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**Event-Specific Art in New Zealand:  
a Visual Culture Analysis of *One Day Sculpture*  
and Selected Case Studies**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts  
in  
Visual and Material Culture  
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New Zealand.

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## Abstract

This thesis introduces the term event-specific art as a new way to view recent art practices. It defines event-specific art as practices that are transmediumistic, participatory, interventionist and temporary in nature and are reliant on documentation, and the effects of media convergence and relational networks. These types of practices also interrogate notions of publicness, spectacle and position themselves in dialogue with entertainment and leisure experiences. Because event-specific art is engaged in the visual landscape of the everyday, visual culture studies, rather than a more conventional art history conceptual framework is employed. Interviews with artists, curators and critics provide the primary data for this research and close interpretations of event-specific art projects are undertaken. *One Day Sculpture*, a recent international series of temporary public sculpture based in New Zealand in 2008 - 2009 is the central case study of this thesis. Other case studies are utilised to demonstrate how event-specificity involves certain practices of looking that are present throughout the wider culture. Event-specificity is shown to be a particular modality of visual experience in the early twenty-first century.

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“This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University’s Human Ethics Committees. The Researcher named above is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher, please contact Professor Sylvia Rumball, Assistant to the Vice-Chancellor (Research Ethics), phone 06-350-5249, e-mail [humanethics@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethics@massey.ac.nz)”.



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## Introduction

### Prologue

People are invited to travel to a boat shed where they can watch and shelter from a forecasted storm. A small festival is held to celebrate the life of a notorious writer in his hometown. Goldfish are flown across the Tasman Sea in a chartered plane. The inhabitants of a small town line up to watch a live lion in their local cinema. People run a circuit through the centre of a city, stopping to ring bells placed at certain points. A group of people travel to an island to collect seaweed samples and listen to a story told inside a cave. A large neon sign spelling out the words OPEN is towed on the back of a truck and parked at various locations throughout the course of a day.

What are these things? Where have they emerged from? Why are they happening? Who is producing them? And how are we to understand them? This thesis examines the problem of how to understand contemporary artworks that appear to be events more than objects or images. The descriptions above are of artworks from a 2008 - 2009 New Zealand public art series called *One Day Sculpture*. My study examines this project by focusing on the qualities of the works that mark them as events, rather than sculpture, a term that fails to fully encompass the nature of these artworks. If we were to come across these things, without them being framed as art, what would we understand them as? Because of their out-of-the-ordinary quality and their occurrence outside the art gallery, we would consider them to be events. Events are things that happen. But there is obviously more to them than this. In fact events are highly structured. Events occur at a certain time and a certain place; they are organised and managed by a distinct person, group or body; they have rules, sometimes enforced, sometimes unspoken and what is common to all events is that at some point they must end. When an event occurs we are conscious that something has happened and that something has changed. To register as an event something must be surprising, unexpected, memorable and most often, a sight. Sight is a predominant sense through which external stimuli is processed. A study of events needs to take stock of visual perception. Another problematic for this thesis is that what distinguishes the examples of art in *One Day Sculpture* does not appear particularly different from the many

everyday examples of events that take place in the visual field of contemporary culture.

The purpose of this thesis is to define the characteristics of what I term ‘event-specific art’ in order to demonstrate that *One Day Sculpture* contained significant examples of this new type of art practice. The thesis will provide evidence of antecedents to *One Day Sculpture* as event-specific art. This will be established through various selected case studies including Barry Thomas’s *Vacant Lot of Cabbages*, 1978; *Art Now: the First Biennial Review of Contemporary Art*, 1994; *Oblique: Culture in Otira*, 1999; *Telecom Prospect: New Art New Zealand*, 2001 – 2007 and the *SCAPE Biennial Of Art in Public Space*, 2000 – 2008. After outlining the principles of event-specific art in these case studies I will turn to a focused discussion on *One Day Sculpture* by using five individual case studies selected from the series (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 will offer an analysis of recent visual phenomena, some that are considered art and some that are not, but which are projects that adhere to the principles of event-specificity. This section will help draw contrasts between differing modes of production and display in public space. This discussion will examine the recent and ongoing Letting Space project, Ashlin Raymond’s *Dawn Parade*, the Glover Park project of urban interventionist Monster Jelly, the Sugar Liberation Army’s *Operation Tang*, and guerilla knitting and gardening. I will conclude by discussing the generative effects of event-specificity in the wider urban culture, demonstrating that event-specific art is both a product of and a response to event culture; that event-specific art is symptomatic of current scopic regimes and that event-specific art requires understanding of new modalities of visual experience in contrast to the traditional public art forms.

Event-specific art describes practices in which both the content and the form of the artwork combine as an event. By this I mean that the artwork’s form is an event-structure, often a pre-existing one like a festival, journey, performance or gathering and that the content of the work investigates and engages with the nature of such leisure and entertainment experiences. These artworks also usually occur within the frame of event culture, for example, an event-specific artwork usually appears in an exhibition, programme or project that acts as a larger cohesive event or event vehicle. This thesis will define the characteristics of event specific art as trans-mediumistic; an extension of Rosalind Krauss’ contention of the post-medium

condition<sup>1</sup> under which artists no longer adhere to one specific traditional medium but work across many. This practice has become increasingly participatory, interventionist and temporally complicated. Artworks are transitory while also permanent because they are reliant on the effects of documentation to make them available to audiences not present in situ of the artwork so as to prolong and give posterity to the event that occurred. This is achieved by media convergence<sup>2</sup> and networks<sup>3</sup>. This type of art often appears in public and interrogates notions of publicness. As such the works are also often spectacular in order to attract attention and stand out from one another.

### Theoretical Framework

By categorising these phenomena as event-specific *art*, an assumption might exist that I will utilise art historical methods. However, event-specific art exists in relation to the culture from which it has recently emerged: today's culture, in which an artwork no longer has a hierarchical reign over the many other visual representations. This thesis will demonstrate how an analysis of event-specific art profits from close alignment to visual culture studies rather than art history. The conceptual framework for this investigation maintains an inadequacy of art history to interpret *One Day Sculpture* and the other projects in this thesis because it is more limited than visual culture studies to discuss the vernacular or everyday visualities that event-specific art engages. Where art history does not aspire to attest for the relationship between event-specific art and a visually saturated world, visual culture studies does aims to show the social in the visual. For example in "Snapshots: Art History and the Ethnographic Turn," Geoffrey Batchen discusses how art history can not explain photography for us because it does not have the tools to understand the way in which most photography is

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<sup>1</sup> As discussed in Rosalind Krauss, "Two Moments from the Post-Medium Condition," *October* 116, no. 1 (2006).

<sup>2</sup> A term coined by Henry Jenkins in Henry Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (New York: New York University Press, 2006). to describe how media that were previously disseminated separately because of their different physical forms, are now converged due to digital technology. For example an iPod can store, display and play music, photographs, films and text documents.

<sup>3</sup> Throughout I use the term networks to describe how event-specific art incorporates a complex of auxiliary connections to the artwork itself. Such connections include public programmes, media coverage, associated projects and documentation of the work. I consider the network surrounding the art to be of significant importance when considering the work.

created: by non-artists, taking casual snapshots. He explains that art history, with its focus on “originality, innovation and individualism” cannot incorporate photography in to its narratives, which construct discursive hierarchies of value judgment and taste.<sup>4</sup> Event-specific art which is never precisely an object or an image, which is always contingent on people (not just the artist), which can not be stored or displayed, which does not ever occur twice in the same way and which can not be separated from the secondary media that attach themselves to it, can not be fully understood through the lens of art history. My literature review will uphold the limitations of art history and instead demonstrate the greater scope that visual culture brings to this topic. Subsequently the literature review will define the term ‘event culture,’ an emergent paradigm within which event-specific art can be said to exist.

## **Literature Review**

### **Visual Culture and its use in this Thesis**

Visual culture studies is an interdisciplinary field that allows investigative methods into the dominant nature of visual phenomenon in contemporary western societies. The field also allows scholars to re-address the past by opening opportunities to study visual histories that are not core topics in art history. What defines visual culture studies precisely is widely debated. The breadth of disciplines (design, anthropology, sociology, architecture, art history, film, media, cultural, gender and American studies) that contribute to the field means the discipline has emerged from an understanding that trans- and inter-disciplinary models highlight potential for new discoveries. Because of this, much introductory literature has been devoted to categorising the field while maintaining that it is infinitely open.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey Batchen, "Snapshots: Art History and the Ethnographic Turn," *Photographies* 1, no. 2 (2008). p 121.

<sup>5</sup> For example: Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2009). , John Walker and Sarah Chaplin, *Visual Culture: An Introduction* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997). , Walker and Chaplin, *Visual Culture: An Introduction*.



Academic and Professional Disciplines Surrounding the Study of Visual Culture		
Media Studies	Art History and Art Theory	Semiotics
Cultural Studies	Film Studies	Visual Rhetoric, Graphic Design, Literary Theory
Visual Arts (painting, photography, video, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, all hybrids)	<b>Visual Culture: Objectifications, Legitimized Subject Matter</b>	Aesthetics and Philosophy of Art and Representation
Sociology and Anthropology of art, media, and communication	Architecture and Design	Museums and Art Curatorship
Communications (TV, film production, advertising, graphic design)	Institutional Theory and Social Network Theory	Mediology and Complexity Theory

**Figure 1** Martin Irvine, Visual Culture Map, Retrieved from <http://www9.georgetown.edu/faculty/irvinem/visualarts/Intro-VisualCulture.html> on 15/04/2011.

Visual culture is a distinctively different field of study than art history. As the study of visual artefacts and experiences started to diversify in the nineteen sixties and seventies with the introduction of design to education institutions, discussions about art and culture also broadened. Feminism and other social movements associated with the counter culture of the 1960s and 70s began to question the patriarchal authority of art history. New mediums and practices in fine art such as video and installation also called for new understandings.<sup>6</sup> John Berger's 1972 *Ways of Seeing* highlights the need to look at images from outside the tradition of art history by juxtaposing fine art and commercial advertising to 'make visible' or de-naturalise the acts of looking and seeing themselves. For example on the concept of 'the gaze,' Berger writes: "Men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at. This determines not only most relations between men and women but also the relation of women to themselves. The surveyor of woman in herself is male: the surveyed female. Thus she turns herself into an object – and most particularly an object of vision: a sight."<sup>7</sup> Berger's analysis of how images of women depict and enforce their social reality, within the seemingly different sources of Renaissance painting and late-twentieth century advertisements, is an important contribution to the development of frameworks to understand the cultural implications of images. Berger's work

<sup>6</sup> Walker and Chaplin, *Visual Culture: An Introduction*. p 36.

<sup>7</sup> John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin, 1972). p 47

demonstrates that the traditional narratives of art history do not afford discussion on the relationship between painting and advertisements.

Extending these ideas, W.J.T. Mitchell discusses the need to reveal the social work a picture does when he defines the motive of visual culture studies to 'show seeing.' In his essay 2002 "Showing Seeing" he situates an exercise used to teach the discipline in which students are asked to prepare a variation on the standard class 'show and tell' performance. In Mitchell's example the object of the routine is less about content than "the process of seeing itself."<sup>8</sup> He asks his students to:

Frame their presentations by assuming that they are ethnographers who come from, and are reporting back to, a society that has no concept of visual culture. They cannot take for granted that their audience has any familiarity with everyday notions such as color, line, eye contact, cosmetics, clothing, facial expressions, mirrors, glasses, or voyeurism, much less with photography, painting, sculpture or other so-called visual media. Visual culture is thus made to seem strange, exotic, and in need of explanation.<sup>9</sup>

The 'showing seeing' exercise reflects how visual culture studies addresses visual phenomena outside the connoisseurial realm of art history including evaluations of the everyday. The exercise also references anthropological inquiry of the visual document/artefact and experience as sites of primary investigation. Visual culture scholars often carry out empirical studies including fieldwork approaches such as interviews and focus groups to generate data. Studies into the actual effects of visual media on audiences and individuals' relationships to the visual are taken into account and deemed as significant as theoretical concepts. Geoffrey Batchen notes that in Hal Foster's writing on 'The Ethnographic Turn,' Foster worries that the anthropological methods utilised in visual culture studies creates "tabulations of images deemed more or less equal in value."<sup>10</sup> Foster's concern demonstrates art history's anxiety that visual culture studies will erase the differences between 'art' and 'non-art.' Conversely, the visual culture discipline aims not to erase these differences but to make them visible: to illuminate the structures of power that make one thing art and

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<sup>8</sup> W.J.T Mitchell, "Showing Seeing: A Critique of Visual Culture," *Journal of Visual Culture*, no. 1 (2002). p 177.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Batchen, "Snapshots: Art History and the Ethnographic Turn." p 127.

another not art, and to be capable of dedicating scholarly inquiry to visual areas which have not been considered worthy of it in the past. In this sense, art history's area of inquiry is limited by value judgements, which are primarily interested in showcasing hierarchies. Visual culture studies is interested in investigating the relationships that exist between all visual phenomena, not only a select few. In the sense that I employ the field in this thesis then, visual culture studies can investigate the very relationship between art and 'not art'

While visual culture studies utilises the image-document as a manifestation of culture in an anthropological sense it also foregrounds the acts of looking as significant in themselves. Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, co-authors of *Practices of Looking* claim that, "looking practices inform our lives beyond our perception of images per se."<sup>11</sup> Cartwright and Sturken exemplify current visual culture investigations that update the work of Berger in a contemporary media context. Berger's work, which drew on Walter Benjamin's "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" is extended by Sturken and Cartwright to show how today's media environment is central to the way we experience visually. Unlike art history which focuses on individual works, artist or movements, Sturken and Cartwright show that visual culture takes the entire mediascape which involves advertising, film, art, video games etc as its point of reference. The following passage exemplifies the media-saturated world which visual culture studies understands as the premise for scholarly work that investigates the visual:

All around us are screens on computers, game consoles, iPods, handheld devices and televisions, far outnumbering those used by the still healthy cinema industry. Still and moving-image cameras are ubiquitous, from personal and professional image making to closed circuit surveillance systems and intranets. Television has morphed from national broadcasting on three or four channels to global narrowcasting on hundreds. Where the Internet was once held to be the retrieval of text, there are already 100 million video clips on YouTube, more than 3 billion photos on the file-sharing site Flickr, and over 4 billion on the social networking site facebook. One billion people have

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<sup>11</sup> Marita Sturken and Lisa Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). p 4.

access to the Internet, the first global medium. Digital video games sustain a \$20 billion a year industry in the United States alone... media estimates of the number of advertisements seen per day range from hundreds to the now widely used figure of 3,000. Museums have ceased to be citadels of high culture and now offer a 'museum experience' to millions in exhibitions that range from motorbikes to fashion... Contemporary art, once the arcane occupation of a few, is now the subject of global events, tabloid coverage and mass attendance.<sup>12</sup>

By understanding the type of environment that this passage describes as the context for any visual text, visual culture studies, unlike art history, can explain the complex interplays between different visual media and texts which are translated, updated, subverted and commodified.

In a similar vein, visual culture studies stress the fact that we live in scopic regimes as a premise for any cultural investigation. The French film theorist Christian Metz coined the term 'scopic regime' in *The Imaginary Signifier*<sup>13</sup>, 1982 which has now been widely adopted and expanded, for example by Martin Jay in the 1988 essay "Scopic Regimes of Modernity"<sup>14</sup> A scopic regime is a culturally specific way of seeing that replaces the traditional definition of vision as a universal and natural phenomenon. The photographic heritage e-learning project Photherel explains that, "The concept of scopic regimes... supersedes the traditional discussion between technological determinism (in this view, the cultural meaning of a technique or an artefact is determined by technology) and social construction (in this view, it is culture that gives meaning to technology). In the case of scopic regimes, culture and technology interact. By foregrounding the notion of scopic regimes, one emphasizes the fact that; ways of looking are not natural, but constructed, that they have a history

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<sup>12</sup> Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*. p 2-3.

<sup>13</sup> Christian Metz, *Psychoanalysis and the Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier* (London: Macmillan Press, 1982). p 61 – 63.

<sup>14</sup> Martin Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity," in *Vision and Visuality*, ed. Hal Foster (Seattle: Bay Press, 1988).

and that they also vary synchronically.”<sup>15</sup> Because art history privileges the individual artist as standing outside the forces of culture and technology and commenting on them, it cannot place artworks within scopic regimes and therefore in relation to the culture that constructs them. Visual culture studies shows that art is always part of the construction of ways of seeing.

The scopic regimes of the 21st century also produce their own modes of perceptual/cognitive experience. Camiel van Winkel writes that, “Images may be present, everywhere, but as a social force they are less powerful than the imperative to visualize.”<sup>16</sup> This statement supports Sturken and Cartwright’s notion that looking practices, derived from engaging with images, extend beyond representations themselves and create a demand for experience to be predominantly visual. Van Winkel further expands the idea of a visually saturated world by stressing “the speed, impatience and lack of time that determine the life of the contemporary citizen.”<sup>17</sup> Here he sets up an important contemporary phenomenon where the temporality and instantaneity of experience are foregrounded. Following in the tradition of cultural studies which emphasises the blurring of the boundaries between high and low culture, art and the everyday, van Winkel maintains that it is increasingly impossible to argue that art offers something different from mass culture. The milieu he speaks of is one in which “mass culture has expanded and branched out into the most diverse niches, generating an increasingly differentiated product range and even organizing its own ‘subcultural’ alternatives.”<sup>18</sup> This ever enlarging and accelerating hybrid mediascape and its imperative to translate experience into images or to ‘visualise experience’ can be said to produce what Paul Virilio calls the “event-instant.”<sup>19</sup> In his writing on accidents in contemporary culture Virilio claims that speed is the defining notion of the 21st century. In a world where speed and instantaneity govern, visual experiences become condensed into ‘events’ in order to be remembered, processed and differentiated from each other. This in turn leads to a type of society and

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<sup>15</sup> Photherel, "Scopic Regimes," Retrieved from <http://www.photherel.net/www.photherel.net/notes/relationships/idea/rel9aiii.html>. on 20/02/2011.

<sup>16</sup> Camiel van Winkel, *The Regime of Visibility* (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, 2005). p 15.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. p 16.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p 35.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Virilio, *Unknown Quantity* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1989). p 5.

collective consciousness what has recently begun to be termed ‘event culture,’ which this literature review will turn to next.

Visual culture studies posit art history as inherently limited in describing and defining new art practices which blur the boundaries between the visual elements of the everyday and ‘art.’ In relation to the case studies in this thesis, I will apply the discipline of visual culture to identify how the artworks in question function as within everyday event culture. In addition to investigating what art history cannot, the visual culture studies material surveyed will aid my analysis in the following ways. W. J. T Mitchell’s exercise ‘showing seeing’ will enable me to discuss how the artworks I examine denaturalise practices of looking. For example, in the case study of Barry Thomas’ *Vacant Lot of Cabbages*, Mitchell’s theory will help me to show how the work draws attention to the politics of urban space by making an unused vacant lot visible through the transformation of the space into a public event. Geoffrey Batchen and Hal Foster’s notion that artworks, like all visual artefacts, have a social purpose will allow me to demonstrate how my case studies contribute to generating a culture of events. For example, the idea that images ‘do something’ will be used to prove that the promotional material of *One Day Sculpture* works to construct the series as a consumable product(s) paralleling those on offer in the wider entertainment and leisure industries. Mirzoeff and Sturken and Cartwrights’ use of visual culture studies to analyse the contemporary media environment will help me to show how the artworks I study traverse mediums and are ‘audienced’ and experienced through multiple visual technologies, which in turn, generate specific looking practices. For instance, the *One Day Sculpture* work *I Wish I Am Fish* by Paola Pivi was dispersed experientially through many mediums, including television news, documentary footage and still photographs. The concept of scopic regimes will help me to explain how event-specificity is a modality that extends out of fine art and to other aspects of visual culture.

While the visual culture literature discussed emphasises the immersion of art in and its inseparability from visual culture, the literature has yet to define event culture and the interstice contemporary art within it. My case studies will provide examples and analysis of the ways in which event-specific art utilises structures of event culture which place it in relationship to the other entertainment and leisure experiences on offer in event culture.

## **Defining Event Culture: Defining Event-Specific Art**

Event-specific art is termed so because it has emerged as a type of art in relation to event culture. Event culture describes the western, late-capitalist societies many people live in where a surplus of entertainment and leisure activities creates a culture in which the amount of ‘things to do’ is a significant characteristic. In the sense that I use the word, an event is a structured social and leisure activity that is often particularly interesting, exciting or unusual. I also use the term to denote an *organised* occasion, not a random one. ‘Event culture’ has no academic definition so I begin by outlining my own conception of what event culture the use a range of literature to support my hypothesis. I demonstrate how event culture arises through leisure and entertainment industries that sell experiences generated through the form of events. The literature review notes the theories of Horkheimer and Adorno and Chris Rojek which can be utilised to describe how event culture functions. The notion of an ‘experience economy’ which can be understood as intrinsically linked to event culture is touched upon. The review will discuss a recent conference on event culture which is a touchstone for developing understanding of the relationship between event culture and event-specific art. This is followed by a discussion on the qualities of contemporary art which align with event culture’s imperative to have an enhanced experience. I note how relational aesthetics encourage convivial sociability and how transmediumism works to meld artistic disciplines together to form event-experiences. I explain how temporal works privilege the transitory event and how documentation presents the artwork as an event which necessitates capturing while complicating our relationship with it. I show that participation allows viewers to become part of the artwork and how notions of publicness also encourage involvement and activate marginalised groups. The review will then turn to discussing cultural institutions which foster event culture by moving emphasis away from the display of objects and images to producing experiences taking the form of events. Lastly I will look at how media convergence works to form networks, ‘audiencing’ viewers for event experiences and how event culture creates specific practices of distracted and immersive looking.

Event culture emerges out of the efforts of the culture and leisure industries to create experiences which take the form of an event. Increasingly, western, late-

capitalist societies operate as a culture that offers an enormous amount of leisure time options. The growth of entertainment industries since the mid-twentieth century, contingent on rapid urbanisation and technological developments means that there is an overwhelming selection of ways to fill ones' free time. As I have noted earlier, visual culture scholars stress the overwhelming amount of visual entertainment on offer in today's culture, for example, the hundreds of new films that are released each year. While a film in itself is not an event, when many films are brought together to form film festivals, which are complemented with lectures and other public programmes, an event is constructed around an entertainment activity. Considering this prospect, there are many such events: arts festivals, food festivals, craft festivals, seasonal festivals such as Queenstown's Winter Festival which combines sports with cultural activities. Aside from festivals, there are singular events such as large concerts and sporting matches which also contribute to this culture of events. Beyond these, smaller and more personal events also feed in to and generate an event culture. These occurrences are events in that they are organised activities involving groups of people. They also become events to individuals because they are *chosen* as the way to spend their free time. In line with the theories of Adorno and Horkhemier, events as entertainment products provide numerous experiences that are all essentially the same in that they function to provide and control the leisure time of individuals with socially acceptable activities.<sup>20</sup> In his writing on leisure and escape Chris Rojek notes, "we are never fully convinced that we have experienced things in our 'free' time fully enough: we are always dully aware that our experiences could be better; no sooner do we enter 'escape' activities than we feel nagging urges to escape from them."<sup>21</sup> Event culture exists on this premise of dissatisfaction, it both fuels and is fuelled by our desire to experience vis-à-vis the event, which is forever delayed by the possibility of more and better event-experiences.

Literature on the ways in which event culture sells experiences from a cultural perspective are limited but it should be noted that in the realms of marketing and tourism a number of texts have appeared to assist in the 'cashing in' of the emergence

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<sup>20</sup> Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (New York: Continuum, 1998). p 123.

<sup>21</sup> Chris Rojek, *Ways of Escape: Modern Transformations in Leisure and Travel* (London: Macmillan, 1993). p 216.



of an 'experience economy.' For example, Pine II and Gilmore<sup>22</sup>, Sundbo and Darmer<sup>23</sup> and Klingmann<sup>24</sup> have produced texts that focus on teaching marketing and business leaders how to make the most out of an economy that increasingly sells experiences. They collectively acknowledge that in terms of economies, experiences will increasingly substitute services and become the next value-creating element in business and trade. For example, in *Creating Experiences in the Experience Economy* the editors outline that "experiences can consist of a product, for example a theatre play. An experience can also be a supplement to a product, such as a dinner at a certain restaurant or the experience can be the whole package, making the experience... a mental process, a state of mind... experiences are always more than just the product... it includes where it takes place, the décor, whether the seats are good or not."<sup>25</sup> These texts show that event culture is sustained by an economy that provides events because of a demand by consumers to have experiences in their free time. Mick Wilson notes that the experience economy incorporates media events, publicity events and the 'eventing' of places, products, brands and services.<sup>26</sup> This notion of 'eventing' also appears in an essay by Temple Hauptfleisch. Hauptfleisch introduces the concept of eventification, (similar to 'eventing') a process in which events are made Events, that is, made important, disseminated and solidified in a collective memory.<sup>27</sup> An experience economy then, serves to frame activities as 'events' in order to make them consumable as products. The imperative for experiences has extended to all areas of life, even museums, the once solemn and silent cultural guardians have become beholden to event culture.

In November 2009 the University of Copenhagen's Doctoral School of

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<sup>22</sup> B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre and Every Business a Stage: Goods and Services Are No Longer Enough* (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1999).

<sup>23</sup> Jon Sundbo and Per Darmer, "Introduction," in *Creating Experiences in the Experience Economy*, ed. Jon Sundbo and Per Darmer (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2008).

<sup>24</sup> Anna Klingmann, *Brandscapes: Architecture in the Experience Economy* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007).

<sup>25</sup> "Creating Experiences in the Experience Economy," ed. Jon Sundbo and Per Darmer (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2008). p 1.

<sup>26</sup> Mick Wilson, "The Event," in *One Day Sculpture*, ed. Clarie Doherty and David Cross (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 25.

<sup>27</sup> Temple Hauptfleisch, "Eventification: Utilizing the Theatrical System to Frame the Event," in *Theatrical Events: Borders, Dynamics, Frames*, ed. Vicky Ann Cremona, et al. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004). p 281.

Cultural Studies held a conference entitled 'Event Culture: The Museum and its Staging of Contemporary Art.' The conference announced the increasing appearance of event based artworks and how this phenomenon could best be analysed from an interdisciplinary approach. The conference defined its purpose and necessity by stating that:

The role of the art museum has changed drastically during the past decades. So has the role of contemporary art within the art museum. Once institutions for preserving and producing knowledge for eternity, museums increasingly become arenas for experience and events of the moment. The interest in contemporary art towards re-uniting art and life in 'micro utopian' models, such as proposed by Nicolas Bourriaud, makes art works perform in ways not incomparable to the workings of the entertainment industry. The shared tendency between museums and contemporary art towards staging and performing ephemeral events and experiences changes the fundamental functions of the museum within a broader cultural context and might indeed change the very role of art in society as well.<sup>28</sup>

This conference is a crucial juncture because it is the first gathering of academics and professionals to attempt to define an area of inquiry that remains undeveloped. That it was held at the close of the first decade of the 21st century shows that the rise of event culture is a recent phenomenon. The conference is evidence of an 'event specific art' being recognised by museums, art galleries, and universities; those organisations that will have to manage the potentially problematic and challenging nature of this art. The conference signals an effort to begin to understand the effects of event culture for cultural institutions, which need to balance their efforts between entertainment and education, art and popular culture. The papers given at the conference and its thematic scope were wide however the discourse was bound by the need to address the concerns of "a museal frame."<sup>29</sup> an internal focus on cultural institutions and their programmes. This thesis, in contrast, will take a broader

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<sup>28</sup> University of Copenhagen, "Event Culture: The Museum and Its Staging of Contemporary Art," Retrieved on <http://eventculture.ikk.ku.dk/>. 20/02/2011.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

approach to event culture, beyond and outside of the museum.

The Copenhagen conference drew attention to Nicholas Bourriaud's 1998 *Relational Aesthetics*, a seminal text on recent contemporary art. Relational aesthetics describes art practices which through their emphasis on sociability and conviviality, parallel the messages of event culture which advocate experience via participation. Bourriaud defines relational art as "a set of artistic practices which take as their theoretical and practical point of departure the whole of human relations and their social context, rather than an independent and private space."<sup>30</sup> In Bourriaud's terms a relational artwork creates a social environment in which people come together to participate in a shared activity. He claims that "the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever scale chosen by the artist."<sup>31</sup> Bourriaud's concepts highlight a need to examine contemporary art through visual culture.<sup>32</sup> In relational art, the audience is envisaged as a community. Rather than the artwork being an encounter between a viewer and an object, relational art produces intersubjective encounters. Meaning is elaborated collectively, rather than in the space of individual consumption. Rirkrit Tiravanija's artworks, Bourriaud's archetypal examples, which often involve the setting up of a makeshift kitchen where the artist cooks for gallery visitors are championed as democratic interactions between artist and audience. Tiravanija's work as an example, demonstrates how Bourriaud's theory aestheticises and fetishises the communal and social nature of event culture. In his work, the sharing and cooking of food are marked as events which are significant enough to take place in an art gallery. Or, the works become significant because they are 'eventified' through the frame of the gallery.

Relational aesthetics as a method to address contemporary art has been highly criticised as well as over used to the point of becoming almost meaningless. In her responsive essay "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics" Claire Bishop asks "if relational art produces human relations, then the next logical question to ask is what

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<sup>30</sup> Nicholas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: les presses du réel, 1998). p 13.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Bourriaud's ideas of what art could and should be show a movement towards what might not be 'art' or what can definitely no longer be dealt with exclusively by art history.

*types* of relations are being produced, for whom, and why?”<sup>33</sup> She suggests that “the relations set up by relational aesthetics are not intrinsically democratic, as Bourriaud claims, since they rest too comfortably within an ideal of subjectivity as whole and of community as immanent togetherness.”<sup>34</sup> Bishop calls for a critical antagonism that she sees lacking in both Bourriaud’s definition of relational practice as well as the artists he sees as champions of the movement. For example, noting an account in *Art in America* of Rirkrit Tiravanija’s first solo show, where the public is invited to eat and drink inside the gallery, she points out that Tiravanija’s intervention is considered successful because it “permits networking among a group of art dealers and like-minded art-lovers, and because it evokes the atmosphere of a late night bar... such communication is fine to an extent, but it is not in and of itself emblematic of democracy.”<sup>35</sup> Bishop’s concerns about relational practice identify them as too close to, or able to be mistaken for an event-experience like going to a ceremonial dinner or special celebration. Others who see Bourriaud’s definition of relational art as problematic have also taken up Bishop’s criticism. For example, Stewart Martin’s “Critique of Relational Aesthetics,” 2007, draws attention to limitations in Bourriaud’s conception of art as a form of social exchange.<sup>36</sup> Martin suggests that relational art actually aestheticises capitalist exchanges rather than providing momentary escapes from them. Relational aesthetics then, is the celebration of event culture. Hal Foster’s review of Bourriaud’s text in “Arty Party” supports this notion, showing a concern for relational practice moving towards a ‘post-critical’ culture where the innovation of capitalist strategies is celebrated rather than questioned.<sup>37</sup>

In addition to the theory of relational aesthetics, many elements of contemporary art practice also demonstrate engagement with event culture. Recent art historical literature describes practices that can be reframed as event-specific through their relationship to event culture. The literature discussed below forms an art historical component to my research, providing antecedents for the event-specific art being made today. Through a discussion of this literature I will demonstrate how art

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<sup>33</sup> Claire Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics," *October*, no. 110 (2004). p 53.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p 67.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Stewart Martin, "Critique of Relational Aesthetics," *Third Text: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture* 21, no. 4 (2007). p 371.

<sup>37</sup> Hal Foster, "Arty Party," *London Book Review* 25, no. 23 (2003). p 15.

over the last sixty years meets the criteria for event-specificity and how these characteristics are reflected in key and on-going visual culture concerns.

As noted earlier, artists today work in what can be called a transmedium practice. Transmedium artworks are produced through a combination of mediums, for example, a mix of installation, sculpture and video. Documentation is also often an essential element to the work because of its ephemerality. Thus the photograph or other record is also part of the work. Additionally documentation is increasingly experienced through visual frames like the internet meaning audiences engage with works in a number of display contexts. The works presence is amplified by its many appearances across different visual media thus enhancing the promotion of an artwork. In essence such practice traverses mediums and media rather than being bound to a specific one. It is a postmodern method of making art in that it is the opposite of the modernist conception of the purity of singular forms. I have developed this term out of Rosalind Krauss' essay "Two Moments in the Postmedium Condition" which discusses artists who use a mixture of mediums as "technical supports"<sup>38</sup> for their individual artistic aims, rather than as defining the way they make art. I have created the term 'transmedium' to describe movement between mediums rather than 'postmedium,' which suggests movement beyond medium. Artistic experimentation in the sixties and seventies lead to widening the categories of specific mediums, for example, of what might be termed sculpture. As Krauss notes in her seminal essay "Sculpture in the Expanded Field" the criteria for what can be considered sculpture has "become infinitely malleable."<sup>39</sup> However, the term can also be deductive and fail to describe art not seen before, indeed Krauss writes that through persistence of the term sculpture "the new is made comfortable by being made familiar... as it is seen as having gradually evolved from forms of the past."<sup>40</sup> Krauss' discussion of sculpture emphasises that while much art may utilise a sculptural ethic, other descriptions are necessary in order to truly expand the field. She says that, "sculpture is only one term on the periphery of a field in which there

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<sup>38</sup> Krauss, "Two Moments from the Post-Medium Condition." p 59.

<sup>39</sup> Rosalind Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field," *October* 8(1979). p 30.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

are other, differently structured possibilities.”<sup>41</sup> One of these possibilities is the field of installation art. Installation art which has been described as “theatrical, immersive and experiential,”<sup>42</sup> provides spaces for viewers to actively enter and experience. In this sense the nature of installation art is to provide an event for audiences to directly engage with as opposed to a painting or static object. Expanded notions of sculpture like installation feed into transmedium practice where mediums combine in order to primarily provide activated and sensory experiences for the viewer. Recent theorists of contemporary art have stressed the inability of medium-centricity to understand how artists use many mediums in their practices. Martha Buskirk’s *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art* identifies that specialised art studies, under the guidance of categorisation by medium, are unable to make links between practices. She argues that they cannot “account for the ways successive generations of artists have drawn upon the precedents established since the 1950s, often bringing together multiple and... distinct approaches and procedures.”<sup>43</sup> Others echo this dissatisfaction with art history’s adherence to medium in light of the work being currently produced. For example, in Suzanne Lacey’s 1995 *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* Lacey states her intention “to compile a concrete yet collaborative discourse that is part of a thirty year history because it is being reinvigorated today by the idealism of young artists and students.”<sup>44</sup> In Grant Kester’s 2004 *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*, he also identifies the discourse of art in the twenty-first century as bringing together “disparate movements and artists through a common set of ideas about the relationship between the viewer and the work of art,”<sup>45</sup> rather than by medium. Kester’s interest in this relationship aligns his work towards more anthropological and sociological concerns and visual culture paradigms particularly where art as a social relationship can be investigated. Together, Lacey, Buskirk, Krauss and Kester show that defining art by medium is restrictive and deductive. From a visual culture perspective it does not allow for cross-

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid. p 38.

<sup>42</sup> Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History* (London: Tate Publishing, 2005). p 6.

<sup>43</sup> Martha Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003). p 7.

<sup>44</sup> Suzanne Lacey, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995). p 11.

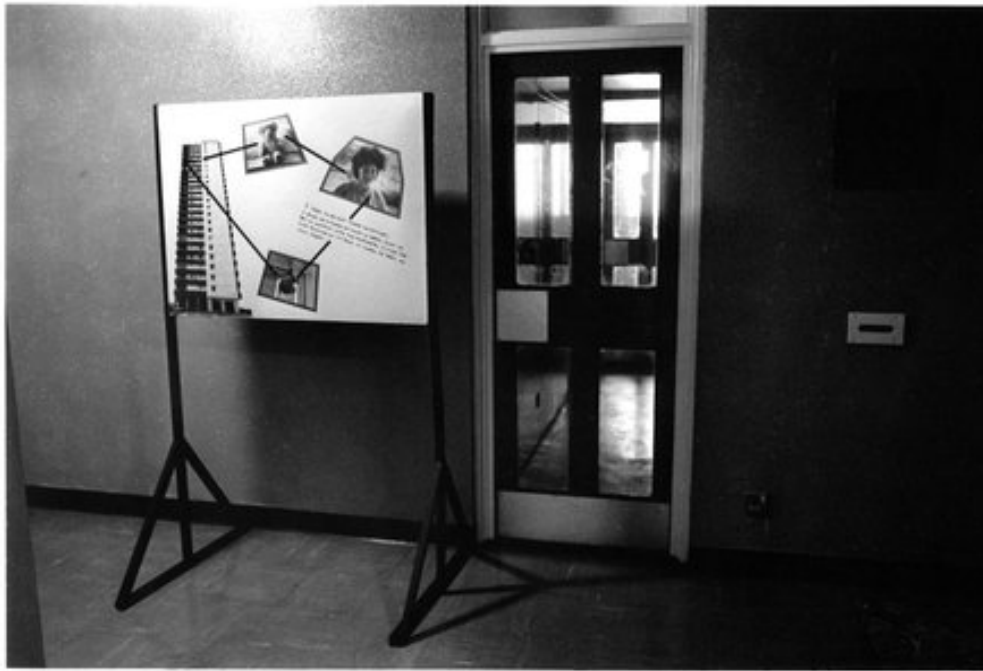
<sup>45</sup> Grant H Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). p 17.

disciplinary understanding, a foundation of wider applied understanding. The literature also collectively demonstrates that a new generation of artists combine many different ways of making art which escape the classification of medium-specificity. The increasing focus on social concerns as thematic material also steers art away from the modernist purity of distinct forms and practices to a postmodern epoch where the way in which the art is made and physically manifests becomes as important as the context and relationships the art sets up or creates a dialogue around. The inability to classify by medium but the need to still recognise form as an intrinsic quality to consider in any artwork calls for current practice to best be described as transmediumistic. Transmediumism reflects the nature of event culture where experiences are created through a combination of forms and presented through a number of visual apparatuses in order to provide ever more exciting and different events that are accessible and highly visible.

Much of the social dimension of contemporary art relies on the generative nature of participation. Participation is a significant factor of much contemporary art, including the radical practices of the 1960s and 70s as well as recent work which strives to re-connect with these historical moments where people were actively part of the artwork. Participation in contemporary art can be broken down into two distinct areas; participation involving collaboration between an artist and a particular group and artworks that require participation in order to be activated. In *Conversation Pieces*, Grant Kester discusses art practices under the term 'dialogical aesthetics' which involve work created collaboratively between an artist and a social group, usually one that is marginalised or disenfranchised.<sup>46</sup> Dialogical aesthetics is an alternative to relational aesthetics because it involves a concentrated situation in which relationships of exchange are formed between the artist and a particular group in a particular place rather than the setting up of free-flowing, undetermined relations. The dialogical nature of the art takes precedence over any medium-specificity or aesthetic concern. Kester exemplifies participatory art as collaboration through the work of British artist Stephen Willats. In Willats' 1985 *Brentford Towers*, the artist collaboratively created display panels with the residents of a housing block.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p 1.



**Figure 2** Stephen Willats. *Brentford Towers*. 1985. Retrieved from [http://stephenwillats.com/media/uploads/projects/1Brentford-Towers-0001\\_jpg\\_440x880\\_q85.jpg](http://stephenwillats.com/media/uploads/projects/1Brentford-Towers-0001_jpg_440x880_q85.jpg) on 28/04/2011.

The panels were montages of the resident's individuality, incorporating photographic portraits, statements taken from interviews and images that drew contrasts between the customised domestic spaces of the resident and the monotonous and bleak surrounding environment. The material on the boards was produced and selected by the individual it represented in conjunction with Willats. In this instance, the artwork cannot be read as an object or an image, but as the participation between the estate dwellers and Willats. The artwork *is* the participatory event that occurred as Willats and the community collectively produced something. The product: the boards, are only a remnant of the event, proof that it took place. Participation shifts "the focus of art from the phenomenological experience of the creator fabricating an exemplary physical object to the phenomenological experience of his co-participants in the spaces and routines of their every day lives."<sup>47</sup> Similarly, Suzanne Lacy's *New Genre Public Art*, traces art practices that "favor temporary rather than permanent projects that engage their audience, particularly groups considered marginalised, as active participants in the conceptualisation and production of process-orientated,

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid. p 91.



politically conscious community events or programs.”<sup>48</sup> Examples of these groups include immigrant and refugee communities as well as minority groups that are not adequately represented or who are portrayed in a poor light within mainstream media such as lower socio-economic youth. One such example is Lacey’s 1987 *The Crystal Quilt* in which a procession of 430 older women sat down on Mothers Day together to discuss “their accomplishments and disappointments, their hopes and fears about ageing in a ceremonially orchestrated artwork.”<sup>49</sup> In her introduction to *Participation*, 2006, Claire Bishop writes that participatory art “concerns the desire to create an active subject, one who will be empowered by the experience of physical or symbolic participation... [and] will find themselves able to determine their own social and political reality.”<sup>50</sup> The practices which these writers and theorists endorse emphasise spectators as active subjects, a central visual culture claim, through what Kester notes as “focus on the ways in which optical experience is conditioned by a given social context or physical situation and by the viewer’s participation.”<sup>51</sup>

Other participatory contemporary art relies on viewers to activate the art. As opposed to collaboration with a specific group, this art would still exist in its own right without participants although it can never be fully realised. Felix Gonzalez-Torres’ art is an example of this strand of participation. For example, his 1991 work *Untitled (Portrait of Ross in L.A.)* encouraged viewers to help themselves to a large heap of sweets which filled the gallery space. When people took a sweet the work was completed. Participation as activation strives to break down the barrier between art and audience by allowing the audience to become an intrinsic part of the work. As Doherty writes on the happenings of Allan Kaprow, “viewers were [intended to be] formally fused with the space-time of the performance, and thereby lost their identity as audience.”<sup>52</sup> In both participation as collaboration and participation as activation, agency is imbued within in the viewer. Participation highlights “an unknown relationship between artist and audience, a relationship that may itself become the

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<sup>48</sup> Miwon Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2004). p 6.

<sup>49</sup> Suzi Gablik, "Connective Aesthetics: Art after Individualism," in *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*, ed. Suzanne Lacey (Seattle: Bay Press, 1995). p 81.

<sup>50</sup> Claire Bishop, "Viewers as Producers," in *Participation*, ed. Claire Bishop (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006). p 12.

<sup>51</sup> Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. p 54.

<sup>52</sup> Allan Kaprow, "Notes on the Elimination of the Audience," in *Participation*, ed. Claire Bishop (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006). p 102.

artwork.”<sup>53</sup> The event-specific artwork privileges this relationship by framing it within the context of an event. As seen in Lacey’s *The Crystal Quilt* participatory art, similar to relational aesthetics, constructs an event through activating audiences in to ‘doing something’ collectively. The context of the event is defined by action, space and time, ideas which also feature prominently in much contemporary art literature.

Miwon Kwon’s *One Place After Another: Site Specific Art and Locational Identity*, traces a late-twentieth century genealogy of site specificity, outlining its radical and political nature in the nineteen sixties and nineteen seventies and its subsequent domestication or submersion into mainstream art practices and institutional frameworks. A clear dialectic emerges in the literature on temporal and locational based art between the compressed time of contemporary life and the notion of placeless-ness or nomadism brought about by globalisation and the ease of travel. Kwon identifies this relationship in site-specific practice noting that “while the accelerated speed, access and exchange of information, images, commodities, and even bodies is being celebrated in one circle, the concomitant breakdown of traditional temporal-spatial experiences and the accompanying homogenization of places and erasure of cultural difference is being described in another.”<sup>54</sup> This contradiction is a significant issue dispersed broadly across visual culture. Sturken and Cartwright agree that, “transnational cultural flows create a homogenization of culture yet they also foster a diversification, hybridity and new global audiences.”<sup>55</sup> They cite the fact that while travel may be easier technologically speaking, the reality is that national borders are currently tightening due to political repression and distrust of refugees.<sup>56</sup> Doherty also discusses the problems of site-specificity, preferring to talk about work that engages with such notions as ‘situational’ because the current “emphasis on experience as a state of flux... acknowledges place as a shifting and fragmented entity.”<sup>57</sup> Thinking of art that depends on the context of space and time as a situation rather than a site allows for an understanding that can incorporate a diverse array of practices. Kwon concludes with a theorisation of the

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<sup>53</sup> Lacey, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*. p 20.

<sup>54</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*. p 8.

<sup>55</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. p 389.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Clarie Doherty, *From Studio to Situation* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2004). p 10.

‘wrong place,’ which attempts to dissect nomadic site specificity. Kwon says that artworks which privilege “uncertainty, instability, ambiguity and impermanence... romanticize material and socioeconomic realities.”<sup>58</sup> Here the temporal nature of contemporary art also adheres to the imperative of event culture which demands new and constantly changing forms of experience. The event-specific artwork’s transience results in an event because this can compensate for the lack of material remnants left after ephemeral works have occurred. The event of the temporal artwork becomes reduced to the residual traces which are often only left behind in forms of documentation.

Underlining issues of the space-time relationship in contemporary art is the role and problem of documentation. Event-specific art like much of contemporary art is ephemeral and transient. A photograph, video, written or oral account of a work cannot stand in for actual experience: a complex relationship exists between the two. The complication of authorship and the ways in which experiences are dispersed and transformed through numerous media are central visual culture concerns. Two key ideas appear in the literature: the necessity of documentation to record the artwork for others to experience it and as proof that it has occurred and the nature of experiencing a work of art via documentation as always estranged from the immediacy of the artwork. Contemporary art which takes the form of actions or events is particularly problematic. In this instance the experience of the work is intended to be a visceral, live one. Indeed such work often attempts to make a strong physical connection with viewers but documentation, especially photographic, reduces the work to a still image. For example Buskirk discusses’ Adrian Piper’s 1970- 1971 performance series *Catalyst* in which Piper carried out unannounced art activities in public such as stuffing a towel in her mouth and riding the bus, subway and Empire State Building elevator. The *Catalyst* series intended to set up small interactions with members of the public through strange or ‘other’ behaviour. Because Piper performed outside the framing of a gallery or cultural institution her unmarked works necessitate documentation so that we know that they actually took place. However, the very nature of Piper’s piece required her behaviour to be unframed: “the presence of a photographer would proclaim that something was happening, drawing attention to... the strangeness of Piper’s confrontation as planned and therefore less disconcertingly

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<sup>58</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*. p 160.

off-centre activity.”<sup>59</sup> Piper’s piece is a perfect example of the contradictory relationship between the work and its documentation: “we have works that are about the immediacy of experience accomplished through the direct presence of the body, but an immediacy that has to be imagined through the mediation of accounts and documents. The more immediate, the more ephemeral, the more of-the-moment or of-the-place the work is, the more likely that it is known through images and accounts.”<sup>60</sup> Because we can never experience all that is available in an event-culture, documentation is also utilised to help us connect with the events that we could not attend. The issue of documentation then, is dispersed across the entire event culture, not just in contemporary art. In her seminal text *On Photography*, Susan Sontag notes that “needing to have reality confirmed and experience enhanced by photographs is an aesthetic consumerism to which everyone is now addicted.”<sup>61</sup> She shows how our ability to document events results in an addiction to looking at images of experience. Like the ‘actual’ experiences, the many images of them also construct event culture.

Also prominent in contemporary art literature is the notion of publicness. In Cameron Cartiere and Shelly Willis’ *The Practice of Public Art* the term ‘public art,’ is defined as an expanding practice that incorporates many fine art mediums but that is still largely unrecognised as a credible fine art discipline. They note that it has become “synonymous with compromise, dilution and dependency.”<sup>62</sup> Cartiere and Willis explain that public art navigates a complex position somewhere between the commercial art market and public institutions. Event-specific art likewise largely operates in a public realm or aims to engage with specific publics. And while it is usually not for sale, the artists who practice it must still engage with the market in order to make a living. Cartiere and Willis also acknowledge a disconnection between the work produced and the critical analysis made.<sup>63</sup> For most people public art equals memorials or monuments that commemorate a significant person or event and take the form of a sculpture. Krauss writes that the logic of sculpture as monument implies something that “sits in a particular place and speaks a symbolic

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<sup>59</sup> Buskirk, *The Contingnet Object of Contemporary Art*. p 220.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid. p 223.

<sup>61</sup> Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (London: Penguin, 1971). p 24.

<sup>62</sup> Cameron Cartiere and Shelly Willis, *The Practice of Public Art* (New York: Routledge, 2008). p 1.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. p 1- 7.

tongue about the meaning or use of that place.”<sup>64</sup> Lacey’s *New Genre Public Art* is significant in expanding the notion of public art as moving away from permanent monuments to temporary engagements with public space that might shed light on alternative uses of space or commemorate events unknown or forgotten to the general historical discourse. Throughout the literature it is agreed that publicness must be understood as a contested and constantly changing space. The emphasis on temporary communities and the representation of alternative histories and marginalised groups continues to complicate any idea of a unified or universal public, instead constantly challenging and redefining who the public are and how they are represented. Publicness in art is intrinsically linked to event culture because activating participation from the public(s) invariably occurs through the creation of and attendance of events. In her writing on the public sphere, Hannah Arendt notes that public space is where reality is constituted because it is viewed as the most visible arena.<sup>65</sup> Event culture is thus engaged with publicness in order to provide experiences that are perceived as ‘real.’ Jon Bywater notes in “Ten Paragraphs Towards the Development of a Public Event” how public spaces are also conducive to ‘non-events,’ quiet and personal moments of interaction and intervention. Publicness is both the spectacular and the small-scale.<sup>66</sup>

Notions of publicness are also investigated through the practice of institutional critique. In this thesis I show how event-specific art critiques event culture by using institutional critique strategies. Kwon’s *One Place After Another* also engages with ideas important to my investigation of how cultural institutions respond to event specific-art. Kwon identifies many site-specific works that challenge the museum/gallery/exhibition space by highlighting it as a hierarchal system. For example Mierle Laderman Ukeles’s 1973 performance *Hartford Wash: Washing Tracks, Maintenance Inside* in which she cleaned the Wadsworth Athenaeum in Hartford, Connecticut, scrubbing the floors and washing the steps of the museum for a number of hours. Kwon writes that Ukele’s piece “posed the museum as a hierarchical system of labor relations and complicated the social and gendered division between

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<sup>64</sup> Krauss, "Sculpture in the Expanded Field." p 33.

<sup>65</sup> Hannah Arendt, "The Public Realm," in *Situation*, ed. Claire Doherty (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009). p 108.

<sup>66</sup> Jon Bywater, "Ten Paragraphs Towards the Development of a Site," in *One Day Sculpture*, ed. Claire Doherty and David Cross (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 212.

the notions of the public and the private.”<sup>67</sup> Ukele’s work is linked to that of Hans Haacke, an artist who applies the theory of institutional critique in his work. In a book based on speculative inquiry, Haacke and Pierre Bourdieu discuss the importance of the notion of the political art institution. According to them “what happens there [in art institutions] is an expression of the world at large and has repercussions outside its confines... they influence the ways in which we look at ourselves and how we view our social relations”<sup>68</sup> In the sense that institutional critique questions the structures of cultural institutions, event specific-art questions the structure of event culture. Throughout my thesis I will use the concept of institutional critique to show how event-specific art both produces and negates event culture.

Exhibition making itself is also intrinsic dimension of event culture. In Michelle Henning’s *Museums, Media and Cultural Theory* materialist theories of media are applied to the museum in order to form understandings of how exhibitions inform experiences. Drawing on the theories of Marshal McLuhan the influence of Otto Neurath is discussed with regard to the historical development of mediatic, educational, interactive and user-friendly museums.<sup>69</sup> McLuhan’s assertion that is impossible to separate messages, information or meanings from the media technologies that convey them demonstrates how the rapid up take of media within the institution is as needy of close scrutiny as televised news. McLuhan’s theory of media forms and his well know catchphrase “‘the medium is the message,’ show that the media at work in the presentation and dissemination of contemporary art are as discursive as those more commonly recognised at play in popular visual culture. Sturken and Cartwright also note that viewing practices are determined by institutional contexts. For example, some are in line with institutional missions such as the art pedagogy offered by listening to an audio device when viewing art. Alternatively viewers can negate such instruction through their ability to move through an exhibition at their own pace and direct their attention depending on their personal taste, politics or cultural knowledge.”<sup>70</sup> Hilde Hein’s arguments concerning

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<sup>67</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*. p 19.

<sup>68</sup> Hans Haacke and Pierre Bourdieu, *Free Exchange* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995). p 98 – 99.

<sup>69</sup> Michelle Henning, *Museums, Media and Cultural Theory* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2006). p 75 – 82.

<sup>70</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. p 65.

museums are also discussed in Hennings' book, especially her idea that cultural institutions have moved away from focusing on objects and instead now emphasise the importance of subjects. Here we can see how event –specific art is often embraced by the institution as part of its own agenda which Henning acknowledges is at once democratic and liberative as well as discursive and capable of producing homogenised histories and culture. Henning sums this up when she notes Hein's claim that "museums are increasingly involved in the manufacture of experience."<sup>71</sup>

These theories are evident in New Zealand's public art institutions which have developed into spaces that are both conducive to and necessitate event culture. Since the 1960s public art institutions in New Zealand have continued to grow, paralleling international trends in the boom of museum and gallery spaces in the second half of the twentieth century. The redevelopment of the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa in 1995 can be viewed as a historical landmark in which the importance of public cultural institutions emphasising experiences over prescriptive knowledge and education were cemented. In his thesis on the development of New Zealand art museums, Athol McCredie notes that Te Papa exemplifies the 'merged' cultural institution through its combination of art and history/natural environment exhibits. He also identifies the museums as fitting the international trend of becoming more market than mission driven, noting:

Marketing departments have appeared in large museums and what were formally thought of as museum services had been commodified into 'products' such as exhibitions, research, public programmes, and spaces for hire that can be 'sold' to target markets. The adoption of business models of management and greater accountability has been forced on museums by legislation and the need to generate more of their own funds. Where a generation ago museums were measured by inputs – how well resourced they were and how good the collection was – from the 1970s there has been a shift to formal performance measurement of outputs and outcomes: how many people visit and how

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<sup>71</sup> Henning, *Museums, Media and Cultural Theory*. p 91.

satisfied they are. In New Zealand the use of attendance figures as measures of value has led to the blockbuster phenomenon spreading.<sup>72</sup>

What is not noted by McCredie is that all of the above factors mimic the conditions put in place within an event culture in order to secure revenue. The shift towards blockbuster exhibitions and the emphasis placed on secondary activities all constitute an ‘eventing’ of museum experiences. Te Papa has also been considered a model for the new postmodern museum through its emphasis on being a “playful, interdisciplinary... and engaging space for visitor participation.”<sup>73</sup> Kylie Message notes that through Te Papa’s “incorporation of video games, theme park rides and its performative populism that has been promoted through a blurring of the boundaries between art, culture and politics, the museum was certainly marked as vibrant and cutting edge.”<sup>74</sup> As well as a space and programmes that are diverse and conducive to multiple experiences, institutions like Te Papa, increasingly offer a large and constantly changing public programme – an annex of talks, screenings, workshops and performances that contribute to the contemporary art institution as a cohesive series of leisure events.

In this thesis I am also interested in the use of media in the construction and dissemination of event-specific art. There is a growing literature acknowledging that in today’s digital world, cyberspace, media and image flows and Web 2.0 are changing and accelerating at an almost incomprehensible speed. Any visual culture analysis must address the issues, effects and complications that digital culture entails. Throughout my thesis a number of key ideas centering on the currently popular notions of a ‘convergence of media’ are employed, including the ability of media content to flow across platforms, and the ability of users to generate content themselves and share it. Through these qualities of media convergence event culture consumers are given activated roles in the experience of the products they choose to engage with.

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<sup>72</sup> Athol McCredie, "Going Public: New Zealand Art Museums in the 1970s" (Massey University, 1999). p 261.

<sup>73</sup> Kylie Message, *New Museums and the Making of Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2006). p 182.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.



In *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, Henry Jenkins defines the terms and conditions of this relatively new phenomenon. He acknowledges the importance of Ithiel de Sola Poll as the prophet of media convergence and briefly notes Pool's 1983 work *Technologies of Freedom*. Pool explains that a single physical force can now carry multiple media, for example, in the past mail depended on a postal system and television on broadcasting. Today, both and many more media services are available via digital media.<sup>75</sup> I add to Jenkins' summary of Pool's concept by noting that online media are becoming increasingly converged in content. For example a video clip often accompanies an online newspaper article. It is also vital to note that media convergence is reliant on the globalisation of media content.<sup>76</sup>

Jenkins breaks down a convergence culture into three important areas.

He describes convergence as "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries and the migratory behavior of media audiences who will go almost anywhere in search of the kinds of entertainment experiences they want."<sup>77</sup> For example, on a social media website like facebook, diverse content including photos, video, blogs, online newspapers and articles, music, personal communication, forum discussions and digital games are shared in the same virtual space. This hybrid content easily moves between 'platforms' so a photo album on Flickr can be uploaded to facebook, moved to YouTube where it can be shared more publicly, commented on via Twitter and downloaded on to an iPod or a personal computer. In this way multiple industries work in conjunction to allow a user to experience content in multiple ways.

A convergence culture also imbues its users with the ability to create meaning and be in control of content flows. Not only can anyone with cyber access experience any number of media across this convergence but they can also actively create content, upload and share. Likewise a further or secondary content can be generated through a discussion, say of a video or initial comment. Jenkins notes that the term participatory culture "contrasts with older notions of passive media spectatorship."<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. p ?

<sup>76</sup> John V Pavlik and Shawn McIntosh, *Converging Media: A New Introduction to Mass Communication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). p 10.

<sup>77</sup> Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*. p 2.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. p 3

For example blogs invite comments on postings as well as being Twitter and facebook capable, meaning parts of the blog can easily be transferred to other online sites and shared.

Because vast amounts of information are being shared digitally in a way in which users can actively engage with, convergence culture creates a collective intelligence, which Jenkins says can potentially act as an alternative knowledge challenging media power. He attributes the term collective intelligence to the French cyber theorist Pierre Levy who suggests that the twenty-first century's biggest cultural plan and most significant product will be the creation of communication instruments "for sharing our mental abilities in the construction of collective intellect or imagination. Inter-networked data would then provide the technical infrastructure for the collective brain or hyper cortex."<sup>79</sup>

Converged media can also be said to create specific visual experiences and practices of looking. I am interested in how these effects are also involved in the experience of artworks that interact with converged media. Nicholas Mirzoeff identifies digital spaces as the central zone where "vernacular looking" takes place. He describes this term as "a watching that is only part of what you are doing or where you consider yourself to be."<sup>80</sup> The phenomenon could be applied to, for example, listening to one's iPod as you walk through a city or talking on the phone while watching television. A convergence of media, creating a state of being in which one is either interacting with one media, such as a social media site or engaging with multiple media at the same time, also demonstrates vernacular looking. Mirzoeff develops his argument through a brief discussion of the history of representation. Whereas traditional representation reception, including looking at a painting, seeing a play or even watching a film in a cinema, required deep immersion and the suspension of disbelief, vernacular looking enables a person to engage without leaving or forgetting the 'real' world.<sup>81</sup> Throughout my case studies I will demonstrate how event-specific art encourages vernacular looking through the many media annexes that attach themselves to the artwork and through its relationship to

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<sup>79</sup> Pierre Lévy, "Collective Intelligence," in *Reading Digital Culture*, ed. David Trend (Massachusetts: Blackwell, 2001). p 258

<sup>80</sup> Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*. p 224.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. p 225.

other experiences in event culture, creating multiple and simultaneous visual experiences that produce a distracted practise of looking.

In combination with vernacular looking, recent developments in the study of how visual media informs contemporary experience have lead to the emergence of the term ‘telepresence.’ Telepresence describes the physical, psychological and visual phenomenon of being immersed in media.<sup>82</sup> In the introduction to their edited book *Telepresence* Bracken and Skalski describe telepresence as the experience of media technology users that generates “a sense of feeling ‘in’ a mediated environment or ‘with’ mediated others.”<sup>83</sup> For example, the way users of facebook can feel connected to others and part of a special network. In my case studies I will use the concept of telepresence to discuss how the converged media attached to event-specific art like, the multiple media on the *One Day Sculpture* website generated a sense of inclusion in the project, effectively extending participation in *One Day Sculpture* to immersion in the multiple experiences of event culture.

## Research Questions

This literature review has lead to the development of my research questions through a survey of work that engages with, and forms a base for defining the term event-specific art which this study introduces. My research will establish answers to the following questions. What are the characteristics of event-specific art? How is *One Day Sculpture* an event-specific art project? In order to fully illuminate the answer to this question and to form a local context I will ask, what are examples of antecedents for *One Day Sculpture* in New Zealand? To expand the notion of event-specificity I will then ask, what are examples of event-specific visual phenomena which are not necessarily considered art? Throughout my study I ask what does event-specific art tell us about the nature of the wider visual culture? and how does it affect practices of looking?

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<sup>82</sup> Cheryl Campanella Bracken and Paul D Skalski, *Immersed in Media: Telepresence in Everyday Life* (New York: Routledge, 2010). p 5.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid. p 6.

## Methodology

This research is based on the gathering of primary material, through interviews and secondary literature. The interview subjects I selected were people known to be involved in the creation, curation and understanding of contemporary art in New Zealand as well as those directly involved in *One Day Sculpture*, my primary case study. I also chose participants who I believed would be able to provide stimulating responses to my proposition of an event-based art, because of the unique nature of their own work. I conducted nine interviews with artists, curators, teachers and facilitators. Most participants were involved in tertiary level education and some had worked for a number of different public art institutions in New Zealand. Many of my interview subjects were involved in multiple ways with contemporary art. For example, artists Liz Allan, Dr David Cross and Maddie Leach all teach Fine Arts at Massey University, Wellington, are active artists within New Zealand and internationally and all participated in *One Day Sculpture*. Christina Barton is Director of the Adam Art Gallery as well as a Senior Lecturer in Art History at Victoria University. She also commissioned a *One Day Sculpture* artwork, and participated in some of the project's additional programmes. In this sense I chose individuals to interview who could speak and think about contemporary art from the different perspectives that they hold as teachers, practising artists, critics and curators. Because my interview participants are connected to each other in numerous ways my selection demonstrates the niche status and joint project between those in my research area.

Because *One Day Sculpture* involved both international and local contributors I sought to include an international perspective through my interview with Claire Doherty, curator of *One Day Sculpture*. Doherty was however the sole international participant. The focus in this thesis on event-specific art in New Zealand means that the small element of international correspondence was not detrimental to my study. My analysis and interpretation of international artist' work within the *One Day Sculpture* programme also provides an engagement with the themes I am addressing on an international level.

The interviews took place in studios, offices and at subjects' homes, as well as via Skype and phone for long distance and international interviews. I strove to create a comfortable interview environment that would allow for speculation on the ideas I

was introducing as well as the flow of anecdotal and personal material. I analysed my interviews by selecting material that helped me to answer my research questions and give weight to my claims and argument. Interviewees' positions and opinions are referenced in Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4 as supporting evidence to the answers I develop.

I chose not to collect any quantitative data in this study. I did originally consider a statistical survey of how audiences responded to artworks which would have involved seeking out people who had visited *One Day Sculpture* works and asking them to fill out a questionnaire that I could analyse for trends and patterns. However, after deliberation I decided that the tendency for such data to demonstrate individual opinions such as whether the viewer liked or disliked the work would not have merit in this project. Although no quantitative data was gathered my interview participants retold anecdotes from the works involving audience members and their reactions which I was able to incorporate in to discussion on how *One Day Sculpture* was received. For example, David Cross noted that as the series progressed, the audience evolved from primarily those involved in the local art world to a more diverse range of the public. Similarly Maddie Leach and Christina Barton shared their observations of how audiences behaved at the artworks.

## Thesis Outline

In Chapter One I cement my definition of event-specific art through a selected range of case studies in order to show that they are antecedents for the emergence of *One Day Sculpture* in 2008. I examine Barry Thomas's *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* 1978, showing how its transmediumism, transitory and situational nature, participation requirement and use of networks defines it as event-specific. I discuss how Thomas's small intervention is an antecedent for larger event projects. Subsequently I analyse *Art Now: The First Biennial Review of Contemporary Art*, 1994, demonstrating how the exhibition sets precedents for biennial style art programmes in New Zealand while also offering a small number of works that can be read as event-specific. I focus on Siegfried Köglmeier's *Shelter*, noting its interventionist, participatory and public qualities. Following this I examine *Oblique: Cultureint Otira* 1999, identifying the project as a precursor to *One Day Sculpture* due to its extended public programmes and focus on specific sites. I show how Maddie Leach's work *At Home* fulfils the

event-specific criteria as an intervention engaged with the nuanced concept of publicness and notions of leisure. I will then discuss *Telecom Prospect New Art New Zealand* 2007, focusing on the ways in which it engaged with media technology and networks to a far greater degree than the previous projects discussed. I use The Association of Collaboration's *Contemporary Art Mobile Response Unit* as an example of an event-specific work in the exhibition, through its participatory, interventionist and networked qualities. Lastly, I examine the *SCAPE Biennial Of Art in Public Space* 2006, showing how it precedes *One Day Sculpture* through its focus on public art. I use Liz Allan's *Tales Illustrated* as an event-specific art example because of its transmediumism, participation, networked status and use of documentation.

In Chapter Two I introduce my central case study *One Day Sculpture*, arguing that it is event-specific by analysing it through the defining terms of event-specific art that I have established. I show this by discussing the deliberately provocative term sculpture in the project, reframing the series as 'one day events.' Engagement with notions of publicness and the urban regeneration and touristic qualities of the series will then be considered in relation to Bik Van der Pol's *1440 Minutes Towards the Development of a Site*. Following this I address the temporality of *One Day Sculpture*, looking at its complex durational nature through Nick Austin and Kate Newton's *Hold Still* and Bedwyr Williams' *Le Welsh Man's 24 Hour*. The status of artworks as interventions in daily visual culture is then discussed in reference to Michael Parekowhai's *Yes We Are*. The central role of documentation to the project is outlined, as well as the network of events which *One Day Sculpture* constructed. Lastly I look at the branding of the series showing how it constructed *One Day Sculpture* as event-specific. These points of focus will generate a cohesive understanding of the qualities of *One Day Sculpture* which make it event-specific, opening up for the following chapter in which I closely scrutinise five *One Day Sculpture* artworks.

In Chapter Three I analyse five *One Day Sculpture* works in detail, chosen as particularly prominent examples of event-specific art. These are Liz Allen's *Came a Hot Sundae*, Paola Pivi's *I Wish I Am Fish*, Javier Téllez's *Intermission*, Maddie Leach's *Perigee #11* and briefly, Santiago Sierra's work *Person Showing His Penis* an unofficial inclusion in *One Day Sculpture*. I have selected these particular projects because while they clearly illustrate the characteristics of event-specificity I

am discussing they also illuminate key visual culture concerns, demonstrating art's increasing engagement with issues concerning the visual in contemporary life. Allen's piece illuminates the event as a means to 'look at' the unseen or forgotten through ethnographic inquiry. Pivi's *I Wish I Am Fish* mediates on the nature of globalisation and the flow of images across space and time. Javier Téllez's work involving a live animal questions the nature of reality and simulation. And Maddie Leach's *Perigee #11* offers a phenomenological alternative to the leisure experiences which today are saturated in the visual. I also discuss Santiago Sierra's work, because it penetrates the heart of the *One Day Sculpture* series, implicating the series in the visual politics of looking, including voyeurism and the scopophilia of contemporary culture.

In Chapter Four I discuss a range of examples of event-specificity, that, while creative, are not necessarily framed or understood as contemporary art. This chapter demonstrates how event-specificity is a phenomenon dispersed throughout visual culture. The projects discussed in this chapter prove that the notion of an event is a modality of experience that is dispersed through all practices involving looking. The chapter addresses the current *Letting Space* project which many have noted as following in the influence of *One Day Sculpture*. I focus on the *Letting Space* project *Free Store* by Kim Paton. Following this I look at the emerging New Zealand artist Ashlin Raymond and her 2009 work *Dawn Parade*. The chapter then looks at three different examples of urban interventions which do not claim to be nor are framed as contemporary art but are dependent on event-specific strategies in order to achieve their individual goals. These examples include the 2010 installation/intervention by Monster Jelly in Wellington central's Glover Park. I also look at *Operation Tang!* a rally organised in Dunedin in 2008. The chapter will consider the presence of guerilla knitting and gardening in New Zealand, which sees urban spaces altered by small collectives and individuals and forms a link back to examples of radical art practices of the sixties and seventies.

Finally I draw together the conclusions which emerge from my research in each chapter and consider the significance of these answers, focusing on the ways in which event-specific art is both a product of and a challenge to event culture and how it is symptomatic of contemporary practices of looking. I will also outline the limitations of this study and areas of possible further research.

## Chapter 1: Antecedents for *One Day Sculpture*: Selected Case Studies of Event-Specific Art in New Zealand

In this chapter I continue answering my first research question by offering further defining parameters of event-specific art through a discussion of five case studies that I view as antecedents for the emergence of *One Day Sculpture*. These case studies provide a context of event-specific art for the discussion of *One Day Sculpture*. To begin I examine Barry Thomas's 1978 work *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* to show how its transmediumism, transitory and situational nature required participation from audiences and employed networks of other contributors. These factors mark it as an early precedent for event-specific art occurring outside of institutional contexts. I then turn to *Art Now: The First Biennial Review of Contemporary Art*, 1994 to demonstrate how the format was a precedent for biennial style art programmes in New Zealand as well as a project that also incorporated works that alert us to the event-specific. For example, I focus on Siegfried Köglmeier's *Shelter*, noting its interventionist, participatory and public qualities. *Oblique: Culture in Otira* was a much different programme to *Art Now* that occurred in 1999. I identify the project as a closer precursor to *One Day Sculpture* because of its extended public programmes and the claim that artists responded to specific, culturally loaded sites. I elucidate how Maddie Leach's work *At Home* fulfils the event-specific criteria as an intervention engaged with publicness and notions of leisure which foregrounds the blurring of everyday reality, event culture and contemporary art. Discussion on *Telecom Prospect New Art New Zealand*, 2007, focuses on the ways the programme engaged with media technology and online networks to a far greater degree than the previous projects discussed. I use The Association of Collaboration's *Contemporary Art Mobile Response Unit* as an example of an event-specific work in the exhibition by virtue of its participatory, interventionist and networked qualities. Finally, I examine the *SCAPE Biennial Of Art in Public Space*, focusing on the 2006 programme, illuminating a very direct link to *One Day Sculpture* due to the challenges to conventional and traditional public art it raises. Liz Allan's *Tales Illustrated* is used to signal an example of an event-specific art form.



### Barry Thomas' *Vacant Lot of Cabbages*, 1978

Barry Thomas' 1978 *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* is arguably an early example of an event-specific artwork in New Zealand. Thomas's work fulfils my criteria for event-specificity through its transmediumism, transitory and situational nature, demand for participation and use of networks. The work is significant because it used tactics similar to the Situationist International to challenge the institution of art and the bureaucracy governing urban planning. On January 5, 1978, a bed of cabbages appeared in a vacant site on the corner of Willis and Manners St in inner city Wellington. The space had previously housed the Roxy Theatre and Duke of Edinburgh but these buildings were demolished in 1975. In mid 1977 *The Dominion Post* began to report on negotiations between the Wellington City Council and land owner Kostanich Property Consultants over the development of the site. Following this attention, members of the local Values Party staged a small intervention in which they plant trees on the site as a "protest against what they described as a misuse of land."<sup>84</sup> The party members also handed out leaflets to the public suggesting better uses for the space and asked people to contact the owner to express their views. In the months that followed this incident the *Dominion Post* followed the drawn out negotiations but the site's future seemed unresolved, despite plans for the owner to develop a shopping arcade. The Values Party re-entered the debate with plans to landscape the site as a public park with benches and vegetation that could be used by community groups and would provide a relaxing central city sanctuary.<sup>85</sup> But this proposal required the landowner's permission, which was never granted. By now the site was being referred to as an 'eye sore' and 'problem.'

Then the cabbage patch appeared. The following day, Barry Thomas announced himself to be the artist, calling his work *Vacant Lot of Cabbages*. In the article the *Dominion Post* ran Thomas claimed the work was "a unification of nature with the culture of our society," and that it would be up to the public as to the future of the cabbages.<sup>86</sup> Soon after Thomas' stake to the cabbages and reports that the

<sup>84</sup> "Making Use of Misused Land," *Dominion Post*, 17/06/1977. p 5.

<sup>85</sup> "'Duke' Site Future Unresolved as Values Plan Landscaping," *Dominion Post*, 18 August 1977. p 4.

<sup>86</sup> "Phantom Cabbage Artist Appears," *Dominion Post*, 06/01/1978. p 3.

owner of the site did not mind, other objects began to appear in the lot, including a child's tricycle, painted pink and suspended from a wall; a line of IBM magnetic tape 'plugged' into the cabbage patch; a scarecrow; a picket gate and an open-air living room consisting of armchairs, a sofa, a television and a crate of 'empties.' Following the evolution of the site into a kind of sculpture or installation park, the Commission for the Environment organised local high school students to paint the walls of the site with forest-like murals in preparation for a Festival of Trees which was held at the site to promote public interest in native vegetation. The show received a Central Regional Arts Council grant of \$300 and the art objects which had accumulated on the site were 'exhibited' along with a ceremonial harvesting of the cabbages.

*Vacant Lot of Cabbages* is event-specific because of its transmedium nature. Event-specific art takes the form of many mediums but regardless of which the event-context takes precedence. *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* incorporates many media including sculpture, installation and environmental art. In a sense it is a 'happening' and can be linked to post-object practices in New Zealand with ideals of re-uniting life and art. A range of post-object practices centred in Auckland between 1969 and 1980. Christina Barton's 1987 thesis was the first to record this history. She defines her use of the term post-object art by revealing its origins in an Australian context by Terry Smith's 1971 declaration of the "redundancy of the object, instead placing value on the type of context-based, post minimalist sculpture which involved the spectator in a new and active way."<sup>87</sup> *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* is akin to the 'happening' in which objects and sculptural materials combined with performers create a strange event, like Thomas' occurrence in the unexpected context of a demolition site. Thomas had also expressed his interest in environmental art,<sup>88</sup> which the piece references in pitting a small act of nature against a bleak urban environment. In the sense that post-object practices draw on installation performance and the environmental, Thomas' work has similarities to other key projects in the post-object 'scene,' most notably in David Mealing's 1974 *Jumble Sale* at Auckland Art Gallery, at which vendors took up residence in the gallery creating a large-scale secondhand sale. Like Thomas's cabbage patch Mealing's sale disrupts the borders between what is life and what is art. The objects used in the pieces - cabbages, second hand items waiting to be sold - do

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<sup>87</sup> Christina Barton, "Post-Object Art in New Zealand: 1969 - 1979, Experiments in Art and Life" (University of Auckland, 1987). p 7.

<sup>88</sup> Barry Thomas, Personal Communication. 04/02/2011.

not classify the works as medium-specific; instead the combination of forms results in a hybrid happening or event occurring. While both Thomas and Mealings' works fall under the term post-object art, the driving forces behind the works are politically and socially motivated. Mealing questioned the commodity status of art by organising a second hand sale in a gallery and Thomas challenged the privatisation of public space by growing vegetables in an unused lot.

The focus on context in Thomas' work also marks it as a situational intervention. By selecting the Manners-Willis St site which had already garnered attention over its 'misuse' and moved members of the community to suggest the space be turned into a park, Thomas drew attention to a previous existing situation that had the potentiality for galvanising wider interest and involvement. While Thomas utilised the 'readymade' situation at the site he also set up a new situation by installing the cabbage patch. Such an appearance asks viewers to consider the new set of circumstances in the space: it provokes passers-by in to realising the ease with which the lot could be modified and how, theoretically, urban space in general could be very different from how we currently experience it. *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* referenced the practices of the Situationist International, a group of cultural revolutionaries active in Europe from the late 1950s to the late 1960s, lead by Guy Debord, who published the collective's manifesto in *The Society of the Spectacle*.<sup>89</sup> The Situationists aimed to re-negotiate and re-map urban visual experience through subverting everyday encounters with the visual landscape of the twentieth century. The artists of the group "were to break down the division between individual art forms and to create *situations*, constructed encounters and creatively lived moments in specific urban settings, instances of a critically transformed everyday life."<sup>90</sup> Thomas' cabbages are a significant example of situational strategies because their appearance transformed the depressed urban space they appeared in and acted as a catalyst for further subversions and re-imaginings of the site. These interventions also drew on the Situationists' concerns with the politics of social space, which they saw as ruled by the hegemony of capitalism, constraining the public's ability to construct their own environment. The temporary quality of event-specific art is also evident in *Vacant Lot of Cabbages*. As an impermanent work due to both the illegitimacy of its installation and the

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<sup>89</sup> Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (New York: Zone Books, 1995).

<sup>90</sup> Peter Wollen, "The Situationist International," *New Left Review*, no. 174 (1989). p 68.

precarious nature of the cabbages' life, Thomas' work also stands in the tradition of new-genre public art with its focus on transient forms. The temporal nature of the piece is intentional because the site was being called into question rather than commemorated in the tradition of public sculpture.

The impermanence of event-specific art likewise produces temporary communities of participants. The ability of event-specific art to mobilise a momentary group of people can result in a more authentic activation of individuals because their participation creates a sense of communal purpose. In Thomas' work such a situation occurred. The temporary work created an urgency or immediacy which attracts actual involvement. Thomas noted that one of the more exciting things about the project was that after the initial planting of the cabbages, people began to care and tend for them of their own accord.<sup>91</sup> Such an act of participation demonstrates that the event nature of the cabbages' appearance empowered people to feel a responsibility towards and a part of the work. Indeed, *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* was probably considered less 'a work' by those involved than a real life situation that they were intrinsically involved in and empowered by, not an aesthetic object they merely contemplated.

Participation is also inherent in an anecdote Thomas shares: a friend of Thomas' recalls that as a bus he was on passed the cabbage patch the entire vehicle erupted with laughter.<sup>92</sup> This moment suggests the power of the event-specific work to create a temporary community united by their reclaiming of public space. The brief moment of conviviality on the bus shows the ability of work like Thomas' to affect the visual experience of a group of people, as well as produce a communal, phenomenological event, through the emotional and bodily reaction that resulted.

*Vacant Lot of Cabbages* also demonstrates how event-specific art is constructed through networks of events and media technology. Thomas' decision to have the cabbages appear unexpectedly and at first anonymously grounds the piece as a surprise happening or occurrence – an eventful moment. Indeed the piece was 'eventful' enough to make it into the local newspaper. This strategy makes the work novel to garner media attention but its organised quality makes it accessible enough for the public to appreciate its quiet and humble aspects. In the following weeks and months after the cabbages were planted, various other art pieces appeared at the site.

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<sup>91</sup> Thomas. Personal Communication.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

Although these works were not by Thomas, they had the effect of extending *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* into an ongoing series of events. This day-to-day evolution of the space provided fodder for the *Dominion Post* to act as a commentator and promoter of the events taking place. It can be assumed that because of the *Dominion Post*'s involvement in the work it was brought to the attention of a wider public. Thomas himself notes that this was a "crucial factor," in the success of the project.<sup>93</sup> In this sense the project became a media event and was fuelled by the media's responses. At the time, utilising the disseminating power and authority of the local newspaper was the most effective way to publicise the cabbage patch. The network of public events that constitute *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* were conducive to ongoing coverage because their 'realness' in the public space and conscience of Wellington was deemed important to broadcast. The work culminated with the 'Roxy Show' which involved an exhibition, awareness campaign by the Commission for the Environment on native trees and ceremonial harvesting of the cabbages. A large coleslaw was also prepared free for the public. This end to the cabbage patch was in itself another event, a festival to celebrate the cabbages and the possible re-imaging of urban space that they symbolised. The day after the Roxy Show, members of the Values Party became involved again, calling for city sites awaiting redevelopment to be declared "peoples parks," and made available for temporary public use.<sup>94</sup>

*Vacant Lot of Cabbages* is an early New Zealand example of an artwork that can be reframed and rethought of as having event-specific characteristics through its combination of media resulting in a transmedium work, generation of public participation, status as a temporary situation and series of networks which engage with the media specific to its time. These qualities position the work as a public event more so than any other term such as sculpture or installation that might describe its characteristics. Thomas' piece stands alone, separate from the influence of cultural institutions but for the majority of event-specific art today this is not the case. I now turn to event-specific art projects that are primarily organised and run through large arts bodies and are therefore engaged more directly with event culture.

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> "Roxy Show Inspires 'Peoples' Park' Call," *Dominion Post*, 22/06/1978. p 3.

### **Art Now: The First Biennial Review of Contemporary Art, 1994**

Since the early 1990s, event-specific work such as *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* has increasingly been recognised by the cultural organisations and public institutions of New Zealand as important aspects of contemporary art. Subsequently, such institutions have attempted to assimilate event-specific work into their programmes. The 1994 exhibition *Art Now: The First Biennial Review of Contemporary Art* is an example of this phenomenon. It is a significant case in point because it demonstrates initial attempts to construct a biennial culture in New Zealand which can be read as a move in response to the number of biennials occurring internationally and by a need to compete with other entertainment experiences. This exhibition also highlights the paradox of exhibiting artworks that derive their meaning from occurring outside of the gallery, often as happenings or events, by displaying them within the frame of large cultural institutions. At a concurrent time, *Art Now* made modest claims to reconcile this problem by incorporating off-site works within the exhibition programme. Siegfried Köglmeier's *Shelter* is one such example. It shares in later event-specific projects which increasingly allow and encourage art to interact with the surrounding visual field.

*Art Now: The First Biennial review of Contemporary Art* was staged in 1994 at the site of the former National Museum of New Zealand on Buckle St in Wellington. The project was a survey of contemporary three-dimensional New Zealand art and was framed as New Zealand's inaugural contemporary art biennial although no subsequent programmes were staged. In her curatorial introduction Christina Barton claims that the event was well overdue, referencing a lack of such exhibitions in the years since the 1986 *Sculpture I and II* held at the Auckland City Art Gallery. Another perspective is gleaned from Te Papa Tongarewa's then Chief Executive Cheryll Sotheran, who validates the exhibition by stating: "as the new Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa rises on the Wellington waterfront it is appropriate that the museum's public programmes become more visible in the

capital.”<sup>95</sup> Sotheran’s statement demonstrates an institutional imperative of museums to compete with the wider entertainment industry, now booming in the nineties, by promoting the biennial model as a means to also make the museum a more visible force. A number of artworks commissioned for *Art Now* created a dialectic between art and the wider visual culture.

While *Art Now* categorised the works on display as linked through their three-dimensional form and status as either sculpture or installation, what also connected the works was the vehicle of the expansive scope of the exhibition itself. In this instance, the biennial model which sits somewhere between “an over-blown symptom of spectacular event culture...[and] a critical site of experimentation in exhibition making,”<sup>96</sup> as defined by Filipovic, van Hal and Øvstebø in their 2010 *The Biennial Reader*, was the frame that connected the range of different practices on show in *Art Now*. Filipovic, van Hal and Øvstebø’s statement is made 15 years after *Art Now* but this characterisation of biennials holds true across time. The earliest forms of biennial such as the Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, or the most famous of biennials, the Venice Biennale, employ spectacle whilst also being innovative exhibitionary practices. While the wide range of works included was an effort to express the diversity of contemporary practice, what held the works together was the frame of the exhibition. Biennials use themes or propositions to do so. In *Art Now* a curatorial framework utilising the concepts of ‘site,’ ‘body,’ ‘materials’ and ‘signs’ brought different pieces together. For example, Philip Dadson’s sound performance *Resonance* and Maureen Lander’s installation of flax-woven baskets *This is Not a Kete* must be understood as primarily linked through the exhibition format. Filipovic, van Hal and Øvstebø note that “exhibitions in general and biennial exhibitions specifically... are central sites for understanding the artwork of today.”<sup>97</sup> In this sense, it is as important to consider the frame around the artwork as much as the intrinsic qualities which may reside within the works themselves.

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<sup>95</sup> Cheryll Sotheran, "Foreword," in *Art Now: The First Biennial Review of Contemporary Art*, ed. Jillian Lloyd and Matene Ruawai (Wellington: The Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1994). p 6.

<sup>96</sup> Solveig Øvstebø, Marieke van Hal, and Elena Filipovic, "Biennialogy," in *The Biennial Reader*, ed. Solveig Øvstebø, Marieke van Hal, and Elena Filipovic (Bergen: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2010). p 13.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. p 16.

The biennial model of *Art Now* provided access to and engagement with sculpture and installation works considered ‘difficult’ by virtue of their conceptual basis. Both the authority of the Museum of New Zealand and the biennial mode created a trustworthy platform to display what is considered ‘art now,’ that is: the cutting edge and most contemporary. Indeed Christina Barton notes that the event was as an attempt to “prod the institution in to taking a responsibility towards contemporary art.”<sup>98</sup> This inherently means packaging it for wider consumption. The power of both the national institution and the biennial mode to do this was aided by using the concepts of ‘site’, ‘body’, ‘materials’ and ‘signs’ to structure the show and provide a range of themes for visitors to view the sculpture and installation work through. These aids suggest ways in which to consume the art on display. As an exhibition of works that was deemed ‘overdue’ we can see these guides as a strategy to help the public engage with these art practices. Moreover the cohesive event of *Art Now* was designed in a way in which to make the perceived ‘difficult’ nature of contemporary sculpture and installation more accessible. Rather than only providing detailed art historical support material such as wall captions and a catalogue the thematic frames of site, body, material and sign enabled a network of sub-events making the work more digestible. This technique was in line with the ongoing imperative of contemporary cultural institutions to provide experiences rather than simply display art objects, similar to the situation that Henning characterises as noted earlier.<sup>99</sup>

While most of the *Art Now* works were exhibited in traditional, spaces within the museum building or on its grounds a small selection were placed off-site demonstrating a divergence from traditional exhibitionary frameworks and a shift towards the tendency for artworks to be experienced in an event-context outside of the institution: in everyday life. I draw attention to one of these works because it demonstrates a departure from housing works in an institutional setting. It also demonstrates parallels to a re-working of the situational nature of works like Thomas’ *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* and foreshadows later event-specific projects in this thesis, such as *Oblique* and *One Day Sculpture*.

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<sup>98</sup> Christina Barton, Personal Communication. 19/08/2010.

<sup>99</sup> Henning, *Museums, Media and Cultural Theory*. p 91.



Siegfried Köglmeier's *Shelter* is an example of an event-specific work included in *Art Now* that occurred outside of the museum and brought to attention the nature of the exhibition as event culture. *Shelter* was transmediumistic, required participation, was a public intervention and operated as a network. For the piece a limited number of raincoats were offered for sale at the museum with the *Art Now* logo printed on them. Theoretically the buyers of the jackets would wear them outside of and away from the show, effectively widening the scope of audience seeing the artwork.<sup>100</sup> Each coat was signed by the artist and one was displayed within the exhibition. The performative nature of 'wearing' the work combined with the installation display in the gallery as art and in the shop as consumer product, show that the work operated across a range of traditional mediums. As a work that was partially dispersed from the museum it acted as an intervention in the traditional strategies of display and engaged with the wider visual culture through its ability to appear, literally, on the back of someone walking on the street beyond the exhibition. The work depended on participation because in order to be fully activated visitors to *Art Now* needed to purchase and wear the jacket. Lacey's notion of participation illuminating an unknown relationship between artist and audience that may itself constitute the artwork is evident in Köglmeier's piece.<sup>101</sup> The coats were an advert for the exhibition, blurring the boundaries between artwork and event promotion, an agency that extended the artwork through a series of networks: the jacket in the museum shop, the jacket on display in the exhibition and the jacket worn by a member of the public. Moreover, as an advertisement for *Art Now Shelter* mimics other creative marketing strategies that are often employed in events. Large festivals or events are advertised through merchandise and clothing. Such objects act as proof that an event took place, that a subject attended and took part, that *Art Now* was indeed experienced in some fashion. *Shelter* shows an awareness of how *Art Now* was attempting to compete in an event culture climate where the exhibition must prove to be as clever and contemporary as any other event which might be advertising itself. *Shelter* as advertisement demonstrates the notion that the frame of the artwork

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<sup>100</sup> Christina Barton "Shelter, Siegfried Köglmeier," in *Art Now: The First Biennial Review of Contemporary Art*, ed. Matene Ruawai Jillian Loyd, Maori Language Commission, (Wellington: Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa, 1994). p 57.

<sup>101</sup> Lacey, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*. p 20.

impacts on its construction. In the case of *Shelter*, the event-vehicle of *Art Now* actively conditioned the work.

Köglmeier's work is an example of the emerging incorporation of event-specific practices in to public art projects in New Zealand that are formulated through a biennial model. As I have noted, the 1994 exhibition was the one and only *Art Now* to be staged. Christina Barton has labelled the project: "one of the strings of failed efforts to establish a biennale model in New Zealand."<sup>102</sup> While Barton's comments are invariably tied to funding and internal politics which this study does not wish to focus on, I speculate that her comment suggests that works such as Köglmeier's posed a challenge to the institutionally driven biennial model which is limited in its presentation of works that engage with the everyday spaces outside of the gallery.

### ***Oblique: Culture in Otira***

The 1999 project *Oblique: Culture in Otira* transcended the biennial structure of *Art Now* as a temporary 'one-off' programme that utilised the situational nature of projects such as *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* to construct small interventions in relation to a specific site. *Oblique* fulfils the terms of event-specificity due to its institutional convergence, engagement with media, participation, temporality, and series of networks. Maddie Leach's contribution to the project, *At Home* is discussed in relation to these characteristics in concord with the context of the project.

*Oblique* was a temporary, site-specific project staged in the small, isolated and nearly uninhabited South Island town of Otira. Otira is nestled in Arthur's Pass and was formerly the hub of the New Zealand Rail and Civil Works Departments for the West Coast-Arthur's Pass region.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Barton. Personal Communication.

<sup>103</sup> The Physics Room, "Oblique: Culture in Otira Project Background," Retrieved from <http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/oblique/otira/backgrnd/>. on 01/02/2011.



**Figure 3** Otira township. Retrieved from <http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/oblique/otira/document/maps.htm> on 19/04/2011.

*Oblique* ran for almost a month and involved thirty artists from New Zealand, Australia, Japan, Germany and the United States creating new art in response to the town. They were asked by project coordinator Julaine Stephenson to develop work “in response to both the local phenomena of the site (Otira rests on the South Island’s major fault line) and its history as a civil works and railway town.”<sup>104</sup> The artists utilised many of the buildings in Otira, including houses, playgrounds, a swimming pool, the community hall and railway station.

*Oblique* demonstrates the networked nature of event-specific art because of the convergence of institutions involved in organising the project and the series of events that made up the cohesive whole of the project. Together these elements created a festival-like structure. *Oblique* was curated by four contemporary New Zealand art galleries and project spaces: Rm 3, Auckland; the Honeymoon Suite, Dunedin; and High Street Project and The Physics Room in Christchurch. The unity provided by institutions working together generates a sense of communal participation. It is similar to how in other contexts corporate interests collaborate in order to promote a product that can attract more attention through combined energies and on a larger scale.

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<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

While less ad hoc than *Vacant Lot of Cabbages*, *Oblique*'s programme consisted of a host of auxiliary events. Unlike Thomas' work though these were official elements in the project. They included the Transit Film Festival, which screened short films and videos from New Zealand and from overseas; and Intersect, a closing night dance party, in an era where the rave was itself a predominant feature of event culture. *Oblique* also had its own souvenir shop and café. Local Christchurch radio station RDU also broadcasted material live from *Oblique*. The distribution of the project into micro event structures, akin to a festival, align it with various types of organised activities that co-exist within an event culture. This format mirrors both the imperative of art and any other economic activity to diversify services in order to appeal to a wider audience and encourage active participation. The literature surveyed earlier which deals with how to capitalise on an event-economy<sup>105</sup> advocates for such a 'total experience' that the sum of all of *Oblique*'s activities start to be seen to offer: to see and experience the art, have a coffee, go to the dance-party afterwards. In 1999 and even more today, the commercialisation of leisure time requires that art follows the event format in order for it to be able to compete with other entertainment experiences. While ironically taken out of the city and planted in an isolated out-post, the *Oblique* website enabled a promotion of this extension of the project into multiple events as a positive and innovative strategy, referring to the project as an "extravaganza."<sup>106</sup>

The remote location of *Oblique* meant that visitors had to travel for a number of hours to experience the project. This had the effect of 'eventing' the programme, so that the journey to *Oblique* could also become an event in itself. The location of *Oblique* called for and required active participants. Once at the site the dispersal of the artworks and secondary activities throughout the town created an 'art trail.' Each artwork and event then was made to participate with each other and encourage a flow from one to the next. For Maddie Leach's *Oblique* work, *At Home*, the artist planted twenty-six rose bushes along the path leading to Otira's empty kindergarten.

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<sup>105</sup> Sundbo and Darmer, "Introduction." Pine II and Gilmore, *The Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre and Every Business a Stage: Goods and Services Are No Longer Enough*. Klingmann, *Brandscapes: Architecture in the Experience Economy*.

<sup>106</sup> The Physics Room, "Oblique: Culture in Otira Project Background." Retrieved from <http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/oblique/otira/backgrnd/> on 01/02/2011.



**Figure 4** Maddie Leach. *At Home*. 1999. Photo courtesy of the artist.

Leach planted a block of fourteen white ‘iceberg’ rose bushes and another block of twelve coloured varieties. In her artist statement Leach noted her desire for the roses to remain after the project has ended with the hope they would successfully adapt to the Otira climate.<sup>107</sup> A frame placed in her materials that extend beyond themselves into the future. Like Thomas’ work, Leach’s *At Home* draws on situational practices and references traditional minimalist sculpture. The freshly planted rose bushes are at once out of place and unexpected in the barren and desolate Otira landscape as they are a common decoration of any garden path. Similar to Thomas’ project Leach’s work strives to revitalise the site where it took place and connect with the past through the theme and use of planting vegetables or flowers. Like works that Bourriaud labels relational, *At Home* strives to re-connect life with art in the construction of a micro-utopia.

Because Leach’s rose bushes at least hold the potential to remain at Otira long after other object based installations are removed, her work extends the event of *Oblique* in a way that transcends the transience of the festival structure. Leach’s work calls into question the nature of the *Oblique* project and its impermanent series of events. Her planting as a subtle alteration of the site through rose bushes asks what

<sup>107</sup> Maddie Leach, "At Home," *Oblique: Culture in Otira*, Retrieved from <http://www.physicsroom.org.nz/oblique/otira/document/maddie.htm>. on 29/04/2011.

difference the temporary *Oblique* event might actually have on what was an economically depressed township, calling attention to what it means to express an individual response as an artist to a specific site or place. Leach's work questions the validity of art-specific events like *Oblique* while acting as an event in itself that attracts visitors. Leach's piece works to undermine and subvert expectations of what might be expected from any artwork, let alone an event in Otira. Amongst the network of public programmes and 'art' trail *At Home* could easily have been completely missed. The piece's simplicity works to question the visual and sensory overload of *Oblique* by asking the viewer to stop and consider the garden path to the kindergarten. Leach's work offers gardening as a hobby and gardening appreciation as leisure activities that straddle the border between art and the everyday and provide a subtle difference from *Oblique*'s network of events. The Kindergarten site also suggests organic and unique methods of play as opposed to the formulaic entertainment experiences offered through the film festival, souvenir shop or dance party. Leach's work is significant because while it contributes to the event-specificity in *Oblique*, it also challenges the very nature of such practise by offering an event that encourages focused and tranquil domesticated looking.

*Oblique* demonstrates a condition of event-specificity because its engagement with media forms networks that expand out of and beyond the artwork. Although all artworks and art programmes garner media attention, only those that draw attention to a particular situation, which *Oblique* did by focusing on Otira, are capable of extending awareness out to a wider context. While *At Home* considers the nature of the *Oblique* event in a subtle and poignant way, visitors to the site and residents of Otira voiced their opinions loudly in the Christchurch media at the time. Their responses are evidence of an art that calls for interaction and participation. On February 3, the *Christchurch Press* ran an article on Otira Chief Fire Officer Arthur Maxwell who was outraged at the amount of funding *Oblique* had received from Creative New Zealand because he could not generate a grant himself to upgrade the brigade's archaic fire truck. In the article Maxwell complains that the brigade is so poorly funded that they must tie a knot in their standpipe instead of using a blank. He then offers the standpipe as an artwork for *Oblique*, calling it a "still life."<sup>108</sup> This reaction is significant because it shows how an event-specific art programme has the

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<sup>108</sup> "Otira Art Show Makes Fire Chief Burn," *Christchurch Press*, 03/02/1999. p 7.

ability to galvanise attention towards the situation that it operates within. The strangeness of Leach's work and the curious proposition of the entire project acts as the catalyst for a very real problem to voice itself. The rhetoric of participation that *Oblique* heralded is not matched by the local community in this instant. Instead the project provides a platform for a real issue to be launched. Leach acknowledges that her practice can provide an "antagonistic sensibility," out of which audiences' dissent at the work can be directed.<sup>109</sup> Like the dilemma of public space in Thomas' *Vacant Lot of Cabbages*, the network of events that construct *Oblique* offer the opportunity for something to take place that was not necessarily pre-planned. This is the distinct possibility inherent in the event format.

*Oblique* is a significant example of an event-specific art programme in New Zealand because it shows a divergence from the biennial model and was an attempt to transcend such event culture by providing an engaged and unique event with a specific place, giving viewers a focus. *Oblique*'s individuality was able to construct a dialogue about the project which provided a platform for locals to voice their opinions about public art funding and contribute to a debate about what art might be and what a meaningful interaction with the Otira community might consist of. The network of events that worked to construct the project as event-specific is also utilised by larger event-based programmes that follow on closely from *Oblique* and bears quite strong proximity to the nature of *One Day Sculpture*.

### ***Telecom Prospect: New Art New Zealand***

While situational based events like *Oblique* show a divergence from the institutionally driven biennial, this format dominated at the turn of the twenty-first century. An ongoing attempt to create an official biennial is seen in *Telecom Prospect: New Art New Zealand*. Other programmes such as the *Auckland Triennial* also continue this aim. *Telecom Prospect* is notable because it demonstrates a greater awareness and manipulation of media technology than precursors. Utilising some of the participatory strategies of *Oblique* and community-based works like *Vacant Lot of cabbages* it also encouraged wider participation from audiences through its network of public programmes. Artists contributing to the show also demonstrate an awareness

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<sup>109</sup> Leach. Personal Communication.

of the often token nature of such gestures and incorporate them into their own artworks. The Association of Collaboration's work *Contemporary Art Mobile Response Unit* in the 2007 *Prospect* plays a tongue-in-check response to the institution's desire to engage with digital technology and online culture but its lack of ability to do so.

In 2001 the first *Telecom Prospect: New Art New Zealand* was held. Subsequent *Prospects* were staged in 2004 and 2007. The events were hosted primarily at City Gallery Wellington although some works were exhibited offsite, for example Maddie Leach's *The Ice Rink and The Lilac Ship*, a custom built strip of refrigerated ice that visitors were encouraged to skate down and an accompanying video work, was installed at Massey University's Great Hall. The 2004 *Prospect* claimed that by "Offering a snapshot selection of the freshest, most innovative artwork currently being produced in New Zealand, the exhibition provides an insight into some of the artists who have made, or are likely to make, a major impact on the thinking and identity of our time."<sup>110</sup> The three *Prospects* drew on the biennial model, exhibiting a range of works assembled according to the curatorial framework imposed by a new curator for each exhibition. The 2004 *Prospect* was not driven by one overarching theme. Instead, curator Emma Bugden claims it was "a show about people, networks, relationships and conversations," and describes the works in the show as "a series of topical concerns presented in user-friendly packages that are as pleasurable as they are provocative."<sup>111</sup> Like *Art Now*, the thematic structure of the *Prospect* exhibition revolved around a preponderance of the word 'new,' aiming to define the work on display as the best examples of the most contemporary art in the country. *Prospect* embodies an event structure though its elaborate public programme and uptake of media technology, framing itself as user-friendly, open to participation and an attractive experience destination.

The *Prospect* website featured as a strong centrepiece and tool for understanding and exploring the exhibition. *Prospect* demonstrates the imperative of contemporary art and contemporary art exhibition spaces to engage with the internet

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<sup>110</sup> City Gallery Wellington, "Telecom Prospect 2004: New Art New Zealand " Retrieved from <http://www.telecomprospect2004.org.nz/prospect/index.asp>. on 29/04/2011

<sup>111</sup> Emma Bugden, "Curator's Essay," Retrieved from <http://www.telecomprospect2004.org.nz/opinions/curator.asp>. on 29/04/2011



and online culture. For example, the website featured images and descriptions of each work in the show, following the movement to provide a virtual gallery to complement the physical one. Sturken and Cartwright note that “cultures of collecting and display have been radically transformed by the emergence of online collecting and exhibition.”<sup>112</sup> By providing the exhibition online as well as in situ, *Prospect* demonstrated an awareness of the need to disperse virtually in order to compete with visual experiences on offer online. The website also contained a selection of essays by curators and critics attempting to comment on the themes and links in the show.<sup>113</sup> By making such information free and easily available, *Prospect* also fed into the flow of information that is characteristic of a digital culture. For the 2004 show, the *Prospect* website also featured public forums, where anyone could suggest a topic relevant to the exhibition and then begin an online discussion. However, only 20 comments were posted, all of them under topics suggested by *Prospect*, not individually initiated ones. Rather ironically, the main focus of discussion on the forum centred around why no print catalogue was published to accompany the exhibition and there was a small debate about the different merits of an online or physical record of the exhibition.<sup>114</sup> The attempt to encourage online participation through forums did not succeed. The same *Propsect* also offered a selection of e-cards, featuring images from the work in the show which users could send digitally. At once promoting the exhibition as well as making attendees feel like they were embedded in the project through their ability to send ‘pieces’ of it to friends and family, the e-cards demonstrate the nature of converged media as a means to continuously expand and defer the event of experience. For the 2007 exhibition, podcasts of participating artists discussing their work were also available on the website. This range of online media interaction being advocated by the *Prospect*/City Gallery institution demonstrates an updated notion of the conditioning effect of the museum. By emphasising participation via the internet the exhibition feeds into a visual culture imperative to offer experience via new technologies and new methods of looking. Claiming there is democratic potential in

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<sup>112</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. p 68.

<sup>113</sup> Including Ian Wedde, Tobias Berger and Gwynneth Porter. City Gallery Wellington, "Critical Essays," Retrieved from <http://www.telecomprospect2004.org.nz/opinions/gwenneth.asp>. on 29/04/2011.

<sup>114</sup> ———, "Have Your Say Forum," Retrieved from <http://www.telecomprospect2004.org.nz/forum/forum.aspx>. on 29/04/2011.

participation via media is reflected by Sturken and Cartwright who note that the “range of ‘second generation’ websites known as web 2.0.... enabled an explosion of activity in the early 2000s in which web ‘Users’ became web ‘Producers.’”<sup>115</sup>

*Prospect* reflects this shift in visual culture and the way in which contemporary art is exhibited and offered to the public digitally. The event of contemporary art is further extended in the discussion, sharing and reproductions of it online.

The Association of Collaboration’s 2007 *Prospect* work *Contemporary Art Mobile Response Unit* played on *Prospect*’s rhetoric of participation by making it the central component of the work. The piece consisted of a mobile, cart-like structure that people could stand or sit at. The unit contained a bench space with paper and pens where audience members were invited to ‘respond’ to the work in the exhibition. Their responses were then displayed on the unit for others to read and react to.



**Figure 5** *Contemporary Art Mobile Response Unit*. The Association of Collaboration. 2007. Retrieved from <http://www.telecomprospect2007.org.nz/artist/TheAssociationofCollaboration.shtml> on 26/04/2011.

*Contemporary Art Mobile Response Unit* is an example of an event-specific work within the *Prospect* exhibition because of its use of many media, obvious participatory elements and interventionist strategies. Like *Vacant Lot of Cabbages*

<sup>115</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. p 246.

and *Shelter*, *Contemporary Art Mobile Response Unit* employs a range of mediums such as the wooden cart and the stationary materials available to use at it. More so than either Thomas' or Köglmeier's work however, the piece rests on audiences' interaction: without their responses the work is not complete. In this sense the work is participatory, calling for viewers to both activate the structure and create a major content of the work through the 'posting' of their responses to the *Prospect* exhibition. The work can also be defined as event-specific because it is an intervention in the public sphere – in this case, an intervention in the *Prospect* exhibition's rhetoric of engagement with the public. While the online participation of *Prospect* offered audiences democratic potential, *Contemporary Art Mobile Response Unit* intervened to suggest audiences ought to respond in a more direct manner within the physical environment of the gallery. Instead of posting a comment on an online forum the work invited viewers to make their responses *the* artwork on display, rather than distancing such involvement to a forum. In this sense the work ran counter to *Prospect*, parodying its claims of inclusivity and contemporaneity established through its use of web 2.0 structures which offer a series of secondary events to participate in. As such simple technology is the institutional critique of the new technology.

The *Telecom Prospect* exhibition illustrates the increasing need for art projects to engage with media convergence in order to broadcast their event and engage technologically-savvy viewer-producers, accustomed to using the internet as a primary arena to be alerted to art-events, experience them and respond. *Prospect's* attempts to engage more widely with the public show a progression from the connoisseurial nature of *Art Now* and an adaptation of participatory models exposed in *Oblique* and *Vacant Lot of Cabbages*. However, *Contemporary Art Mobile Response Unit* suggests that engagement can be more easily and meaningfully achieved when the audience feeds directly into the artwork. Such an imperative is the focus of more recent art programmes.

### *SCAPE Biennials of Art in Public Space*

One such project is the *SCAPE Biennial of Art in Public Space* that has occurred every two years in Christchurch since 2000. *SCAPE* is relevant because its focus on publicness demonstrates an arresting break with the event-specific projects discussed so far and forms a crucial link to my main case study, *One Day Sculpture*. *SCAPE* also demonstrates the characteristics of event-specificity through its temporary, situational and participatory nature, its network of events and engagement with media. These elements of the project are clearly visibly in the work *Tales Illustrated* by Liz Allan.

*SCAPE* focuses on interrogating the notion of public art and encouraging discussion about urban renewal. The biennial is organised through a festival structure that like other event-specific projects incorporates an annex of public programmes. In 2006 *SCAPE* ran for a six-week period and saw new temporary outdoor artworks spread through Christchurch's central cultural precinct and some exhibited at Christchurch Art Gallery Te Puna o Waiwhetu. The secondary activities that were attached to the actual presentation of artworks include symposia, performances and public talks. With each *SCAPE*, at least one permanent public artwork is commissioned in partnership with the Christchurch City Council. Unlike *Art Now* or *Prospect*, *SCAPE* melds new, site-specific commissions with the large institutional bodies governing the project. *SCAPE 2006* profited from art's dispersal in the urban landscape of Christchurch, showing a return to situational interventions of the sixties and seventies with their radical intentions to disrupt everyday life and critique the political economy of art. This focus on the publicness of art illuminates a movement away from large exhibition models that attempt to identify what the best art New Zealand is at any given moment; towards temporary, local and international work, which is made in response to the site in which it will appear or to commissioning parameters.

Like other biennials, the *SCAPE 2006* project was organised around a curatorial proposition: "Don't Misbehave!" which alludes to the traditional way that public art lacks antagonism and resides permanently in public spaces, and perhaps the mainly conservative attitude of Christchurch citizens. *SCAPE* is now in its sixth year and is run by the Art and Industry Biennial Trust, an organisation set up to encourage

collaboration between art and commerce vis-à-vis the biennial formula which promises regular revenue. As acknowledged in the 2006 exhibition catalogue, *SCAPE* “aims to grow within the global art scene to become a major event within a network of rapidly evolving contemporary arts festivals in the Asia-Pacific region.”<sup>116</sup> This premise for the festival demonstrates how art-specific events contribute to a wider event culture, which sustains itself by interconnections. In this case, *SCAPE* is organised in order to draw from international arts travellers who will attend biennials close to New Zealand. *SCAPE* functions then, as much to stimulate local Cantabrians with innovative public art, as it does to generate art tourism for the local area.

Liz Allan’s contribution *Tales Illustrated* is a key example of viewing *SCAPE* as a precursor to *One Day Sculpture*. For the work Allan set up a stall at Christchurch’s weekend craft market at the Art Centre and invited people to share personal stories of misdemeanour in exchange for a ‘portrait’ the artist produced while the tale was being told. The stories could be first hand or secondary accounts but had to concern moments of misbehaviour. The artist worked on carbon copy paper so that she could keep a copy of each portrait to display on a board at the stall. The participatory exchange was advertised on a large sign in anachronistic font.



**Figure 6** Liz Allan. *Tales Illustrated*. 2006. Courtesy of the Artist.

<sup>116</sup> Deborah McCormick. "Don't Misbehave! Scape 2006 Biennial of Art in Public Sace," (Christchurch: Art & Industry Biennial Trust, 2006). p iv.

Allan's work's weekly appearance at the craft market aligned it with the realm of regular events in the region, marking it as part of the repetitive structure of local event culture in Christchurch. It draws on forms of popular event culture such as fairs and carnivals that involve entertainment experiences and spectacles. The participatory nature of the work required that the storyteller recount an event from their past in order for Allan to translate the account into an image. This act takes on the quality of a transformative event, a metamorphosis. Allan's work takes on the form of an event while also exploring the nature of events in its content. The act of storytelling and the ontological status of memory both implicate the event as a means to process and understand experience. *Tales Illustrated* demonstrates the connection between an event-specific artwork operating within an art-specific event culture by synthesising the content and form of the work around the idea of the event. The work shows the ability of an event-based practice to transcend the event-spectacle in its intimate and user-friendly nature. Allan says of the work that it "Attempted to give people an opportunity to feed into the network of ideas being generated in the biennale rather than transmitting something to an audience."<sup>117</sup> As Allan worked on carbon paper, participants also took away a part of the work with them: a representation of their personal story, the very content of the work itself. In this way participants engaged directly with the work. Both *Tales Illustrated* and the larger *SCAPE* project can be read as significant antecedents for *One Day Sculpture* because of their focus on temporary public art, the way in which they act as a series of networked events and their relationships to art as a tourist or leisure activity.

In this chapter I have further elucidated the characteristics of event-specific art by applying the definitions established in the introduction to selected examples of contemporary art programmes and selected works included in them. I have shown how event-specific art origins in individual public interventions of the late 1970s as demonstrated by Barry Thomas' *Vacant Lot of Cabbages*. The chapter has shown how such practices have then been uprooted and assimilated into institutionally driven exhibitions, formatted around the biennial model. I have used *Art Now* and Siegfried Köglmeier's *Shelter* as an example in the 1990s in New Zealand. The *Oblique* project within which Maddie Leach's work *At Home* appeared was used to illustrate a

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<sup>117</sup> Liz Allan, Personal Communication. 28/07/2010.

divergence from the *Art Now* biennial model through a focus on a particular context in order to generate event-specific practices. Following this I returned to institutionally structured projects to demonstrate how *Prospect* utilised visual communication modalities in order to engage the event with a wider. Forming a very direct link between the projects in Chapter 1 and *One Day Sculpture*, the *SCAPE Biennials* illustrate how event-specific art is most activated in the public and temporary realm. The next chapter turns to my main case study.

## Chapter 2: *One Day Sculpture*: Focus

In this chapter I introduce my central case study *One Day Sculpture*. After describing the links between the *SCAPE* biennials and *One Day Sculpture* I discuss the series under the defining terms of event-specific art with constant reference to the series and the rhetoric surrounding its claims and commissioning parameters. I discuss the certain fallacy of the term sculpture in the project and reframe the series for my own purposes as ‘one day events.’ Engagement with notions of publicness and the urban regeneration and touristic qualities of the series will be considered in the example of Bik Van der Pol’s *1440 Minutes Towards the Development of a Site*. Following this I will address the temporality of *One Day Sculpture*, looking at its complex durational nature through Nick Austin and Kate Newton’s *Hold Still* and Bedwyr Williams’ *Le Welsh Man’s 24 Hour*. The status of artworks as interventions in daily visual culture will be discussed in reference to Michael Parekowhai’s *Yes We Are*. The central role of documentation in the project is outlined, as well as the network of events which *One Day Sculpture* constructed. Lastly I examine the branding of the series and the way it engaged with media. These foci will argue for a the need of a cohesive understanding of the general qualities of *One Day Sculpture* as event-specific, providing the necessary background for the following chapter in which I offer interpretations of five *One Day Sculpture* projects.

In comparison to the other case studies in Chapter One *SCAPE*’s emphasis on public art and sculptural forms are both popular and engaging for a wider art audience and more similar to *One Day Sculpture*. *SCAPE*’s focus on visual encounters in the visual landscape of the city also shows how art’s interaction with the everyday is more stimulating than for example, the gallery-bound, survey-style *Prospect* and *Art Now* exhibitions. Furthermore *SCAPE*’s ability to turn artworks into events through the urgency and attraction of temporary public sculpture is evidence of its success in continuing to operate as an event-based programme. For example, Liz Allan’s 2007 *SCAPE* work *Tales Illustrated*, discussed in the previous chapter, engaged individuals whilst taking place in the publicly demarcated space of a craft market. The work interrupted the commodity exchange nature of the market place by subverting the rules of engagement in such a zone. By doing so Allan recoded ways to experience and see in public spaces. Allan’s work exemplifies how the *SCAPE* structure allows



for exciting interactions between the public and art. *One Day Sculpture* takes its lead from the success of *SCAPE* in a number of ways. The series also focused on a programme of temporary public sculpture which was dispersed throughout various locations. While *SCAPE* takes central Christchurch as its display arena, *One Day Sculpture* took place across four major cities and two rural areas. Similarly, *SCAPE* runs over the course of a month, following a traditional arts festival pattern whereas *One Day Sculpture* occurred over the course of an entire year. However, while *SCAPE* works were on display for the duration of the biennial, *One Day Sculpture* works were each exhibited for one day only. An additional difference between the two projects is that while *SCAPE* was held together by a loose, curatorial theme, in 2006 the directive ‘Don’t Misbehave,’ *One Day Sculpture* required works to adhere to a very tight brief, occurring in a certain time at a certain place and being the product of a research period or visit. Its differences from *SCAPE* and other New Zealand biennale-like projects then, lie in its temporal extension and compression, its tight curatorial and commissioning parameters, and its greater adherence to the event-specificity at large in the culture.

*One Day Sculpture* took place in New Zealand between June 2008 and June 2009. The project occurred throughout New Zealand at sites in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, as well as in the smaller settlements of Hawera and Opunake in the Taranaki region. The project involved a range of prominent New Zealand public art institutions commissioning international and local artists to produce a new, sculptural work that lasted for twenty-four hours only. Twenty works in total were commissioned. The parameters placed on the commissions were that the work should last for the duration of twenty-four hours and that it should engage somehow with the specific place in which it would reside. The program developed from propositions by Curatorial Director Clair Dougherty in conjunction with the Massey University Litmus Research Initiative, led by Dr David Cross.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>118</sup> The One Day Sculpture website notes the project and its establishment as “the primary outcome of the inaugural Litmus Curatorial Fellowship, which first engaged leading international curator and writer, Claire Doherty in a six-week research residency at Massey University School of Fine Arts in November 2006. Identified by Litmus as an exemplary figure in her field, Doherty’s invitation to Wellington was premised by the calibre and scope of her ongoing critical engagement with temporary, place-based art commissioning and curatorial methodology.”

“Here today and gone tomorrow,”<sup>119</sup> is how Cross and Doherty describe *One Day Sculpture* in their curatorial overview, alluding to what I see as the focal point of the project: its status as an event, and its very proposition and parameters as demanding of the artworks to operate as events. *One Day Sculpture* can be reframed as event-specific by closely scrutinising the artworks themselves, for example, Amy Howden-Chapman’s *The Flood, My Chanting* is an example of how individual works demonstrates the ‘event-ness’ of the project. Also, the rhetoric of the series itself verges on admitting that he works are more events than sculpture. In addition criticism and reactions to the project show a response from critics and commentators that understands the project as event-specific.

Amy Howden-Chapman’s *The Flood, My Chanting* saw the artist place seventeen antique maritime bells throughout central Wellington. A team of two bell ringers ran a circuit, ringing the bells at each stop to mark out an aural map of the urban area most prone to the possibility of future flooding. The overlap of ringing and the spaces between depended on the pace of the runners and created a chain reaction of sound contingent on the runners’ journey through the city landscape. Howden-Chapman’s work was an aural intervention in the everyday noise of Wellington. The experience for viewers, or more accurately, listeners, would have been a subtle yet curious alteration to the daily cacophony of urbanised environments. While the work could be considered sculpture in an incredibly expanded sense, the frame of the event encapsulates what actually took place. Sculpture can neither attest for the aural presence inherent in the work, or the other practices at play: performance, endurance and installation art. The viewers who saw *The Flood, My Chanting* experienced not a sculpture, but an out-of-the-ordinary event: bells ringing, people running through the streets, a sense of ‘something happening’ but not knowing exactly what it was.

Critical responses to *One Day Sculpture* support understandings of the project forming a new type of event-specific art form. In fact responses other than those published in the *One Day Sculpture* reader and website focus on this. For example, in Sally Blundall’s essay in *The Listener*, she notes both Cross and Doherty’s partial admission of the project as event as well as her own view that *One Day Sculpture*

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<sup>119</sup> David Cross and Claire Doherty, "Curatorial Overview," in *One Day Sculpture*, ed. David Cross and Claire Doherty (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 7.

seemed to “serve an event culture.”<sup>120</sup> After describing the project Blundall asked “but was it sculpture?” To which Doherty responded:

Someone said it would have been easier if they’d been called one-day works or one-day events but the whole series has been around saying, ‘What does this tell us about the future of public sculpture?’ We understand public sculpture to be monumental, commemorative, permanent, but it’s also about space and how it’s placed in its surroundings.<sup>121</sup>

It seems that the use of sculpture as an interrogative term for the programme, allows for it to be tested, questioned and deemed unsatisfactory in present day discourse. In the same article and in an interview I conducted with David Cross he stresses the importance of *One Day Sculpture*’s status as a research project, hence open to the possible usurpation of the use of sculpture by another term: “this is a research project, and as with a lot of research, you don’t know what your outcomes will be.”<sup>122</sup>

Additionally, in Mark Amery’s review of the *One Day Sculpture* reader on the art and visual culture blog *Eye Contact*, he claims, “the word sculpture [was not] interrogated enough to warrant its use... what we had more was an interrogation of the notion of the event.”<sup>123</sup> While sculptural forms undoubtedly played a role in each project in the expanded sense of the term, in consideration of the programme as a whole, given the connection with the traditional and art history, it must be viewed as a term limited when fully comprehending the impact of *One Day Sculpture*. The commissioning brief asked contributing artists to broaden understandings:

Each artist should be encouraged to consider the nature of public sculpture, particularly its placement in and scripting of public space and the potential for artworks to engage with new publics through the transient spaces of the everyday. All artists should be encouraged to site, perform or initiate their

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<sup>120</sup> Sally Blundall, "One Day at a Time," *The Listener*, May 30 - June 5 2009. Retrieved from <http://www.listener.co.nz/culture/one-day-at-a-time/> on 20/02/2011.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Mark Amery, "Mark Amery Has Been Reading One Day Sculpture - the Book," Retrieved from <http://eyecontactartforum.blogspot.com/2010/05/mark-amery-has-been-reading-one-day.html> on 20/02/2011.

projects in public space, outside institutional or conventional art or museum spaces.<sup>124</sup>

In this statement, the term sculpture is important in relation to engaging the public(s). *One Day Sculpture* can be read as event-specific through this focus on public-ness. Because the curatorial parameters demanded an engagement with the public each work required some form of public participation:

Each artist should be encouraged to consider the nature of public sculpture, particularly its placement in and scripting of public space and the potential for artworks to engage with new publics through the transient spaces of the everyday. All artists should be encouraged to site, perform or initiate their projects in public space, outside institutional or conventional art or museum spaces.<sup>125</sup>



<sup>124</sup> Litmus Research Initiative, "Curatorial Statement," Retrieved from [http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS\\_programme\\_cstatement.html](http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS_programme_cstatement.html). on 20/02/2011.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

**Figure 7** Bik Van der Pol. *1440 Minutes Towards the Development of a Site*. 2009.

Retrieved from [http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS\\_artistdetail.php?idartist=5](http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS_artistdetail.php?idartist=5) on 19/04/2011.

The emphasis on publicness resulted in the construction of events because these forms best elicit participation from the public. For example, Bik van Der Pol's work *1440 Minutes Towards the Development of a Site* took place in the band rotunda in Albert Park, Auckland, a public space with a long history of participation in the form of political and protest action in the 1960s and 70s. Curator Laura Preston notes that the work "pointed to... the latent history of political activity... practiced at the site."<sup>126</sup> Bik van Der Pol's work consisted of a large digital clock counting down the twenty-four hours of the work's duration. The band rotunda, also a site of performances, speeches, festivities and entertainment is a key location where we expect something to take place: an event to occur. Those that attended Bik van Der Pol's work or those that stumbled upon it could not view it outside these contexts because the location of the band rotunda is embedded in the notion of public participation and the activity that constitutes an event.

The focus on publicness in *One Day Sculpture* is an appropriate concern for visual culture studies because the concept is tied to the construction of reality through practices of looking. The public is one of the most conducive places for an event to occur because it is the most visible and therefore it is considered the most real. As Hanan Arendt puts it: "everything that appears in public can be seen and heard by everybody and has the widest publicity. For us – appearance – something that is being seen and heard by others as well as ourselves – constitutes reality."<sup>127</sup> In this sense, *One Day Sculpture*'s public nature strove to forge 'real' connections via the perceived realness of public space.

Publicness is also a strategy used more widely to promote official efforts of urban regeneration and to construct images of cities as vibrant destinations. A recent article in *Art News New Zealand* focusing on temporary public art in New Zealand noted how Wellington City Council's enlightened public art policy was equipped to financially support *One Day Sculpture*. The article quotes David Cross as championing "a significant war-chest of funding that could be applied for by

<sup>126</sup> Laura Preston, "Bik Van Der Pol, 1440 Minutes Towards the Development of a Site," in *One Day Sculpture*, ed. David Cross and Claire Doherty (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 206.

<sup>127</sup> Arendt, "The Public Realm." p 108.

organisations whose objectives matched those of the Council's.”<sup>128</sup> In the wake of the heavy marketing and branding of Wellington as the ‘creative capital’ of New Zealand, the ‘Absolutely Positively Wellington’ tourism campaign and the ongoing staging of various large-scale events such as the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts or the Rugby Sevens it seems the council’s prerogative to support *One Day Sculpture* financially is tied to both the cultural tourism opportunities that a large art event offers and providing the local public with cultural activities: ‘things to do.’ In this light, *One Day Sculpture*, with its headquarters and the majority of its works taking place in Wellington, is part of a strategy that contributes to the cultural work that the city does in order to brand itself as creative and exciting. The project is thus inseparable from the cultural tourism noted in Chapter One that biennials like *SCAPE* engage with. It is also not dissimilar to the way in which large arts institutions often act as cultural capital in the transformation of urban centres. For example, Sturken and Cartwright note how the Guggenheim has become a symbol of museum tourism with its franchises in Bilbao, Venice, Berlin and Abu Dhabi.<sup>129</sup> Conversely, the series did take place at a number of other locations, including the smaller towns of Hawera and Opunake. David Cross noted in interview that part of this plan was to avoid and challenge the events which are marked by cities and locations, for example the Rugby Sevens or World of Wearable Arts. Cross claimed that *One Day Sculpture*’s trans-city status prevented it from being simply another event to attend amidst the great quantity that any urban centre offers.<sup>130</sup> While this aspect of *One Day Sculpture* may be admirable in its attempt at inclusivity, it is not necessarily unique in light of *Oblique* as an antecedent, which focused on a remote and largely unknown small town. Neither does it detract from the fact that, really, most of the works still occurred in Wellington and Auckland. Because of this, *One Day Sculpture* was tied to locations, namely Wellington and the Massey University institution and hence part of a scopic regime that privileges an event culture .

*One Day Sculpture* can also be read as event-specific because its temporal duration was both condensed and extended. This paradox parallels the culture in

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<sup>128</sup> Sue Gardiner, "Fleeting, Temporary... And Exciting," *Art News New Zealand* 2010.

<sup>129</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. p 417.

<sup>130</sup> David Cross, Personal Communication. 11/08/2010.

which we live, where visual experiences last for very short periods of time but are also part of an unremitting, continual flow. *One Day Sculpture* also reflects the very nature of events to be ephemeral yet remain for a long time through memory, accounts and documentation.

*One Day Sculpture* took place over the course of an entire year. This extended run is unusual in an event culture. Indeed the compressed nature of the other art projects discussed in this thesis can be read as a direct adherence to the imperative of event culture that demands continual change. In this sense *One Day Sculpture* might in fact be viewed as a very long and drawn out event, perhaps an attempt to resist a culture of speed, where our notion of permanence needs re-defining.

Conversely the requirement that each *One Day Sculpture* last for only twenty-four hours demonstrates an obedience to the rules of instantaneity and ephemerality that proliferate in our culture. The constraint of only a single day for a newly commissioned artwork to appear and then vanish is, even purely logistically, a tight squeeze. These paradoxes show that *One Day Sculpture* was durationally confusing: on the one hand audiences were encouraged to take part in a year-long programme while on the other, the novel nature of one day events was celebrated. Because temporality was such a focus in the project, for example, in the curatorial and commissioning brief,<sup>131</sup> it is inevitable that the works produced became beholden to time, resulting in events. This phenomenon, of the constraints of time producing event-like relations, is not specific to contemporary art. In today's visual culture, time is often much further condensed in to brief and fleeting moments, for example in the way in which we engage with online visual media by watching a video clip or quickly scanning an email. In a round table discussion published in the *One Day Sculpture* reader, curator Natasha Conland exemplifies this when she notes that it would be "difficult to find a way of thinking about [*One Day Sculpture*] that separates it from

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<sup>131</sup> "Each project should occur within its own 24-hour period, though the duration, medium and location of each work is open to interpretation. Artists might also like to consider whether they wish to specifically address the durational aspect of this commission through the work, or whether 'the day' is simply the moment at which the work is presented to or encounters its public" Litmus Research Initiative, "Curatorial Statement," Retrieved from [http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS\\_programme\\_cstatement.html](http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS_programme_cstatement.html). on 20/02/2011.

temporality at large in the culture of viewing.”<sup>132</sup> The notion of modern, postindustrial life as generally ‘sped-up’ is predominant throughout visual culture. Doreen Massey notes that frequently we are aware of and are told that contemporary life is characterised by a “space-time compression,” that is: life happens at an accelerated pace and is further physically dispersed than it once was.<sup>133</sup> Similarly, as I have noted earlier, Virilio and van Winkel<sup>134</sup> all characterise speed as the defining notion of contemporary existence. Conversely, there is also a strong desire to slow down the pace of life seen through such shifts as the global slow movement<sup>135</sup> which address current anxieties about the damage to the environment which our accelerated consumerist lifestyles causes.

These contradictions are visible in *One Day Sculpture*. Some projects like Bedwyr Williams’ *Le ‘Welsh’ Man’s 24 Hour* verged on the point of ridiculousness and meaninglessness in their extreme speed. Williams’ work involved the artist completing a painting in a different location for every hour of his allotted one day. In this instance the artwork was reduced to frenzied activity and complex organisation in order to make the event work. In contrast, Kate Newby and Nick Austin’s *Hold Still* invited the public to view through a telescope, one at a time, objects that had been carefully placed in Auckland’s Western Park. The viewers were given a single composition to look at and consider throughout the course of an entire day. *Hold Still* encouraged, as its title suggests, placid contemplation rather than the physical exhaustion Williams’ project created for both the artist and audience apparent in documentation of the work.

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<sup>132</sup> Natasha Conland, "Roundtable Discussion," in *One Day Sculpture*, ed. David Cross and Claire Doherty (Bielefeld Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 256

<sup>133</sup> Doreen Massey, "A Global Sense of Place," in *Situation*, ed. Claire Doherty (London: MIT, 2009). p 160.

<sup>134</sup> Virilio, *Unknown Quantity*. van Winkel, *The Regime of Visibility*.

<sup>135</sup> The slow movement is a global ideology advocating a cultural shift towards slowing down life’s pace. The slow movement is often discussed in regards to slow food, gardening and travel. Wikipedia, "Slow Movement," Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slow\\_Movement](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slow_Movement). on 30/04/2011.





**Figure 8** Bedwyr Williams. *Le Welsh Man's 24 Hour*. 2009. Retrieved from [http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/Le%20Welsh%20Man/Bed038\\_567high.jpg](http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Le%20Welsh%20Man/Bed038_567high.jpg) on 30/04/2011.



**Figure 9** Nick Austin and Kate Newby. *Hold Still*. 2008. Retrieved from [http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/Hold%20Still/Hold\\_Still\\_2.jpg?size=271488](http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Hold%20Still/Hold_Still_2.jpg?size=271488) on 30/04/2011.

While *Le Welsh Man's 24 Hour* and *Hold Still* demonstrate oppositional temporalities at play within *One Day Sculpture*, the series as a whole, with its basic premise of one day only artworks, privileges an accelerated temporality. As outlined in the previous chapter, the temporal tune of *One Day Sculpture* has antecedents within New Zealand in projects like *SCAPE* and *Oblique* where artists are commissioned to produce temporary work. Moreover, the continuation of the biennial modal internationally and the appearance of new biennials, such as those in the Asia-Pacific region<sup>136</sup> shows that producing work in such a manner has become a formula. As an artist who has worked in this way numerous times, Maddie Leach says that there "is a certain addictive quality to practices which condone temporality", noting that they can result in an "exhaustive series of puffs and bursts."<sup>137</sup>

*One Day Sculpture* is also event-specific because the situational and interventionist nature of the artworks formed unexpected disruptions and interactions within everyday life, drawing attention to the ways in which experience is structured by events and offering alternative modes of looking. Michael Parekowhai's *Yes We Are* exemplifies this. On a larger scale the interludes and distractions that the works embody reflect the states of distraction viewers experience when they engage with visual phenomenon. *One Day Sculpture* works sought to "unsettle... through strategies of displacement, interruption, protest and intrusion."<sup>138</sup> And they did. But while these strategies were heralded as creating new readings of specific locations, they also created interludes in everyday visual experience, rather than actually transforming the understanding of a site. Ian Wedde dwells on this in his article on Michael Parekowhai's work *Yes We Are*. Parekowhai's piece consisted of a 4.6 metre-high neon sign, mounted on the back of a truck, which spelt out the word OPEN. The sign was 'installed' at a number of locations throughout Wellington on its allocated day. The work began at the Interislander ferry terminal and ended on Mount Victoria.

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<sup>136</sup> For example, while the Sydney Biennial has run for 17 years, others in the Asia-Pacific region such as the Auckland Triennial, Shanghai Biennale, Taipei Biennial, Guangzhou Triennial, Busan Biennale, Gwangju Biennale and Yogyakarta Biennale are still relatively young.

<sup>137</sup> Maddie Leach, Personal Communication. 04/08/2010.

<sup>138</sup> Cross and Doherty, "Curatorial Overview." p 13.

The locations between were not disclosed, inviting the public to search and look for the work throughout the day. Wedde's piece, titled "Open Event" implies that the work functioned as such. His informal account details his day of following the work as he ran errands, met with friends and worked. Through his own experience of the work, Wedde illuminates how it functioned as series of interludes in his everyday life. Each interlude was a mini event, involving the distraction of his attention from whatever task was at hand for a short period of time. Contrary to the rhetoric of *One Day Sculpture*, works like *Yes We Are*, could have appeared in any place in any city – be it Dunedin, Christchurch, Wellington or Auckland. Rather than acting as a catalyst to encourage thinking differently about the site at which *Yes We Are* appeared, the work intervened in Wedde's daily routine, offering him a series of situations that were, as the Situationist International describes what their practice could offer: "moments of rupture."<sup>139</sup> By acting as moments of rupture in the structure of Wedde's day, the way in which experience is constructed as a chain of events (coffee with friends, running, errands, completing a task at work, cooking dinner etc) becomes apparent. In this stream of banal activities, each bound to their own moment of occurrence, *Yes We Are* offered the opportunity to step away from such monotony and experience something fresh. As Wedde has noted the neon sign, suggesting an attraction of some sort and its message: 'OPEN,' signal that there are possibilities outside of the prescribed and everyday. However, *Yes We Are* was also a repetitive artwork that continually interrupted Wedde's day.

In this sense, the work, like the entire *One Day Sculpture* project, is part of a larger culture of distraction. While individual works may appear as reprieves within everyday life and alternatives to commodified leisure experiences, they also contribute to the phenomenon of vernacular, or distracted looking, as described by Mirzoeff. Encounters with contemporary artwork in the everyday visual landscape cannot be understood as uniquely separate from encounters with any other visual media that viewers consume, not just daily but in every second of waking life. Because visual consumption is both saturated and accelerated, the interruption that a *One Day Sculpture* potentially made was only one of many. Therefore the situational interruptions of the works are viewed simultaneously with many other things. Like

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<sup>139</sup> Situationist International, "The Theory of Moments and the Construction of Situations," in *Situation*, ed. Claire Doherty (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009). p 112.

Wedde's distracted experience of *Yes We Are*, Mirzoeff notes that watching "is the wide variety of things we do and places we are when we watch... as we 'watch' we eat, cook, do the laundry or childcare, talk, speak on the phone, work or read."<sup>140</sup>

Mirzoeff further notes that "vernacular watching tends to emphasise those moments of drift in which attention is not fully engaged in gazing at visual media."<sup>141</sup> *The One Day Sculpture* programme encouraged vernacular looking because it was adrift in a sea of other visual stimuli. While it was unique in its idiosyncrasies, all cultural experiences compete with each other by differentiating themselves slightly in the hope of creating a momentary event of distraction.

Another significant element of *One Day Sculpture* that marks it as event-specific is the role and problem of documentation within the series. By their definition as one-day only occurrences, the artworks in the programme necessitate photographic documentation. *One Days Sculptures* present a conundrum: they must be photographed to prove that they occurred and to make knowledge of the work accessible to those that could not attend but this process undermines the nature of the works, whose *raison d'être* is to be ephemeral. As Buskirk notes of Adrian Piper's performance work: "the more immediate, the more ephemeral... the more likely that it is known through images and accounts."<sup>142</sup> Indeed this is my own experience of the project. While the *One Day Sculpture* rhetoric celebrates the idea of stumbling, completely unexpectedly, upon a *One Day Sculpture*, photographs, which "interfere with... invade... or ignore whatever is going on"<sup>143</sup> usurp the possibility of having an unmediated experience. In the *One Day Sculpture* reader, Daniel Palmer dedicates his essay to the problem of photography, showing that, at the least, the project is aware of the complications it entails. He notes that "photography's function as a publicity and memory machine is obviously crucial... both in terms of the political economy of the art market, as well as broader, institutional, curatorial and critical imperatives."<sup>144</sup>

This irreconcilability between the document-image and the experience infers that 'something happened' which can not be understood fully without having being

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<sup>140</sup> Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*. p 304.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> Buskirk, *The Contingent Object of Contemporary Art*. p 223.

<sup>143</sup> Sontag, *On Photography*. p 11.

<sup>144</sup> Daniel Palmer, "Photography and Temporary Public Sculpture: Publicity and Publicness," in *One Day Sculpture*, ed. David Cross and Clarie Doherty (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 27.

present at the moment it occurred: without having participated in the event of the artwork. In this sense, the issue of photography in *One Day Sculpture* and other ephemeral work proves that they are contingent on the event. Photographs show that an event did indeed take place, while excusing the need to have participated in it.

Photographs are also part of the construction of the event, of what I have referred to earlier as ‘eventing.’<sup>145</sup> This process can be understood as the turning of things into events by translating them into an image. For example, Maddie Leach recounted that she was aware of comments about how her work “photographed well.” She says she spent time negotiating and arguing for the images she wanted to represent the work in the *One Day Sculpture* publication.<sup>146</sup> This shows that photography was intrinsic to constructing Leach’s work. As Palmer notes, photography can be used to illuminate the elusive qualities of the work. Some artists have attempted to avoid this problem by strictly not allowing any photographic documentation, for example, Allan Kaprow managed his happenings as such and more recently, the artist Tino Seghal refuses his work, which he calls ‘constructed situations, to be documented in any way. Conversely, Liz Allan was relatively unconcerned with the ways documentation might alter her work, claiming that the work is “what it was, when it was.”<sup>147</sup>

It is also important to note that all official *One Day Sculpture* photographs were taken by the commissioned photographer Stephen Rowe. Rowe’s monopoly on re-visualising the works also standardises them. There are similar traits across all images of the work which act to ‘event’ the pieces. These images aim to provide a feeling or sense of the event that took place as this central element to the work cannot easily be shown. For example, the images tend to show the work by itself and also with people interacting with it, highlighting its participatory qualities as well as its claimed ‘sculptural’ status. Most profiles also feature a day and a night shot in order to emphasise the nature of *One Day Sculpture*. For example these images from Kah Bee Chow’s *Golden Slumbers*, a temporary memorial to a Chinese immigrant shot dead in what was once Wellington’s Chinatown, show the work in various stages of the day as well as the work with and without viewers/participants.

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<sup>145</sup> Hauptfleisch, "Eventification: Utilizing the Theatrical System to Frame the Event." p 281.

<sup>146</sup> Leach. Personal Communication.

<sup>147</sup> Allan. Personal Communication.





**Figure 10** Kah Bee Chow. *Golden Slumbers*. 2008. Retrieved from [http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/Golden%20Slumbers/golden\\_slumbers1.jpg?size=256681](http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Golden%20Slumbers/golden_slumbers1.jpg?size=256681) on 25/04/2011.



**Figure 11** Kah Bee Chow. *Golden Slumbers*. 2008. Retrieved from [http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/Golden%20Slumbers/golden\\_slumbers9.jpg?size=249870](http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Golden%20Slumbers/golden_slumbers9.jpg?size=249870) on 25/04/2011

While the centrality of photographic documentation to *One Day Sculpture* shows that the artworks were events in need of recording because their transitory nature and dematerialisation did not allow for the preservation of objects, documentation was also achieved via memory and personal accounts. The nature of remembering things is often reliant on organising them through the structure of events. For example, we remember what happened by associating it with a time and a place: the context of the occurrence. Second to remembering, is re-telling, passing on the event through word-of-mouth and anecdote or written records. For example, Ian Wedde's essay is a form of capturing the way in which he experienced Parekowhai's work. Similarly Barry Thomas' recollection of an anecdote told to him by his friend passing *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* on a bus shows the ability for the event-specific artwork to live on through personal, oral records. The need to record the experience of the work shows how central it is to the existence of ephemeral art, without it, *One Day Sculptures* could easily disappear.

Documentation is one of the methods in which *One Day Sculpture*, like other artworks discussed in this thesis, operated as a network of events. The series acted as a network of artworks dispersed by time and space but connected through the cohesive frame of the project. Many of the artworks were networks in themselves, involving a number of interconnected events. Documentation of each work extended the life of the project into a network as well. Additionally, the public programme (symposium, artist talks, etc) of *One Day Sculpture* immersed the series in a third type of network.

The nature of *One Day Sculpture* as a project dispersed throughout New Zealand and over the course of a year required that the series forge connections between locations and temporalities. Holding the network together were the curatorial parameters which each work adhered to and which provided a sense of continuance: each project developing the themes and ideas that the restrictions set up to investigate. In this sense, *One Day Sculpture's* networked nature both resembles and deviates from the biennial model.

The works in *One Day Sculpture* often operated as networks in themselves. For example, Douglas Bagnall, Adam Hyde, Zoë Walker and Neil Bromwich's *Intertidal* played out as a series of intertwining events. The work was presented on Quarantine Island in the Otago harbour Dunedin. Audiences were invited to travel to

the departure point by car and then take a small boat to the island, requiring commitment and participation. Once on the island the group were asked to search the intertidal zone, looking for new species of seaweed. Following that the audience was invited, one by one to a cave perched on the edge of the shore, where one of the artists dressed as a spider re-told the Scottish fable of Robert the Bruce's encounter with a spider. The journey to the island and the activities the travelling group participated in, resulted in a day of events that linked together to form a network of experiences that were set apart from everyday life.



**Figure 12** Douglas Bagnal, Adam Hyde, Zoë Walker and Neil Bromwich. *Intertidal*. 2009. Retrieved from [http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/Intertidal/Intertidal3375a\\_567wide.jpg?size=87121](http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Intertidal/Intertidal3375a_567wide.jpg?size=87121) on 20/04/2011.





**Figure 13** Douglas Bagnal, Adam Hyde, Zoë Walker and Neil Bromwich. *Intertidal*. 2009.  
Retrieved from  
[http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/Intertidal/Intertidal3486h\\_567wide.jpg?size=122108](http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Intertidal/Intertidal3486h_567wide.jpg?size=122108) on 20/04/2011.



**Figure 14** Douglas Bagnal, Adam Hyde, Zoë Walker and Neil Bromwich. *Intertidal*. 2009.  
Retrieved from  
[http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/Intertidal/Intertidal3543o\\_567wide.jpg?size=121323](http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Intertidal/Intertidal3543o_567wide.jpg?size=121323) on 20/04/2011.

*One Day Sculpture* offered a large public programme in addition to the individual works. It included talks given by individual artists and conversation style public presentations with artists, curators and visual arts experts. Many of these talks were given in the locale in which the work occurred while others were centered around Massey University. For example, the public discussion “Between Moments and Monuments: Considering the future of Contemporary Sculpture in the Public Realm” addressed ideas generated by the series rather than the actual works within it. Some events occurred in relation to activities outside of *One Day Sculpture*, for example, Billy Apple’s *Less is Moore* was directly linked to the Adam Art Gallery’s retrospective of his work: *Billy Apple New York 1969-1973*, 28 March – 7 June 2009, which ran at the same time. Likewise, a presentation on *One Day Sculpture* was given at the *Sydney Biennale* by David Cross; and Liz Allan, Nick Austin, Kate Newby and Maddie Leach discussed their *One Day Sculpture* projects in a presentation as part of Massey University’s *Blow.08* festival. Experience of *One Day Sculpture* was thus dispersed not just through the individual artworks but by the greater network of secondary events that attempted to provide additional information and understanding of the project. This mode of networks is typical of contemporary art strategies constructed to prove connection and interaction with the public and fulfil educational requirements as noted earlier by McCredie,<sup>148</sup> as well as also being at large in other dimensions of visual culture. Visual experience is primarily structured through networks today. For example, social networking and Web 2.0 are central looking apparatuses today. In virtual networks, information and images are easily uploaded and made accessible to be consumed and shared. Being ‘networked’ is an ideal and encouraged state.

The *One Day Sculpture* website also functioned as a platform for secondary networks of understanding to take place. Like the *Prospect* website, each artwork is profiled with a description of the work and biography of the artist. Photographic documentation is also included. The website also includes the critical response essays which were commissioned to accompany each artwork in downloadable PDF format. An ‘online reader’ with key academic essays relating to *One Day Sculpture* as well as

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<sup>148</sup> McCredie, "Going Public: New Zealand Art Museums in the 1970s". p 261.

a six-page recommended reading list also feature on the site.<sup>149</sup> By making these texts available online the project adheres to cultural imperatives of access and availability to information, similar to the way in which *Prospect* operated. The website also contains a compilation of press releases, reviews and responses to the project. The *One Day Sculpture* network consisting of online material, an extensive public programme and the dispersal of the works themselves in space and time fits an understanding that information and experiences should be instantly available, indeed almost be an extension or accessory to people's very bodies. Sturken and Cartwright note that "technologies are imagined to be integrated within our very eyes and vision."<sup>150</sup> The network of *One Day Sculpture*, converged on the website, functions in this way to make the entire series with all of its constitution parts immediately available, but purely restricted to vision. The phenomenological experiences of being 'at' and 'in' the work cannot be recreated no matter how easily *One Day Sculpture* can be accessed online. David Cross, supports this notion, claiming that because the series is "about people, places, participation and performance, documentation is *not* the work."<sup>151</sup> As a parable, social media networks like the ubiquitous facebook, create a sense of connectivity and communal knowledge, like Pierre Levy's concept of a hyper-cortex, in which all knowledge and understanding is pooled collectively, creating revolutionary potential<sup>152</sup>, but while networks provide endless amounts of information, they also fail to stand in for physical experience and face-to-face contact.

However, because *One Day Sculpture* inevitably becomes known more so through this network, these secondary experiences do become significantly 'real' and akin to 'having been there.' In an event culture, the surplus of leisure activities makes it impossible to 'do' everything and so secondary media can fulfil the desire to experience. Cross acknowledges that "We can't be everywhere at the same time... we will always have partial experiences... that is the nature of dispersal... this is how we live."<sup>153</sup> So the extended networks of *One Day Sculpture* both compensate for not attending the event but can never quite replace it.

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<sup>149</sup> One Day Sculpture, "Reading," Retrieved from [http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS\\_reading.php](http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS_reading.php). on 13/04/2011.

<sup>150</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. p 380

<sup>151</sup> Cross. Personal Communication.

<sup>152</sup> Lévy, "Collective Intelligence." p 258.

<sup>153</sup> Cross. Personal Communication.

Intrinsically linked to the issue of network at play in *One Day Sculpture* are the ways in which the project was branded and publicised. *One Day Sculpture* can be said to be event-specific through the marketing and branding of the project because these strategies are widely utilised throughout contemporary culture in order to promote cultural event-experiences. Within the realm of event culture, brandings and advertising are essential elements that can ‘make or break’ the success of an event.



Figure 15 *One Day Sculpture* logo. Retrieved from <http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/index.php> on 15/07/2010.

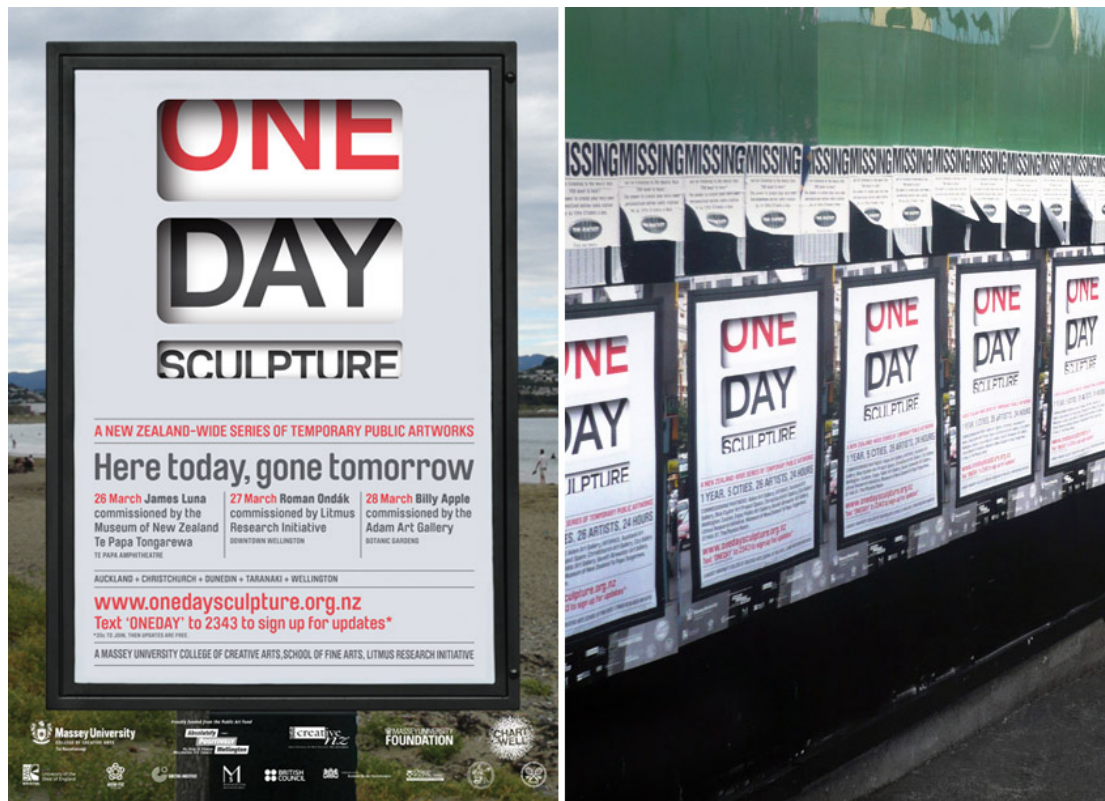
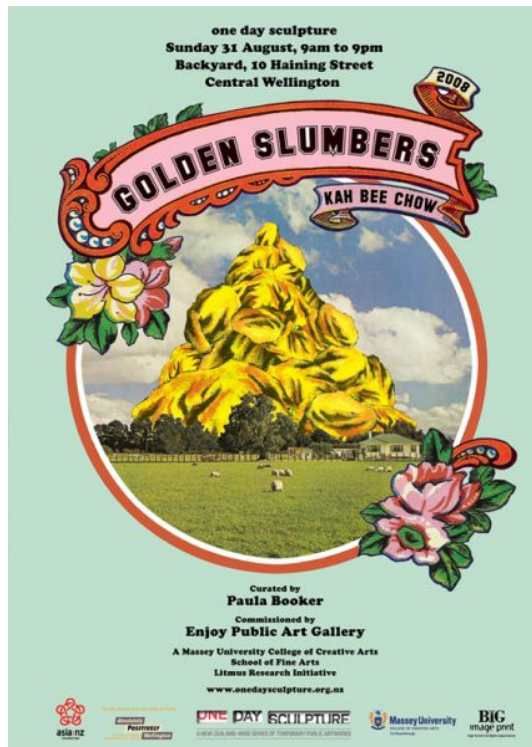


Figure 16 *One Day Sculpture* advertising. Retrieved from <http://redantler.com/work/one-day-sculpture> on 10/03/2011.

*One Day Sculpture* was promoted both before the commencement of the series and continually throughout the year. Individual works were advertised as well as the project as a whole. Official *One Day Sculpture* posters were displayed (Figure 16)



while some individual projects also created their own poster, for example, Kah Bee Chow's *Golden Slumbers* (Figure 17).



**Figure 17** Poster for Kah Bee Chow's *Golden Slumbers*. Retrieved from [http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/Golden%20Slumbers/golden\\_slumbers\\_poster\\_1.jpg](http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Golden%20Slumbers/golden_slumbers_poster_1.jpg) on 14/02/2011.

Media releases and interviews were conducted before and throughout the project. Extensive coverage was given to the series on Radio New Zealand National, particularly on The Arts on Sundays programme. These features were generally interviews with individual artists about their work.<sup>154</sup> *One Day Sculpture* also generated television coverage from TV3. For each individual work, an announcement card was sent to those on a mailing list. Likewise, SMS alerts were sent to remind those signed up, of work occurring, both the day before the and on the day, including information on where the work would be.

These promotional strategies demonstrate that *One Day Sculpture* was aware of itself existing in parallel to other cultural products, within a scopic regime that privileges events. The vast array of marketing methods that were used derive from a

<sup>154</sup> Interviews with *One Day Sculpture* artists Maddie Leach, Amy Howden-Chapman, Heather Morrison, Bedwyr Williams, Lara Almarcegui and project director David Cross are available at: [http://www.radionz.co.nz/search?mode=results&queries\\_all\\_query=one+day+sculpture](http://www.radionz.co.nz/search?mode=results&queries_all_query=one+day+sculpture).

range of event-specific arenas. For example, televised and radio interviews connote official promotions, for instance for a large concert, or new film, while the announcement cards function like invitations to a private event, like a party. The SMS alerts demonstrate an attempt to engage with the mobile ability of cellular phones to generate spontaneous events, for example the flash mob or smart mob.<sup>155</sup> In this light, *One Day Sculpture* appropriated a broad range of branding methods, utilised by different types of cultural events. David Cross commented that because of its nature *One Day Sculpture* “needed a clever marketing and promotion scheme,” in order to direct “audiences to see unclearly marked artworks.”<sup>156</sup> Cross’ comment demonstrates that the very lack of visibility of the artworks required heavy advertising in order to make them seen.

David Cross and Claire Doherty acknowledged criticism of the *One Day Sculpture* brand, particularly comments which emphasised the slick and professional nature of the project’s publicity and marketing as aligning it with the seductive techniques used in commercial advertising.<sup>157</sup> Cross admitted that the project experienced difficulties in balancing between the spectacle which attracts audiences and the more subtle and complex works the series spawned.<sup>158</sup> He also noted that while *One Day Sculpture* strove to avoid commercialisation, it had responsibilities to its large amount of sponsors.<sup>159</sup> Other interviewees acknowledged that there was a general feeling amongst participants and attendees that the *One Day Sculpture* brand

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<sup>155</sup> As defined in Howard Rheingold, *Smart Mobs: The Next Social Revolution* (Cambridge: Perseus Publishing, 2002). A smart mob is effectively a flash mob which is mobilised specifically by technologies such as cellular phones and social media.

<sup>156</sup> Cross. Personal Communication

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. Claire Doherty, Personal Communication. 27/09/2010.

<sup>158</sup> Cross. Personal Communication.

<sup>159</sup> These were many; Arratia / Beer Gallery, Berlin; The British Academy / ACU Grant for International Collaboration; Massey University’s College of Creative Arts; the Wellington City Council Public Art Fund; the Massey University Foundation; Creative New Zealand; the Chartwell Trust; the Asia New Zealand Foundation; the Auckland Festival 2009; the Auckland City Council; the British Council; the Canterbury Community Trust; Galerie Peter Kilchmann, Zurich; Hotel So; the Spanish Embassy, Wellington; the New Zealand Film Archive; the Goethe Institut; Litmus; the Mondriann Foundation; the National Library of New Zealand, the Royal Netherlands Embassy; the New Plymouth District Council; the New Zealand International Festival of the Arts; Otago Polytechnic, the Perry Foundation, Pro-Am, Pro Helvetica; SEACEX; Situations, the South Tarnakai District Council, the University of the West of England, and the Wellington Museums Trust.

was a powerful force driving the project.<sup>160</sup> Cross also responded to this criticism by commenting that one must simply operate this way in 2009 in order to generate at least some sort of audience.<sup>161</sup> As project director of *One Day Sculpture*, Cross' belief shows that she actively strove to forge a distinct and competitive identity within the structure of event culture. Cross therefore takes the position of *One day Sculpture* within an event culture as unavoidable premise for any cultural project to be launched from. Speaking of her time as curator of contemporary art at the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa between 2006 and 2010 Charlotte Huddleston, supported this notion in her interview, adding that:

You have to engage in event culture because arts in general have become or are viewed as leisure and entertainment. You have to attract attention for funding or even just for people to come [by] making some kind of spectacle or event that speaks to funders, the media and audiences... everyone likes an exciting atmosphere.<sup>162</sup>

Huddleston's view adds weight to the notion that contemporary art must compete with other leisure activities by adhering to the rules of event-specificity, in these examples, by promoting itself as an exciting and worthwhile event. However, Claire Doherty complicated this notion by saying that she was aware of having a "front stage and a back stage voice" for *One Day Sculpture*.<sup>163</sup> By this she explained that there was a dialectic between the promotion of *One Day Sculpture* which could only be a positive, confident and convincing advertisement to audiences and the more subtle, uncertain nature of the actual works. For example, many of the works were dependent on uncontrollable factors for their success or were set up in a way as to question the very nature of the project. Rirkrit Tiravanija's work *Untitled, 2009 (Pay Attention)* rebelled against the rule that each artwork should occur on a specific day by inviting members

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<sup>160</sup> Allan. Personal Communication. Leach. Personal Communication. Charlotte Huddleston, Personal Communication. 23/09/2010. Sophie Jerram and Mark Amery, Personal Communication. 18/08/2010.

<sup>161</sup> Cross. Personal Communication.

<sup>162</sup> Huddleston. Personal Communication.

<sup>163</sup> Doherty. Personal Communication.

of the public to consider his sculpture “today.”<sup>164</sup> Doherty freely admitted that while, of course, *One Day Sculpture* is not without its problems and shortcomings, the ‘front stage’ voice cannot divulge this.

In this chapter I have examined the qualities of *One Day Sculpture* that mark it as a definite example of event-specific art. I have argued that the project must be understood as event-specific because the use of sculpture in the project falls short and calls for a better way to understand and describe the works within the project as well as the ways in which the project operated as an event in itself. I have shown that *One Day Sculpture*’s emphasis on publicness and urban regeneration resulted in artworks that operated as events in order to be visible in the public realm. Through discussing the contradictory temporalities at play in the series I have demonstrated how *One Day Sculpture* both adhered to event culture’s demands of speed and constant renewal while also subverting these rules through an extended programme and work that interrogated the nature of event culture. The ways in which the individual works acted as interventions in everyday visual culture has also been shown, illuminating how the pieces were small events of distraction. The chapter has drawn attention to how documentation of *One Day Sculpture* also constructed the pieces as events of significance. I have also demonstrated how the project disseminated itself through a web of networks. This chapter has also considered the importance of the *One Day Sculpture* brand in aligning the project with the promotional strategies of event culture. I have defined the project as event-specific art through the terms that I have established as characterising this type of practice. In the following chapter I will draw my focus in, identifying five *One Day Sculpture* works that are particularly emblematic of the projects’ event-specific status and also engage with significant visual culture concerns.

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<sup>164</sup> Emma Bugden and Brian Butler, "Rirkrit Tiravanija, Untitled, 2009 (Pay Attention)," in *One Day Sculpture*, ed. David Cross and Clarie Doherty (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 224.



### Chapter 3: *One Day Sculpture*: Case Studies

In this chapter I analyse and offer interpretations of six *One Day Sculpture* projects that are particularly clear examples of event-specific art. I discuss Liz Allen's *Came a Hot Sundae*, Paola Pivi's *I Wish I Am Fish*, Javier Téllez's *Intermission*, Maddie Leach's *Perigee #11* and briefly, Santiago Sierra's work *Person Showing His Penis* which was not officially included in the *One Day Sculpture* series. I have chosen these particular projects because while they clearly illustrate the characteristics of event-specificity they also shed light on key visual culture concerns, demonstrating art's increasing engagement with issues concerning the visual in contemporary life. Allen's piece illuminates the event as a means to 'look at' the unseen or forgotten through ethnographic inquiry. Pivi's *I Wish I Am Fish* mediates on the nature of globalisation and the flow of images across space and time. Javier Téllez's work involving a live animal questions the nature of reality and simulation. And Maddie Leach's *Perigee #11* offers a phenomenological alternative to leisure experiences which today are predominantly visual. Her piece also presents looking itself as a leisure activity. I will also discuss Santiago Sierra's work, because it penetrates to the heart of the *One Day Sculpture* series, implicating the project in the visual politics of looking, including voyeurism and the scopophilia<sup>165</sup> of contemporary culture.

Liz Allen's *Came a Hot Sundae: A Ronald Hugh Morrieson Festival*

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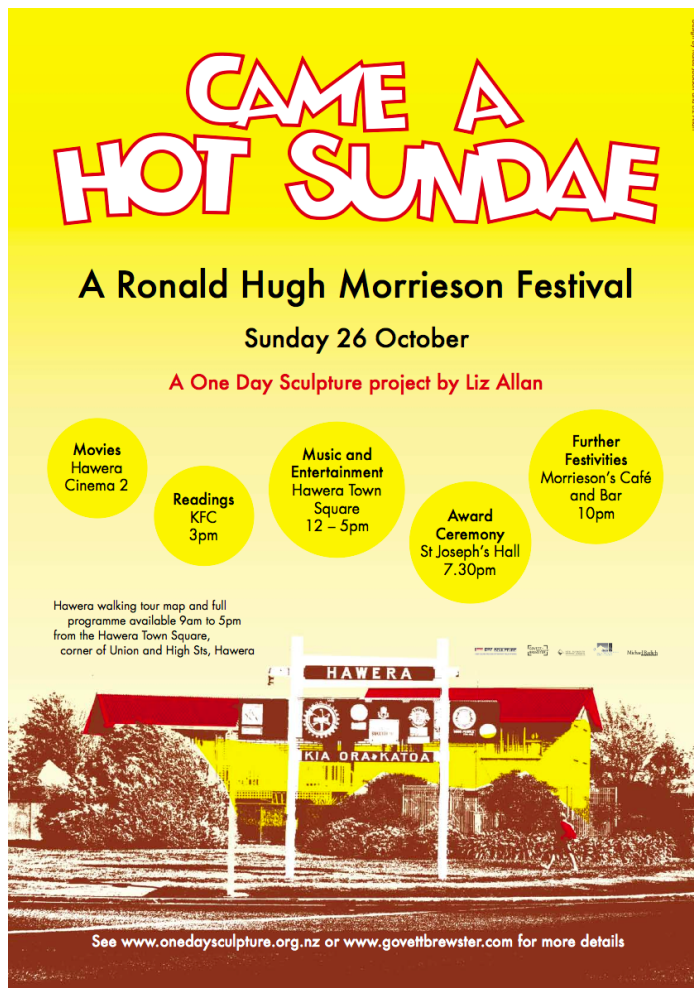
<sup>165</sup> Literally, the love of looking. This term describes deriving pleasure from looking. While it originally was associated with sexual pleasure gained from looking at erotic objects, it has also been utilised by cinema psychoanalysts, borrowed from the theories of Jacques Lacan and Otto Fenichel, to describe the processes occurring in spectators when they watch film. More recently the term has been applied to contemporary visual culture to explain the saturation of images in the current, western world and the ways in which subjects are 'othered' through looking practices, in most case studies, the othering of women and non-Europeans is focused on. Retrieved from Wikipedia, "Scopophilia," <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scopophilia>. on 07/03/2011.



**Figure 18** Liz Allan. *Came a Hot Sundae: A Ronald Hugh Morrieson Festival*. 2008.

Retrieved from

[http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/Came%20a%20Hot%20Sundae/Liz\\_Allan4\\_600wide.jpg?size=275059](http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Came%20a%20Hot%20Sundae/Liz_Allan4_600wide.jpg?size=275059) on 26/11/2010.



**Figure 19** Poster for Liz Allan's *Came a Hot Sundae: A Ronald Hugh Morrieson Festival*  
 Retrieved from  
[http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/\\_programme/Liz%20Allan/Came%20a%20Hot%20Sundae.pdf](http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/_programme/Liz%20Allan/Came%20a%20Hot%20Sundae.pdf) on 26/11/2010.

Liz Allan's *Came a Hot Sundae: A Ronald Hugh Morrieson Festival* played out as a series of events in the small rural Taranaki town of Hawera and celebrated the life of local and notorious musician and writer Ronald Hugh Morrieson. The work was designed as a town festival involving a cluster of activities. It required participation on behalf of both those who attended the event and the local community that hosted it. *Came a Hot Sundae* illuminated the problematic figure of Morrieson, providing a platform for the controversial character to be made visible and thus opened up to dialogue between historical grievances and the Hawera community. The temporal nature of the piece meant that Morrieson was represented by individuals' actions rather than through a traditional monumental form. The work shows how art

employs visual culture strategies in order to engage a public to attempt to reconcile a past and ongoing issue within a particular community.

Morrieson (1922 – 1972) was a New Zealand novelist and short story writer who lived in Hawera for all of his life. He has been described as “a rogue character who polarized the local community through both his deviant musician lifestyle and the unusual literature he penned.”<sup>166</sup> Although he is considered an important writer, until recently he is often left out of the history of New Zealand literature. Within Hawera, Morrieson was strongly disliked because his writing depicted rural North Island towns as dark, seedy underworlds. Morrieson was and is considered an outsider, a role he also actively played. Allan’s work takes this polemic as a proposition to investigate the Hawera community through their relationship to Morrieson.

The town festival or A & P Show<sup>167</sup> like nature of *Came a Hot Sundae* produced an event which was open to participation from all levels and members of the Hawera community. Allan notes that the community became “active agents”<sup>168</sup> in the construction of the event through her research period in which she assimilated herself into the community, collaborating with individuals in the creation of the various components of the festival. For example, various members of the community took on supervisory roles and initiated sub events within the project.<sup>169</sup> It also made the event accessible to outsiders who had travelled distances to see the work. Allan’s strategy of an open event, albeit focused in and on a small community, resembles the practices which Grant Kester examines as dialogical. Rather than presenting an artistic vision of the Hawera community, Allan provided the means for the residents to express their responses to Morrieson and for these to be presented for others to listen to. Kester describes practices like Allan’s as “contingent upon the insights to be derived from their interaction with others and with otherness.”<sup>170</sup> The work was dependent on the

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<sup>166</sup> Melanie Oliver, "Liz Allan, *Came a Hot Sundae*: A Ronald Hugh Morrieson Festival," in *One Day Sculpture*, ed. David Cross and Clarie Doherty (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 96.

<sup>167</sup> Agricultural and Pastoral Show.

<sup>168</sup> Allan. Personal Communication.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. p 118.

community collaborating with Allan in order to realise the event as well as their participation and that of others who came to the work to activate the piece.

*Came a Hot Sundae*'s participatory quality was achieved through a myriad of activities that took place at sites in the town which resonated with the character and life of Morrieson. For example, a local band whose members are of Morrieson's generation performed in the town square. Visits were organised to the attic which was once Morrieson's writing studio and a number of enthusiasts read passages of Morrieson's work in the local KFC outlet. This event was of particular poignancy because the site was where Morrieson's house had once stood. As Patrick Laviolette notes in the *One Day Sculpture* reader, the work appeared like "a curatorial and administrative exercise in art/event management."<sup>171</sup> The festival structure of Allan's work allowed for a network of events to umbrella throughout its twenty-four hours. In this way the piece utilised the readymade form of the festival as its medium.

Allan's practice can be understood as fulfilling the idea of the artist's role as ethnographer or field worker. Allan approached the community of Hawera as an outsider, but through an extended research period in the town was able to create a project that "generated participation from the people she was working and talking with."<sup>172</sup> Like other *One Day Sculpture* projects the engagement with the local area and its social complexities mark *Came a Hot Sundae* as an example of what Miwon Kwon has described as nomadic practice, when an artist travels to an unfamiliar place to research and present a site-specific work.<sup>173</sup> Laviolette's response to Allan's work identifies the project as fulfilling the 'artist as ethnographer' model as defined by Hal Foster because of her engagement with the community of Hawera via the cultural catalyst of Morrieson. Because the project was also tied to a long residency Allan took at the nearby Govett-Brewster Gallery in New Plymouth and because of the local participation in *Came a Hot Sundae*, Laviolette sees the work as a "forum for social catharsis," organised by the participant-observer, Allan.<sup>174</sup> Allan's appropriation of anthropological methods in order to generate a publicly engaged artwork shows a movement away from a universal event culture to a localised one.

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<sup>171</sup> Patrick Laviolette, "Predicament of Placelessness," in *One Day Sculpture*, ed. David Cross and Clarie Doherty (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 100.

<sup>172</sup> Allan. Personal Communication.

<sup>173</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*. p 46 - 47.

<sup>174</sup> Laviolette, "Predicament of Placelessness." p 104.

While the festival structure, temporal nature and mixture of performative elements (music, readings, tours) of the work aligned it as event, the focus on a single place at a certain time provided an authentic and unique experience that the commodified and common place event can not.

*Came a Hot Sundae's* utilisation of the festival, based upon readymade conventions, demonstrates both Allan's interest in the relationship between art and leisure and the balancing act *One Day Sculpture* performs between contemporary art and entertainment. Allan agrees that art exists within an expanded leisure industry and that as this industry is required to generate new and different experiences, so is contemporary art. Her previously mentioned *SCAPE* work, *Tales Illustrated*, also drew on a festival-like model, in this instance a craft market. Such leisure arenas are spaces conducive for Allen to explore the themes her work has often been identified with because events are central sites where exchanges occur between people, groups and ideas. Allan's work has been characterised as immersed in "practices of economic and interpersonal exchange... She frequently initiates scenarios which recontextualise commonplace activities, asking audiences to consider relationships and transactions that occur all the time in ordinary life, to which one pays little attention."<sup>175</sup> Allan's 2005 work *Self Portrait of the Artist as Café Worker*, as part of the Govett-Brewster exhibition *Linked: Connectivity and Exchange* also demonstrated her interest in the relationship between art and leisure. The project saw Allan working as a waitress in the gallery café in an investigation into the framework of both artist and service worker. The work was documented in an image referencing Manet's *A Bar at the*

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<sup>175</sup> David Cross and Clarie Doherty, *One Day Sculpture* (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 105.



*Folies-Bergere.*



**Figure 20** Liz Allan. *Self Portrait of the Artist as a Café Worker*. 2005. Retrieved from [http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS\\_artistdetail.php?idartist=1](http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS_artistdetail.php?idartist=1) on 28/01/2011.



**Figure 21** Édouard Manet. *A Bar at the Folies-Bergère*. 1882. Retrieved from <http://www.artandarchitecture.org.uk/images/gallery/dfa40992.html> on 25/03/2011.

*Self-Portrait* shows the desire to collapse and interrogate the boundaries between life and art. Charlotte Huddleston notes in her description of the exhibition that Allan was “tapping into the artistic histories of realism and of everyday actions as performance, similar to the artist Christine Hill, through an expansion of the concept of art to include, and even be life.”<sup>176</sup> *Portrait of the Artist* and its link to Manet’s depictions of the spectacle of modernity show Allan recoding the relationship between leisure and art in the past with the present. While Manet was fascinated with the rise of the leisure class of Paris, Allan comments on art-as-leisure via the prominence of leisure time activities such as frequenting cafes and dining out, which art institutions now offer.

Through an ethnographic method Allan’s project endeavoured to ‘look,’ at a contentious local and historical figure within the physical parameters and collective consciousness of Hawera. In this way the festival can be read as fulfilling a visual culture imperative to make visible the unseen and unspoken which Allen achieves through a form of social catharsis. Like W J T Mitchell’s ‘showing seeing’ exercise, *Came a Hot Sundae* ‘showed’ the complexity of Ronald Hugh Morrieson through the ways in which Allan and the community decided to celebrate and portray him. Ranging from typical festivities such as dancing and music to the poignant reading of his work in a KFC franchise which the community had allowed to be built on his former home as a symbolic act of retribution<sup>177</sup>, the work utilised the leisure activities to mobilise participation.

Allan commented that the type of experience people want seems to centre on “an expectation of a more direct response... catered to them personally. They want to see themselves in things... they want a direct feedback: to feel seen and heard.”<sup>178</sup> The structure of a participatory event is an ideal way in which to engage people in such a way. Allan furthered this notion by discussing the embodied experience that an artwork involving participation engenders. She noted that an object or image are approached as if they are discreet things - you have a direct relationship with something you look at – you respond to it, as opposed to “with a whole bunch of things – the space between them has to be navigated – you become part of the

<sup>176</sup> Charlotte Huddleston, "Linked: Connectivity and Exchange," ed. Govett-Brewster Art Gallery (New Plymouth: Govett-Brewster Art Gallery Publications, 2006).

<sup>177</sup> Laviolette, "Predicament of Placelessness."

<sup>178</sup> Allan. Personal Communication.



conversation – your body moves through the space.” The ability of an audience to become agents themselves means the work as Allan puts it and as a visual culture perspective advocates, “Engages more than just vision [but a] network of senses... vision [is] not prioritised, although the language of visual and material culture [is still a] base, they become more like signposts, props, clues rather than an object as subject of inquiry in itself.”<sup>179</sup>

### Javier Téllez’s *Intermission*



**Figure 22** Javier Téllez. *Intermission*. 2009. Retrieved from [http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/Intermission/Tellez070\\_567wide.jpg](http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Intermission/Tellez070_567wide.jpg) on 02/09/2010.

In a similar fashion to *Came a Hot Sundae: A Ronald Hugh Morrieson Festival* Javier Téllez’s *Intermission* was an event-based artwork that took place within the small community of Opunake in Taranaki and centred on a figure (in this case a historic building) that holds an important place within the town. Téllez’s work engaged a specific public in a participatory intervention in everyday life through a traditional leisure activity. By doing so, attention was drawn to the discursive role film occupies in visual culture in constituting ideas about representation and reality. At Everybody’s Theatre in Opunake small groups were shown in, one after the other, by an usherette

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

to sit in a cage and watch the MGM logo (with its roaring lion) while a live lion, controlled by handlers, was led into the cinema space. Each 'performance' lasted ten – fifteen minutes and began with the audience standing for the British national anthem. While some of the audience sat in a cage facing the screen, others were placed on a balcony above. As a performative event *Intermission* focused on the act of looking. While the audience watched the screen and MGM lion, the live lion appeared through a side door and moved about, investigating the audience, while at the same time those on the balcony watched those seated. In this way watching became performing within the cinema space. *Intermission* was advertised throughout the town as a carnivalesque and unique one-day-only event, generating a long queue on the day. Because the work was advertised as an event, we can assume it will be remembered by the community as one, rather than a contemporary artwork.

As an event-specific work *Intermission* was dependent on public participation in order to be activated. It is significant that the work took place in Everybody's Theatre, a venue that would, as the name suggest be familiar to and hold many memories for most of the Opunake community. Likewise Gwelfa Burgess, the usherette, has worked in the cinema for many years and would be well known figure in the community.<sup>180</sup> These 'local' factors contribute both to the work being 'eventified' and cemented in the local consciousness as well as the work becoming similar to any large-scale event experience that the residents of Opunake might have had, for example, watching a sporting match together. In this sense *Intermission* simultaneously explores the local and the international – generic, commercial experiences and unique personal ones.

The presence of a live lion demonstrates a number of interesting facets of event-specific art, including the notion of spectacle, the 'eventification' of art and the foregrounding of 'realness.' Téllez's use of a live animal in his piece is provocative. It challenges the parameters of the *One Day Sculpture* project because while it threatens to verge on carnivalesque spectacle it also brought together the Opunake community in a participatory event. It is easy to see the lion's appearance as spectacular and meaningless – what is a lion in Opunake if not gratuitous entertainment? In this sense

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<sup>180</sup> John Di Stefano, "Intermission," in *One Day Sculpture*, ed. David Cross and Clarie Doherty (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 180.

*Intermission* engages with Debord's theory<sup>181</sup> of the spectacle: the work can be seen as 'good' because it appears and it's appearance as good, for no reason other than the inherent exoticism and excitement of seeing a large, dangerous, foreign yet universally recognised animal up close, albeit from the safety of a cage. There is little opportunity for a discussion of the lion's appearance – it is presented and it is enjoyed. Debord's assertion of a spectacle society demanding passive acceptance is clear in *Intermission* where the viewers are ushered in to sit and watch and then ushered back out. This idea of a public unable to actively engage is also exaggerated by the audience's seating within a cage. From these initial impressions of the work it is easy to align *Intermission* with other contemporary artworks and elements of event culture that rely on shock or spectacle in order to be successful. For instance, these works can appear anywhere and have often been described as 'plop art.'<sup>182</sup> Tellez's work falls short of the *One Day Sculpture* requirement that a new work be commissioned through engagement with the host city or region.

In addition, the spectacular nature of *Intermission* assists in the eventification of the artwork, of the piece becoming an *Event*. For example, the project was publicised throughout Opunake as a one-off, special event through posters in shop windows and word of mouth. John Di Stefano exemplifies this when he notes "the local community has been mobilised by the expectation of seeing something extraordinary that would certainly not repeat itself in Opunake – an event that promises to become the stuff of legend."<sup>183</sup> In this sense *Intermission* was not purely spectacle, it also acted as an intervention in everyday visual excess and spectacle by providing a unique experience event.

The ability of event specific art to offer an experience that is closer to the 'real' is also apparent in *Intermission*. This desire for authentic and 'real' experiences is explicit in contemporary culture. The contemporary urge to experience 'realness' is also reflected in the types of experiences on offer in an event culture. While the audiences' expectations of an entertainment spectacle show a desire to be moved,

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<sup>181</sup> Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*.

<sup>182</sup> The term 'Plop art' is attributed to the architect James Wines who used it to describe public art inappropriate for its surroundings; thoughtlessly 'plopped' where it lies. Wikipedia, "Plop Art," Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plop\\_art](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plop_art) on 20/04/2011. The New Genre Public art as defined by Lacey positions itself in antithesis to plop art.

<sup>183</sup> Di Stefano, "Intermission." p 180.

their expectations are transcended by an experience closer to ‘the real’ than they were imaging. Di Stefano emphasises this when he notes that “prior expectations that the audience may have had, of a lion performing something for them within the realm of entertainment, are here displaced and reconfigured by the artist in favour of something more tangible and unpredictable with elements of danger, thus somehow more real.”<sup>184</sup>

The presence of both the simulated MGM lion and the real lion call into question the nature of visual experience today. Which was more real? If we take Baudrillard’s claim that images have become more real than the real, “not because they are sites of the production of meaning and representation but because they are sites of the disappearance of meaning and representation, sites in which we are caught quite apart from any judgement of reality,”<sup>185</sup> then *Intermission* attempted to rupture this hyperreality by juxtaposing the real and the unreal. Whether or not the real lion had more of an impact on the audience as Di Stefano suggests is ambiguous and impossible to tell, what is significant is that Tellez foregrounded the displaced nature of visual experience. By presenting ‘the real’ in tandem with the simulation the work shows how the leisure activity of film watching is always estranged from the real world of lived experience that it attempts to represent.

Like Allan’s *One Day Sculpture*, *Intermission* used a leisure modality to reflect on *One Day Sculpture*’s relationship to the entertainment industry. *Intermission* encouraged viewers to engage in cinema spectatorship demonstrating how such activity dictates how art is situated within a visual culture: the looking practices we use to view movies are intertwined with how we approach contemporary art.

Paola Pivi’s *I Wish I Am Fish*

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<sup>184</sup> Ibid. p 181.

<sup>185</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. p 309.



**Figure 23** Paola Pivi. *I Wish I Am Fish*. 2009. Retrieved from [http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/I%20Wish%20I%20Am%20A%20Fish/Pivi056\\_567wide.jpg](http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/I%20Wish%20I%20Am%20A%20Fish/Pivi056_567wide.jpg) on 15/08/2010.

Paola Pivi's *I Wish I Am Fish* also utilised animals in a performative manner as a means to investigate the nature of images and leisure in the age of globalisation. The work reads as event-specific through its temporality, network of events, spectacle and dependence on documentation. *I Wish I Am Fish* involved the Italian artist Paola Pivi flying eighty goldfish, each in an individual bowl on an individual seat, from Sydney to Auckland International Airport in a small chartered plane. An audience, limited to 100 for security reasons, greeted the plane in a hanger and were able to board, one by one to view the 'sculpture' intimately. Later that evening a short, looped film of the goldfish while in flight was projected on to a large screen in Auckland's Freyberg Square.

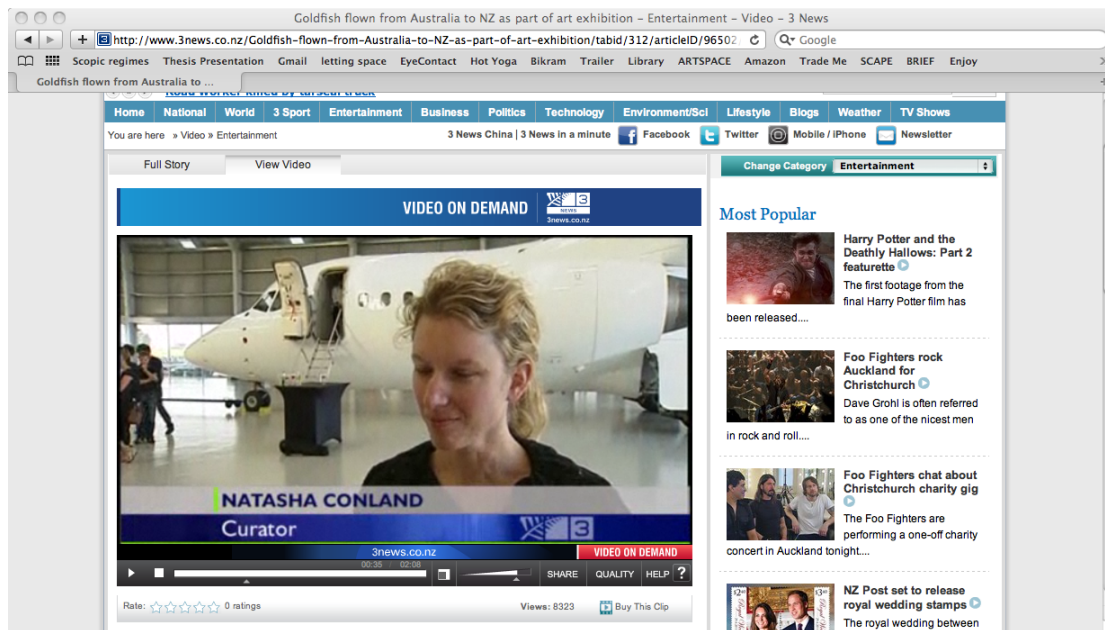
*I Wish I Am Fish* demonstrates the extreme temporality that event-specific works can involve. As the flight from Sydney to Auckland is less than four hours the central element of the work took place within a short time frame. The nature of air travel itself embodies notions of the fluidity of contemporary life and the flexible, temporary lifestyles many live. While once travelling was a drawn out ordeal, in a global world it is merely a brief inconvenience. Natasha Conland's curatorial

statement for the project captures the relevance that an air flight as artwork has today: “the majority of travellers to and from the islands of New Zealand experience their exit and entrance mid-air, through the portal of a jet aircraft. In fact, almost anyone anticipating travelling to New Zealand also contemplates a flight no shorter than three hours.”<sup>186</sup> Air travel also represents the speed of contemporary life. Pivi denaturalises or ‘shows’ these facts of contemporary existence by substituting people with goldfish. The condensed space-time of the work is complicated by its dispersal into a network of events which also expand the work’s lifetime, extending it into a series of forms.

*I Wish I Am Fish* was constituted by a series of parts; the flight of the goldfish, the arrival of the plane and its ‘exhibition’ and the screening of the flight. The centre piece of the work, the flight of the fish happened ‘elsewhere,’ the public audience was unable to participate in this action and only the artist and her assistants, the curator, filmmaker and the official *One Day Sculpture* photographer were present at the time of the work taking place. What the public were able to be part of were two delayed experiences – the arrival of the plane and the opportunity to take turns climbing inside to ‘view’ the exhibition and later the screening of the film of the flight. The arrival of the plane acted as both exhibition and exhibition opening. While every *One Day Sculpture* was effectively an opening, the restrictions on audience numbers for Pivi’s work means that the majority of the audience would have been ‘in the know’ art viewers, creating an environment of art world schmoozing which is often a secondary event taking place at exhibition openings. Similar to other *One Day Sculpture* works, the networked nature of *I Wish I am Fish* extended to television and other media coverage. Figure 24 shows a still from the work’s TV3 coverage viewed on the channel’s website, further extending the ways in which the work can be re-visited and remembered.

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<sup>186</sup> Natasha Conland, “I Wish I Am Fish,” in *One Day Sculpture*, ed. David Cross and Clarie Doherty (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 166.



**Figure 24** Still from TV3 coverage of *I Wish I Am Fish*. Retrieved from <http://www.3news.co.nz/Goldfish-flown-from-Australia-to-NZ-as-part-of-art-exhibition/tabid/312/articleID/96502/Default.aspx> on 10/01/2011.

In Pivi's work the desire to experience the authentic event is further complicated by that fact that because the artwork was the remnant of the actual event it is possible that the flight never took place – that there is no authentic experience to be had. And that all we can hope for are the tease of visual documentation.

Pivi's work not only relies on photographic documentation because of its temporal nature, but the film of the flight was also an integral part of the work itself. The film screening existed as part of the 'one day sculpture' rather than as a record that could be looked at by others after the work had finished. However, the film was still a record of the flight taking place. Here, the role of documentation in Pivi's piece folds in on itself. Buskirk notes that "the document may be transformed from secondary object to something identical with the work itself," becoming either "the document of the work, the document in the work and the document as the work."<sup>187</sup> The film footage and screening in Pivi's work constitutes all three of these roles. We can read this excess of documentation in the work as part of as well as a conscious referencing of the obsession with documenting in contemporary life.

The fantastical nature of Pivi's piece was also *made* to be photographed. We cannot deny that such an unusual event as goldfish taking an international flight cannot have been considered by Pivi or her team without the knowledge that the work

<sup>187</sup> Buskirk, *The Contingnet Object of Contemporary Art*. p 223.

would be photographed. Visual culture scholarship emphasises this point: that events are produced with their documentation in mind. The most powerful example of this idea is the September 2011 terrorist attacks on The World Trade Centre. Nicholas Mirzeoff<sup>188</sup> as well as others including Sturken and Cartwright note that “it is now common to characterize the terrorist attacks of 9/11 as acts intended to produce above all an unforgettable image.”<sup>189</sup> In the sense that spectacular events are constructed in order to make a memorable photograph, Pivi’s work also interacted with ideas of the spectacle and mass entertainment. The theatricality of the event aligns the work with event culture where suspense, surprise and waiting are vital components. The outrageousness of the work, which curator Natasha Conland admits herself as, “preposterous,”<sup>190</sup> demonstrates the imperative of event culture to provide new and different experiences and images whatever the cost. While the work was inherently spectacular, it also disrupted ‘the spectacle’ through its playful and surprising intervention. Indeed, flying goldfish on a plane resonates as a type of *détournement* the Situationists might have constructed in order to question the capitalist system that promotes global travel as necessary and normal.

*I Wish I Am Fish* epitomises the practice of the nomadic artist, precisely the ‘jetting in and out’ which is so often criticised in site-specific art because of the tendency for such work to “extract the social and historical dimensions of... places in order to serve the thematic drive of the artist, satisfy institutional demographic profiles, or fulfil the fiscal needs of a city.”<sup>191</sup> The work is problematic because it almost does what the curatorial parameters of *One Day Sculpture* ask it not to: forgoing a connection with a specific place, and only being available to a limited public. However, the work should be read as purposely provocative, asking its viewers to consider the nature of globalisation, image flows and travel as leisure.

The work’s use of air travel as a theme and Pivi’s status as an international artist, brought to fame especially by her work in the 50th Venice Biennale in 2003, posit the work of art in the age of globalisation as a significant element of the piece.

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<sup>188</sup> Mirzeoff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture*. p 293.

<sup>189</sup> Sturken and Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An Introduction to Visual Culture*. p 253.

<sup>190</sup> Conland, "I Wish I Am Fish." p 166.

<sup>191</sup> Kwon, *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*. p 53.



In a global world, the movement of people, ideas and images is a constant and ever-accelerating flow. Advanced communication technologies, satellite and the Internet mean that images flow globally with ease and speed. Works of art are no exception. Art too crosses borders and travels long distances, often to appear at a biennial, where multiple and vastly different works are exhibited together or to be retrieved by an individual in image form via the Web. *I Wish I Am Fish* presents itself as a global artwork as it is effectively a visual object and image in transit as well as a contribution to an art event following in the biennial tradition.

Pivi's work also plays with the idea of travel as a leisure activity, both within current culture and the wider *One Day Sculpture* series. One of the hallmarks of globalisation is that travel is now much more affordable and accessible to a greater breadth of people. In the twenty-first century, air travel is an important dimension of the travel-leisure industry. Pivi's goldfish as travellers to a foreign country emphasise the notion of 'other-worldliness' experience of a tourist. Many of the *One Day Sculpture* works asked audiences to travel to an unusual destination or the work itself was a voyage of sorts, for example *Intertidal* involved sailing to an island. In this way the *One Day Sculpture* project as a whole fits into a larger travel-leisure industry where new experiences are gained by interactions with the 'other.'

**Maddie Leach's *Perigee* #11**



**Figure 25** Maddie Leach. *Perigee* #11. 2008. Retrieved from [http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/Perigee\\_1.jpg?size=190988](http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Perigee_1.jpg?size=190988) on 05/10/2010.



**Figure 26** Maddie Leach. *Perigee* #11. 2008. Retrieved from [http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/Perigee\\_5.jpg?size=61005](http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/Perigee_5.jpg?size=61005) on 05/10/2010.

Maddie Leach's *Perigee #11* which opened the *One Day Sculpture* series also involved a journey of sorts. Leach's piece can be read as event-specific because it involved participation through requiring visitors to travel to the work and respond to directives the artist had set up. By offering an out of the ordinary event to engage in the piece was also an intervention in everyday experience. Moreover, Leach's work offered a phenomenological leisure experience as an alternative to ubiquitous visual media ones. At the same time *Perigee #11* foregrounded the actions of looking and watching as discursive leisure practices in themselves. For *Perigee #11* Leach refurbished a boat shed across the road from her home in Breaker Bay, Wellington and for twenty-four hours offered it to the public as a shelter and viewing platform for a storm that was forecast to hit Wellington on the day of the project. Leach re-lined the inside of the shed with cedar boards, replaced the window and meticulously adjusted the heavy door so that the sound it made when it closed and opened was to her liking. The shed was empty apart from a radio picking up sporadic reports of nearby ocean traffic and a small lamp which was turned on in the evening. Leach built anticipation for the storm through weather predications she published in the local paper on the days leading up to the work (See Figure 27). She used these predictions to select the day that her project would take place.

Leach's work is often described as place-based, locational, conceptual installation involving a performative thread. In my interview with Leach she noted that sculpture is an important word and idea in her practice<sup>192</sup>. The work was a sculpture in the sense that Leach had fashioned or altered the architectural space of the boat shed but the piece can also be considered a readymade because while the building was modified, it was still presented as a boat shed: it was not significantly transformed into a new object. Leach's use of Duchampian modalities has been discussed by Marcus Moore in reference to her 2006 – 2007 work *My Blue Peninsula*. In this work, Leach built a sailboat and placed it on Te Papa Tongarewa's Sculpture Terrace, overlooking the Wellington harbour. In so doing, Leach asked viewers to consider the displaced context the work resided in. Moore draws attention to Duchamp's "ambitions to shift expectations about everyday objects, and engender thoughts that are seemingly peripheral to their use," that register also in Leach's

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<sup>192</sup> Leach. Personal Communication.

work.<sup>193</sup> Leach has described her work as being able to transition from minimalist sculpture to participatory use and that within her work there is always the possibility of action emitting from stasis.<sup>194</sup> In *Perigee #11* Leach asked viewers to reconsider their looking practices from within her work rather than by looking at it.

Like many of the *One Day Sculpture* works *Perigee #11* invited the public to take a small journey or trip that was different to regular leisure activities. The differences lay in the ability of the work to offer an intangible experience and to obfuscate expectation. Leach achieved this by placing notices in the *Dominion Post* leading up to the work, which described the conditions of extreme weather which was predicted to occur on the day of the event. However the day itself turned out to be calm and sunny, meaning that the original reason for attending *Perigee #11* became unclear. In this sense, the participation that Leach's work called for was choreographed to allow for the unexpected to occur. Much of Leach's previous work also calls on audiences to actively participate in the work. For example, *The Ice Rink and the Lilac Ship, 2002 - 2004* invited audiences to skate down an ice rink installed in the Waikato Museum of Art and History and *Take Me Down to Your Dance Floor, 2004* at the Dunedin Public Art Gallery presented audience members and community groups a purpose-built dance floor to perform on. In contrast *Perigee #11* offered a participatory experience that was open to interpretation. As Martin Patrick notes it was quite possible in the work that "nothing really happens."<sup>195</sup> While everyday events like going to a film, party, play etcetera always hold an element of the unknown these experiences are still prescribed because their ubiquity and excess in contemporary culture means they are over-experienced and therefore formulaic and repetitive. *Perigee #11* offered itself as an alternative to such event culture experiences, through what Christina Barton called its "quiet, slow and speculative"<sup>196</sup> qualities that are conducive to a unique and personal experience. Effectively, Leach proposed a slowing-down of experience.

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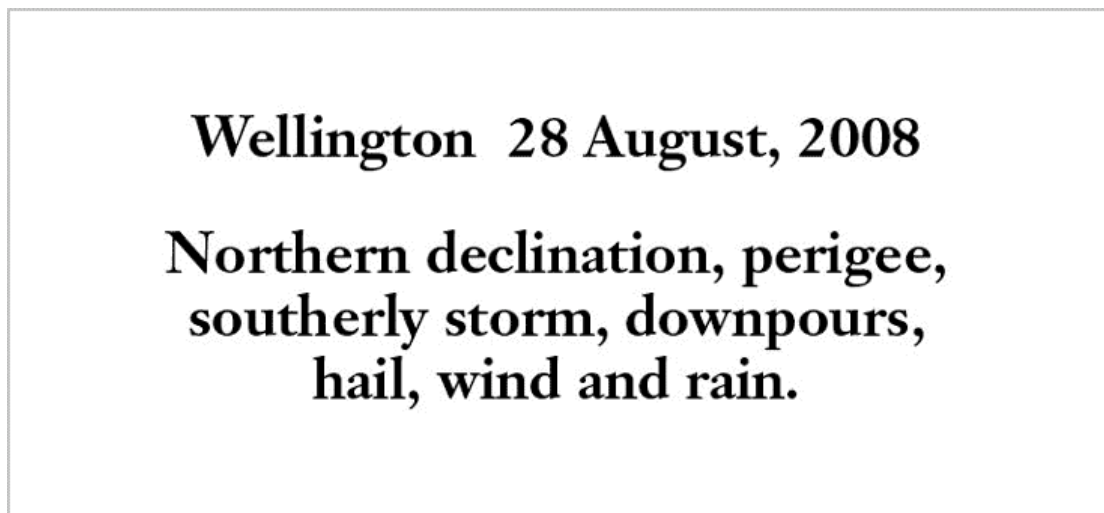
<sup>193</sup> Marcus Moore, "Made by Hand 'Serving the Puroses of Art, Even'," in *My Blue Peninsula, Maddie Leach*, ed. Christina Barton (Wellington: Maddie Leach, 2007). p 9.

<sup>194</sup> Leach. Personal Communication.

<sup>195</sup> Martin Patrick, "On False Leads, Readymades and Seascapes," in *One Day Sculpture*, ed. David Cross and Clarie Doherty (Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 65.

<sup>196</sup> Barton. Personal Communication.

Leach's work encouraged participation but left it up to individuals to decide how this might occur, in contrast to Allan's work which was highly organised. Leach has noted that there was evidence of personal interaction in the work. When she went to close the boat shed after its 24-hour lifespan she found an empty whisky bottle and a Polaroid.<sup>197</sup> These objects can be read as the remnants of a personal intervention in the work: proof of a transitory but unique experience that occurred at the site and that would not have occurred without the event frame that *Perigee #11* made accessible. The work was an open event in that this intervention was able to take place. This occurrence also suggests that event art offers more than a visual experience – it aids in creating an embodied phenomenological one – the alcohol bottle and the photograph exist as products of an indeterminate yet palpably real experience that took place in the work.



**Figure 27** Maddie Leach. Promotional image for *Perigee #11*. Retrieved from [http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist\\_images/leach-webflyer\\_1.gif?size=17366](http://onedaysculpture.org.nz/assets/images/artist_images/leach-webflyer_1.gif?size=17366) on 05/10/2010.

Leach's previous works offer precedents for her involvement in an event-specific project like *One Day Sculpture*. *The Ice Rink* and *The Lilac Ship* and *Take Me Down to your Dance Floor* have been noted as exploring ideas about contemporary leisure and entertainment and the role of the public art institution. Likewise, her Trade Me based projects, where she sold timber online, offer a telling perspective on the shift from traditional art contexts to new technologies. Leach's work presents leisure activities as artworks by drawing attention to and emphasising the sculptural and installation aesthetics of, for example an ice rink or dance floor. Leach displays the

<sup>197</sup> Leach. Personal Communication.

artist's touch in a work through the context of an art gallery or the institution frame of an art project. Her work functions as a prop to encourage engagement with the leisure activity it references and contemplation of the proximity of art and entertainment. For example, in her essay on Leach's *The Ice Rink and The Lilac Ship* Christina Barton notes "Leach's conscious collapsing of the distance between art and entertainment, through her merging of the readymade with the recreational facility, grants... a certain pointed poignancy."<sup>198</sup>

In *Perigee #11*, Leach moves away from juxtaposing specific leisure activities and traditional art forms and focuses on the acts of looking and watching which art spectatorship calls for, as modes of leisure in themselves. *Perigee #11* was a viewing platform, a place from which to watch the forecasted storm. Combined with Leach's oeuvre of leisure based works, the invitation to travel to a destination and to do something unusual and the predictions in the paper which acted as advertisements, the work appears as a leisure event to take part in, like any other. This event though, similar to Liz Allan's *Came a Hot Sundae*, 'showed seeing,' by making looking the participatory activity in the work. The non-appearance of the storm is almost proof that sheltering from and watching it was inherently a fiction, a trick to lure people to the site. Instead, as they gazed out of the window on a bright, clear day, people's attention was drawn to how our looking is never natural, but informed by cultural practices. In *Perigee#11* these practices are the expectation and desire for 'something to happen,' something to look at which event culture fuels. Martin Patrick says of those who attended: "everyone seemed to be on the verge of something as the piece ticked its way towards culmination at midnight"<sup>199</sup> Patrick's comment emphasises the excitement of 'something about to happen' which *Perigee #11* emits. *Perigee #11*'s status as a viewing platform is also significant because it shows how the work acts as a looking apparatus for viewers to consider their own visual practices and their facility in leisure experiences. Patrick notes that "the emphasis on the gaze is intriguing and significant... the spectator enters a closed chamber, almost a surrogate camera, in order to look outwards, into the unknown, to discover things only partially

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<sup>198</sup> Christina Barton, "Out of the Deep," in *Gallery Six: The Ice Rink and The Lilac Ship* (Hamilton: Printhouse Ltd, 2003).

<sup>199</sup> Patrick, "On False Leads, Readymades and Seascapes." p 66.

revealed or visible.’<sup>200</sup> *Perigee #11* drew attention to how event-specific art illuminates looking practices and how viewing art is a leisure practice.

### Santiago Sierra's *Person Showing his Penis*



Figure 28 Santiago Sierra, *Person Showing his Penis*. 2009 Retrieved from [http://www.santiago-sierra.com/200905\\_1024.php](http://www.santiago-sierra.com/200905_1024.php) on 05/10/2010.

Originally, Sanitago Sierra was invited to create a one day sculpture with commissioning partner St Paul St Gallery in Auckland. However, the project did not eventuate due to circumstances *I am not at liberty to know*. As an artist who is well known for his ‘difficult’ and uncompromising work it is not surprising that his official appearance in the programme fell over. Sierra’s work focuses on human labour, exchange and capitalism. His art often involves a situation that might be seen as exploitative, framed and presented as art. His work usually consists in paying people, often members of the working underclass to perform menial tasks or let their bodies

<sup>200</sup> Patrick Martin, "On False Leads, Readymades and Seascapes," in *One Day Sculpture*, ed. Claire Doherty and David Cross (Bielefeld Kerber Verlag, 2009). p 65.

be used.<sup>201</sup> For example, in 1999 the artist paid a group of men to have a single ink line tattooed across their backs. The following year he restaged the work, this time using prostitutes and payed them in their drug of choice. In 2001 at the Kunsthalle, Munich, Sierra paid out of work actors to lift up the benches in the gallery and hold them for periods of time. In the same year at the Spanish Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, Sierra paid non-European immigrants, many who were selling fake designer bags or working as wandering salesmen on the streets of Venice, to have their hair peroxidized.

Although Sierra did not contribute to *One Day Sculpture* officially, he staged an individual work in Wellington while the series was running. Independent or not, Sierra's *Person Showing His Penis* now needs to be considered part of the *One Day Sculpture* event as one of its many constituting parts. In fact the work took place while the One Day Sculpture symposium was being held and was openly advertised at this event. In conversation Christina Barton noted "Sierra's work must be considered when looking at the *One Day Sculpture* project as a whole, even though the organisers have erased it [from the official programme]."<sup>202</sup> While the project's title is self-explanatory I will describe it further from accounts given to me by interviewees who did not wish to be identified as attending. Sierra invited people to come to a central Wellington location, an unused space in the Imperial Building on Dixon St. The audience members were asked to queue outside a room hired by Sierra and then enter one at a time. They were warned that the content of the work may offend and that it was restricted to people 18 years of age and over. The viewers were also asked not to say anything to those waiting in the line once they had seen the work. The piece consisted of a man, standing with his head bowed, hands behind his back, his fly undone and his penis visible.

Sierra's 'contribution' to *One Day Sculpture* demonstrates how event-specific art elicits secondary event responses that question the validity of the original event. Sierra's work can be seen as a typical example of his artistic practice responding to the parameters of the *One Day Sculpture* brief. The shabby appearance of the performer in the work and Sierra's penchant for using members of the underclass as performers in his work suggested that the artist sourced him from the street and paid

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<sup>201</sup> One Day Sculpture, "Santiago Sierra," Retrieved from [http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS\\_artistdetail.php?idartist=18](http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS_artistdetail.php?idartist=18). On 20/02/2011.

<sup>202</sup> Barton. Personal Communication.



him to expose himself to the mostly art-world and *One Day Sculpture* involved audience. His work is a sharp and stinging undermining of *One Day Sculpture*'s grand purpose to 'examine how contemporary artists conceive of sculpture as a means to critically navigate and activate the public sphere.'<sup>203</sup>

By using a person exposing their genitals as a sculpture, Sierra asks about the quality of cultural products in an event culture. His event asks what kind of satisfaction drives a constant need for experiences vis-à-vis events within the contemporary event culture. If it is a desire to experience 'the real' as indicated earlier in this thesis, then Sierra's piece harshly presents an engagement with gritty reality – the exploitation of bodies for the viewing of others. The work marks out the gratuitous nature of event culture and the insatiable desire for new experiences by providing an unpleasant one which highlights what an event culture audience is looking for but is not offered in this work: a self-affirming or personal moment of epiphany. As Liz Allan noted, people want to see themselves in event culture and contemporary art.<sup>204</sup> Sierra's representation is not the side of *One Day Sculpture* or the general publics' that anyone wants to engage with. In a sense, *Person Showing His Penis* is an expletive directed at the *One Day Sculpture* project which Sierra felt he could not officially contribute to under its terms.

Sierra's work asks 'hard' questions about the nature of looking and the nature of the *One Day Sculpture* project itself. Because the piece presented a person as an object in a degrading manner, the work interrogated whether the participatory nature of *One Day Sculpture*, celebrated in the rhetoric surrounding the series, could ever transcend out of art and into the reality of the everyday. For example, while the residents of Hawera might have enjoyed Allan's work, felt a togetherness as a community because of it, even be moved to experience the complicated nature of their own identities through the figure of Ronald Hugh Morrieson, Sierra's work flatly refuses such positivist ideas. The main participant in the work – the performer – does not experience such a convivial moment. Instead the performer, the 'sculpture,' acts to turn the viewers' gaze back on themselves, making them aware of the voyeurism inherent in any act of looking, and the scopophilia that lies at the base of a project

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<sup>203</sup> One Day Sculpture, "About," Retrieved from [http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS\\_about\\_ODS.html](http://www.onedaysculpture.org.nz/ODS_about_ODS.html) on 20/01/2011.

<sup>204</sup> Allan. Personal Communication.

such as *One Day Sculpture*, which above and beyond all, reinstates the cultural imperative to look and visualise.

In this chapter I have demonstrated that *One Day Sculpture* is a clear example of event-specific art through a close analysis of five artworks in the series. I have also begun to demonstrate how event-specific art produces certain ways of looking and practices of seeing. Liz Allen's piece *Came a Hot Sundae: A Ronald Hugh Morrisson Festival* illuminates the event as a means to 'look at' the unseen or forgotten through ethnographic inquiry. Paola Pivi's *I Wish I Am Fish* mediated on the nature of globalisation and the flow of images across space and time. Javier Téllez's work involving a live animal questions the nature of reality and simulation. And Maddie Leach's *Perigee #11* offers a phenomenological alternative to the leisure experiences which today are predominantly visual. Her piece also presents looking itself as a leisure activity. Santiago Sierra's work *Person Showing His Penis* demonstrated how the *One Day Sculpture* series network extended to the production of 'unofficial' works and implicated the project in the visual politics of looking, including voyeurism and the scopophilia of contemporary culture. Sierra's project as an 'outsider' of the *One Day Sculpture* project leads me to my next chapter which will consider whether event-specificity is a modality of experience which exists outside of the realm of art.

## Chapter 4: Event-Specificity in the Wider Culture

Taking its lead from Santiago Sierra's project as an 'outsider' work, this chapter will discuss selected examples of event-specificity, that while creative, are not necessarily framed or understood as contemporary art. I will demonstrate how event-specificity is a phenomenon seen throughout the wider culture and not solely in art projects like *One Day Sculpture*. The projects discussed in this chapter demonstrate that event-specificity is a modality of experience utilised in many looking practices in the everyday. The chapter will begin by addressing *Letting Space* a project running since early 2010 that commissions new temporary artworks to be exhibited in empty or abandoned urban spaces which many have noted as similar to *One Day Sculpture*. While *Letting Space* is contemporary art, the project aims to negotiate pressing social issues, arguably blurring the line between art and life more dramatically than any socially-engaged *One Day Sculpture* work. I will discuss the 2010 *Letting Space* project *Free Store* by Kim Paton. Following this I will look at the emerging New Zealand artist Ashlin Raymond and her 2009 work *Dawn Parade*. Raymond is an example of young artists whose event-specific practices based in relational conviviality see the almost complete collapsing of the boundaries between leisure and art, resulting in events which are often an end to themselves. The chapter will then look at three different examples of urban interventions which do not claim to be nor are framed as contemporary art but are dependent on event-specific strategies in order to achieve their individual goals. Through these examples I demonstrate the similarities between event-specific art practises and non-art events. The case studies include the 2010 installation/intervention of Monster Jelly, a self-proclaimed urban design guerilla who installed a piano in Wellington central's Glover Park. I will also look at Operation Tang! A rally organised in Dunedin in 2008 to protest at the discontinuation of a line of Cadbury sweets that adopted flash mob strategies and 'went viral.' Lastly the chapter will consider the emergence of guerilla knitting and gardening in New Zealand, which sees urban spaces altered by small collectives and individuals and forms a link back to the radical art practices of the 60s and 70s.

### ***Letting Space and Kim Paton's Free Store***

As I conducted the research for this thesis and considered projects other than *One Day Sculpture* as event specific, *Letting Space* emerged as a relevant local case study. Besides from my own cognisance of the similarities between the two programmes, interview participants suggested that *Letting Space* was responding to the models of practice initiated by *One Day Sculpture*.<sup>205</sup> There are also differences between the two projects. *One Day Sculpture* was initiated by Litmus Research Initiative whilst *Letting Space* is the conception of two individuals working outside of institutions. *Letting Space* also currently only features New Zealand artists and occurs solely in Wellington in comparison to the combination of both international and local artists in *One Day Sculpture* and the programmes' dispersal throughout the main centres of New Zealand as well as in some regional towns. *Letting Space* produces artworks that are event-specific because they are temporary, participatory, public, networked and engage with media. The requirement that the works engage with social and environmental issues means that the works traverse fine art to the everyday world with more ease than *One Day Sculpture* projects. For example Kim Paton's *Free Store* was an operational service giving away free food. The tangible nature of shopping and eating made the work more accessible than some of the conceptually driven *One Day Sculpture* works.

*Letting Space* is an independent commissioning group that facilitates the short-term occupation of empty urban spaces in Wellington by newly commissioned artworks. *Letting Space* is based on a similar programme initially realised by Sophie Jerram and Mark Amery at Artspace, Auckland between 1994 and 1996 and was reactivated in Wellington in 2009. The program receives assistance from Wellington City Council, Creative New Zealand and City Gallery Wellington but is relatively free from any institutional constraints. As a project initiated by individuals, rather than developed around institutional requirements to produce work such as *One Day Sculpture*, *Letting Space* provides a different site of analysis. *Letting Space* differs from my main case study in that it is an ongoing project without a specific end-time. It describes itself as seeking "to engage a wider public in the vitality and relevance of

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<sup>205</sup> Cross. Personal Communication. Leach. Personal Communication. Huddleston. Personal Communication.

installation and performance-based contemporary art practice outside an institutional gallery framework.”<sup>206</sup> The project has so far commissioned four works, and has two more in development for 2011. Some of the projects realised were presented as ‘pitches’ at The Urban Dream Brokerage, an event that *Letting Space* organised at which property developers and artists pitched ideas for projects regarding the use of vacant urban space to each other and were judged by an arts panel. The audience voted for their favourite pitch and *Letting Space* selected some pitches as projects to be developed within their programme.

The directors, Amery and Jerram emphasise their belief that local “art needs to contribute to a discussion about the future of the world,”<sup>207</sup> and that contemporary art is lacking in this regard. They posit the *Letting Space* project as committed to reconciling ‘real world’ issues, such as food production and consumption, employment and plastic waste, with contemporary art and its increasing presence in the public sphere.<sup>208</sup> *Letting Space* therefore references Kester’s idea of dialogical art<sup>209</sup> because the projects attempt to engage with a community about an issue that pertains to them directly. *Letting Space*’s working method also resembles that of new genre public art as termed by Lacey, demonstrating “political and social activity...distinguished by... aesthetic sensibility,”<sup>210</sup> but presented in ‘new genres’ not traditionally considered public forms like monumental sculpture. The programme’s *Free Store* work by Kim Paton takes the issue of food wastage in central Wellington as its social/political agenda and the readymade of a shop as its form.

From May 22 to June 6 2009, *Letting Space* commissioned artist Kim Paton to open and operate with the help of volunteers, *Free Store*, a shop which gave food away for without charge. Paton and *Letting Space* negotiated the short-term lease of an empty shop on Ghuznee St in central Wellington. The project sourced bread from Arobake and Brooklyn bakeries, coffee from Supreme and People’s Coffee, and produce from several of Progressives’ Countdown and Woolworths supermarkets and Café Italiano. This was supplemented by an array of goods donated by individuals. On the *Letting Space* website Paton says of her project “*Free Store* is making public

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<sup>206</sup> *Letting Space*, "About Letting Space," Retrieved from <http://www.lettingspace.org.nz/about-letting-space/>. on 02/10/2010

<sup>207</sup> Jerram and Amery. Personal Communication.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Kester, *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. p 1.

<sup>210</sup> Lacey, *Mapping the Terrain: New Genre Public Art*. p 19.

the point in the supply chain that is usually unseen. I hope to raise discussion around how we define the value of a product and what we do with our waste.”<sup>211</sup>

Paton’s work exemplifies the *Letting Space* project in which issues of importance are mobilised in public through the art event. Paton’s *Free Store* can be read as event-specific art and art specific event culture because it generated a short term ‘buzz.’ Going to the *Free Store*, when I directly experienced this, became an event, a special occasion which was outside of my everyday experience and offered something new through its alternative consumer transaction. Paton’s project demonstrates the ability of event specific art to re-imagine and therefore potentially reform everyday events that we normally do not ‘see,’ in this case making the routine transaction of money for goods visible. The *Free Store* presented itself as a different way to look at everyday consumption and waste. From a visual culture perspective, audiences, or customers, were made to see differently and envision through the event formula of the work how the system of consumption could be different.



**Figure 29** Kim Paton. *Free Store*. 2010. Retrieved from <http://eyecontactsite.com/2010/06/wellingtons-free-store> on 02/10/2010

In contrast to *One Day Sculpture*, the *Free Store* existed for long enough to galvanise people toward it but not long enough to encourage complacency. Its

<sup>211</sup> Kim Paton, "Free Store," Retrieved from <http://www.lettingspace.org.nz/free-store/> on 02/10/2010.

temporary nature made it an important event to attend but it did not lose potential audiences through an extreme temporal compression like *One Day Sculpture* works. Through *Letting Space*'s parameters of occupying urban space, the *Free Store* existed within a specific urban community and asked the members of this locale to participate in the event. *Free Store* appealed to groups outside of the art world. Although it attracted such an audience it also attracted those who do struggle to pay for the cost of food. From my own experience and personal knowledge, students were amongst those who frequented the *Free Store*.

The *Letting Space* projects also engage with new and social media at a level unseen in the art projects discussed earlier in this thesis. For example, in contrast to *One Day Sculpture*, media convergence is a central reality and necessity rather than a novel token. Amery and Jerram acknowledge that they are promotion and media savvy because they cannot afford a large public relations campaign or to employ someone to do this. Therefore they utilise the resourceful nature of converged and new media.<sup>212</sup> Through sophisticated email lists, a presence on facebook, Twitter, their own website and blog, attention in the media and reviews such as on the art and visual culture blog EyeContact, *Letting Space* successfully promotes itself. This convergence of sites of information, images and promotion also allows for direct feedback and engagement with the works. For example, *Letting Space* uses Twitter to tweet about issues that relate to the projects' urban revitalisation ideals. It also has a feedback submission page where the public can suggest ideas for suitable projects. Likewise updates on current projects, including responses in the media or related happenings and events can easily be shared and announced through this converged network.

All of the above tools are increasingly used in everyday life and in the construction of event culture. The media convergence around *Letting Space* creates excitement about and promotion for the current projects and the future ones. In short, a professional PR 'buzz' is achieved easily and economically. At the same time *Letting Space* contributes to a specific contemporary experience where the need to experience via events is constantly fuelled by the surplus of events at any given time. The experiences on offer can be unique and very different but together they form a kind of event spectacle, which becomes overwhelming and anxiety producing because

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<sup>212</sup> Jerram and Amery. Personal Communication.

it generates a fear of 'missing out' which, because not everything can be attended, can never be reconciled. The result is a modality of being in which a distracted, vernacular looking practice is common: individuals constantly seek new visual stimulus but are never satisfied because there are always more experiences to be had. As introduced earlier Rojek notes that "we are never fully convinced that we have experienced things in our 'free' time fully enough: we are always dully aware that our experiences could be better."<sup>213</sup>

Jerram and Amery also noted that while they are very capable of launching *Letting Space* into event culture in order to gain interest, the artists they work with are themselves often very accomplished at self-promotion. Jerram notes that the artist they work with are used to "operating in a sophisticated and independent way."<sup>214</sup> It seems that contemporary artists are increasingly aware of their profession as existing within a wider event culture paradigm and that they must compete with other leisure and entertainment industries and experiences in order to have their work noticed and recognised. In order to do this, their art becomes more like the experience on offer within an event culture. However, criticism of the project centred on questioning whether a model for living like the *Free Store* can be actually implemented and whether the project's social concerns can be called art or are ultimately sustainable.<sup>215</sup> Such criticism is similar to Claire Bishop's call for antagonism<sup>216</sup> in the relational practices so championed by Bourriaud.

### **Ashlin Raymond's *Dawn Parade***

The perceived 'conviviality for conviviality's sake' that concerns Bishop is present in the work of a new generation of artists who are yet to transition from art school to their careers. On the periphery of institutionally driven projects like *One Day Sculpture* and more free floating programmes such as *Letting Space*, these emerging artists who have not been recognised critically are developing their own event-specific practices. As artists of a younger generation from those primarily exhibiting

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<sup>213</sup> Rojek, *Ways of Escape: Modern Transformations in Leisure and Travel*. p 216.

<sup>214</sup> Jerram and Amery. Personal Communication.

<sup>215</sup> David Cross, "Wellington's Free Store," Retrieved from <http://eyecontactsite.com/2010/06/wellingtons-free-store>. on 02/10/2010.

<sup>216</sup> Bishop, "Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics."



in both *One Day Sculpture* and *Letting Space*, these emerging practitioners are making art in direct response to event culture where, the boundaries between art and the entertainment spectacles of everyday life are increasingly blurred. These artists belong to generation Y, as such their practices have arguably been shaped by communication and interaction technologies immersed in popular culture. The event is often a given and ‘natural’ frame or structure for their work to be presented in. When considering this prospect I reflected on art students my own age I am acquainted with and applied my criteria for event-specific art to their work, finding that their practices and artistic concerns resonate strongly with my hypothesis. One of these artists is Ashlin Raymond, a University of Canterbury School of Fine Arts graduate who is currently completing postgraduate study at Elam. Raymond’s work often appears in and creates celebratory contexts around events such as parties, musical performances and gatherings. Of her work, Raymond says she aims to “create special and sacred places that provide a surreal or mystical experience or event.”<sup>217</sup> Raymond’s practice provides a difference to the projects previously discussed because it occurs outside the context of institutional frames.

Raymond’s 2009 work *Dawn Parade* demonstrates how younger artists today are increasingly creating event-specific work that collapses the boundaries between leisure and fine art. *Dawn Parade* was a protest-like march through central Christchurch early on a Sunday morning. Recruiting friends and interested participants, Raymond choreographed a parade of inspirational banners through the city, declaring messages like ‘You are Loved,’ ‘Everything is Going to be Amazing,’ ‘Hang in There Baby,’ and ‘Dream Nation.’

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<sup>217</sup> Ashlin Raymond, 14/09/2010. Personal Communication.



**Figure 30** Ashlin Raymond. *Dawn Parade*. 2009. Courtesy of the artist.

In my interview with Raymond, she explained that the work was an extension of a project by the artist, film maker and writer Miranda July whose website and book *Learning to Love you More*<sup>218</sup> offers templates for daily interventionist projects that one can develop themselves.<sup>219</sup> This type of practice has become commonplace, for example, David Horvitz's 2010 *Everything That Can Happen in a Day*<sup>220</sup> is incredibly similar to July's *Learning to Love You More*. These texts encourage anyone (i.e. non-artists) to make interventions in their daily lives through small creative projects that they can easily complete themselves or with the help of others but do not require the authenticity and authority of any kind of institutional frame. Some of the suggestions, or as July calls them 'assignments', that Horvitz offers are: "Go on a walk with a postal worker as they deliver the day's mail... Leave a bouquet of flowers in a taxi for the next person... Cover up the sun with a finger... With a sharpie make a small sign that says: out of order. Tape this to an ATM when no one is looking... Go to a museum that has one of Marcel Duchamp's fountains. When the gallery attendant is not looking, put your face inside the urinal... Ask a war veteran to write an apology

<sup>218</sup> In its initial seven years July's page accepted posts of individual's responses to her propositions but does not any longer. The page notes "In 2010 the website was acquired by the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, ensuring that *Learning to Love You More* will continue to exist online as an archive of the project."

<sup>219</sup> Raymond. Personal Communication.

<sup>220</sup> David Horvitz, *Everything That Can Happen in a Day* (New York City: Mark Batty Publisher, 2010).

letter to the country they had fought... Acquire a highly priced bottle of water. Pour it out on the roots of a tree nearby.”<sup>221</sup> These instructions can be seen as generating event-specific practice because they act as small disruptions. They blur the boundaries between art and event culture because their ‘fun’ or novel quality codes them as leisure activities: ‘things to do.’ Raymond’s work is an appropriation of these strategies. *Dawn Parade* can be defined as an event-specific artwork because it takes up the parade event form as a readymade. It can be termed so because it is an existing event structure that has a long history and therefore exists as a cultural idea that is ‘already made.’ In this instance the political march or rally is re-coded as a leisure experience/art project to take part in.

The work can be seen as an intervention into the everyday spectacle of event culture because it breaks the continual flow of banal events with a participatory alternative that is ‘out of the ordinary,’ as well as strange and unsettling. The positive messages on the banners Raymond constructed are at odds with the need to publicly march or protest. They are contradictory in that they imply revolution while exclaiming complacency. The grassroots organisation of the work – unattached to an institutional imperative or assignment that Raymond had to complete - also demonstrates the possibility of alternative events to the ones prescribed and followed in the culture at large. Raymond says that those involved in the parade experienced an elated feeling but they were paid little attention by potential spectators.<sup>222</sup> In this case the ‘out-of the ordinary’ quality of the work did not turn it into a spectacle, instead, it required direct participation in order to be experienced. While Raymond’s *Dawn Parade* must be considered an artwork because of her formal art education and self-defined status as an artist, it is interesting to note that many individuals who would not fit into the same category have created their own interventionist ‘projects’ from July’s templates.

Raymond’s event also offers a visual experience that transcends event culture. Instead of looking and watching an event from a distanced entertainment-seeking position, the participants in *Dawn Parade* actively create a visual event – they are embodied in the ‘sight’ they are constructing. In addition, those who saw the parade are confronted with the unexpected. Because of the event's underground nature as a

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Raymond. Personal Communication.

project created independently, onlookers were in no way prepared for the event. The short-circuiting of expectations creates a visuality that promotes the excitement of possibility. Raymond foregrounds the event as a means to liberate visual experience.

### Monster Jelly

Raymond's melding of art and leisure through the active participatory form of a march is taken further in the anonymous urban designer Monster Jellys' 2010 installation. Monster Jelly's installation mobilised people to come together for temporary periods of time. It references the contemporary phenomenon of flash mobs in that it encouraged spontaneous moments of conviviality.



**Figure 31** Monster Jelly. Glover Park piano installation. Retrieved from <http://monsterjelly.tumblr.com/> on 17/02/2011.

In 2010, Monster Jelly installed a 100-year-old restored piano in Wellington CBD's Glover Park. The installation occurred without consent from Wellington City Council and was unattached to any institutional programme, initiative or funding. Monster Jelly describes his practice as 'guerrilla' urban design and the proposition on his website asks, "Could unauthorised and temporal acts form new and engaging

experiences?”<sup>223</sup> Miraculously, the installation remained in Glover Park for three weeks before the Wellington City Council removed it for fear of it being damaged by vandals and creating an eyesore.<sup>224</sup>

Monster Jelly’s piano became a site for events to take place free from any organisational structure. Throughout the weeks of its placement in Glover Park, individuals could be seen and heard playing the piano at any time day or night. The piano became a meeting and gathering point for groups who sometimes brought their own instruments and ‘jammed’ at the site. In my own experience the piano became an auxiliary event attached to others. At a party I attended the host announced that later in the night everyone would go to the piano together and end the evening by having a sing along in the park. Going to the piano or watching others use it was an event in itself that disrupted the everyday. The piano turned the park into a place of potentiality where it’s discursive role as leisure and rest space within the urban Wellington district was challenged and transformed. Visually the experience of the park was temporarily complemented with an aural element that made for a richer experience and a re-imagining of urban space. The piano installation exemplified the possibility of events.

Monster Jelly’s intervention utilised the flash mob, a phenomenon in which a large group of people assembles in a public place to perform a strange or ‘useless’ act for a short period of time and then disperse. Little has been written about flash mobs besides from Howard Rheingold’s *Smart mobs: The Next Social Revolution*. Wikipedia’s entry on flash mobs defines the term as “applied only to gatherings organized via telecommunications, social media, or viral emails. The term is generally not applied to events organised by public relations firms, protests, and publicity stunts.”<sup>225</sup> Wikipedia’s notes on the commercial use of the flash mob is interesting because it alludes to the appropriation of subversive techniques in order to, ultimately, generate revenue for whatever cause through event culture.

The flash mob can be read as a response to event culture in that it adapts the event culture modality in order to generate subversive events that undermine whilst

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<sup>223</sup> Monster Jelly, "Monster Jelly," Retrieved from <http://monsterjelly.co.nz/>. on 08/08/2010.

<sup>224</sup> Nay Johnson, "Musical 'Vandalism' Enlivens Glover Park," *Newswire.co.nz*, 23/04/2010.

<sup>225</sup> Wikipedia, "Flash Mobs," Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash\\_mob](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash_mob). on 20/02/2011.

‘speaking about’ event culture itself. This can be said because as mentioned above, flash mobs often congregate to fulfil bizarre or seemingly ‘useless’ desires. The Wikipedia entry on flash mobs claims that the first flash mob occurred in 2003, although it is apparent that flash mobs take their cue from the happenings of the 60s and 70s, early performance art and the Situationist International’s attempts to re-imagine urban space through the *dérive*. In 2003, Bill Wasik, senior editor of Harpers Magazine organised More than 100 people to converge upon the ninth floor rug department of Macys in New York City, gathering around an expensive rug. Anyone approached by a sales assistant was required to claim that the gatherers lived together in a warehouse on the outskirts of New York, that they were shopping for a "love rug", and that they made all their purchase decisions as a group. After a brief period of time in which the mob discussed the merits of the rugs on display and conferred with shop assistants it suddenly and quickly dispersed.<sup>226</sup> Since this alleged initial flash mob, many more have occurred almost everywhere in the world.

The nature of flash mobs – of doing something, acting out in some way that is different from normal, everyday life and in some small way disrupts the everyday - appears to provide some sort of satisfaction, according to the large numbers of people that are involved. The transformative experience of being part of a flash mob is based in the concept of going against the mundane and prescribed, that is, participating in an event that does not belong to event culture. However, it seems like flash mobs can easily be assimilated not the culture they intend to disrupt. A number of commercials for communication companies and mobile phones have been produced with the staging of a flash mob as the advertisement’s content. Monster Jelly’s Glover Park intervention utilised the flash mob formula as a means to create an event-specific project which was an alternative to event culture.

### **The Sugar Liberation Army’s *Operation Tang!***

Flash mobs as an event culture/ leisure modality are also present in a 2008 event Dunedin woman Leigh Patterson organised. Patterson designed a rally to protest at the discontinuation of Tangy Fruits, Snifters and Sparkles by the local confectioner Cadburys. The sweets will be iconic to many New Zealanders, belong to the movie-

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid.



going era of confectionary, similar to Jaffas. Similar to Raymond's *Dawn Parade*, but drawing on a more tangible reason to protest, Patterson rallied friends and like minded individuals to make costumes and protest banners and meet outside the Cadburys factory to direct their disappointment at the immanent disappearance of long standing lollies both at the factory and the one way traffic passing by. The group called themselves the Sugar Liberation Army and named their intervention *Operation Tang*.



**Figure 32** The Sugar Liberation Army. *Operation Tang!* 2008. Courtesy of The Sugar Liberation Army.

*Operation Tang* can be read as a utilisation of an event format – the demonstration – in order to create a subversive event culture product. The protests' blatant frivolousness is offset by its independent and 'grassroots' quality. It bypasses the bureaucracy and hierarchical structure of protests that are usually aimed at government and instead focuses on something small and seemingly insignificant: lollies. Patterson and her associates also employed event culture promotional strategies in order to validate the protest and garner media coverage. With friends working in the media industry, Patterson was able to access a press-release email group and prepare a professionally sound media-statement. The result was, amidst the static everyday media cycle, an intriguing and unexpected event which the New

Zealand media both locally and nationally quickly grasped as an ‘interest story.’ Patterson was interviewed for a host of radio stations and TV3 news. The protest itself was filmed by TV3 and slotted into their evening bulletin, presumably as ‘light relief.’ However, the media was confused by the event and as Patterson recalls repeatedly asked if the event was ‘real’ and whether it was not a marketing stunt deployed by Cadburys to regain interest in the sweets. The local newspaper the *Otago Daily Times* ran articles on the protest as did online news website Stuff.co.nz. The following quote shows how the event worked as a confusing intervention: “Whether the demonstration was light-hearted fun, a ‘Dada’ social experiment examining the media response to well managed publicity, or a serious effort to save "the big three... the protest drew a rowdy response”<sup>227</sup>

Patterson’s event and the media attention it garnered is an example of ‘going viral.’ A viral video “is one that becomes popular through the process of Internet sharing, typically through video sharing websites and email.”<sup>228</sup> Viral videos themselves and the process of becoming viral is an extended form of event culture. Viral videos are apt to discuss here because they are often user generated, last for incredibly short periods of time and are a very new form of visual event culture.

Other public interventions can also be read as both responses to and parts of event culture. Recently, in both New Zealand and internationally, guerrilla gardening and knitting have bloomed in urban spaces and been recognised as subtle yet profound interventions in public visual space. Guerrilla knitting, ‘knitta’ or ‘yarnbombing’ is said to have originated in Houston, Texas in 2005 with the formation of the knitting ‘crew’ Knitta Please<sup>229</sup>. This group advocates knitting as an adventurous experience and aim to create pleasure, confusion and surprise by adopting graffiti-esque strategies in which they ‘tag’ urban areas with knitting.<sup>230</sup> The collective tags street lights, public statues, handrails, gates, and other public and private property. Since their inception, other groups have formed internationally. The

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<sup>227</sup> Sam Stevens, "Sweet Protest 'Deadly Serious'," *Otago Daily Times*, 03/09/2008 2008. p 8.

<sup>228</sup> Wikipedia, "Viral Video," Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viral\\_video](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viral_video). On 21/02/2011.

<sup>229</sup> Mandy Moore and Leanne Prain, *Yarn Bombing: The Art of Crochet and Knit Graffiti* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2009). p 17.

<sup>230</sup> Sabrina Gschwandtner, *Knit Knit: Profiles and Projects from Knitting's New Wave* (New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2007). p 91.



movement aims to beautify urban space and revitalise the knitting craft at the same time. It has also been associated with youth culture appropriation of traditional crafts and activist art. The act of knitta can be read as an event practice because the guerilla tactics involved in installing knitting in urban space and the encounter of seeing knitta both embody experience events. Most yarnbombing takes place at night and in conditions of stealth. Moore and Prain's book contains sections on how to select a good target, avoid being caught 'bombing' and escape safely. Coming across knitta becomes an event because it ruptures the visual landscape of the everyday, suggesting alternative ways of visualising. Stephanie Springgay writes, "knitted tags approach pedagogy as unsettled—as events that are “in the making”—open and never fully achieved.”<sup>231</sup> Springgay's statement shows how event-specific phenomena offer the hope of possibility in their unbounded open-ness. In Wellington the group Knitoutdoors has staged a number of knitta works in the central city.

In 2009 the collective knittoutdoors organised an event on Cuba Mall where knitters were invited to spend a day knitting around the trunks of a group of trees. The group has also initiated projects on the wire fences of abandoned or empty sites, such as the spaces on Vivienne Street and Buckle Street which have been unused for long periods of time. These projects reference Barry Thomas's much earlier appropriation of urban space as a means to intervene in the everyday, suggesting alternative ways for the public to engage with their immediate environment. In 2009 and 2010 the Vivienne St site featured a mass of crocheted multi-coloured hearts.

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<sup>231</sup> Stephanie Springgay, "Knitting as an Aesthetic of Civic Engagement: Re-Conceptualizing Feminist Pedagogy through Touch," *Feminist Teacher* 20, no. 2 (2010). p 114.



**Figure 33** The Outdooroknit group knitting on Vivienne St, Wellington. Retrieved from [http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3423/3822398390\\_a1c2077e5c\\_o.png](http://farm4.static.flickr.com/3423/3822398390_a1c2077e5c_o.png) on 30/03/2011 on 30/02/2011



**Figure 34** Guerilla knitting by Outdooroknit on Vivienne St, Wellington. Retrieved from [http://farm3.static.flickr.com/2587/3821598793\\_8b6f8540eb\\_o.png](http://farm3.static.flickr.com/2587/3821598793_8b6f8540eb_o.png) on 30/02/2011,

Like Springgay suggests, Knitoutdoors work are small interruptions and distractions in everyday visual experience that, through their spontaneous and open-ended appearance, encourage people passing through the urban landscape to look closer at the seemingly banal and imagine or visualise it differently. They suggest that anyone has the ability to challenge the status quo through such simple and small ‘visual events.’ Like Thomas’ *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* they have the potentiality to galvanise

community responsibility for misused public. Also similar to Thomas' work is the recent resurgence of guerilla gardening.

Guerrilla gardening is gardening on another person's land without permission. The earliest use of the term is by Liz Christy and her Green Guerrilla group who in 1973 in the Bowery Houston area of New York transformed a derelict private lot into a garden.<sup>232</sup> Guerrilla gardening can take many forms from radical and large-scale activism advocating land rights and environmental issues to small, personal interventions such as planting and tending seeds in tiny cracks of the urban landscape. Guerrilla gardening is also often linked to squatting and protest sites where land is occupied. Guerrilla gardening in New Zealand has not as visible as the extent of knitta but it also a lot harder and subtler to spot. Community blogs and forums such as [guerillagardening.org](http://guerillagardening.org)<sup>233</sup> include a New Zealand forum with postings from Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch gardeners. Like Knitta, guerrilla gardening utilises forums, blogs and websites to organise 'digs',<sup>234</sup> share tips, information and news and publish images of gardening projects. For example, the following images are from a personal flickr photostream by the user mia.judkins, they document the users personal guerilla project in Aro valley, Wellington. Similar to event-specific art, guerrilla gardening and knitting use social media in order to extend the event of the action through documentation and discussion.

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<sup>232</sup> Wikipedia, "Guerilla Gardening," Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guerrilla\\_gardening](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guerrilla_gardening) . on 30/02/2011/

<sup>233</sup> <http://guerillagardening.org/community/index.php?board=90.0>

<sup>234</sup> A dig is the guerrilla gardening term for preparing a site for planting and then tending the project. This often takes place at night to avoid confrontation with authorities.





**Figure 35** A 'before' image from the flickr user mia.judkins of a guerilla gardening project in Aro Valley, Wellington. Retrieved from <http://www.flickr.com/photos/miajudkins/4124173000/in/photostream> on 30/02/2011.



**Figure 36** An 'after' image from the flickr user mia.judkins of a guerilla gardening project in Aro Valley, Wellington Retrieved from <http://www.flickr.com/photos/miajudkins/4352568759/in/photostream> on 30/02/2011.

Guerilla gardening can be understood as an extension of my terms for event-

specificity because of its participation, publicness, and interventionist nature. In the preceding chapters I have characterised event-specific art by its attempt to permeate the borders separating life and art in order to produce an experience that is more real than any art object and more enjoyable than any entertainment activity. In this final chapter I have demonstrated how event-specificity in the wider culture manages to make this transgression. In the final examples of guerrilla gardening and knitting, event-specificity is a model not just for the way in which we experience today but also a model for the ways in which we might try to envision the future and make changes to our current world. This chapter began with the *Letting Space* project and Kim Paton's *Free Store*, demonstrating how some event-specific art programmes are more involved in using event culture formats in order to challenge and comment on social realities, like food and wealth, more so than the art-focused projects earlier discussed. I also drew attention to the ways in which *Letting Space* and the other projects in this chapter used social and new media and the networks provided by these technologies either because they are free and user-friendly or because they are adept to guerrilla-style marketing and promotion, such as in the case of Patterson's *Operation Tang!* and her use of media to make her project 'go viral' and garner attention. Raymond's *Dawn Parade* demonstrated how younger artist work in an event-specific mode because they have been conditioned by a culture where art and entertainment are inseparable. Raymond's work demonstrates the collapsing of these historical dichotomies into each other. That *Dawn Parade* was devised from Miranda July's *Learning to Love You More*, a series of templates for personal, interventionist practice also shows that event-specificity is assimilated as an experience model in the wider culture.

## Conclusion

This thesis sought to define the characteristics of an emergent art practice that I name event-specific art. The research was focused on New Zealand and the 2008 – 2009 public art series *One Day Sculpture* as particularly emblematic of this type of art. In order to define *One Day Sculpture* as event-specific art, this research explored first examples of event-specific art that are antecedents for *One Day Sculpture*? The thesis then discussed how *One Day Sculpture* is an example of event-specific art. The study also considered examples are there of event-specific practice outside of the realm of art. Throughout the thesis I have also interrogated the kinds of visual experience event-specific art produces. The data I collected to answer these questions was based on interviews and secondary material I gathered. I have used the paradigm of visual culture studies to investigate this topic because the field calls for contemporary art and visual culture to be considered together in order to generate understandings about the role, effects and importance of visual phenomenon in ways that the traditional discipline of art history cannot. In this section I consider my findings and discuss their significance, as well as outlining the limitations of this study and the directions for possible further research.

In Chapter 1 I have argued that there are antecedents for understanding *One Day Sculpture* as event-specific art by selecting five case studies which precede the project and demonstrate the characteristics of event-specificity. In Barry Thomas' 1978 work *Vacant Lot of Cabbages* I showed how the piece functioned as an early, independent example of event-specific practice. Thomas's work can be read as event-specific because it constructed an interventionary event that drew attention to the politics of urban space, by activating the public to become engaged in re-visualising the ways in which an empty urban lot could be used. The piece demonstrated how event-specific art utilises media in order to be framed as an event within the public consciousness. The *Art Now* case study showed how institutional public art programmes in the late twentieth century increasingly incorporate situational works like Thomas' in order to disperse contemporary art in to the wider visual culture. I used Siegfried Köglmeier's *Shelter* as an example of a work that balanced between the biennial's framing of art and the wider event culture of leisure and entertainment experiences because it acted simultaneously as an advertisement for the exhibition and an artwork within the show. I then discussed the project *Oblique: Culture in Otira* in

order to demonstrate how event-specific projects create act as networks of events. I showed how Maddie Leach's *At Home*, similar to Köglmeier's piece, was an event itself within the programme of the exhibition while also drawing attention to art as a leisure practice. Following this, the *Telecom Prospect* exhibitions demonstrated how event-specific projects utilise media convergence in order to increase access and participation and preserve documentation of ephemeral works. I also show that these practices adhere to the rules of event culture and frame the project as inseparable from other leisure experience on offer in the wider culture. The Association of Collaboration's *Contemporary Art Mobile Response Unit* was used to illustrate how such 'publicness' and participation is part of event culture rhetoric by offering a more direct way to achieve this through an actual artwork in the exhibition. Lastly Chapter 1 discussed the *SCAPE Biennials of Public Space*, showing how they form a very recent antecedent for *One Day Sculpture* because of their mutual focus on temporary public artworks. Liz Allan's *Tales Illustrated* demonstrated how artworks within *SCAPE* used event culture strategies in order to generate experiences which are in demand in the wider culture.

This chapter showed how event specific art is both a response to and product of event culture. Event-specific art is made in order to compete with other event-based experiences in an event culture but it also attempts to challenge this sphere and its typical cultural products. Knowing this shows us that art and other visual culture have little differences and are increasingly blurred when they both become part of event culture.

In Chapter 2 argued that *One Day Sculpture* is a particularly striking example of event-specific art. With constant reference to the series and the rhetoric surrounding its claims and commissioning parameters I discussed the fallacy of the term sculpture in the project, reframing the series as 'one day events.' I showed how *One Day Sculpture*'s engagement with notions of publicness, and the urban regeneration and touristic qualities of the series, construct the works in the project as public events. For example, Bik Van der Pol's *1440 Minutes Towards the Development of a Site* can be read as such because it occurred at a site coded as a public space. I discussed the temporality of *One Day Sculpture*, looking at its complex durational nature through Nick Austin and Kate Newton's *Hold Still* and Bedwyr Williams' *Le Welsh Man's 24 Hour*. *Hold Still* demonstrated the ways in which the project called for slow and

speculative looking while Williams' work illustrated how some projects' frenzy required a distracted and mobile gaze. The status of artworks as interventions in daily visual culture was discussed in reference to Michael Parekowhai's *Yes We Are*, illuminating how each *One Day Sculpture* was an event of distraction. The central role of documentation in the project was also outlined. I examined how photographic documentation 'evented' the works by capturing the pieces' ephemerality, in order to show a record of how a transitory event did take place. This chapter discussed how the various parts of the series, including a vast array of public programmes, documentation and the project's media coverage formed a network of events similar to how entertainment products like a film, are dispersed into many parts in order to reach as wide an audience as possible as well as to diversify the product into a number of commodities. Lastly I examined the branding of the series, discussing how the advertising strategies used are the same as those employed in any facet of event culture. However, I also found that while *One Day Sculpture* utilised event culture strategies, it also withheld them, in order to balance in a precarious place between mass event culture and the more subdued area of contemporary art.

In Chapter 3, I continued my argument for viewing *One Day Sculpture* as event-specific by focusing on five artworks within the series as case studies for both the characteristics of event-specific art and the ways in which event-specific art produces particular practices of looking. I showed how *Liz Allan's Came a Hot Sundae: A Ronald Hugh Morrieson Festival*, meets the criteria of event-specificity through its festival structure which is an event form, and its focus on encouraging public participation in order to activate the work. Through a discussion of how the artist takes on the role of ethnographer I demonstrate how the work 'showed seeing' by looking at the controversial figure of Ronald Hugh Morrieson and translating the community's varied response to the writer into embodied visual events.

In Javier Tellez's *Intermission* I also characterised the work as event-specific due to its requirement of participation as well as its spectacular nature. The work's mediation between the real and the simulated showed how event-specific art aims to provide viewers with an experience that is as close to the real as possible because of their desire for such experiences.

Paola Pivi's work which saw goldfish flown across the Tasman sea, can also be read as event-specific through its construction of a spectacle. *I Wish I Am Fish*



was a situation created in order to be photographed because of its absurdity. As a work not just in situ, but in motion, it demonstrated artworks are also subject to the transnational images flows in an age of globalisation.

In contrast the stillness and contemplative qualities of Leach's *Perigee #11* showed a desire to transcend the spectacle of event culture and experience in a more organic way, where the experiences on offer are not prescribed and predictable but rather open and subject to change.

Santiago Sierra's work, *Person Showing His Penis*, which was not officially part of the series, exemplified how both event-specific art and art-specific event culture are malleable forces, encouraging active productiveness from their users. That Sierra created a work which responded to *One Day Sculpture* by challenging the programme through an alternative and subversive 'one day sculpture' shows how contemporary art's merging with visual culture results in a more engaging experience for both viewers and producers. Sierra's work threatened the ideology of *One Day Sculpture*, while adhering to its curatorial parameters by exposing how the looking practices involved in the programme are in many ways no different from the voyeurism and scopophilia implicit in viewing pornography or, in any act of looking and watching. Sierra's work broke down any pretensions about what art might offer that is different from the gratification that any visual experience gives. The *One Day Sculpture* case studies elucidate a significant visual culture ramification for this study: that art has to create visual experiences similar to those in other visual culture forms – ultimately, event culture experiences, in order to successfully capture the attention of the contemporary citizen.

Chapters 2 and 3 show that event-specific art is symptomatic of the visual culture of the first decade of the 21st century. In chapter 4 the thesis has expanded on the notion of event-specific art to include a discussion on recent art events other than *One Day Sculpture* as well as applying the criteria of event-specific to non-art examples. These case studies, especially those demarcated from contemporary art are significant because they demonstrate the event culture modality as dispersed across many facets of current visual culture.

Through the example of the Letting Space projects and Kim Paton's *Free Store* I have shown how other event-specific art projects engage more directly with the everyday than *One Day Sculpture*. *Free Store* addressed a significant social issue by offering

food and other goods for free. It worked as an event because it acted as a thing to do: visit the free store, it took shopping and consumption as leisure time activities and politicised them, raising questions about what is done with unwanted goods and waste. This chapter has also dwelt heavily on the concept of media convergence in relation to event-specific practice. Whilst *One Day Sculpture* and its precedents employ convergence tactics in order to compete in event culture, their institutional foundation does not allow them to make the most of such strategies because of various official and 'proper' obligations. Likewise because of bureaucratic ties, they are often not as quick or as able to adopt new media technologies and tools. Letting Space's conveners Amery and Jerram made it clear that rather than using interfaces like Facebook, Twitter and the online world in general as gimmicks to align themselves as 'hip', cool or with a youth market, they actually rely on these mediums because they cost very little and do not require additional employees to run and manage. Likewise, guerilla gardening and knitting groups meet to plan projects, share documentation, and forge a presence online because this is the only avenue open to them.

In my discussion of Ashlin Raymond's *Dawn Parade*, I demonstrate how event-specific art practice on the periphery of institutions and made by a new, younger generation increasingly blurs the boundaries between art, visual culture and event culture. Taking this break down of traditional boundaries further, this chapter also discussed events created by and for a non-art audience. These projects like Patterson's *Operation Tang!* demonstrate the existence of small and personal yet powerful interventions in event culture. These do-it-yourself happenings show a response to event culture via event-specific practice. Patterson's effort is evidence of the accessibility and galvanising possibilities of event-specific practice. In the sense that everyone knows how to throw a party, round up a group of friends to do something etc, event-specific practice is boundless in its potential for change. Patterson's ability to channel television and newspaper coverage to her event, demonstrate the media-savvy abilities of today's visual culture consumers who are, just as much producers. In this light *Operation Tang!* is also evidence of how viral culture is dependent on the event.

Finally I examined the presence of guerrilla gardening and knitting in New Zealand. These practices that tie back to the environmental art of the 60s and 70s, such as Thomas' *Vacant Lot of Cabbages*, create small, interventionist events in the

visual landscape of the everyday. Like some of the *One Day Sculpture* practices such as Maddie Leah's *Perigee #11*, they ask for the distracted looking practices symptomatic of current visual culture to slow down and focus on miniscule alterations to what is already present. The case studies in this final chapter show that event specificity is an experience modality of early 21st century visual culture. The desire for experiences — fuelled by an experience economy which event-specific art is as much a part of as adventure tourism — is best fulfilled through events.

This research was limited by the relative constraints that a Master of Arts thesis entails. As noted earlier, original plans to conduct a survey of viewers' responses to the *One Day Sculpture* projects was deemed too large a task for the timeframe I was working to. While I also decided that the type of material to be gleaned from such a research method could result in simple, value-judgements, this thesis was still limited in that it does not include testimonies from actual viewers of the projects that I write about, rather it values the idea and beliefs of the people who created these projects. This thesis does not have the scope to fully comment on the types of engagement that the projects I discuss produce. While engagement with an artwork is always in individual and subjective experience, the study could have been complemented with some such accounts.

As an emergent term, event-specific art is a practice that could be further investigated. For example, a more historical based lineage of the emergence of the practice could be valuable. Equally, as this study was focused in New Zealand, further research could look at event-specific art in an international context or other focused locales. As I discussed in my final chapter, event-specificity as a model of visual experience is an area that could be extended in further study. One such example, that I touch on briefly, could be examining the viral video, or internet 'meme' as an event-specific phenomenon. The event is present as a galvanising force across many facets of contemporary visual culture and this thesis has demonstrated its nature and features in regard to contemporary New Zealand art practices. My research underlines the way that event-specificity involves certain practices of looking that are present throughout the wider culture. I have shown how, even the more restricted arena of contemporary art, event-specificity is a particular modality of visual experience in the early 21st century.

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