New Zealand War Memorials* (Wellington: GP Books/ Historical Branch/ Department of Internal Affairs, 1990), and Jock Phillips, *To the Memory*, 93.

For an understated and highly refined treatment of a war memorial, a particularly elegant example can be found in New Zealand's *Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, He Toa Matangaro No Aotearoa* (2004), Pukeahu War Memorial Park in Wellington. The *Tomb* was designed by a team led by Kingsley Baird. The body of an unnamed First World War soldier (a victim of fighting in one of the battles of the Somme and recovered from the Commonwealth War Graves Commission Caterpillar Valley cemetery in northern France) was interred on 11 November 2004[29].

In Baird's work, particularly in examples I will refer to later in this thesis, we begin to see the way that the personal response of the artist as an individual, free of civic notions of appropriate public memorialisation, may produce a different kind of commemoration, one that the artistic output of this doctoral project aspired to conform to. A poignant example of a personal, yet universal, sculptural portrait of grief (and a monument to her son, Peter, killed early in the war in the *Kindermort* battles in 1914) is Käthe Kollwitz's '*Mourning Parents'* at Vladslo German war cemetery in Belgium[30], and there are others in this ilk that I will pay closer attention to in subsequent chapters.

As will be clear from the preceding discussion, the thesis of this practice-based creative project is made up of artworks that visually memorialise an individual soldier of the First World War. They do not commemorate his death; rather, they contribute to preserving the fact that he (and the majority of his comrades) endured extended proximity to great dangers and shared risks, and yet survived the 'war to end all wars'.

This project's miniature sculptures are an exploration of the experience of just one man caught up in what Frederic Jameson has described as the 'enormous forces' of war [31]. These miniature sculptures are creative conjectural and speculative endeavours that are informed by notions of how Wilkinson maintained both his individuality and his sanity over a protracted period of time amidst the coercive and conforming constraints of military structure, and subdued by the doctrine of attrition. They, therefore, consider his response to the imminent possibility of his own death, and the metaphor of the shattered landscape not only alludes to the terrain he fought in, but also to the psychological states he – the 'common soldier' – faced as a privation of 'total' war. Tropes such as the blasted tree-stump or disappeared avenue, the sandbagged breastwork, the railway siding or platform, along with cratered, shattered and de-populated ground have enabled me to create images of landscapes that have been subject to destruction, inspired by Wilkinson's story. I have matched my imagery to events that Wilkinson cites, or to states of mind that he confesses to, or to empathetic imaginations provoked in the mind of the artist as a response to his writings.

[29] *Tomb of the Unknown Warrior, He Toa Matangaro No Aotearoa*, 2004, Pukeahu National War Memorial Park, Wellington, designer Kingsley Baird, et al.
[30] Anne Roze, *Fields of Memory: A Testimony to the Great War* (London: Seven Dials, 2000 [1998]), 63.
[31] Jameson, *Postmodernism*, 34–38.

Given that the last of the First World War's combatants have died over the past decade, this project operates outside of lived memory. It uses memory, however, as an 'inexhaustible nutrient source'[32], maintaining a position of vigilance against forgetting. The project also acknowledges that some of Wilkinson's experiences may have been self-censored from his letters (out of consideration for his family's sensibilities), or erased for him by higher military authority, instances of which are occasionally noted by Wilkinson himself and A.H. Reed, the letters' transcriber. Except for the letter dated 8 July 1915, no other original letter has been available to enable a finer scrutiny, perhaps through the analysis of his writing style of cursive script. However, the transcribed copies, as collected in the three volumes, have provided this project with information that would otherwise have been excised from history and lost forever. Some censored passages, along with the 'lost' diary for 1917, have presented 'gaps' on which I have made creative suppositions that have been integral to the creative-research process.

[32] E. Wesseling, ''Memory is the Primary Instrument, the Inexhaustible Nutrient Source', Remediations of Literary Romanticism in Sally Mann's Family Photographs', *Arcadia International Journal for Literary Studies*, 46, no.1 (2011), 3–14.

Chapter 3. Memorialisation

W. G. Sebald has noted that there is an 'art' to forgetting and this 'art', it can be argued, is what memorialisation is all about; a constant transferring of recollection into written signs and, in this project's case, into visual signs. Sebald contends that writing (and by extension, art-making) is an attempt 'to preserve our equilibrium among the living with all our dead within us, as we lament the dead and with our [own] death before our eyes[33].'

Permeating this project's research has been the recognition and identification of what I have called 'a phenomenological sensorium' of Wilkinson's war experience: guilt, pity, sympathy, exhaustion. This range of senses and emotional responses lies hidden below Wilkinson's narrative and has necessitated acts of imagination on the part of the artist: although he does indicate how hard he was emotionally hit when comrades were killed or wounded, or what he thought of his enemy after the discovery of a particularly deplorable act of fighting, he does not dwell on or overstate these facts. The catalyst for each work, therefore, arose from an empathetic re-imagining of the events of Wilkinson's war, each of which become an artistically expressed commemoration in the form of a miniature artwork.

Manifesting and harnessing the affective powers of the thing and the possibilities of 'memory-as-sympathy' constituted an important aspect of this central task. First World War soldiers are remembered not only because of abstract notions of nation-formation or identity, but because the very act of remembering enables empathy with them and the travails they endured in the name of the nation (or empire).

As an artist I see pity competing with guilt as a means of explanation of personal experience in the First World War. Pity, I interpret as a sense that is central to the human condition, and which empowers empathy; it is an affective reaction to war-as-normative-history, and also to any art-making endeavour that seeks to understand the human cost of that history. I assert that pity accompanies sadness as both immediate and retrospective reactions to the universalising hardships of war; pity, to employ Wilfred Owen's poetics, 'distills' war's 'untold truths'[34].

According to W. G. Sebald, self-reflexive reconstructions of the past are available to anyone's artistic self, and any aspect of the past constitutes suitable subject matter for this act.

[33] W. G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction* (London: Penguin, 2003) [*Luftkrieg und Literatur*, Carl Hanser, 1999], 176–77.
[34] Wilfred Owen, 'Strange Meeting', line 24 - 25: 'I mean the truth untold, The pity of war, the pity war distilled,' in Fiona Waters, ed., *A Corner of a Foreign Field: The Illustrated Poetry of the First World War* (Croxley Green, Hertfordshire: Transatlantic Press/Daily Mail, 2012), 126. Niall Ferguson used Wilfred Owen's phrase as the title of his formidable *The Pity of War* (London: Allen Lane/Penguin, 1998).

Because particularly traumatic moments seem to pique the interests of so many, the process of memorialisation may be a painfully acute means of identity formation, especially when a close family member is under scrutiny. The very act of remembering, in an age filled with traumatic moments ensures the continuance of memory[35].

Temporal and spatial separations of one hundred years, and half a world in distance, have provided both content and context, and the research arc has operated under the following premise: just as the future moves back into the past via the instantaneity of the present, so too the past reaches forward into the future through the simultaneity of the recalled here and now. But this flux is not smooth and continuous, or even necessarily coherent. It is, at best, partial, meaning Wilkinson's weekly letters and day-diaries of recalled details of his experiences are episodic in form – ledgers of letters received or sent. His lists include meals cooked, old mates encountered in odd places, long walks, near misses, or other experiential highlights, along with other incredible (or mundane, fragmented or episodic) moments. This temporal framework has allowed my research to focus not only on the remembering of one man's experiences in the First World War, but has also provided vital nodes to engage with the time, space, place-landscape, and duration of his service, along with a visual representation of the social agency inherent in his war trajectory – in a 'postmemory' act of 're-remembering'[36].

By employing 'the episodic' – which is the experiential fragment or the noteworthy event – as the tool of inspiration in its investigations and explorations, the creative output has embodied 'glimpses' of a narrative that hovers between pragmatic representations and – when viewed retrospectively – the oneiric. Notwithstanding the uncertainties of autobiographical memory, with its potential for exaggerations, under-statements, distortions, boasts, inaccuracies, gossip and banalities, Wilkinson's 'self-writing'[37] provides a platform from which to divine meaning (as opposed to knowledge) from his experiences by using 'imagination and poetic insight'[38]. This project is concerned with a translation and interpretation of Wilkinson's experience, by seeing him as an individual (and perhaps inevitably) as the 'everyman' or the 'common soldier'. Research conclusions may seem to presuppose the taking of some kind of moral or ethical stance; say, of locating the

[35] Sebald, *Natural* History.
[36] See Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust* (New York: Colombia University Press, 2012); *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); and, Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
[37] See Susanne Gannon, 'The (Im)Possibilities of Writing the Self-Writing: French Poststructuralist Theory and Autoethnography', *Cultural Studies, Critical Methodologies*, 6, no. 4 (2006): 474–95 and Irina Paperno, 'What can be done with Diaries?', *The Russian Review,* 63, (October 2004): 561–73.
[38] Hayden White, 'The Public Relevance of Historical Studies: A Reply to Dirk Moses', *History and Theory*, 44 (October 2005): 38.

'justness' of war through creative practice. Less attractively, research may be interpreted as offering a voice to the 'winning' side, because the act of memorialisation may combine the commemorative with its less conciliatory mirror-image, the celebratory.

All these conclusions are open to the viewer, and such negotiations also include the elegiac; because although Wilkinson returned home uninjured, many of his comrades were not so lucky. Also at hand is an implicit pacifistic interpretation. These elements can be deployed in a combination as ways of memorialisation and help the miniature sculpture to contribute to collective recall (or memory) of the First World War, but it is at the singular, 'bottom up' level that the conflict's calculations of death may be more viscerally witnessed.

This project's act of memorialisation is both a strategy and a perspective (for example, the god's-eye viewpoint) and also a temporal process. The selection of works for exhibition constitutes a sequence of episodes that is informed by events or pieces of information, but is not necessarily temporally linear in its makeup; although all these works were made during the research arc, they were not necessarily made one after the other. Instead, and as a result of the digressions, and discursive dry gulches that inevitably accompany practice-based research, they were the result of what may be termed somewhat peripatetic, periphrastic and palimpsistic ways of working. In employing processes of evocation, which reduces and compresses Wilkinson's story, the problematic notion of the quixotic was confronted: how can even a single day – from cock crow to reveille – let alone over forty-eight months of a combatant's experience, be distilled into a small body of sculptural works that coherently interpret this man's war trajectory? Here, 'choice' remains a pivotal aspect in this project's creative arc, meaning that each miniature sculpture has been empowered to do its 'work' affectively.

The selection process for the subject of each miniature sculpture is one that harnesses the power of the god's eye and transverses viewpoints to project and communicate each 'episodic' encounter. In making such encounters with Wilkinson's narrative 'plastic', the miniature sculpture is a conversation between the materiality of sculptural practice, and the encoding of concrete material things – or "things-in-motion" – with memory in order to illuminate their human and social context. The miniature sculptures under discussion are derived from the object form of history: things, or mnemonic devices – including war memorials – that help us recall the past. They are not about the First World War *per se,* but they are things that are aware of the historical rupture that was created by this conflict.

Sculpture possesses a performative operation through its occupation of space by form inviting a kinetic audience reaction. This may be the circumnavigation of the plinth-borne, three-dimensional art object, the craning for a more comprehensive view or the enticement to move to

gain a closer perspective. The miniature sculpture also possesses an association with child-like things such as toys, gaining something of its authority by placing itself at a particular temporal here and now.

The sculptures aim to find (visual) form for phenomenological interactions of human experience with (past) landscapes, as Susan Stewart expands:

> *Miniature models['] use of the tableau as a method to represent and capture entire worlds also means that they invite action by asking the viewer to step into the model and make it come alive through imaginative play. This not only gives the tableau 'the power to etch itself into one's memory' but also gives us the power to invent our own worlds, our own associations* [39].

The miniature sculpture conflates the experience of exchange between the art object and its audience, not only through its intentionality (that of memorialisation) and its data-set, (Wilkinson's letters and diaries), but also with a number of other contextualising factors. The first of these factors is social, cultural, and military history. Then, imagined renditions of terrain profoundly subjected to state-sanctioned military violence. These may be seen as a representational trope, but they do offer an accessible means of recalling the geographical spaces in which Wilkinson served. Closely allied to these considerations is the presence of the human body in such places and the psychological condition of the human mind in static war situations, or in the less-pressurised spaces of the rear areas or where no actual fighting has taken place. The latter factor reflects the oddness of the Western Front, where a soldier could be facing imminent death, yet a mere twenty-four hours later would see him disembarking from a leave train in the centre of London.

The foundational 'Anzac myth', which is interwoven into the national identities of both New Zealand and Australia, is inevitably entangled in the meaning of these sculptural works, albeit at the level of inference. More overt in unpicking this contested ground is the work of Kingsley Baird's *The Anzac Pair* (2017)[40], which is comprised of bronzed renditions of the distinctive headgear of both the First New Zealand Expeditionary Force, and the Australian Imperial Force. These works incorporate the depiction of compressed pictorial space, archival photographic imagery rendered three-dimensionally, symbolic forms of co-opted and re-contextualised toys and faithful facsimile incorporation of historical artefacts and photographic imagery. Deployed in combination, *The Anzac Pair* speaks of a 'familial' kind of memory, but it is visualised at the level of the nation-state. Here the

[39] Susan Stewart, 'The Miniature', in Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007 [1984]), 37 – 69; 69.
[40] Kingsley Baird, 'The Anzac Pair: An Allegory of National Identity', in *Kingsley Baird*, *The Anzac Pair* (Waiouru: National Army Museum, Te Mata Toa, 2017, 7 August – 24 November 2017), 6–33.

experience of the disastrous Gallipoli campaign as an essential ingredient in the concepts of national identity in New Zealand and to a greater extent in Australia, is an 'act of contemporary "witnessing" by artists – and historians – [and] includes the moral necessity to critique the use of the past to justify action in the present' [41]. This project echoes such sentiments.

In allowing this position, this project's miniature sculpture constitutes – but is not dependent on – a symbolic re-presenting of precise aspects of a life lived *in extremis* one hundred years ago. In seeking out meaningful and original visual responses to Wilkinson's testimony – ones that pursue and hopefully adopt some aspect of Walter Benjamin's enduring epithet of the 'aura' [42] – the miniature sculptures mirror or imitate the real, or the mimetic, to help give three-dimensional shape to how Wilkinson's experiences may be interpreted and understood. Mimesis, as a sculptural means, relies heavily on intuitive, and tacit, creative intentionality in its processes of making [43].

In this context Paul Ricoeur, in *Memory, History, Forgetting,* speaks of mimesis in relation to the truthful dimension of memory in the concept of history, and also of 'icon[ographic] specificity, faithfulness and veracity'[44]. Ricoeur is reluctant to ascribe history with the word 'truth' in his comparison of the presumed truth of historical representation of the past with the presumed trustworthiness of mnemonic representation. This has relevance when memorialisation, as a cultural drive at the micro and macro level, is being considered. Ricoeur states that 'a narrative does not resemble the event it recounts', where the 'taking the place of/standing for' is deployed as 'representation-supplementation'[45]. Such an awareness has enabled sculptors of miniatures to seek out subjects that present historically-influenced and artistic/creative 'truths', that are constantly open to review with the passage of time. They are also able to be analysed 'objectively', notwithstanding the dual subjectivities operating at the heart of this project; that is, Wilkinson the soldier, and this writer as the producer of the sculptures under discussion.

I acknowledge Benjamin's ideas on the way children are "irresistibly drawn" to the dirt pile and the construction site, and how they effortlessly and intuitively use waste to create playthings that separate them from the adult world. Such activities and utilisations have close parallels to the *objet trouvé*, and I have been motivated by Benjamin's observation of how children produce their own small world of things within the greater one. This is a phenomenon not dissimilar to the workings of the miniature sculpture. The miniature sculpture's reduction in size of a landscape, say,

[41] Baird, *The Anzac Pair*, 28.
[42] Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana, 1973 [1936]): 5–10.
[43] See Ernest Dichter, 'The Strategy of Desire', quoted in Arthur Asa Berger, *What Objects Mean: An Introduction to Material Culture* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2009): 14.
[44] Paul Ricoeur, *Memory, History, Forgetting,* trans. Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006 [2004]), 12.
[45] Ricoeur, 280, and note 81, 565–67.

along with the incorporation of scale-model figures, built-culture artefacts and other natural elements like tree-stumps or revetments in this project's sculptures, all hint at the toy. This cultural artefact embraces a close relationship to one of this project's methods, that of the model, and with it, the scale-model soldier used as a 'found object' within an artwork. As I have noted earlier, the miniature sculpture is not simply an act of model-making, rather it is an end in itself; in this case a three-dimensional art work inspired by Wilkinson's story. This emphasis enables the memorial, miniature sculpture to act as a visual metaphor for Wilkinson's experience and to operate as a reflection of the existential state of the battlefront, of 'No Man's Land', and of imagined landscapes that he may have fought in. I have termed these sculptural renderings 'topographies of experience', a conflation that allows the miniature sculpture to not only compress geographical space in iconographic terms, but also to impart a consideration of the (imagined) psychological experience endured by the soldiery.

Chapter 4. Narrative and Self-Writing

As Roland Barthes comprehensively identifies: the narratives of the world are numberless, and, their variety of genres, prodigious[46].

Wilkinson's story contributes to processes of analogous identity formation, and as he offers his own personal perceptions of his life at war through his letters, he thus allows me, as a conduit, to invent some of my own visual analogies[47]. The sculptures selected to reflect or represent this particular kind of narrative need to simultaneously convey memorable events, something of the 'character' of the writer, and some of the details of given spatial situations, to create opportunities for imaginative speculation. These artworks must also be capable of conveying (the impression of) temporal exactness, and possess stylistic cohesiveness. Therefore, the imagery that is embodied in each miniature sculpture, contributes to another kind of narrative inspired by Wilkinson's words.

For the purposes of this project, I have taken the word 'narrative' to mean the representation in art of a story or an event. An event, according to Slavoj Žižek, is:

> *Something shocking, out of joint, and which appears to happen all of a sudden and interrupts the usual flow of things; something that emerges seemingly out of nowhere without discernible causes; an appearance without solid being as its foundation* [48].

Contributing to the idea of event are considerations of time, and, as Paul Ricoeur contends: 'Time determines speed, pacing, suspense, and movement. Plot is there for what and how. Time is there for the when. But it's the coordination of these two that make an interesting story, where images not only 'tell' stories, but they also utilise the 'declarative' qualities of memory'[49] .

Hand-written letters constitute a private conversation – a particularised and intimate kind of narrative. But, because letters were often passed on and shared, in this case because Wilkinson often did not have the time or energy to write to all those who 'may be interested' in his doings, his letters enunciated a public conversation as well, representing the pluralistic face of a (historical)

[46] Roland Barthes, *Image Music, Text,* trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang/Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1977); 79.
[47] For a discussion of the role of analogy in visuality, Barbara Maria Stafford, *Visual Analogy: Consciousness as the Art of Connecting* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001).
[48] Slavoj Žižek, *Event: Philosophy in Transit* (London: Penguin, 2014), 2 & 3.
[49] Ricoeur, 392. Ricoeur is referring to Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory Crisis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 3.

individual. He is not only a singular narrator (whose record, through good luck or management, remains available to us today), and his identity has shifted by processes of exchange that transform his personal, and individualised, 'utterances' into a dialogue of intimacy and immediacy. Letters themselves are but re-interpretations of lived time, and lots can, and does, happen while on active service in a war zone. But a letter can be no more than the merest of hints of the totality of his experiences; therefore, I have taken Wilkinson's letters to present only the barest of fragments of his life at war. He does not, for instance, often comment on the Flemish or Picardy countryside – pulverised or otherwise – although he is immersed in such landscapes for months on end. This is an even-handedness that perhaps represents a distancing of himself from 'agencies of destruction' that he had no personal control over.

Wilkinson was also aware of the constant hand of the censor (although as an officer he had to impose this restriction on his men's correspondence) often preferring to make oblique notes, so that he could embellish his narrative when he returned to New Zealand – an almost talismanic confidence that he would survive. The state of the weather, however, is often mentioned, which is unsurprising, given that he spent much of his time out of doors, exposed to its attendant seasonal discomforts of mud, deluge or broiling sun. He recorded notable narrative events, including when a rocket went up; when he received New Zealand mail (often in floods after long, dry periods of no mail at all); when his next leave might eventuate; what he thought of the fighting prowess of 'Tommy'; who had won the inter-unit game of rugby; who had dropped into his dugout for a chat, a meal, or a hand of bridge; or, worst, who had been wounded or was dead. He did this without exaggeration or undue recourse to hearsay or maliciousness.

No matter how intimate and truthful I find Wilkinson's self-writing, others – particularly historians – have found the data offered by primary source/epistolary testimony to be problematic; John Lack contends that there is disagreement amongst historians, regarding the historical value of wartime letters [50]. He cites Paul Fussell, who found letters unreliable as factual testimony because of their 'unique style of almost unvarying formulaic understatement', reflecting 'a decent solicitude for the feelings of the recipient'[51]. Martin Lyons, in writing about the correspondence of the French Army's frontline soldier has this to say about the reliability and veracity of this form of testimony: 'soldiers'

[50] John Lack, ''The Great Madness of 1914-18': Families at War on Melbourne's Eastern and Western fronts', in John Lack, Judith Smart and John Arnold, eds., *Victoria and the Great War, The La Trobe Journal*, no. 96, (September, 2015), 59 – 87.

[51] Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 181 – 83.

letters and postcards, banal, formulaic, and platitudinous, were designed not to reveal the truth as much as to disguise it'[52].

Samuel Hynes has noted that the preponderance of soldiers' recorded frontline experiences come from junior officers because it was the literate middle class that supplied this cohort of men for active service – 'the great self-recording class, the class that keeps diaries and journals and considers that the preservation of one's daily life is an appropriate and interesting activity for an individual'[53]. The soldiers' tale, according to Hynes, is represented in the format of the letter, which, for the main, did not come from the ranks, because the rank and file were 'poor, inarticulate, unlettered, shy; or because it simply did not occur to them to write down what had happened to them'[54]. Wilkinson, as a 'ranker', is an exception to this definition, but as he climbs through the ranks, he confirms Hynes's assertion.

Within this narrative lies the potential for the event to be framed in ways that are not obvious, empirical or that take place in the common-sense world of 'reality'. Žižek states that the event also 'designates a new epochal disclosure of Being, the emergence of a new 'world' (a horizon of meaning within which all entities appear)[55]. Wilkinson's letters, as a 'memoir from below', provide an intimate glimpse of what it was like to experience and endure this War/Event: Gallipoli as an all-encompassing, enveloping and hellish experience, where, once landed, Wilkinson and his comrades were stuck until wounded or finally evacuated.

In constructing my sculptures I was aware that the two main theatres of land warfare where New Zealand soldiers were engaged (Gallipoli and France/Flanders) were highly concentrated territorially and spatially; the former being a beach-head a few kilometres in depth, and the latter a long thin skein of profoundly distressed land that stretched from the English Channel to Switzerland. Each army/corps/fighting division was allocated a section of this line that mathematically decreased in a series of sub-divisions all the way down to that occupied by the gun battery and the platoon or section. These are measurements of scale, and they are entangled with the idea of the 'bottom up'. Here the fighting soldier knew only the sliver of terrain immediately in front of his trench, or the thin arc that the traverse of his artillery piece was tasked with bombarding; geographical size that was inextricably bound up with survival, and luck, in wartime. Accordingly, these sub-divisions have much to do with the size and scale, and therefore the meaning, of each of my miniature sculptures, as they have sought to isolate particular moments in Wilkinson's testimony.

[52] Martin Lyons, 'French Soldiers and Their Correspondence: Towards a History of Writing Practices in the First World War', *French History*, 17, no. 1, (2003), 94 – 95.
[53] Samuel Hynes, *The Soldiers' Tale: Bearing Witness to Modern War* (London: Pimlico, 1998), 32.
[54] Hynes, *Soldiers' Tale,* 23, 57 – 58.
[55] Žižek, *Event.*

In this context, the 'episodic' is a core means of selecting individual elements from Wilkinson's narrative, to be used as subjects for sculptures that operate within this collective world-narrative. The episodic helps to both identify, and also to isolate an individual's point of view. As the locus of fertile historical inspiration, the "individuated in the narration" to use Franklin Ankersmit's phrase[56], has enabled an interpretation of this as being the point in time when an individual's lived experience may denote a specific, historical viewpoint. Through an individual's life I have been able to pinpoint broader and more generalised factual aspects of the past. This has, in turn, enabled the miniature sculptures to work as points of, and for, interpretation; not only to locate where the particular point of view should be seen from, but also how to maximise the scope and descriptive meanings and relative merits for selecting statements from the past. Such an act of identification is, in Ankersmit's words, a 'subtle indication':

> *Narrative use of language is not object[ive] language and 'points of view' are neither true nor false. The narration does not claim that an interconnection exists between things or aspects of things in the past – such a claim could be true or false – but only creates an inter-connection between a narratio's scope and what is explicitly stated in it*[57].

Ankersmit also cites Johan Huitzinga, and his notion of 'interrelatedness'[45] as a means of surmounting the contradiction between historical knowing and strict causality. Huizinga has used the German word *samenhang* to define the understanding of the term interrelatedness (although the German word for context is *Zusamenhang*) to emphasise a conceptualising of the connectedness between the multifarious strands of historical remembering. According to Huitzinga[58], each new statement modifies the point of view from which the past (as described by the other statements of the narration) should be seen. In modest, temporally and spatially localised and individual ways, this is what the 'episodic', as embodied in each discrete miniature sculpture, attempts to do.

The agency of the miniature sculpture works at the intersection where the processes of miniaturisation and the diminishment of scale provide a metaphorical equivalence to the relationship of the individual to the collective, as they enact agency in the world. This agency affords the small sculpture the means, through compression and encapsulation, to divide space and shrink

[56] Franklin R. Ankersmit, *Narrative Logic: A Semantic Analysis of the Historian's Language* (The Hague: Martins Nijhoff/ Kluwer, 1983), 31.
[57] Ankersmit, *Narrative Logic,* 204 – 05.
[58] Ankersmit references Johan Huitzinga, 'Historical Forms and Ideas', in Verzamelde Werken, VII, Haarlem, 1959, 228, n3ff.

experience. My work deploys divisible scale that descends in ratios – 35th, 72nd, 76th, 144th. These are measurable interior and exterior spaces informed by the landscapes of safety or extreme lethality. I interpret these (variously scaled) formats as analogies, or topographies, of experience, and as micro-worlds they allow the viewer to engage with the work by looking down at it, or into it. These visual fictions possess not only semblances of likeness and equivalence, but also perspectives of odd or uncanny aspects of Wilkinson's narrative; for example, his being depicted alone in a scenes that either ambiguously depict a war environment or that leave absolutely no doubt (for example, *Soldier Sitting…* , *Deathscape/Push* and *Owen, Forward Observing Fall of Shot* as discussed in Chapter 6).

Edward Casey, in his discussion on memory and the way we remember, notes how mnemonic modes differ perceptually, through writing, or, indeed, sculpting, when used as indicative signs[59]. These modes use forms of recognition that, while bound to the present, are more focused on the past. Their use of reminiscing, which ranges over both past and present, as well as the future, acts as a reminder. Casey cites the German word *weidererinnerung* (meaning 'recollection-again' or, more intriguingly, 're-remembering') as not a mere repetition of its predecessor, but something that differs from its forerunner. It refers, Casey claims, to something that possesses the probability of recall, and is a means of encoding content and context. Re-remembering accounts for changes in taste and distinction, takes into account distractions, digressions, cul-de-sacs, and interferences, and is aware of the internal relationships between the various materials being remembered. Casey concludes that:

> *Despite important differences, these 'mnemonic modes' take us from the realm of mind to the larger reaches of the surrounding world – from the involuted concerns of mendation to the way the world shows itself to be filled with [recognitory] clues, effective reminders, and things that inspire reminiscence. Instead of memory being confined to mind alone – as its own root memoir, 'mindful' signifies – it enters here into a continuing close collusion with the life world of its experience[60].*

It is this notion of 'the mnemonic mode' as a collusion between memory and experience, that has enabled important aspects of the experimental, incremental, nature of my research arc and art practice.

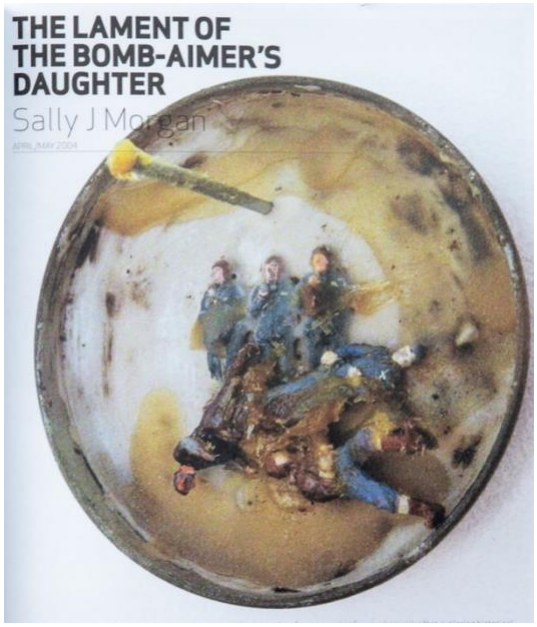
[59] Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000; [1987]), 51.
[60] Casey, Remembering, x – xi.

Wilkinson's voice 'speaks' to us in moments of 're-remembering'; not as secondary memory, where previously experienced episodes may be recalled using long-term visualisation, but as a step further removed from personal memory, where the process of remembering is filtered through the creative imagination of another person. In this case, this artist who has used the soldier's voice to inspire a series of artworks.

My visual imagination has been intent on an interpretation of the barest, few 'episodes' selected from Wilkinson's text. The process of my 're-remembering' is activated by the events and experiences of someone else's life. It cannot involve body memory because I am not Wilkinson. But the highly subjective way of remembering, made available to me by his self-writing, invokes a type of 'place memory'. This is derived from a combining of second-hand memory as embodied in his testimony with the photographic canon of the war and with my direct experience of visiting the battlefields that he fought on. This constitutes a plethora of memories, which has motivated this commemoration, enabling an infiltration and permeation of Wilkinson's witness testimony and accidental memoir; his is a 'mentalistic, representational or recollective' exemplar that permits a crafting of retrieved and reanimated places from Wilkinson's story, in more accessible and concrete form.

Chapter 5. A Survey of the Field

The works produced as part of this thesis are what I would term 'creative fictions': a cross between fact and imaginative interpretation. They rely on a 'singularity' in terms of their interpretation of an unpublished data source which has not been the subject of any previous research, creative or otherwise. The exhibition of the sculptural thesis, primarily its siting and modes of display, are discussed in the concluding chapter of this exegesis. The purpose of the current chapter is to identify the 'field' of memorialising sculpture that this project's thesis is situated in, to support the above claim, accompanied by a brief commentary identifying similarities or differences. The works identified to establish points of similarity and difference are all concerned with the miniature, and the sculptural depiction of war (particularly, but not exclusively, the First World War).



Sally J. Morgan, *The Lament of the Bomb-aimer's Daughter* (2004). Multi-media installation, dimensions variable. Photo: J. Gillam.

Here I examine a range of works with themes or approaches similar to my own, with the objective of identifying the reasons why my work makes a different contribution to the field. The first art work I will look at is Sally J. Morgan's multi-media installation, *The Lament of the Bomb-aimer's Daughter* (2004).

To lament is to regret, to grieve, and to mourn, and these verbs describe vital aspects of the way death and loss in war is remembered at both individual and collective levels. A lament may also be made of solid, corporeal or even found objects as it makes its call to remember the cost of war and all its terrors. Visually, a lament may affect through the identification and representation of

ghastliness or horror, through the shock of documentary realism, through keening, squalling or song, or through the frank and provocative revelations of aesthetic or artistic transgressions.

A lament may be poetic, elegiac or ballad-like. It can be sung or come as a 'cri de coeur' that is a means of locating the calm in the midst of the emotional storm. This is how I interpret Sally J. Morgan's *The Lament of the Bomb-aimer's Daughter.* This installation work situates the arrestingly tranquil and affective moment – a creative conversation between a Second World War combatant (the bomb-aimer) and his daughter; a condensing of familial memory and grief in an artwork that recollects traumatic times, for both father and daughter.

Although there are some surface similarities between Morgan's work and my own, in as much that both sets of works use found objects and model soldiers, my work relies on 'postmemory' - where I am removed from my subject by an extra generation, with no chance of any direct verbal conversation. In terms of the origins of the works, and also in their aesthetic and emotional effects, the key difference here lies in the nature of historical proximity – in Morgan's case this is at the level of personal remove; in mine it is one of generational distance.

Sally J. Morgan, *The Lament of the Bomb-Aimer's Daughter.* Multi-media installation, details, dimensions variable, 2004. Photo: J. Gillam.

Morgan uses a range and ensemble of media – wall-hung oil paintings, found, crafted, and mass-produced objects – to set up an engagement with her audience. This installation methodology invites her viewer to emotionally connect with the separate and discrete narrative elements that

make up her work. These centre on a pattern of circles, displayed on a pair of stacked 'op-shop' coffee tables, in an axis that crosses the exhibition space and which demands that the work be circumnavigated. The twenty-four circles on the top coffee table are boot polish tins, which contain prone, scale-model plastic airmen. The tins and polish are a neat material culture metaphor open to contrasting interpretations from the harsh spit and polish regimes of the military martinet, and are emblematic of uniformity, community, comradeship, and pride. Everyday routine is conflated with profound loss and grief; the figures lie on the differently coloured and textured waxen grounds in each tin, alone or in pairs. Because none of these figures stand upright, they appear 'dead'. In contrast, I have depicted Wilkinson alone, but very much alive and either standing, or sitting (or recently departed from the scene, or yet to arrive.

Morgan's tins have a medallic quality, a sculptural tradition of some antiquity, and they are lain out in strict formation on the small coffee table, itself stacked on top of a slightly larger coffee table. These material culture artefacts are both quotidian objects and plinths. Beneath the larger table is hung a white, ceramic, four-engined, model bomber plane. It may be assumed, that this aircraft must possess a minute kinetic potential, because being so low to the floor, the viewer must crouch down to claim a better view, thus disturbing the air slightly and setting the plane in motion (even if only slightly).

In contrast, I use specially made white plinths. Their primary function is as utilitarian display devices (notwithstanding their two heights that are aimed at evincing two different viewing perspectives). My nine sculptures are silent, and immobile, and are exhibited in the Hall of Memories as discrete works. They do, however, possess a collective coherence with the grouping of the eight plinths in the Hall creating a lozenge 'shape'. Also, the verticality of the plinths engaged with the upright character of the Hall itself. Considerations of the plinth heights (and viewing perspectives) were also crucial to the imparting of meaning. The geometrical layout of the plinths contributed to the way the miniature sculptures were 'read', and emphasised the importance of the 'pairing' of one miniature sculpture with another, and also the relation (and contribution) of the individual work to the collective body of work. As such they could be recognised to be part of a recognised definition of 'installation practice', although this was never an overt intention. The layout of Morgan's *Lament,* however, does adhere to ideas of the installation, with the disparate elements brought together, foregrounding the various aspects of Morgan's long-established 'processual' and performative practice[61].

[61] Morgan, Sally J., 'The Lament of the Bomb-aimer's Daughter [(April-May, 2004]', (Wellington: SHOW, 2009): 9–10, and also 'Beautiful Impurity: British Contextualism as Processual Postmodern Practice', *Journal of Visual Art Practice*, 2, no. 3, (2003): 135–44.

Morgan deploys small sculptures within her installation practice, and her figures hint at aircrews by making reference to items of kit, uniform, and their specific colours. These tiny vignettes investigate the familial memory of her father's war experience through processes of interpretation and reduction of memory into small sculptures, but expanded into a single 'installed' work.

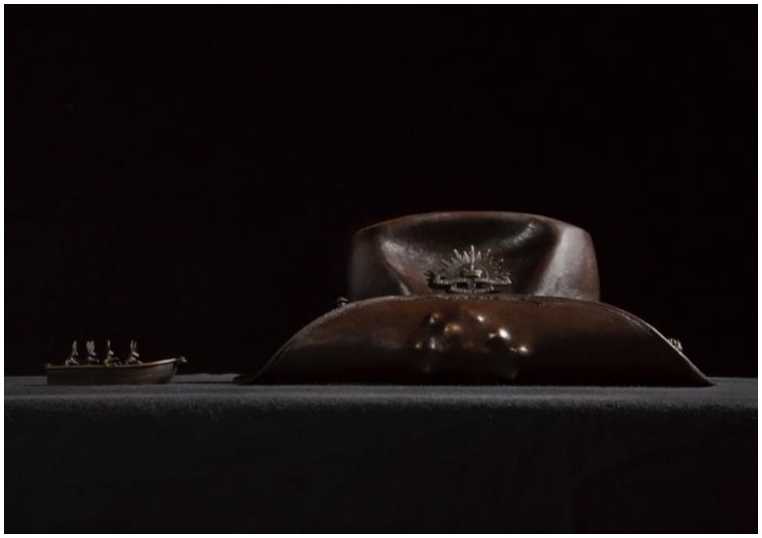
I share Sally J. Morgan's intention to affect my viewer, and like her I have aspired to find 'much in little' – *multum in parvo*[62]. However, the details of my subject, the space that separates familial memory from 'postmemory' and the divergent approaches to 'installing' our creative research outcomes means there are two quite distinct modes of expression being evinced here.

Kingsley Baird, *The Anzac Pair* (2017). Exhibition held at the National Army Museum Te Mata Toa, Waiouru, New Zealand, 7 August – 24 November, 2017. Photo: Ana Palmer.

Kingsley Baird, *Gallipoli* (*The Anzac Pair*) (2017). Photo: Jane Wilcox.

[62] Karl Zigrosser, *Multum in Parvo: An Essay in Poetic Imagination* (New York: George Braziller, 1965), 11.

The second artist's work I will examine is by Kingsley Baird. The vast and convoluted place of human communication may be brought to a focal point in singular acts, such as Kingsley Baird's bronzes, which are imbued with multi-layered story-strands. *The Anzac Pair* is concerned with the foundational national stories of Australia and New Zealand which were first truly 'blooded' on the Gallipoli Peninsula (the Anglo-Boer War notwithstanding)[63].



Kingsley Baird, *Birth of a Nation* (*The Anzac Pair*) (2017). Photo: Jane Wilcox.

My work differs in approach from Baird's in that it is concerned with the singular (and imagined) experiences of one historical soldier. In my works I situate Wilkinson in the particular, but generalised, landscape(s) of the Western Front, whereas Baird's bronzes reference both the field of battle, and also contemporary (and post-war) spaces such as the Australian Memorial in Hyde Park, London, and the Australian War Memorial (AWM) Roll of Honour in Canberra. While the landscapes referenced in my work may be recognisable through the historical photographic canon, and are inspired by 'real' places that Wilkinson mentions in his letters and diaries, none attempts to replicate facsimiles of them; they are 're-shapings'.

Baird's work harnesses the power of symbols, unearthing and enacting a more cognitively challenging function possessed by these two hats. They bear a strong likeness to place, as in the exaggerated 'lemon-squeezer' crown of the New Zealand headgear, which suggests that the elongation of this hat's distinctive folds is reminiscent of landscape; perhaps the rills, gullies and

[63] Kingsley Baird, 'The Anzac Pair: an allegory of national identity', in *Kingsley Baird, The Anzac Pair*, (Waiouru: National Army Museum/Te Mata Toa, 2017); 6–31. Also, Denis McLean, *The Prickly Pair: Making Nationalism in Australia and New Zealand*, (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2003).

ridges of Gallipoli, or of Stratford-domiciled Colonel William Malone's Mount Taranaki (or Egmont as he would have known it). My works share this conflating of landscape within the small object.

Baird also evinces a strong fidelity to the image. He depicts Australian official war correspondent (and one of the key creators of the Anzac myth and the AWM) C.E.W. Bean standing with his back to the viewer as in a 1915 black and white photograph. Baird reproduces Bean in bronze standing within the distinctive brim-fold of the slouch hat; a space that is both a metaphorical representation of a deeply cut Gallipoli sap, or the wall of names of a modern-day war memorial.

Both Baird's *The Anzac Pair* and my works are concerned with doing memory-work, but Baird's sculptures are more overtly aligned with the investigation of the 'foundational myth' of the 'Anzac'. More commonly known in Australia as the 'digger', this figure is imbued with values of stickability, reliability, personal courage, mateship, and physical strength and stamina. However, Baird's bronze sculptures also incorporate references to the myths of antiquity, which are made more specific by his inclusion of a Lego Trojan Horse. The New Zealand lemon-squeezer hat is flanked by this wheeled toy which is an apt visual metaphor because the archaeological site of ancient Troy could be seen from Chunuk Bair and other high points on the Gallipoli Peninsula, on the Asiatic side of the waters of the Dardanelles. In my miniature sculptures the 'toy' model soldier is incorporated as sculptural, story-telling and narrative elements that 'stands for' Wilkinson. It further contributes to the meaning of the work by leaving its toy-related origins behind.

While my work does not include classical references, it does share with Baird the use of everyday objects – felt hats, Lego figures, and facsimile renderings of militaria on his part, or Fernware school chair seat-bottoms, driftwood, kit-set plastic soldiers, on my part. The hats and the wood have been re-purposed into tableaux, upon which narrative stories have been enacted (and sculptures crafted). These have then acted as symbolic repositories of the Anzac myth-story (whether deliberately, as in Baird's case, or inferentially in my case).

There is a shared commonality of 'hallowed' and reverential stillness that lies between the Medal Room at the National Army Museum/Te Mata Toa in Waiouru and the National War Memorial's Hall of Memories at Pukeahu War Memorial Park, Wellington. Baird's work is surrounded by the collective medallic history of New Zealand's military history; a room of compressed valour. Given how such material culture artefacts are earned, there is a high register of solemnity present.

Although the distinctive official headgear of the Australian and New Zealand armies possess an obvious utilitarian function, Baird uses these hats as central contributing elements to a 'magic realism'. Here, he has transformed an actual militaria artefact, pieces of soft apparel, into artworks

that are durable and capable of lasting for centuries. His work operates as a warning against the sabre-rattling precarity of jingoism, which continues to cultivate and embellish the foundational Anzac myth; a national story of 'valour, honour, and glory', (in the face of bungled planning, indifferent leadership, and ultimate military failure) that could be balanced with a more cynical and contrary reading of the myth that views the war as a profligate using up of young lives in the pursuit of contestable ends. Like Baird's bronzes, my works (although fragile) are equally concerned with a believable, and faithful representationalism, as they enunciate their particular memorialising story.

The third artist's work in this survey is that of Richard Lewer from his 2016 project that contributed to *Sappers and Schrapnel* (https://richardlewer.com/work/artwork/198). The sculptures examined accompany several large-scale paintings as a response to the centenary of the First World War. Lewer is a New Zealand-born artist who lives in Australia and undertook a residency at Albany, Western Australia, where Europe-bound antipodean troop-armadas stopped over and re-provisioned before crossing the Indian Ocean. Lewer produced a body of drawings at Albany and then viewed the AWM's dioramas, some of which are pictured below.

It is important to emphasise that Lewer used the skills of an independent model-maker to fashion these sculptural works, making the work of the artist a step removed and indirect. This distancing means the artist's hand also becomes that of the 'project manager'; one removed from an 'actual' and dextrous negotiation with the language of mediation and media. This is not dissimilar to the production designer in the movie industry, or the expert printmaker who converts the artist's work into end products. In the context of this sculptural thesis all the miniature sculptures are the product of a direct, and experimental, working methodology.

Lewer's works 'sweat' with glistening verisimilitude; the 'fake water' in the craters looks convincingly 'real' enough, as do the expressions on the faces of some of the model figures. They emulate many of the original intentions of the Australian War Memorial's dioramas in their veracity and 'feeling of the scene' and artistic evocations of 'feverish unreality'; an attribute that C. E. W. Bean claimed 'comes over every day landscapes during battle time'[64].

They are symbolically evocative of situations that he has imagined and are thus similar to this project's intentions. However, his sculptures specifically converse with the universal aspects of the First World War: the clichéd features of trench life, the emotional hardships endured by the nurse, or the 'myths' of the war in the form of 'The Angel of Mons'. The mud depicted in 'The Angel of Mons' possesses a flaccid and oozing mobility, temporarily frozen into a trench wall that protects a four-man Lewis gun team who, awaiting the next deluge from the skies or shell explosion, stare

64 C. E. W. Bean in Leigh Robb, 'Richard Lewer: Small Acts', in *Sappers and Shrapnel: Contemporary Art and the Art of the Trenches*, ed. Lisa Slade, 104–122 (Adelaide: Art Gallery of South Australia, 2016).

with astonishment at the uncanny vision of a ghostly apparition before them as it dances above the skeins of barbed wire.

Lewer's works have been described as 'small personal acts of emphatic re-enactment [that] go some way to closing in on the helplessness of the contemporary artist, a century away from the feverish unreality that was the First World War'[65]. He speaks to the universal, whereas this project speaks to the specifics born out of Owen Wilkinson's self-writing.

Two key strands of Stephen Hurst's long career present militarised 'toys', which give a strong nod to the 'primitive', and bronze works, which are concerned with memory (as embodied in the written word/text/book) and, in particular, conflict-memory[66] (https://www.stephenbhurst.com/works/the-official-version/; https://www.stephenbhurst.com/works/war-toys/). A key problematic that has existed for the duration of this project, is whether works made from wax, plastic or balsawood should be converted into bronze or be allowed to remain extant. By taking works through the mould-making and lost-wax casting process, will the quotidian and 'un-monumental' stance offered by plastic kit-sets, found objects, or 'blobs' of wax be, at best, diminished or even removed? Bronze transforms the ambiguous object unimpeachably into art and something of the diorama's populist and 'everyday' status may, inevitably, be lost in this process. As Hurst puts it, bronze is the medium of war-memorials, ministry door handles, and the symbol of timeless officialdom and power.

Hurst has a long career as a sculptor who is concerned with the effects of war; he saw national service in Malaya and his father served in the First World War. His parents were also 'pilgrims' to the Flanders battlefields. He has made sculptures to 'comprehend' the war, and to understand the people who fought it, and lived through it. He has also sought ways of giving sculptural shape to its violence and also to critique its leadership. He does this through a powerful mediation – in cast bronze and carved wood, as an expression of fascination for the on-going effects of the First World War.

I share many of these motivations, although my familial associations are of my grandfather's generation, to seek out the destructive paradoxes of battle and rebirth and remembrance, and also Stephen Hurst's desire to remember war and its cost. However, I am telling a singular story about an individual at war, rather than a generalised call that is made by Hurst's sculptures. He is equally concerned with the victim of war, the failure and folly of leaders, the destruction of property and the ruination of landscapes. He has used the toy to advance these concerns, although his are

65 Leigh Robb, 'Richard Lewer, 104–122.

66 Stephen Hurst, *Stephen Hurst: Ypres the Great War and the Re-Gilding of Memory* (Ypres: In Flanders Fields Museum, 15 June–15 September, 2013); 94–101, 126–29.

assemblages and constructions, not without a high degree of visual wit. I also share Hurst's quick, and extemporised approach to facture and finish. He has cast small pocket notebooks which many volunteer soldiers carried into battle, and balances them with the luxuriously bound compendium of the official war history. Wilkinson's self-writing is similarly concerned with the literary, but for this artist only as a spark for my research, rather than an object to be replicated.

Hurst's cast books bring together his desire to communicate multi-layered narrative details in a durable, mediated manner. Human connections, for instance, speak of the human condition through over-production, pollution and addiction to war.

David Levinthal and Garry Trudeau are artists who work together and have produced a work that is pertinent to this project[67] (http://davidlevinthal.com/artwork/hme.html). In *Hitler Moves East,* war is presented as 'impassiveness', as opposed to the British artists, brothers Jake and Dinos Chapman, who present war as 'indifference'[68]. Rachel Wells writes that '[i]t is not an impassiveness that delights in itself, but rather one that is consumed with numbness at miniscule enormity. Here the exaggeration in scale through photography allows an enlargement of […] deceptively small domestic frustration[69].' These images create the appearance of the life-sized as opposed to the appearance of miniaturisation, or illusions of scale.

Levinthal and Trudeau's *Hitler Moves East* appears to be the ultimate example of Baudrillard's assertion of the miniaturisation of simulation – a miniaturisation that disguises its nature as such, and that simulates its own reality. In this simulation (of its own reality), Levinthal and Trudeau exaggerate through the use of both enlargement and through depictions that approximate actual historical events (that may have happened or are simply products of these artists' imaginations). These simulations are manipulated miniaturisations of the life-size, and they have offered me points of similarity (of intention and mediation) and also of difference and opposition, throughout this project's research arc.

This project's thesis has embraced and utilised the form of the miniature sculpture because of its inherent reductive and compressive capabilities, its capacity to represent other worlds, and its ability to evoke and to declare my intention to embrace the gap separating historical veracity from creative fiction. Although war is presented in this publication as 'impassive' and consumed with a 'miniscule economy', it is the enlarged miniaturisation and confusion of the grainy and blurred

[67] Levinthal, David and Garry Trudeau, *Hitler Moves East: A Graphic Chronicle, 1941–43* (Kansas City: Andrews McMeel, 2012 [1977]).
[68] Jake and Dinos Chapman, *Flogging a Dead Horse: The Life and Works of Jake and Dinos Chapman*, (New York: Rizzoli, 2011).
[69] Rachel Wells, *Scale in Contemporary Sculpture: Enlargement, Miniaturisation, and the Life-Size* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 49–51, 130–34.

background with the sharpness of the figures in the foreground which create aesthetic tension by negotiating between obvious fakery and possible documentary authenticity. Such intentions also seem to lie at the heart of *Hitler Moves East,* and this publication remains a beacon of stylistic innovation, over forty years after it was first published. The book contests officially-sanctioned canons of the military campaign. It does this by blending images of scale-model soldiery, photographed in close, often sepia-toned, depth-of-field, with grainy black and white 'authentic-looking' photography, militaria and ephemera and emblematic graphic art. These factors are brought together for the purposes of achieving a 'periodicity' – one that involves nostalgia, the antique and military memorabilia. The book uses miniaturisation (the scale-model plastic soldier and facsimiles of real life buildings, infrastructure, and technologies), while mixing normally incompatible visual and graphic traditions; all to help blur the lines between fact and fiction. Wilkinson's narrative is about a different war and military operations than this project, but it possesses a visual accessibility that offers an affective fusing of the above format(s) with (contemporary) printing and publishing technologies. This combination is recognised as highly influential.

Because this project has adopted the miniature, the diorama and the model soldier, consideration of British artists Jake and Dinos Chapman's *Hell* is unavoidable (https://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/jake_and_dinos_chapman_hell_installation_13305.htm). In their monograph *Flogging a Dead Horse* (2013), their work is shown to be deliberately transgressive, conceptually confrontational, and visual shock is a core strategy. *Hell* deploys considerable numbers of adapted Nazi-era 35th scale figures, with skeletons, cadavers and zombies, along with Adolf Hitler(s)-at-his-easel-while-the-world-burns. By mixing these with twenty-first-century corporate icons like Ronald McDonald, globalised consumption practices and economic and political mores are contested. Their treatment of the human figure often seems to border on the visually thano-pornographic in its depiction of ghastliness and in its universalising indeterminacies. Nevertheless, these works are concerned with remembering; with the shout of warning.

The Chapman brothers refer to model-makers' conventions by adhering to a specific and consistent scale. This implies 'a critique of the desire to recreate the world, including battles and ruinations, in miniature'[70]. But Mark Holborn asserts that *Hell* emphasises the gulf that separates the audience from the nightmarish scenes of decapitation and purgatorial suffering that the Chapman brothers make explicit[71].

This is a grand work and is meant as a trigger of the audience's imagination and awareness, paradoxically in the same way as the AWM's dioramas, but for radically different reasons (and

[70] Mark Holborn, 'Introduction', in *Jake and Dinos Chapman, Hell*, London: Jonathan Cape, 2002, 14.

71 Holborn, 14.

aesthetic motivations). Despite all the horror depicted in *Hell*, an extremely black sense of humour pervades this work, which is deliberate. However, the sheer numerousness of the plastic actors inhabiting their vitrines, each with their (deceased or zombie-like) story to tell, the superb design of the vitrines themselves, as separate and encapsulated worlds that contribute to a cohesive and singular (Swastika-shaped) multi-part whole, along with the capacity of these images to manipulate and evoke a sense of audience amazement and 'affect', have been aesthetic and conceptual strategies that have proved attractive for this study.

A crucial difference between their work and mine lies in the emphasis placed on artistic imagination. Of the Chapman brothers' *Hell*, Rachel Wells states that:

> *It is not a matter of quantative differentiation but rather a virtual take on a topic made deceptively familiar by references to an historic actuality. This is part of its manipulation of the viewer, persuading him or her that it is a miniaturisation rather than a miniature [..a] deception that this is a model taken from life, rather than a creation born out of the artist's imagination. Hell works on the general rather than the particular, its generic nature as a toy-like model reflecting its generic take on war*[72].

In a parallel creative production the Chapman brothers manifested Francisco Goya's two dimensional etchings *Disasters of War,* which converted the original suite and collaged or painted their trademark zombie-big-eared clown faces as an inserted extra character in each of the eighty etchings as an act of art-historical and aesthetic intervention, which was termed an 'improvement'. The crucial difference lies in the emphasis placed on the artistic imagination, and the nature of authorship.

The Chapman brothers re-purposing of a complete (and presumably rare) suite of Goya's etchings – that remember the horrors of war – is an act of pastiche. Their re-titling of the work, *Insult to Injury* (2007) is a wry, self-referential nod that destabilises the notion of the art hero, the masterpiece, the scarce artwork-as-commodity and status symbol; it is also knowingly confrontational, because their destruction of the work of one of the great European masters, will inevitably be interpreted as a polarising act, that gives a new shape and form to Goya's investigations of war's cruelties.

In contrast to my practice, where each work is unique and not intended to be changed in scale or media, the Chapman's further converted Goya's etchings into very small-scale, painted resin sculptures and then placed these eighty works into a collective grouping. This process of

72 Wells, *Scale in Contemporary Sculpture*, 134.

appropriation was developed by remaking Goya's *Disasters of War,* and their version *Insult to Injury*, into hallmarked, sterling silver miniatures. This act completed the transition from 'Old Master' to 'YBA'; into the desirable, and more affordable, contemporary art commodity.

In this next section I examine the difference between a museological diorama and the artworks I have contrived through dioramic form. The 'affective' power of things, and also of visually accurate reportage, may be witnessed in the still-fascinating dioramas at the AWM in Canberra (https://www.awm.gov.au/visit/visitor-information/features/dioramas). Made at great expense in the 1920s and 1930s, these dioramas represent a significant investment in how the memory of the cataclysm of the First World War is remembered in Australia; how its story is 'told'. The dioramas display a precision in locating and compressing temporal and spatial exactness through the place and the action depicted. A series of events – going 'over the top', succour for the wounded, bayonet charges of horse-mounted infantry – represent the enactment of visual, existential, and phenomenological 'apparatuses', that recall actual events, but still rendered using the generalised and the typical in order that a particular scene is visually and three-dimensionally 're-enacted'.

Such scenes remain enduringly affective methods. They help audiences feel and be affected by what it was like to have 'been there' as a participant. The AWM dioramas always possessed faithfully realistic contexts – both journalistic and pedagogical – to compress visual information. Their authenticity and authority derive from the AWM's status and influence the way war is remembered and commemorated. This is something distinctly different to anything this project may modestly aspire to, since many of the original AWM audience more than likely fought in the war or lost their sons or daughters to the war. These dioramas, therefore, originally acted as proxies of a national grief and were focused on overtly martial aspects of war remembrance and subject matter.

The AWM dioramas, although vastly reduced in scale when compared to the battlefields they depict, are large-scale if my miniature sculptures are placed in their context. However, when considered alongside the Chunuk Bair diorama that was part of the Great War Exhibition staged over the past four years, from 2015, at the former Dominion Museum building at Pukeahu, Wellington, they are modest in size[73]. It is all a matter of scale, with the Chunuk Bair diorama deploying around 5000 fastidiously painted, 35th scale figures (the work of a large group of enthusiastic – and highly skilled – modellers); a vast outlay of volunteer labour for the relatively short exhibition life of approximately three years (http://anzacdiorama.blogspot.com).

[73] Jeanette Richardson, *The Great War: New Zealand 1914–1918. Exhibition Guide* (Wellington: The Great War Exhibition/ National Military Heritage Charitable Trust, n.d. [ca. 2016]).

The Chunuk Bair diorama was many metres across, and had light-ups to pin-point important historical or tactical moments and places, to guide the viewer through the timeline of the battle that took place between 6–8 August 1915, and which cost New Zealand dearly.

None of my miniature sculptures have aimed at this kind of temporal and spatial precision nor have they attempted to cite troop deployment numbers, or the particularities of the terrain encountered. The meaning of my work lies outside historical and pedagogical accuracy, although like all the dioramas referred to here, they are vitally concerned with, and dominated by spatial dimensionality of negotiating the spaces between two and three dimensions to be able to pass on a soldier's story.

Chapter 6. The Creative Process

This section will discuss the creative process from engaging with the epistolary texts as sources of inspiration through to deciding upon the content, form, and materiality of the finished miniature sculptures. The agency of the sculptural process and language, the importance of materiality (in conjunction with choices around subject and scene) in the resolution of the final work will be examined. While other works will be referred to in this section, one miniature sculpture in the examination collection, *Soldier Sitting at the End of a Duckboard Track before a Skeletal Copse*, has been chosen to demonstrate how the above factors and the final content and aesthetics developed through the course of the creative process.

David Guerin, *Soldier Sitting at the End of a Duckboard Track before a Skeletal Copse*. Plywood 'Fernware' seat bottom, store-bought plastic trees, scratch-built 35th-scale Tamiya model soldier, epi-glue, Humbrol acrylic paint. 350 x 350 x 220 mm.

My sculptural thesis is concerned with both the universal story of combatants in the First World War, while simultaneously being intimately bound with the imagined experiences of a particular soldier. The thesis is a series of fictional speculations that could be described as being

'based on a true story.' Here incidents and moments are deployed to say something that is more than an accumulation of the parts (of this soldier's story).

As the title of the thesis suggests, the research has been concerned with the memorialization of a singular narrator. Even as they re-shape his personal story, the miniature sculptures are not translations of his words. Rather, they are three-dimensional interpretations *inspired* by his words. Initially, in part to maintain a degree of fidelity to the subject and his wartime experiences, actual events – as described in Wilkinson's diaries and letters – were selected as the drivers of the works. After making a number of miniature sculptures that responded directly to quotes from his epistolary texts, it became apparent that this strict adherence to the letters and diaries as the source of inspiration was not working.

David Guerin, *Soldier Sitting at the End of a Duckboard Track Before a Skeletal Copse* (detail). Plywood 'Fernware' seat bottom, store-bought plastic trees, scratch-built 35th-scale Tamiya model soldier, epi-glue, Humbrol acrylic paint. 350 x 350 x 220 mm.

Confining the scope of sculptural expressions to literal material drawn directly from the letters and diaries constrained the project's possibilities, including, crucially, getting closer to what I imagined Wilkinson might have experienced in war. While most of his sanguine recollections might have protected the narrator's loved ones from the reality of war, some just hint at the dangers he faced. One example is a reference he makes to returning to base and finding bullet holes in his coat.

A compelling recollection but not , I decided, the subject for a miniature sculpture. Paradoxically, given the source material related to one man's wartime experiences drawn from numerous letters and diary entries, selecting real-life events limited the possibility of creating a coherent collection.

It was essential that the works extended beyond the veracity of dioramas such as those found in the Australian War Memorial or the prescriptive compositions of kitset scale models. A solution to the problem of how to remain faithful to Wilkinson's narrative without scrupulously adhering to the subject's actual experiences as described by him came initially intuitively through the work, *Soldier Sitting.* This miniature sculpture became the model for the works that would follow and established the criteria for the selection that would comprise the final collection.

David Guerin, *Soldier Sitting at the End of a Duckboard Track Before a Skeletal Copse* (detail). Plywood 'Fernware' seat bottom, store-bought plastic trees, scratch-built 35th-scale Tamiya model soldier, epi-glue, Humbrol acrylic paint. 350 x 350 x 220 mm.

The model subjects were selected according to speculative individual episodes that explore a variety of experiences. These range from the frame of mind of the individual, the use of battlefields to operate as metaphors for psychological states and the destruction of human beings, 'everyday' settings of war experience – the trench, the dugout, and those directly removed from the immediate danger of war – the railway platform and the remembered kitchen from home. The evocation of

psychological states and the use of metaphor became key tools in which to explore a soldier's psychological experience. In a number of works discussed elsewhere, place is used metaphorically: *Departure* depicts a railway platform empty of all but a stack of luggage. Two paired relief sculptures, *Dugout Entrances (interior and exterior)* suggest the relative safety of one location over the other. Contrasting safe and perilous places – of reverie and reality – are also evoked in the juxtaposition of *The Oneiric Dyad (Dreaming of Grandma W's Kitchen/Breastworks)*.

Top: David Guerin, *Dugout Entrances (Exterior).* Bottom: David Guerin, *Dugout Entrances (Interior)*. Rimu, ebony, plastic, modelling putty, hessian, Tamiya and Humbrol acrylic paint. 95 x 95 x 110.

Two works which portray a lone figure dressed in an officer's uniform looking through binoculars, appear to refer directly to Wilkinson. One, *Owen, Forward Observing Fall of Shot*, explicitly includes Wilkinson in the title and both sculptures appear to depict the subject undertaking his everyday duties as an artillery officer. However, both *Owen, Forward* and *There's Rosemary, that's for remembrance. Pray, my love, remember*, are concerned not with Wilkinson's recorded experiences, but with the cost of war – dead soldiers are buried metres away from the apparently oblivious Wilkinson who is focused on his duty – and remembrance rituals which will begin before the war's end.

David Guerin, "There's Rosemary, that's for remembrance. Pray you, love, remember". Rosemary wood, Elmar 35th scale plastic soldier, micro-crystalline wax, Tamiya acrylic paint. 360 x 290 x 120.

Top and bottom: David Guerin, *Owen Forward Observing Fall of Shot*. Plywood, micro-crystalline wax, Tamiya modelling putty, twigs, plastic, Tamiya and Humbrol acrylic paint. 16 x 10.5 x 0.95.

Top and bottom: David Guerin, *Owen Forward Observing Fall of Shot*. Plywood, micro-crystalline wax, Tamiya modelling putty, twigs, plastic, Tamiya and Humbrol acrylic paint. 16 x 10.5 x 0.95.

These subjects are set within miniature sculptures, a small-scale 'model' form that was not part of my previous practice. It was selected because physical reduction provided the means to encapsulate Wilkinson's narrative within various settings depicted and evoked, ranging from battlefields to a railway station platform and a domestic kitchen. Along with being made from both available and affordable media, the miniature sculpture possesses the ability to 'compress' Wilkinson's story as well as make comprehensible – in visually compact and physically portable vignettes – the unimaginable scale of the First World War landscape.

Common to my existing sculptural practice was the use of found materials – sometimes minimally modified, if at all – which I would recontextualise and form into 'assemblages.' *Soldier Sitting* began with an old, plywood classroom seat, detached from the other chair parts. Turned upside down, this convex shape presented itself as not only a stage on which one of Wilkinson's narratives could be played out, but suggested a moment described in one of his diary entries, when enormous underground explosives were detonated under German lines at Messines, causing the earth above to momentarily 'swell.' A kitset scale figure, modified so his uniform and armaments are consistent with the British Army, was installed in the empty scene, sitting by himself at the end of a duckboard track. Next, a rough semi-circle of scale model trees was placed on the outer edges of the ply seat and crudely glued into position. It could have been a prototype for a more 'finished' work to follow, however, I recognised its raw state enhanced the narrative possibilities. Concerns about naturalism evaporated; instead Wilkinson's narrative could be found in this single model soldier sitting on a duckboard and partly surrounded by plastic trees, all located on an undecorated, upturned plywood seat. It was at this stage that the dramatic conceptual shift occurred from concern of faithfully relating the actual experiences of one combatant, as recorded in his letters and diaries, to instead portraying the imagined experiences of Wilkinson as a universal and archetypal character. The one representing the many.

Speculating about the incidents of Wilkinson's war experience opened up the possibility of considering his psychological state. There is no explicit evidence in his letters and diaries that Wilkinson suffered psychologically from the experiences he endured. However, *Soldier Sitting* speculates that he (or the lonely figure seated at the end of the duckboard) *might* have done so. This work gives expression to the number of constant forces in his life that might have induced less buoyant feelings than those he presented in his letters to his loved ones at home. I could, therefore, make the constant spectre of imminent danger of injury or death the subject of a work. This meant that I could invent a scenario that included a sense of powerlessness for this individual combatant (who was caught up amidst the forces of inexorability).

While *Soldier Sitting* represents a speculation of what Wilkinson might have experienced, it also offers the possibility of extending that experience: what might have happened next? Pairing *Soldier Sitting* with another work opened up the possibility of the 'before and after': a trope that would be repeated in a number of following works in the collection. Sometimes this would be expressed in a straightforward manner, such as *Dugout Entrances (Interior and Exterior)* in which two scenes are presented in relief representing the interior and exterior existence of the trench and the dugout. *Soldier Sitting* is concerned not only with a soldier's (Wilkinson's imagined) psychological state but also a foreboding; an individual's fate or a portent of greater events at play? This miniature

sculpture is paired with another work, *Deathscape/Push.* Here a landscape, possibly the same as that depicted in *Soldier Sitting*, has been devastated. The fate of the sitting soldier is unknown.

As with *Soldier Sitting*, the form of *Deathscape/Push*'s original physical setting, and in the latter's case, the nature of its surface, gestured to a particular approach. While *Soldier Sitting*'s ply seat was left unmodified, the natural burrs of *Deathscape/Push*'s wooden 'landscape' were augmented by the use of a chisel, extending the bomb craters implied by the timber's burred surface into depressions clearly interpreted as such. Paint was used to increase the impression of a naturalistic landscape, but the clearly chiseled surface never allows an entirely mimetic reading. While later works in the collection soften the measured 'crudeness' of *Soldier Sitting*, moving the work closer to the finish of dioramas or kitset models, they continue, at least partly, to eschew the latter's illusionistic techniques.

David Guerin, *Multum in Parvo – Bello Vista*. Totara, plastic, micro-crystalline wax, sticks, Tamiya and Humbrol acrylic paint. 330 x 185 x 115.

David Guerin, *Multum in Parvo – L'enfer*. Oregon pine, rimu, plastic, fo-mo, micro-crystalline wax, sticks, driftwood, putty, Tamiya and Humbrol acrylic paint. 290 x 200 x 115.

The means of displaying the miniature sculptures allowed for different viewing perspectives depending on how I wanted viewers to engage with the works and, specifically, Wilkinson's and his fellow combatants' experiences. Two modes of engagement, and thus exhibition display, emerged. Varying plinth heights aimed to draw viewers into various forms of engagement with the sculptures, and to provide for different types of experience. Firstly, the omnipresent, 'god's eye' viewpoint enabled an imaginative conception of a depiction of a large geographical space by looking down on the work. It presented a view that could be taken in at one glance. The god's eye view has the impact of emphasising the vulnerability and fragility of the lone soldier in the landscape. Other works were displayed at a higher level to enable a transverse perspective. This 'looking through' and 'across' the model landscape invited the viewer to be drawn into the environment depicted. These two approaches offered a means of eliciting an affective viewer response that asks for a

contemplative consideration of this soldier's experiences, along with the possibility of respect for the endurance he displayed.

Thus, *Soldier Sitting* became a progenitor for the works that followed. The adopted conceptional and aesthetic methods – related across the exhibited works – were intended to encourage viewers to perceive the exhibited collection as a cohesive, sculptural narrative.

However, an earlier work which was not selected for the Hall of Memories exhibition, *Salvage (Materielschlacht) #1* (2014), might also be seen as an exemplar for the methods of episodic selection (and rejection), and also as a means of identifying the space that separates the archive from its manifestation as a miniature sculpture. Before discussing this work in detail, I reiterate that my research began with the decision to align the memory of the First World War – and a single soldier's place in that meta-narrative – with the miniature sculpture; a cultural artefact that holds an ambiguous and nomadic position in visual culture objecthood. This decision resulted in a sustained production of small-scale sculptures.

The 'inspirations' garnered from Wilkinson's text (textual recapitulations of events and incidences of note, and of people and geographical spaces encountered) were integrated with the creative potential possessed by the found or gifted object. This combination was further amalgamated with a number of other factors: the simulation (in miniature) of the places his war trajectory took him to, or more accurately, places that he *may* have been taken to; the integration of aspects of the immense literary and pictorial canon of the conflict; the legacy of memorialisation – the war memorial – that was the commonly-received, plastic mnemonic device produced in the aftermath of the war.

This list indicates the potential for an immersive (and engaged) intersubjective practice. The potentially important role of the 'given' in the mediation processes of sculptural production (such as the use of military memorabilia in the form of weaponry, uniforms, and trench art) I took to be appropriate media for use in the miniature sculpture. I interpreted given objects as things that could operate as catalysts, and as important to the creative process as the historical, literary, and photographic/filmic canon of the war.

The miniature sculpture, both individually and as a genre of (contemporary) sculptural production is, therefore, a holistic response. Such a response is exemplified in a fortuitously stumbled-upon kit-set model that had languished for a long time on the back of a toy shop shelf, and which 'sparked' a sculptural idea. This idea, manifested in the miniature sculpture, *Salvage (Materielschlacht) #1*, was concerned with the task of the removal of the bodies of dead comrades. It was inspired by two 'real' events. The first Wilkinson records in a letter on 14 June 1917 (there is

no diary for 1917) when one of his battery's guns suffered a direct hit from a large-calibre, German shell with fatal consequences. The second is noted in the diary entry for Monday, 4th February 1918:

> *Sergeant Hoby, Bombardier Nandishley, Gunners Paddy Murphy and Lane were killed & Whittaker wounded – it was awful. We got the bodies out at night & rolled in blankets ready to go to wagon lines. They were all splendid fellows & will be missed. Strange both the Sergeant & Murphy were with me on the stretchers last night [bringing in the bodies of gassed infantrymen].*[74]

The corporeality of these two events I have reduced to an exact moment in time; not one that precisely locates the detonation of high explosive, but the sad and emotional enactment of body removal which is infused into the meaning of this miniature sculpture. The realistic model introduced a series of materialities that helped conflate and frame what were quite obviously profoundly moving moments in Wilkinson's active service. My creative supposition that equated the status of discarded personal weaponry and other battlefield detritus with human cadavers (stacked like so much cord-wood in the back of a horse-drawn wagon) is potentially the most affecting aspect of this work. And as an artwork, *Salvage* relies on the generously pluralistic and democratically inclusive framework of the 'expanded sculptural field', on which contemporary sculpture has theoretically operated on for some time[75]. The idea of the dehumanising quality of trench warfare being canvassed in this work was embodied through scratch-work, re-modelling, and a recontextualisation of a commercially available, model kit-set. This 'toy' is accessible to anyone who cares to purchase it.

Salvage is about memory, and the act of remembering; firstly, a soldier's remembering – his survival of ghastly experiences when others were not so fortunate (as he wrote for both himself and to reassure and remain connected to his family). As a researcher, I have used the authenticity of Wilkinson's recollections to inspire creative practice, and attempted in this work to capture the immediacy of an imagined moment. This 'invention' offers an opportunity for a broader remembering by a public audience.

The 'postmemories' I have of the First World War were inspired by two particularly traumatic events that Wilkinson records. I combined these two events into a single moment; a distilling of death-dealing combat action into an imagined denouement, where he and his (living)

[74]Alfred Owen Wilkinson, *On Active Service in Great War, Volume 2, France 1916 – 17*, (Dunedin: Self-published/A.H.Reed, 1922), 323, Sunday, 24th June 1917.
[75] Rosalind Krauss, 'Sculpture in the Expanded Field,' *October*, 8 (Spring, 1979) 30 – 44, and Rosalind Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1986 [1985]).

fellow soldiers cart the corpses of their slain comrades away for proper burial. This miniature sculpture responds to, and recognises a particularly challenging event (or events) in this combatant's life as a citizen soldier and witness to war, and the psychological expectations demanded of him. His memories are of a man who left these shores to fight in a war, and who endured war's vicissitudes. He has provided me with a series of historical 'facts' (whose precise historiographical veracity may, or may not, be contestable). This sculpture is a transmission of such 'facts'; a creative fictionalisation that was then placed in the public realm. In turn, Wilkinson's memories contribute to the idea that memory as a collective commemoration of war is a notion of national virtue – both as a sacrificial rite of suffering, endurance, loss, courage, and of the prevailing of nationalistic will.

Here, the nature of memory itself, visually manifested as a 'mnemotechnical' exercise, is one that employs the miniature sculpture to encapsulate the typicalities of scene and/or experience[76]. This sculpture incorporates the idea of 'a politics of location, positioning and situating; of partiality not universality – visualising practises through which sovereign violence is actualised,' to adopt Derek Gregory's formulation[77].

In manipulating this daunting range of options into a manageable programme, I chose from the outset to work with the miniature – to squeeze, to compress, to find the 'interiority' of a singular narrative that embraced the portability of the small-scale. Individualised vignettes that tell affective stories, also negotiated between smallness of size and the reduction of scale (from the life-sized). These enticing modes of perception demanded a closing-in from the viewer, in order that a better vantage point might be had. This strategy is discussed in greater depth elsewhere in this exegesis.

The very nature of a primary source (epistolary, episodic and diaristic) is at once partial, and historically fragile. Although I have been presented with opportunities to link dates, phrases or events with three dimensional manifestations of the same, I have been loath to take full advantage of this obvious investigatory tack. This reticence was persistent, perhaps beyond words, or even objective description, but which I interpreted as a wariness of well-trodden, research pathways. A literal application of his text to connect the spatial-temporal linearity of Wilkinson's self-writing to the 'body' of the art work, I saw as being conceptually too convenient, expedient or obvious as a means of resolving the above-listed problematics. Additionally, the sculptures made over the first 12 months of this research project were not the product of ideas that pre-empted the project, and they represented a major deviation from my established practice in terms of media, scale, and perhaps style. They were influenced by affective practices of other artists, in particular, the interdisciplinarity

[76] Kelly Oliver, 'Witnessing, Recognition, and Response Ethics,' *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 48, no 4, (2015), 473 – 92; 475.
[77] Derek Gregory, 'Gabriel's Map: Cartography and Corpography in Modern War,' in *Geographies of Knowledge and Power*, edited by Peter Meuseberger et al, 89 - 121. Knowledge and Space 7, Springer Netherlands (2015).

of David Levinthal and Garrie Trudeau[78]. The *Salvage* sculpture stood on the merits of the inspirational singularity of AOW's story (and its place in the story of New Zealand in the First World War). *Salvage* was an extension of a series of miniature sculptures that were based on the objective of producing 'topographies of experience' – geographical, social and psychological'. It 'played' with the plastic/material possibilities, and interdisciplinary aims that the practice-based research aim had highlighted; it alludes to the gap separating the historical/material culture artefact from the sculptural artwork.

David Guerin, *Salvage (Materielschlacht) # 1* (2016), plastic, 35th scale Tamiya kitset, micro-crystalline wax, Tamiya and Humbrol paint, on cork-faced placemat, 288 x 215 x 85mm.

Salvage (Materielschlacht) #1 contains four horses drawing a British General Service wagon. Riding in the wagon are four, fully battle-kitted British soldiers wearing rain slickers with their service rifles slung. The wagon's cargo is six cadavers. The wagon progresses along a corduroy or wooden road which straddles blasted, otherwise impassable wet and boggy ground. This road is flanked by the detritus of industrialised conflict – war-wrecked wagons and wainwrighting, flitched stacks of lumber, used artillery brassware, recovered small-arms, trench ladders, buckets, picks and shovels with their 'hickory' handles. These material remnants recall the horrendous cost of the war and also the burden imposed not only on each of its individual ('bottom up') participants, but also on the environments where it was waged. Yet the miniature sculpture offers no pretence of realism, as a

[78] David Levinthal and Garry Trudeau, *Hitler Moves East. A Graphic Chronicle, 1941– 43* (Kansas City: Andrews McMeel Publishing, 2012 [1977]).

moving picture, a documentary photograph, or a snapshot may; there is no gory flesh wound or amputated stump, although the ghastliness of rigor mortis and the corruption of flesh is hinted at.

This work depicts and enacts a type of metaphorical scene that would have been familiar to Wilkinson during his two and a half years on the Western Front. It focuses on fragments of actual and specific parts of his story, and by making specific and isolated moments imaginatively 'real', in sculptural terms this work (and the others in its accompanying series) also sought a plastic manifestation and embodiment of a wide number of theoretical, aesthetic and historical considerations. These include the litany of wound and death incurred by AOW's friends and comrades; the role of 'home' in sustaining combat endurance over the four years and eight days of overseas service; Wilkinson's social class and his relationship with senior officers; his ability to 'keep the books' which led to his promotion – to sergeant on Gallipoli and to subaltern on the Western Front – with their accompanying responsibilities and agonies; his personal fortitude, stamina and endurance, ambition and self-belief; his near-death proximities and avoidance of personal wound; his sheer good luck.

The subject of this work is the relationship of the living with the dead and the fine and sometimes tenuous line that separates these two existential states when the duress of terror and exhaustion play their parts. This relationship is metaphorically referred to in the practice of 'salvage'. By combing the battlefield for the dead or for items of military usefulness or re-purposing, recovered weaponry (and war materiel) was not only repaired, but was denied further use by the enemy, in a war of profligate wastefulness matched in equal parts with great parsimony. The recovery of human and material 'detritus' is the central theme in this work. It links to Wilkinson's narrative in a moment of pathos; while Wilkinson records the wrapping of the dead men's bodies in blankets, I have stacked the cadavers like cordwood in the tray of the G.S. wagon, and sat the four armed soldiers facing forward. They are seemingly oblivious to their grisly cargo, but an initial implication of callousness could be just as easily interpreted as men so inured to the attrition rate (extracted by industrialised war fought between peer adversaries), that the dead are just so much more war materiel to be carted from one place to another.

Salvage (Materielschlacht) #1 also assisted in further developing my model-making skill-set, with the required exactitudes of detail. The paintwork and surface treatment I consistently restricted to hand finishing (as opposed to air-brushing). These are accompanied by time-based work processes that include fastidiousness, precision and patience. This sculpture aimed to contribute to 'how' and 'why' the war is remembered; it also canvassed a single unnamed place 'where' detailed events may have taken place, suggesting an entanglement with archaeological, geographical,

sociological/anthropological and military history considerations[79]. But, first and foremost, this work is a creative expression. It asks how a particular aspect of Wilkinson's history (his coping with the deaths of comrades, the disposal of their bodies and the human relationship with conflict and the mortal consequences of violence, or gallantry, 'glory' or 'heroism') is to be 'told' in visual terms, when any such investigation expressed solely by the written word would not be equally available.

David Guerin, *Deathscape/Push*. Totara burl, plastic, sticks, Tamiya and Humbrol acrylic and enamel paint. 520 x 320 x 95.

Another work, discusssed earlier in relation to *Soldier Sitting* and selected for the Hall of Memories exhibition collection, *Deathscape/Push* exemplifies the way the individual sculpture contributes to a body of works. It offers a 'sovereign' viewpoint as opposed to the 'subordinate' perspective of most war memorials which are typically larger than life, and which 'overshadow' the individual. This work draws heavily on the cratered and lifeless battle landscape that serves as a metaphorical contribution to notions of the effect and consequence of industrialised warfare – and of the fate of the individual combatant in such an environment (and how, possibly, his endurance is

[79] See, for example, Dieter Roelstrate, ed., *The Way of the Shovel: On the Archaeological Imaginary in Art* (Chicago: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2013), 1 – 7.

remembered with a level of awe a century after the fact). *Deathscape/Push* uses the device of the absence of the soldier.

This miniature sculpture hints at the enormity of war's destruction, and its predominating feature is the flayed tree trunk (or stump), with its shattered limbs, matched with the entrenchment. Together they serve as iconographic testimony to the powerlessness of the individual fighting in modern war – if full-sized trees can be mistreated in such a manner then what hope is there for a puny, human frame? These well-worn tropes of First World War depictions, I posit, can never become outmoded, or even 'grow old', because they are ingrained in the invocation: 'Lest We Forget'. Diorama-models, as Helmut Puff asserts, are material monuments in miniature that 'function as repositories of temporalities, emotions, and narratives […] sites where memories of a past that was lost are invoked, [along with] the experience of destruction, and a future that never came to be'[80]. Puff also notes that the model is a material object made and built from, and in, a wide range of materials, scales and sizes. As agents in scenarios of commemoration that 'goad us to remember', he describes and analyses models as temporal scenarios that are 'icons of destruction' that use panoramic views to invoke memories (that may have shifted over time from memorial contexts to historical exhibits). Urban ruins models (that Puff analyses) have parallels with my research, because they permit the viewer 'an understanding of all sides of the story', and can be walked all the way around[81]. They also permit a marshalling of an aesthetic code in order to render a sense of loss (or mourning and grief). The model intends stimulating audience responses that are dependent on their make, context, and commentary. However, they:

> *Cannot show processes; their seductive simplicity, and their great power, is that they deny the perpetual passing of time. Instead, they are bent on halting time for the beholder to view, to appreciate, and to let their gaze wander about this static depiction – despite the fact that destruction is unsteady, uneven, and impossible to condense into a stable image […] The models thus potentially operate as nodes of narrative affirmation to encourage viewers into thinking back through time*[82].

Beneath the surface of *Deathscape/Push* is a subterranean (other) world, and this zone expresses the in-betweenness of the duality of daytime absence and night-time presence (for the

[80] Helmut Puff, *Miniature Monuments: Modelling German History* (Berlin and Boston: de Gruyter, 2014), 4 – 5. Puff writes about the ruins models that depicted a number of German towns and cities levelled by the Allied bombing campaign of the Second World War, commissioned by local governments and displayed in town halls.
[81] Puff, *Miniature Monuments*, 19.
[82] Puff, *Miniature Monuments*, 5 & 18, quotation 8–9.

First World War frontline soldier). This doubled landscape is at once 'banal and extraordinary', and is only now knowable through the canon of self-written reflection and memoir, film and photography, through the 'mirroring' processes of the imagination, or through the alleviation of the death and oblivion of forgetting through creative practice.

This work is paired with *Soldier Sitting,* as a before-and-after development, and both works utilise the notion of a god's eye perspective, with its implication of an omniscient vantage point. While *Soldier Sitting* depicts a soldier alone and frail, possibly fearful, and vulnerable to the vicissitudes of up-coming (or recently passed) battle, *Deathscape/Push* represents a landscape that seeks out a man who has simply vanished from ledgers of ever having existed (a fate common enough for the soldiery of all the warring nations).

The tortured landscape evoked in this work is unequivocally pulverised, its trees torn and lifeless; a geographical and biological denouement. This work, in pursuit of a stylistic conformity and cohesiveness, combined some of the formal elements first canvassed in two sculptures not selected for the Hall of Memory exhibition, *Deathscape (Lest We Forget)* and *Push 01.30.10.07.06.17*. The former incorporated an irony in its title that was perhaps misplaced, while the latter, as a work comprised of two unaltered readymades – a chunk of cast iron and a steel blacksmith's work table – strayed stylistically from the consistency of the works that constituted the thesis. The temporality in the title of the latter work expressed the erroneous time (he was ten minutes out) that Wilkinson noted in his diary when the Allied underground mines of the Battle of Messines were detonated.

Deathscape/Push represents a battle landscape once the agencies of destruction – the fabled 'storm of steel' – has passed over it[83]; land that has become utterly de-populated, even though it represents a physical and normative environment crammed with a humanity that is possibly hidden and hunkering down in underground shelters. Depicted is a 'deathscape' – a portmanteau word that describes a landscape pockmarked with artillery craters, cadavers, and the material detritus of war. At one edge of this work is a slight protuberance that denotes the instant of the first flowering of an underground mine as it 'pushes' its malignant energies through the earth's surface. The 'push' is in fact a knot in the totara burl; itself a 'found' object utilised after a series of right angles in its grain were randomly noticed and then configured into a trench line. Craters and saps were then carved into the brute matter of wood using fine wood block chisels applied to the task of 'manifesting' the landscape, tree trunks and stumps 'collaged' to the surface, and a silent, brutalised world emerged.

[83] Ernst Junger, *Storm of Steel*, translated by Michael Hofmann, London: Penguin, 2000 [*Im Stahlgewittern, 1*920].

Top: David Guerin, *The Oneiric Dyad (Dreaming of Grandma W's Kitchen).* Bottom: David Guerin, *The Oneiric Dyad (Breastworks)*. Matai, plastic, Tamiya 35th scale figures, modelling putty, Tamiya acrylic paint. 274 x 75 x 22 & 274 x 78 x 50.

In another work; *The Oneiric Dyad (Dreaming of Grandma W's Kitchen/Breastworks),* two 'interior' spaces are depicted. The first is the cognitive space of remembering: dreams, reverie, nostalgia, security, hearth, and the rituals and routines of family life; of a remembered Dunedin home in peacetime (or, by extension, the several homes of 'de-facto' families in London and elsewhere that Wilkinson stayed in while on leave). The scene is enclosed, embracing, enveloping, nurturing, and protective; it is one of calm and depicts the safe sureties of life's continuity.

The second is 'out-of-doors' and is the representational and mimetic space of imagined militarised and weaponised geography. Exposed, dangerous, dynamic and fleeting, a 'breastworks' is open to the elements, stars, shrapnel or rifle bullet and the more destructive energies of the howitzer gun or 'minenwerfer' mortar round. Crucially, a breastworks is built at ground-level; it is a defensive position that, through the use of sandbagging and revetting, is sited above a shallow

water-table so as to ameliorate the eternally wet feet (and the inevitable, debilitating and corrosive effects of 'trench foot'), which was one of the excruciating and exacting aspects of the defence of Flanders' flat fields. A breastworks, then, in its offering of the least of protections from mud, shot, and shell, is analogous with both Wilkinson's time in Belgium and, more generally, it metaphorically reflects the travails of the New Zealand Division's experience of the great trough of despair that was the Third Battle of Ypres/Passchendaele.

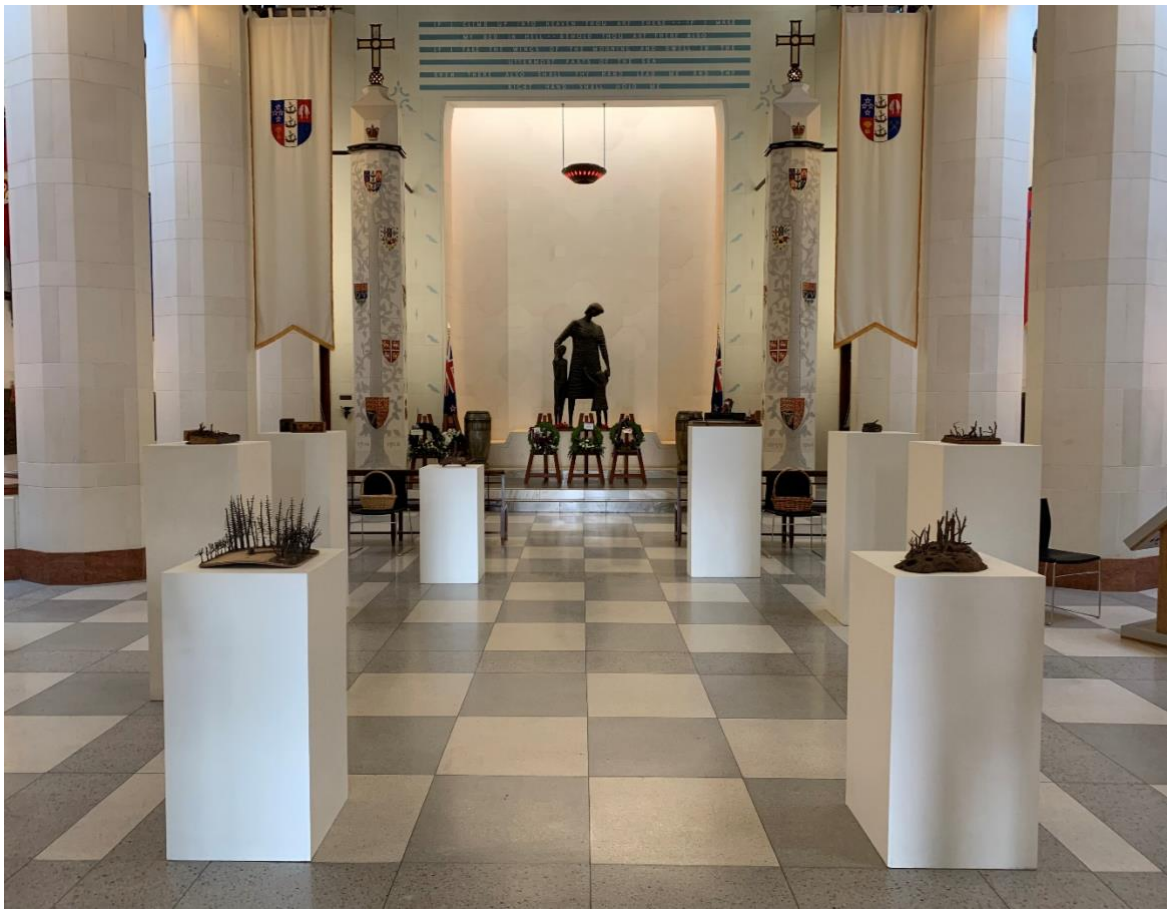
While not temporally or spatially exact, the *Breastworks* nevertheless locates, literally mid step, an imagined moment in time and place. In freeing itself from any actual diary entry, or recollected epistolary notation, this work harnesses, through a creative 're-remembering', the aesthetics of the utility and integrity of this means of defence.

Top: David Guerin, *Departure*. Bottom: *Departure* (detail). Rimu, totara, plastic, Airfix, Tamiya architectural models, Humbrol acrylic paint. 490 x 260 x 110.

In the work *Departure,* we see a silent and empty urban railway platform, soot-blackened and blacked out, war-weary and devoid of people. The soldier returning to the frontline at the end of his leave may have left his 'digs', arrived at the station on time and piled his bags on the siding. This is a work of creative imagination (rather than one inspired by actual events recorded in Wilkinson's diaries or letters). It references all the train stations and railway platforms where Wilkinson must have whiled away his time as he waited for the (often late) locomotive to arrive. This work speaks of the societal organisation of railway scheduling and the industrialised supply of coal, steel, spare parts, rolling stock, rails and ties, maintenance facilities and manpower, along with the instantaneity of punctuality demanded by the railway timetable. The two parts of *Departure*, significantly point to the split moments and places of personal decision – for the military actor's arrival on leave. Or pejoratively, they allude to the notion of surrendering to the resolution to abscond, or equally, to the notion of doing one's duty and going back to face mortal danger.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Witnesses of war, those who have experienced its effects at close range, whether as a soldier or civilian, have contributed their memories to the historical record. Their stories have helped to shape how war is collectively remembered.[84]



David Guerin, *Re-Shaping a First World War Narrative: A Sculptural Memorialisation Inspired by the Letters and Diaries of One New Zealand Soldier,* (May, 2019), mixed media, Hall of Memories, Pukeahu National War Memorial Park, Wellington, New Zealand.

War memorials commonly add to conceptions of national identity, reflecting their core function and obligation to 'evoke those who were lost with sufficient authenticity and conviction that we are moved to remember and honour'[85]. The war memorial may be made from stone or bronze or laser-

[84] Anne Whitehead, *Memory*, (London: Routledge, 2009), 147.
[85] Alan Livingstone MacLeod, *Remembered in Bronze and Stone: Canada's Great War Memorials*, (Victoria: Heritage House, 2016, kindle edition), n.p. This writer completes his list of war memorials as: 'arena, clock, museum, hospital, column, tower, bridge, hall, gun, arch, park, building, wall, window and street.'

cut and welded cor-ten steel. Equally, it may be manifested in a rock or boulder that represents the solid, symbolic, or primeval power of the nation[86]. The war memorial may express 'lofty, didactic functions', to use Jennifer Wingate's expression[87], which are commemorated in militarised sculptures such as the soldier statue, the obelisk, the stele, the cross of sacrifice/stone of remembrance, the architectural monument, or the sculpted tree. The living and growing botanical tree (with its special planting ceremony and sometimes its later, possibly ignominious, felling) has also been widely deployed in the role of war memorialisation[88]. All of these means express the dichotomy separating the real from the ideal, the romanticised or metaphorical from the ambivalent and the grisly, the individual from the collective (as denoted in lists of the dead or those that record all those who served) that often embellish the war memorial.

The aim of this project has been to memorialise the active service of one man who survived the war: Alfred Owen Wilkinson, 2/1498, New Zealand Field Artillery, First New Zealand Expeditionary Force, and to use him as an exemplar for the experiences of the many. The singularity of this citizen-soldier's testimony, mediated by creative conjecture and speculation that evokes his experience, has informed each of the sculptures in the thesis/exhibition.

While it is foremost the miniature sculptural memorialisations inspired by Wilkinson's unique account that provide an original research contribution to war memorialisation, they cannot be separated from other key elements in the interpretation of the works. These include the choice of exhibition site, the selection of the discrete or episodic narrative sculptures, and the means used in their display to provide the viewer with a variety of engagement options.

The Hall of Memories, Pukeahu National War Memorial Park, Wellington, New Zealand, is a 'hallowed' space from Christian, national, and military perspectives. The wording on the granite panels that flank its front entrance clearly express this in their statement that the Hall is dedicated 'To the Glory of God', 'to those who died in the Great War of 1914 to 1918', and, more generally, 'to those who died while on active service in defence of this country'. The Hall's interior possesses many of the attributes of a church with stained glass windows, lofty ceiling heights, gleaming white

[86] George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 88 – 89. This power of the rock or boulder, co-opted as a war memorial and in the German context, is defined by Mosse as 'Urkraft'.
[87] Jennifer Wingate, *Sculpting Doughboys: Memory, Gender, and Taste in America's World War 1 Memorials*, (London: Routledge, 2016, [Taylor and Francis, 2013]), and Jennifer Wingate, 'Over the Top: The Doughboy in World War 1 Memorials and Visual Culture', *American Art*, 19, no. 2 (Summer 2005), 26 – 47.
[88] Paul Gough, 'The Avenue at War', Landscape Research, 18, no. 2, (1993), 78 – 90, Robert L. Douglas, *Mighty Oaks from Tiny Acorns Grow: The Story of the Memorial Oaks Scheme in North Otago*, (Oamaru: Self-published/ Memorial Oaks Committee/Waitaki District Council, 2010), Angela Kilford, 'Living Memorials: Pohutukawa at the National War Memorial', (Master of Fine Arts, Massey University/Memorial Park Alliance, Wellington, 2014), and Imelda Bargas and Tim Shoebridge, *New Zealand's First World War Heritage* (Wollombi: Exisle, 2015).

masonry, heraldry, emblems and flags, and – Carillon bell peals aside – a subdued, hushed atmosphere. In the Sanctuary at the very front of the Hall and placed on a modestly raised 'altar', stands the building's focal point: Lyndon Smith's (seemingly Henry Moore-influenced) larger-than-life, bronze *Mother and Children* (ca. 1964); apparently a depiction of a widowed wife, flanked by her fatherless children.

Ken Inglis has described the Hall of Memories' counterpart at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra, Australia, as 'a shrine, or a Temple to the Dead, both officially and informally'[89]. The Australian Hall of Memory, according to Inglis, is a 'chapel-like space', 'more or less explicitly a response to the sacred, a 'quasi-ecclesiastical' […] 'temple of a civil religion'[90]. It could be argued that Wellington's Hall of Memories, while more modest in its scale, shares similar ambitions and attributes.

Exhibiting my sculptures within this site was instrumental in establishing the particular parameters that defined the relationships separating audience from artwork(s) and which fused this relationship with the 'secular religiosity' of the site and space of the Hall (albeit briefly). This research has anticipated a sculptural 're-shaping' of Wilkinson's narrative by making creative suppositions that not only isolated the fragile nature of aspects, or episodes, of his existence, but also established an emotional conversation with the perceiver by setting up specific terms for the viewing encounter[91]. The affectivity of this soldier's singular tale permitted the memorialisation of lives lived in traumatic times, and my research conclusions offered the viewer the opportunity to draw their own reflexive conclusions, which were compounded by the miniature sculptures being exhibited/situated outside 'the sterilised operating room' of what Brian O'Doherty has described as the 'white cube'[92]. The Hall of Memories, it could also be said, exemplifies what Thomas McEvilley has termed the past century's 'special genius […] to investigate things in relation to their context, to come to see the context as formative on the thing, and, finally, to see the context as a thing itself.'[93]

In this discussion, I have claimed that the anecdotal immediacy of the information that Wilkinson has bequeathed us is knowledge that has provided this research project with its central research proposition: *That miniature sculptures may be used to negotiate between the actual, and the fictional, to memorialise the experiences of one New Zealand soldier who served in the First World War.*

[89] Ken Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1998), 433.
[90] Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 434.
[91] Nicholas Bourriaud, Relational Aesthetics, translated by Simon Pleasance, Fronza Woods and Matieu Copeland, (Paris: Les Presses du Réel, 2002 [1998]), 17 – 19 & 111.
[92] Thomas McIvelley, 'Introduction,' in Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999 [1976, 1981, 1985], 7 & 12.
[93] McIvelley in O'Doherty, *White Cube*, 12.

The creative journey that produced this exhibition of miniature sculptures was motivated throughout by the following question: 'By using imaginatively 'speculative' means to remember the lived 'episodic' testimony of a singular narrator, how may research visually memorialise and manifest his unique First World War story in three dimensions, in a negotiation of the gap between words (his self-written account) and visual/creative expression (the small scale/miniature sculpture)?'

As has been made clear by now, Wilkinson's recalled and lived experience of war – his existence – has been made available to the project through his self-written narrative. But in multi-layered temporalities, there is more than one story being expressed here; first is Wilkinson and the frailty and powerlessness of his individuality, when it is conscripted into the waging of destructive war. There is his humanity, along with his love of life and family, his church, and much more besides. There is his surviving the war without wound or apparent traumatic psychological injury. There is the newly-graduated accountant who went away to war in the service of the nation for over four years, leaving his family behind him and being denied the 'freedom' of his youth. There is the historical 'ghost' who has spent the past decades on a bookshelf, and whose contingently unearthed 'soldier's tale' waited its moment to contribute, as a singular 'site of remembrance' – or perhaps better, as a 'realm of memory' – to the collective memory of the First World War.

Although Wilkinson was completely unknown to me prior to beginning this research, the discovery of his legacy initiated it. While his self-written narrative stands alongside numberless others produced by First World War combatants, it is the particularity of the story that he recounted to his family and to himself – its temporal completeness, its various declarations of this man's 'character', and its revealing intimacies in combination with its untapped research potential – that provided the inspirational spark for my research. Wilkinson's archive, therefore, proved to be a sustaining catalyst and touchstone.

Wilkinson was a survivor and his story is an insight into one combat soldier's war trajectory. His particularity is representative of a typical soldier; not one who died serving his country or a 'missing' or 'unknown soldier', but an individual who served, returned, and lived into relatively old age. His epistolary trace marks an individual soldier's tale that links with official, unit, and popular histories, and also provides subjective and creative fuel for the telling of new visual stories. These combine figurative and representational elements, and modify scale and use existing objects. These combinations are intended to create imaginative, plastic manifestations of the time, space, and place of Wilkinson's war, further incorporating and utilising evocative, metaphorical, and iconographic tropes, or 'visual clichés', or 'genres': the shell-cratered 'deathscape' or 'memoryscape'– or even a 'corpsescape' – the pock-marked ground, sandbagged and revetted

dugout entrance, the blasted tree-stump, or even the railway platform, which operates as a visual metaphor for industrialised railway-enabled warfare, and the individual's place in it.

In addition to the exhibition's site, its timing was key to its reception, with the 'slipstream' of the centenary of the First World War contributing to the meanings expressed in the miniature sculptures. Because of the numerous and varied remembrance activities and attendant publicity, New Zealanders (adult and schoolchild alike) will have been aware of the centenary period and what was being remembered over the years 2014 and 2018, in what Catriona Pennell has described as a 'future making process' […] that revealed 'palpable anxieties about loss and identity', and also identified the potential for historical amnesia.[94] As a consequence, those who chose to visit the National War Memorial Park, and in particular the Hall of Memories, may have been more receptive to the affectivity of the Hall and the symbolism contained within it. By association, those same visitors may have been more open to reflexive appreciation when viewing my research outcomes. While ironic or satirical symbolisms were not overtly part of my intentions, they are inevitably part of any affectivity offered by this soldier's singular tale; so too is metaphor. The nine miniature sculptures offered an opportunity to simultaneously memorialise a life lived in traumatic times, and to reflect upon the dislocations normally valorised by war memorials – the commemoration of heroism, sacrifice, and loss; the strident call to remember, and the implication that the costs of war should be borne with some lesson learned.

Memorialisations of war also proclaim a unity and cohesiveness in what may be called a 'collective memory' and vast amounts of physical artefacts, memoirs and historical research and documentation concerning the First World War have been produced and uncovered over the past century. Their echoes may be seen in world-wide levels of fascination in all aspects of the conflict. The miniature sculptures were selected from a wider body of experimental works produced over the research arc because they possessed both a collective narrative coherence and a strong formal stylistic consistency. These works also reflected my intention that they operate as temporal and spatial 'windows' that could transport the viewer back into the past and take them on a visual journey. I also intended that the sculptures would honour their subject, and while showing respect for him and for the solemnity of the Hall of Memories, present a calm and measured (visual) narrative (in contrast to any potentially transgressive or 'blood and guts' depictions of war). They did, however, rely on the legacy of visual tropes that the First World War has bequeathed the present day, and which depict radically transformed, and ravaged, geographies.

[94] Catriona Pennell, 'Taught to Remember? British Youth and the First World War Centenary Battlefield Tours,' *Cultural Trends*, 27, no. 2 (2018), 83 – 98; 83.

Three-dimensional artworks quite obviously possess different attributes to a painting, or a drawing or a map, not least of which are its haptic qualities. Its occupation of real space with tangible form presents comprehensible and illusionistic representation; attributes that are inspired by, and share something of, the memetic properties of painting, print-making and photography. Also, miniature sculptures may attract touching, but in the present case, are in reality too fragile to realistically allow this interaction. Therefore, the principal intention was that these miniature sculptures would be experienced by the eye but, when observed as landscapes (or 'manscapes' – meaning geographical vistas utterly changed and adapted by human agencies[95]), the spatial relationship the miniature sculptures offer is a kinaesthetic one. This takes place within the perceiver' body, rather than a kinetic movement within the body of the artwork. Here the viewer is 'invited' to move around and examine the works from different perspectives, and to consider the aspects that cannot be seen from a single viewing position (the 'back' of a wall, the 'inside' of a dugout). In aiming for some level of affectivity, these small-sized artworks induce and possibly entice their viewer to close-in with them for an immersive engagement that reveals something of the complex minutiae of detail depicted in each miniaturised scene.

The objective here has been to place the viewer in a mimetic 'micro-world' of the imagination; one where the reality of the viewer's every day existence can be temporarily suspended in a 'game of make believe', to adopt Kendall Walton's formulation[96]. He sees a representation as something that possesses the social function of serving as a 'prop', itself mandating (through rules, and forms) the distinctive phenomenology that inseparably binds together the perceptual with the imaginative aspects of the aesthetic experience. Viewers are thus enabled to distinguish representational propositions (that is, the sculptural depiction of [aspects of] Wilkinson's soldier's tale), and ascertain that they are fictional, or 'fictional truths'. As such they constitute, and contribute to, the fictional world of that game of make-believe. In their elucidation of the conceptions of depiction and/or pictorial perception, the 'prop' determines the viewer's interaction with both the physical actuality of the work (as manifested by the artistic and sculptural medium or combination of media) and the ideas that make up its conceptual content (such as the relationship of memory and memorialisation to the self-written testimony/chronicle/narrative/story, and how this interface may inspire creative practice).

The game is played out in the 'mind's eye' that transports the viewer into a world of harm (of the battlefield for instance, or of a place of alienation and survivor-solitude) to be confronted

[95] Simon Schama, Landscape and Memory, (London: Harper Collins, 1995)
[96] Kendall Walton, *Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), & 'Precis of Mimesis as Make-Believe: On the Foundations of the Representational Arts', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 51, no. 2, (1991), 379 – 82.

with diminutive scenes representative of Wilkinson's past reality. Some of these sites may be shattered by the hand of war – that place of armed conflict and human contention that conforms with Nicholas J. Saunders' definition: 'the transformation of matter through the agency of destruction' – while others may be more prosaic, practical and peaceful[97].

The materiality of sculpture is, unavoidably, central to the plastic corporeality of each artwork, and this mediation combines selected iconographic tropes (blasted trees, trenches, craters) with key found objects (toy soldiers, seat-bottoms or driftwood), and with subject matter (frozen temporal, spatial, and experiential moments) that is drawn from a unique archive. Also, some of the aesthetics of similarity promulgated by model-making were co-opted, to situate the format of the diorama-model in an imaginative dimension that is different[98].

In this context Susan Stewart observes that the:

> *[m]iniature models['] use of the tableau as a method to represent and capture entire worlds also means that they invite action by asking the viewer to step into the model and make it come alive through imaginative play. This not only gives the tableau 'the power to etch itself into one's memory' but also gives us the power to invent our own worlds, our own associations*.[99]

The use and re-use of changing versions of the de-populated, empty and shattered battlefield has been deployed here as a key unifying motif, and as Paul Gough identifies:

> *On the Western Front, the compressed scale of the battlefield, where the opposing lines were sometimes only ten yards apart, meant that even the most insignificant topographical features would be named, recorded and scrutinised. […] Naming, gridding and cartographic logic was used to fix on the seemingly empty spaces that characterised the battleground. While the battlescape may have appeared deserted, the dead lay exposed beneath its ruptured surface and the living led an ordered and disciplined (albeit perilous) existence in underground shelters and deep chambers.*[100]

[97] Nicholas J. Saunders, *Trench Art: Materialities and Memories of War*, (Oxford: Berg, 2003), 1.
[98] David Davies, 'Medium in Art', in Jerrold Levinson, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 181 – 191; 185.
[99] Susan Stewart, 'The Miniature', in Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007 [1984]), 37 – 69; 69.
[100] Paul Gough, *Dead Ground. War and Peace: Remembrance and Recovery. A Cultural Reading of Memoryscapes from the Great War, 1914 – 1918*, (Bristol: Sansom, 2018).

I have earlier asserted that 'compression', with attendant variations of scale, has enabled Wilkinson's narrative to be reduced and condensed into a comprehensible form. Compression is a 'filmic' notion that reduces a long and complex life story into a few discrete episodes, or converts wide geographies into tiny, yet understandable representational reductions of real space-time equivalences[101]; like simulacra, they are copies where the 'original' can never any longer exist, nor need to. In turn, the presence (or progressively, the absence) of the plastic soldier expresses Wilkinson's humanity, and it relies on the reservoir of his 'bottom up' memories to tell the story of an ordinary life lived in extra-ordinary circumstances. He is depicted in various states of his own solitariness, and when he is present in a miniature sculpture he is often shown to be a man on his own – alone and solitary – instead of submerged and anonymous in a group formation.

The sculptures, with their stylistic focus on the fragile body, depict this human being as tasked to operate (often alone) as a surveillance tool; as a forward observation officer in a devastated landscape. In presenting the incongruence of survivability in these works, other questions arise: what would this destructiveness do to a man's frail body and mind? What did it take to 'stick it'? What kind of luck would it take to not become a casualty of these vast and hurtful agencies?

The Western tradition of memory since the Renaissance has been founded upon an assumption that material objects, whether natural or artificial, can act as analogues of human memory. It has been generally taken for granted that memories formed in the mind can be transferred to solid, material objects, which may come to stand for memories, and by virtue of their durability, either prolong or preserve them indefinitely beyond their purely mental existence.[102]

The Hall of Memories is a hallowed space, imparting a gravitas peculiar to this site. In the Hall, these small-scale works were located in the wider (or 'national') metaphor that is embedded in the very architecture of the building.

The miniature sculptures were exhibited without vitrines, which have associations of security, quarantine, and dissociation. The vitrine encases and isolates the sculpture from the 'real' space-time of the viewer, and its exclusion meant the works were spatially 'available' to the audience; they shared the same 'breathing space' as that occupied by the viewer, and were therefore also 'open' to the meanings of the Hall of Memories. The works in the exhibition were

[101] Rachel Wells, *Scale in Contemporary Sculpture: Enlargement, Miniaturization and the Life-Size*, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), Joan Kee, 'What Scale Affords Us: Sizing the World up Through Scale', *ARTMargins*/Massachusetts Institute of Technology, (2014), 3 – 29, and Joan Kee and Emanuele Lugli, 'Size to Scale: An Introduction', *Association of Art Historians*, 38, no. 2, (2015), 250 – 67.
[102] Winter, *Sites of Memory*,and Pierre Nora, 'Between memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,' *Representations*, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory, no. 26 (Spring 1989), 7 – 24.
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positioned on plinths of two heights. The lower ones enabled the adult viewer to look down on the small-scale works, offering an omniscient or 'god's-eye' perspective. Here, the viewer is an 'outsider', able to perceive the landscapes of Wilkinson's life at war – both physical and psychological – from a distance. Contrastingly, the taller plinths offered a 'transverse' view that allowed a 'looking-through,' across, and into the (imagined) war-spaces experienced by Wilkinson and his comrades. This viewpoint seeks out the possibility of an empathetic viewer response; a sharing of the 'same' view Wilkinson may have seen. Both perspectives were intended to enable viewers to be metaphorically and literally drawn into the works, thus enabling a more immersive engagement with the sculptures. As noted earlier, the nine miniature sculptures are not three-dimensional representations of the actual battlefields Wilkinson fought on; rather they are creative imaginaries – what Susan Stewart terms 'abstract experiences of […] fictiveness […]' presenting a view of simultaneous particularization and generalization of the moment. Stewart continues:

> *The miniature does not attach itself to lived historical time. Unlike the metonymic world of realism, which attempts to erase the break between the time of everyday life and the time of narrative by mapping one perfectly upon the other, the metaphoric world of the miniature makes everyday life absolutely anterior and exterior to itself. The reduction in scale which the miniature presents shows the time and space relations of the everyday life world, and as an object consumed, the miniature finds its "use value" transformed into the infinite time of reverie. This capacity of the miniature to create an "other" time, a type of transcendent time which negates change and the flux of a lived reality.*[103]

In May 2019 the sculptures produced for this doctoral project were exhibited in the 'sacred site' (and in the evocative resonance) of the Hall of Memories at New Zealand's National War Memorial, Pukeahu, Wellington; a site concerned with the construction of national identity formation through its proclamation of foundational myths. In framing my research, Wilkinson's letters and diaries have enabled me to create and exhibit sculptures that are, both singularly and collectively, acts of memorialisation.

As creative fictions, the sculptures operate as a collection of imaginary proxies of lived experience; they mediate the transmission of their content, as artworks, to a receiver. Individually – along with the intimate size, and reduced scale – the discrete, 'episodic' representations employ the filmic conventions of compression, and aim to find visual form for phenomenological interactions of a first-hand human experience of past landscapes; themselves analogues of human action.

[103] Stewart, On Longing, 65 & 69.

Each miniature sculpture, in their revealing of tiny aspects of Alfred Owen Wilkinson's unique record, enter the Western tradition of memory that assumes that material objects, whether natural or artificial, can act as analogues of human memory. The thesis, while concerned with both the universal story of combatants in the First World War, is simultaneously and intimately bound with the imagined experiences of a particular soldier; fictional speculations that could be described as being "based on a true story", where incidents and moments are deployed to say something that is more than an accumulation of the separate parts of this soldier's story. The creative component of my research thesis uses 'compressive' capabilities that make the unimaginable scale of the First World War landscape comprehensible, and my methodology is the miniature sculpture, which combine the methods of the diorama and the model, not as prototype or precursor, but as ends in themselves.

Of the nine miniature sculptures that constitute this PhD sculptural thesis, and exhibited in the Hall of Memories, several were ruminations on the sustaining power of 'home' and family in times of profound adversity. The works were selected because they shared an aesthetic and stylistic coherence, which was supported by incremental, episodic differences in each discrete work, and because they successfully linked with the impulse outlined in the research proposition. The layout in the Hall of Memories also enabled viewers to perceive the ensemble as a single work. Some works stressed a 'before and after', or 'presence and absence' (*Dugout Entrances–Interior and Exterior*, and *The Oneiric Dyad,* Appendix 2: Experiments) by emphasising a pairing of relief story-telling surfaces. These dichotomous and binary conversations sought further meaning beyond their depictions of accessibly understandable evocations of actual places and sites, through the partiality of linking two, predominantly frontal, (relief) surfaces.

The use of compression enables the miniature sculpture to vastly reduce the size of the places and spaces depicted and evoked. The intimate size and reduced scale(s) of the diorama and the model combines with aesthetic choices regarding intimacy, mediation, and in the coherent unravelling and manifesting of isolated aspects of this combatant's experience of service in the Great War. This soldier has given me intimate, yet at the same time mundane, and often repetitive details of his everyday experiences of military service, both overseas and in New Zealand. He also noted an unsettlingly large number of potential life-shortening moments that are spread over a long period of time. Such detail was reflected upon and taken inspiration from, and this narrative detail is imbued in each of the sculptures. These creative-practice outcomes combine the pursuit of, and the combing of potential meanings contained in both the fragile thing – literally and metaphorically – with the enduring thing, in the form of the imagined microcosm/miniature sculpture.

To conclude, I would contend that this creative arts PhD thesis addresses and negotiates a gap in knowledge in sculptural memorialisation practices through its use of miniature sculptures. The

research outcomes give expression to both the real and imagined experiences of one combatant, based on his singular epistolary narrative. This is a memorialisation that relies on the impulses of narratives of recollection, 'post memory', and 're-remembering'[104], and as such, the thesis deploys miniature sculptures as creative and conjectural speculations that give form to the story of a First World War soldier.

[104] Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture after the Holocaust*, (New York: Colombia University Press, 2012); and for the concept of 're-remembering', Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000 [1997]).

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