

The Transpositional Art-object (Mezzzone)

Countering restrictive modalities in art production

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May 2018

Thesis submitted to Middlesex University, London,
as partial fulfilment of the degree of PhD (Fine Art).

ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

I, Shaun Martin, declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to my Director of Studies, Ergin Cavusoglu, and my supervisor, Susan Lok, for your generous and inspired support throughout my research project. It has been a great pleasure and privilege working with you.

I also want to extend my gratitude to the School of Art & Design at Middlesex University, for providing me with the opportunity to undertake my research with you.

Finally, I also want to thank my family and friends for your unwavering support throughout this undertaking.

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ABSTRACT

By acknowledging the characterization of my research and practice as a “complexly-woven artistic-existential positionality”¹; which whilst activating my interests about place, mobility and identity; it has nevertheless been conditioned by my adoption of an altogether transient lifestyle. The perpetual cycle of certain restrictive modalities that accompany it – variously experienced as economic and spatial flux – has nurtured in me perceptible sensations of artistic constraint; in terms of both limiting my practice outputs and access to the wider art-establishment. In order to counter these problems; and intertwined with issues about ‘belonging’ and ‘place-making’ (Markiewicz); the aim of this practice-led research is to assuage my paradoxical desire to remain personally in-transit whilst simultaneously ‘becoming’ artistically situated. Since I cannot extricate my everyday life from my practice concerns; and in order to unravel and subsequently resolve the perceived connections between them; the initial strategy was to deploy a critical reflexivity about my lived experiences with various spatialities and mobilities. Thereafter, my objective is to establish a new *potentiality* for my practice; my ‘axis-mundi’ (Lippard); one which will expand my exposure to scholarly and creative opportunities across the entire art-institutional framework.

Central to this investigation is the idea of an essential connection existing between a-priori elements already within the current (restricted) status of my practice and the potential trajectory desired for it. In the first instance, my aim was to formulate an experimental methodology which recognizes and fosters the co-dependent relationship between how I have historically acquired knowledge and its generative potential for my practice. My research identifies a significant gap in knowledge that adequately accounts for an approach to art practice that is based on my lifelong inclination towards *grazing* on and *gleaning* from anecdotal and theoretical information. In arguing for a continued expansion in the scope of art-research methodologies, the concept of *Pragmatic Selection* has evolved which adopts those very same processes for the acquisition of knowledge and; when applied to art-production; constitutes an original contribution to the ongoing debate about practice-led research.

Following this development; and in order to better comprehend my perceived marginalized existential positionality (Madison); I necessarily undertake an interrelated examination of critical spatial theory and critical mobility theory. Although noting that notions of space and time appear beyond our full comprehension, there is however a general consensus that a fluid interconnectedness exists between them; which, when enacted through discreet applications, enables multivalent place-making. Importantly for me here, are the emerging personal affiliations

with living in perceptible hybrid (Bhabha), liminal (van Gennepe, Turner) and/or heterotopic places (Foucault); as well 'cognitive' landscapes (Daniels, Biggs). These include: the idea of a *hybrid-liminal* space experienced as the 'insider-outsider paradox', where the individual is contextually both the insider *and* the outsider at the same time; the idea of the *trans*-national subject whose position is grounded in a specific spatial-temporal liminal register; and furthermore; the idea of the contemporary nomad whose position is *without* fixity to a *specific* place (Kebshull, Braidotti, et. al.). Concluding that all kinds of spaces are potentially made transitory through the intervening processes of (de/re-) construction – as a type of mobility (Cresswell) – it becomes apparent that the triangulation of those very same ideas could be applied in the creation of sculptures that embody and/or represent a similar *trans*-positional *state*.

Concurrently, I am constantly recording, reflecting and responding to the above theories by both creating and analysing a number of preparatory studies for a potential future application of them. By interrogating the tendency of using the language of binary referents within my work (here-there; this-that; etc.), which; alongside a corresponding investigation into hyphenated living (Bruno, van Dyk); I have conceived the *physical* manipulation of the hyphen as a type of 'structural' middle-zone. To that end; and rather than acquiescing to the normative expectation to *exhibit* work; I have met another of my objectives here with the purposeful creation and *display* of an original 'idea', which; latterly termed the *Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzzone)*; constitutes another significant contribution to the contemporary artistic-academic discourse. Furthermore; as a three-dimensional expansion of the compressed two-dimensional written form of the hyphen symbol itself (–), it has generated a space in which to 'house' my artistic responses to theory and anecdote. As an original approach to art practice, it challenges art-institutional authority by subverting the traditional hierarchy of art-object categorization in the model-maquette-sculpture relationship. In conceiving a new unified position for them, a (liminal) middle-zone emerges which acts as a type of compressed space and an expanded place at the same time. It advocates for the *trans*-positionality of the art-object *as* subject, in a form which is fluid, hybrid and ambivalent; yet it is fully grounded in its own *potentiality*.

Inspired by observing certain forms of resilience and subversion used to counter restrictive modalities experienced in both the carceral context (Moran, Fiddler) as well as more commonplace situations (Flynn, de Certeau), I have successfully co-opted a similarly creative tactic herein. This in turn, has provided me with a point of focus around which a sense of becoming has been formulated. That is; whilst beginning this research with some reservations about my place as an artist (belonging)

and the trajectory of my practice (becoming), I can now claim to have fully entered into that apparently negotiable in-between space of the liminal threshold. By having contested it and ventured through it, I have emerged into a new place by firmly establishing my current position within the historic art-academic timeline.

Whilst articulating contemporary experiences about mobility, my proposition also draws upon both historic and current artistic and philosophical theories. These include ideas about: *simultaneity* (Bergman, Foucault and Bauman); *motility* (Kaufmann); *thinking material* (Cragg); and also the *subjectile* (Artaud, Derrida and Long). Correspondingly; the conceptual premise of the *Transpositional Art-object (Mezzzone)* is very much grounded within the precedent of Institutional Critique. As a subversive tactic; frequently involving the manipulation of a-priori elements to expose the often concealed hierarchies of power and mechanisms of control within the art-institutional framework; it has been successfully employed by Metzger, Ali Uysal and Asher to register their own counter-positions within it. Altogether, these artists have effectively enacted perceptible types of simultaneous *trans*-positionality; they have similarly entered a perceived liminal space; a middle-zone; a perceived space in-between their practice and the art-institution itself. They have fully engaged with and subverted the (art-contextualized) insider-outsider paradox and, in having ventured outside of the institution's authority, they have necessarily had to – as I have done also – simultaneously return to the inside of it.

By claiming an original approach to research methodologies (*Pragmatic Selection*) and also art-production; my aim has been to *trans*-form my practice by establishing new *potentialities* for it; thus enhancing my motility and exposure to both scholarly and creative opportunities across the entire art-institutional framework. To that end, I have met my objective in the creation and *display* of an original 'idea': the *Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzzone)* constitutes a new and original development in contemporary artistic-academic discourse.

Key words: *The Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzzone); Pragmatic Selection; the insider-outsider paradox; hyphenated living; liminality; heterotopias; cognitive landscapes; trans-positionality; simultaneity; motility; thinking material; subjectile; constraint; carcerality; resilience; subversion; and also Institutional Critique.*

INTRODUCTION

I have often interrogated the notion of the artist, because - although very successful in both my undergraduate and post-graduate studies here and abroad - I have mostly shown my artworks within the art-educational framework. Alongside some reservations about the function of the artist, I am ironically also concerned about the placement of my current practice in the historical timeline and also its potential trajectory. I often feel as if I am at some kind of liminal threshold; never fully entering the *inside* of the art establishment nor ever fully remaining on the *outside* of it either; yet paradoxically, occupying both these positions at the same time. Despite these overall concerns, I am encouraged by colleagues to 'get (my) work out there'; that is they mean for me to 'exhibit' my work in the public arena. However, whilst there might seem to be a plethora of opportunities to do so - and not unlike many other emerging artists I suspect - I am often confronted with certain *feelings* of 'restrictiveness' arising from the apparent denial of any real access to them. Paradoxically, on the other hand, to *exhibit* 'work' has never actually been an overriding priority for me, since I have always maintained that what is more important instead is the creation and *display* of an original 'idea'. By constantly reflecting upon how this might be achieved, I have concluded that in order to enhance both my artistic and academic *motility*, it must necessitate the formulation of a new strategic and nuanced methodology which fully acknowledges the inextricable complexities linking the artist and the practice. Emerging from this is an original concept which, through the agency of subversion simultaneously (re)positions it on the *margins* of established art categorization whilst remaining wholly reliant on the institution of art for authentication.

To that end, this thesis documents an explorative journey as practice-led research. It is about discovering how to construct a viable art-practice whilst, at the same time, countering certain effectual spatial, economic and material constraints (restrictive modalities) brought about by my personal choice to live a transient lifestyle. In viewing the thesis as a reflexive document, it also contains a series of images which are simply intended as preparatory studies for now - with the view *potentially* to be developed as standalone and resolved artworks at a later date. By (necessarily) using simple craft-based techniques and inexpensive, low-key and founds materials, these studies function similarly to (low-resolution) 'snap-shots' of ideas. Whilst other supplementary images have also been included as an indication of the breadth of my practice - as well as examples of ongoing ancillary projects in appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4 - they nevertheless wholly compliment the generative nature of this project in its entirety. Altogether, these studies serve to 'chart' the practical and conceptual developments that have been considered throughout undertaking this research journey. Ultimately - as exemplified in appendix 5 - I am led to conceive the *Trans-positional Art-object*

(*Mezzone*) as an innovative development in my practice; as well as an original contribution to art-practice (sculpture) more broadly.

For the purposes of providing a specific starting point here, I will begin with the following anecdote; but not before noting that since my practice is both ongoing and reflexive, I will necessarily return to the same anecdote in my conclusion to this thesis:

When I was 18 I enrolled at a provincial art college northwest of Melbourne, Australia, to study painting. However, very soon afterwards I realized that I was more than likely simply going end up as a poor artist, and so I decided to change direction completely and study commerce instead. Importantly, in making this change, my then painting lecturer advised me of two things in particular: firstly - that I needed to go off and explore the world so that I could find myself both in my art and my art practice; and secondly - that one day I would in fact return to my art. I distinctly remember thinking at the time that he was being very presumptuous on both points; after all: I was 18, I had money in my pocket, a car and a healthy relationship....what *was* there of me to find; and just how did he know for sure that eventually I *would* return to my art?

Anyway, I did indeed go off into the world during which time I completed my commerce degree and went into chartered accounting. However, within just three years I became quite disillusioned with the trappings that my early career choices had afforded me; including the house, a new car and a 'comfortable' lifestyle. Consequently, I sold off all my newly acquired possessions, packed a bag and simply went 'travelling'. Over the years that followed, I visited many places; saw many different things; lived in a wide variety of habitats; worked in a wide variety of jobs; and met many different people. Ultimately, I was influenced by a wide variety of (disparate) experiences. I did not stay too long in any given place however; and interspersed with frequent and extended journeys overseas, I migrated from Australia to Holland and - as a British-born citizen - I became a returning migrant to the UK some years later. Until recently, I had also embraced for nearly a decade the 'unconventional lifestyle'² of the so-called 'Traveller' - who is defined as someone "who travels from place to place, often living in a van or other vehicle, rather than living in (any) one place."³ For me this simply meant that rather than moving into various types of 'static' accommodation, now the accommodation could actually move around with me. For example, I lived for several years in the converted ex-military Bedford TK330 as shown below. It was a ten-metre-long horse transportation vehicle; the smaller van was simply my 'commuter' transport.



Figure 1: My Bedford TK330 ex-military truck

At last count, I have held at least 45 formal addresses altogether. Even now I am constantly aware that my current tenancy is based on an unpredictable informal arrangement and that I may have to move on once again at very short notice. Accumulatively, the aforementioned experiences have had a profound effect on the way I view my sense of being-in-the-world; both mentally and physically. Although I readily acknowledge a fairly romantic attachment to the notion of being an artist who is perpetually in-transit, it has conversely however, also generated certain restrictive modalities and the *feeling* of constraint in respect of my practice and in the production of artworks themselves.

On further reflection, it is without doubt that my formative years; as both a child living in the UK and as an adolescent growing up in Australia; have significantly influenced my accumulative attitude towards seeing the transformative potentialities in experiencing multivalent spatialities and mobilities. It is because my parents are house builders and renovators that I moved so frequently; either into very old houses in dire need of extensive renovation, or otherwise into brand new houses built on newly parcelled plots of land. In any case, I was surrounded by - and latterly actively involved in - the processes of construction, de-construction and/or re-construction. What always fascinated me was how the very simple removal or (re) building of ordinary and familiar structural elements could make such an enormous difference to both the existing and/or empty spaces around me. This phenomenon introduced me to the idea that all kinds of spaces are potentially transitory. This same approach to both interrogating and creating spaces would go on to strongly influence the way I develop and produce artworks. Nonetheless, it has since raised the following question: If a 'house' as a physical object can be transposed into a 'home' as a subjective experience, could a similar observation of transitory-ness and trans-positionality be witnessed in the context of art?

Clearly, I have of course returned to art (*per se*); albeit, not until almost 20 years after my painting lecturer's earlier prediction. Apart from the short dalliance with painting in my late teens, I did not go on to graduate from art school until I was nearly thirty-seven years old; having first studied sculpture in Melbourne and then completing my honours degree in Portsmouth, UK. After several more years - mostly taken up again with being a 'globe-trotter' (someone who travels a lot and visits many different countries⁴) - I returned once more to Portsmouth to complete my Masters in Fine Art. Regrettably, with my transient lifestyle comes an ongoing cycle of economic instability which has meant that I have never managed to secure any kind of dedicated studio space. Therefore, I have had to develop an affordable strategy that is more suitable to working in small, cramped, multi-purpose spaces; whilst also being on-the-move. Since I have acquired a (nurtured) preference for making *objects* - through the cyclical and multi-reflexive processes of (de-/re-) construction - I began to record my ideas by making what might simply be considered as 3D (analogue) models. This practical methodology has continued throughout this specific research project also. Because of their ephemeral qualities, most of my models have a relatively short lifespan; this is simply due to either the lack of suitably dry storage conditions or simply that over time they do not transport very well in any case. However, after their production the objects are systematically photographed with the general idea that they might be developed further as either: photographic prints, film projections, or sculptures; and in some instances installation pieces. All of this brings me to this point in time and the objective of this research in particular. Importantly, I consider it as part of that larger journey mentioned above; it is both a 'live' document and a 'live' practice. It is an ongoing endeavour that strives to answer the plethora of questions which continually arise as a result of its explorative and reflexive nature. Effectively; for me the issue is about 'becoming'; both personally and artistically.

I am not alone in being interested in the efficacy of the lived experience upon art-production; indeed other artists have been interested in the relationship between art, life and the places of production. Historically for example, the diverse range of creative outputs of the post-First World War art school called Bauhaus, (shown at the Barbican, 2012), explored art-production through delving into a variety of subjects, such as, "culture, life, politics and society, and the changing technology of the age."⁵ For more recent artists, the lived experience is incorporated into the work itself and thereby aims "to blur the boundaries between art and life"⁶, according to Anna Dezeuze (2007) writing for Tate's online research journal. She cites a range of practices from the 1960s to the early 21st century "upon which a political discourse of freedom and self-discovery revolved"; including: Allan Kaprow's "pioneering environments of 1960-3" which relied on the "active participation" of the viewer; Helio

Oiticia's *Parangolé* capes (from 1967), and Lygia Clark's *Beast* (1962) which were intended as "objects to be worn or handled"; and later also, the "contemporary participatory work" of Carsten Höller's *Test Site* at Tate Modern in 2007.⁷ Additionally, in his seminal essay *The Function of the Studio* written in 1971, Daniel Buren described the studio as "the *unique space* of production" and must "inevitably" be taken into account when undertaking an examination of the "art system (and) the ossifying customs of art"⁸ since; as he points out; "it is the first frame, the first limit, upon which all subsequent frames/limits will depend."⁹ In critiquing her own working conditions, Setareh Yasan's work *Studio Space* (2013), depicts a scaled-down representation of her studio which – whilst not functioning as a 'model' per se – serves as a place of mediation in "the dialogue between the world of the studio space where she actively creates and the outside world."¹⁰ Furthermore, Yasan's exploration of these worlds relies on the "material knowledge" accrued in the process of making in her studio; whilst also amassing "immaterial knowledge informed by (her) individual life and experience(s)."¹¹ Similarly, at the exhibition *Many Places at Once* (2014), a number of artists' works reconsidered "the place of artistic production" particularly in terms of the "nuanced circumstances that characterize the economic, social, and technological conditions under which artists work today."¹² For each of us it seems, whilst the 'studio' becomes a type of liminal place – a space in-between the formulation of idea and the manifestation of it – it is also a conditioned space affected by circumstance. Nevertheless, a noticeable distinction was observed between these artists' experiences of working spaces with that of my own; that is, their studios - as non-dedicated spaces for art-production – appeared to be far more stationary than mine. Furthermore, Buren describes the studio as "generally a private (and) *stationary* place where the work originates (and) where *portable* objects are produced (original emphases)."¹³ In contrast, for me as the 'artist-in-transit', the studio has not only been a non-dedicated space; it is actually a highly mobile site. Indeed, the objects historically made therein might in themselves be considered 'portable'; if only simply because they are ephemeral (materially) and consequently deteriorate very quickly.

The question arises as to whether other 'unique space(s) of production' can be (re)negotiated such that whilst simultaneously reflecting the artist's lived experiences and the circumstances in which the artwork is produced; the space remains transient in itself. Could such a space be conceived where the formulation and resolution of ideas occur simultaneously? To that end, and alongside examining the 'ossifying customs of art', I have included appendix 3 (The PTV Project) and appendix 4 (Studio-en-Valise) which, whilst remaining ancillary to the main thrust of this thesis, they nevertheless serve as examples of on-going projects very much related to it and reflect my wider interests about how an artist's lived experiences can affect places of production and its outputs. If

artists want to reflect the vagaries of the contemporary art-world and its manifold transitions then we must adapt and respond accordingly.

Rather than becoming an 'expert' in any one thing (place or skill) I have tended to simply *graze* upon my experiences and *glean* from them what is significant as part of my research methods and strategic approach. Using a rural analogy here, I have observed a not too dissimilar approach in the way farm animals *pragmatically select* only the choicest bits of meadow-grass and, by disregarding what *they* find unsuitable, they create their own desired outcome (nourishment). Since I have come to realize that I cannot separate myself from my art-practice, this way of creating 'nourishment' – or acquiring knowledge in my case - has necessarily become integral to my practice methodology. However, in the very first instance, I must confess that it is simply because I normally have only ever grazed upon and gleaned from theoretical and anecdotal information, that any accumulated knowledge of the world around me is actually always far more generalized and less specific. Meanwhile, I began to reflect on the following statement: "The artist-as-researcher distinguishes himself from other artists by taking it upon himself to make statements about his thinking process and the production of work (such that) the matter and medium function as the instruments in the research or thinking process."¹⁴ In taking this idea forward in chapter 1, the issue then arises that: If my practice and my thought processes are intrinsically entwined, can this way of interacting with the world be *transposed* to the context of art and thus also become a validated approach to making artwork? By interrogating this question further, I put forward the case for *Pragmatic Selection* as an experimental model in practice-led research (PLR). It takes its cue from pedagogical science in which the method of Principled Eclecticism advocates that a teacher should not be wholly reliant upon any one specific 'best' method.¹⁵ As the name suggests, Pragmatic Selection is not a haphazard exercise, since each line of enquiry pursued is a direct result of that which preceded it, and therefore directs all subsequent lines of investigation. In turn, I had anticipated that by adopting such a generalized approach to PLR, that I would not only be introduced to important theories and other artists work - which would benefit my understanding about my subject area interests – but very importantly also, it would identify specific parameters around which my research could be constructed. As an original contribution to the wider academic-artistic discourse, Pragmatic Selection is validated through my examination of the ongoing debate about PLR and its methodologies; in what *still* appears to be an emerging research paradigm.

On further reflection, I have come to also realize that my practice is both complexly woven and multifaceted. It is intertwined and co-dependent with *my* personal experiences of mobility and place; and importantly - and in also being mindful of Heidegger's hermeneutic circle - I realize that I

am at the very centre of *my* practice. Therefore, I am my own constraint and my own potentiality at the same time. It is at this point that I start entertaining the notion of *simultaneity* as a perceived state of compression and expansion occurring at the same time. As a consequence of having been transient for the majority of my life so far, I have developed a broad interest in ideas about identity, place, emplacement, mobility *and* the interconnectedness between them. This has in turn, engendered an ongoing personal and philosophical engagement with ideas about *belonging*; specifically with the insider-outsider paradox: one moment 'becoming' the insider, another moment 'becoming' the outsider; and yet very importantly also, when 'belonging' to (occupying) both of those binary positions simultaneously. However, this simply raises the additional question as to *what* am I sometimes an insider; or outsider? Furthermore: what is it that specifically *separates* these two states of being? In recognizing that in its compressed two-dimensional written form, it is the hyphen symbol itself (-) that separates the word 'insider' from the word 'outsider'; I begin to imagine the potential of expanding it into a three-dimensional space as a type of 'middle-zone' for an artistic intervention.



I am this and I am that and all things between

Figure 2: Shaun Martin, study for: *I am this and I am that and all things between* 2017. Computer generated image, dimensions variable.

For instance, the artwork/study in Figure 2 is intended to be made out of neon-tube lighting. The luminescent green colour and the straight line it takes, allude to Bruce Nauman's *Green Light Corridor* (1970). Reflecting on the positionality of a corridor; it occupies a type of middle-zone and, as a singular place, it simultaneously separates and connects the spaces adjacent to it and thus becomes part of a spatial collectivity.

In addition to the above, I am also seeking answers to other related but commonplace questions such as: Who am I? Where am I? What am I doing? Where am I going? In turn, the problem then arises as to whether these questions can be answered specifically or just generally; and thereafter: how best to go about artistically responding to them. Furthermore; and generated from a personal awareness of seemingly going somewhere generally yet paradoxically nowhere specifically - the *idea*

itself of simultaneously going somewhere *and* nowhere at the same time, becomes another point of focus. In that sense, *ideas* seemingly become a kind of 'artistic material' suitable for both interrogation and manipulation - this would later lead to an affiliation with the concept of 'material thinking' as part of justifying my proposition (see chapter 4). However, even the notion of *going* (anywhere) raises further questions as to whether this is forwards, backwards, upwards, and/or downwards; and thereafter the potentiality of going in multiple directions at the *same* time. In order to elucidate further on what in the meantime emerges as issues about 'becoming' and 'belonging', I turn to an examination of mobility theory in chapter 2. In combination with a critical examination of my own experiences with mobility, I subsequently find myself *becoming* affiliated with many terms and aspects of it that include: existential migration undertaken for the purposes of self discovery; and Third Culture Kids (TCKs) who *become* allied to many cultures and identities instead of any single one specifically. Further affiliations emerge with contemporary nomads, transients and Travellers who adopt an attitude of generality to place by identifying with a sense of *belonging* based on the idea of non-fixity to a specific place. Moreover, I began to identify with the notion of the trans-national identity who constantly engages with feelings of difference; and in turn, develops an appreciation of 'between-ness'; the 'here and there'; the 'you and me'; the 'us and them'. What is more significant here - as an artist - is the understanding that since the simple actions and gestures of walking and hand-waving also constitute forms of mobility; then by extension, it must also include the agency of art-making – and, *potentially*, even just thinking about it also. These speculations would later inform an original development for my practice. At the same time, I am also looking at other artists who explore themes associated within the rubric of migration, nomadism and also mobility more generally. In doing so, what particularly comes to light here, is that whilst many of them tend to make work that simply records their experiences of it and/or simply their interests in it; none of them however, seem to make work as specific responses to the *effects* of working in-transit; and particularly even more so, the constraints of practicing *within* confined, transient spaces. It is in filling this apparent gap that my proposition makes a further claim to its originality.

My practice intuitively adopts Newbury's research model as the cycle of practice before research *and* research before practice: a continual and cyclical process of (re)negotiation whilst always attempting to forge something anew. During the interim once again, I am continually making and *reflecting* upon my work and constantly asking: What is it that I am trying to achieve, and how and where will it evolve beyond the artefact itself? From this, another question then arises about the above-mentioned and intertwined mobility issues: *where* is mobility actually occurring? This in turn, leads me to an examination of spatial theory in chapter 3; starting with a general overview of the

terms space and place. This is followed by a closer look at certain derivative ideas about hybrid, liminal and heterotopic places, as well as notions of landscape - all of which is gleaned from theories grounded in the physical sciences, human geography, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology. This has served only to indicate that these terms appear in no way definitive; but rather, they seem to be subjective concepts purely defined through the contexts in which they are explored. The idea of space-time compression is a clear example of this type of subjectivity; in which - during the course of the same time frame - many different people will have quite opposing experiences of both space and place. Since space-place theory is continually developing – as reflected in the relatively recent progression from physical geography towards human geography (including theories about mobility, motility and carcerality) – it must also reflect our continually developing sense of identity. What becomes important here – particularly as it relates to how spatialities affect art production - is that it leads to the interrogation of a plethora of other related questions, including: How might various perspectives about space and place be portrayed within the art context? Could they inspire new types of place-making, artistically? Can a type of studio-space make you the artist who you are? How might multiple occupations of different spaces (as positionality) be reflected in art-practice? And finally; how might the constraints of working in small, cramped, mobile places be subverted to generate ‘transformative potential’?

Correspondingly, I return here once more to the premise that: I am in fact at the centre of my practice. Yet this simply generates *another* further set of questions: Where am I artistically? What is it that I actually make; are they models, maquettes and/or sculptures? What is my practice about? Where is it located? Where am I going; and furthermore, what is it that I am *potentially* going into? Contrary to these concerns however, I have also entertained the thought that none of these questions really matter and that maybe instead, it is simply that it is the journey of exploration which is more important, as well as simply being open to all the changes and opportunities it may bring. Despite this conundrum however, I begin to contemplate that perhaps the answers to these issues lay some-where *closer* to home; that is, not out there (as I first thought), but actually already located here, with-in my practice outputs - since in the end they are reflections about my thought processes and therefore act as a kind of ‘ready-made’ self-portraiture (see study below).



Figure 3: Shaun Martin, *The ready-made self portrait* 2000 – 2005. Original lost. Peeling wall plaster.

By interrogating and then countering restrictive modalities on art production, I aim to show that I do not necessarily have to venture *outside* of the academic framework in order to construct a viable practice; especially when the alternative is in fact to explore and develop the potentiality of going further *inside* of it instead. Ultimately; I may not need to go very far after all. Through a self-reflexive examination of my current practice I will reveal that there is something which has, until very recently, been rather latent and obscure; but quite possibly inherent and already-made at the same time; thus in turn, I aim to generate new and alternate potentialities for it by manipulating that which has apparently always previously existed.



Figure 4: Shaun Martin, study for: *Self-portrait: The Reddy-Maid* 2013

Furthermore, in analysing my work even-more closely, it becomes clear that I ordinarily attempt to make works using the most simple, pared down elements as is possible; and in doing so, I have adopted the mantra of: ‘think big but make small’. This has allowed me a significant freedom in exploring the use of scale whilst juxtaposing it with the perceived enormity of the transcendental view I have developed about my own sense of place-in-the-world. Additionally - in terms of composition - I almost invariably rely on the language of duality: this-that; here-there; inside-outside; emplace-displace; compression-expansion; compare-contrast; and so on. Further scrutiny reveals that my work generally resonates with ideas about liminality also - as spaces between adjacent spaces; including the perceived spaces in-between the gaps of those adjacent spaces – essentially; in the *divide* of all of those places. In doing so, I have come to appreciate that there is the *potential* of occupying a type of middle position (or zone); and one which is also *trans*-positional. That is, it is never entirely on one side or the other side; but very importantly, it is on one side *and* the other side - simultaneously. This is a position which seen to be both *constraining* yet also *yielding* at the same time. So, in this *cycle* of reflexive practice, I (re)examine Bruno’s affiliation with the notion of the ‘hyphen’ as home. I begin to visually examine and perceive the potentiality of the space between one position and its referent non-position. As a sculptor, the question then arises: How do I creatively respond to the hyphen as a compressed two-dimensional sign? Quite simply, I

must go further inside it; expand it into a three-dimensional form. I must engage with it; I must intervene and enact within it. In doing so, I am in the process of *becoming*; I begin to engage with a form of place-making and thus begin to develop a sense of *belonging*.

Alternatively of course, I could have continued making individual artworks that are nothing more than individualized visual responses to intuitive moments, theories explored, and/or anecdotes recounted. Yet, my aim here is to make an original contribution to the existing body of knowledge - something that is *both* physical *and* conceptual. Therefore, I repeatedly *return* to ideas about constraint and confinement; both of which is either observed within my artwork and/or experienced within my practice. With this comes the realization that I am effectively exploring ideas around the notion of the 'carceral continuum'; exploring certain types of power-relations and the (re) negotiation of them. Consequently, this simply raises even more questions: If I have these *feelings* of constraint; of operating within certain types of power structures; then it cannot be an unusual paradigm for other emerging artists also. But; how have they addressed similar issues? In turn, how will I counter them? How do I 'turn the tables' on that sense of restrictiveness? How can I turn it to my advantage? Where else are these feelings experienced more widely; by whom; what form do they take; how are they enacted; and finally, what strategies are used to tackle them? In order to address this set of questions and also develop a foundation in which to contextualize my proposition, I return yet again to the field of human geography in chapter 4. This chapter is dedicated to elucidating on the practical and conceptual development of the *Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzzone)*. It is through this constant interrogation of relevant theories and the (re)negotiation of my practice outputs that ultimately leads me to propose that the *Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzzone)* is an original contribution to the existing body of knowledge. In the first instance my proposition seeks to address the following (but lengthy) question:

If human geography has already provided me with the idea of the *trans*-national subject, whose position is grounded in a specific 'spatial-temporal liminal register'; and also the idea of the contemporary nomad whose position is without 'fixity' to a *specific* place; *and* if spatial theory has already provided me with the idea of hybrid, liminal and heterotopic places: THEN; could a *triangulation* of those same ideas mean that a similar trans-positional *state* could be observed and applied both in sculpture and sculptural practice?

Before continuing however, it is important to note that I am simultaneously gleaning information about different forms of constraint and confinement as experienced in other contexts. It is here that I note that many types of 'power-relations' materialize through a variety of disciplining mechanisms;

and furthermore, they are in fact commonplace across a wide range of socio-economic and socio-political scenarios. Such disciplining mechanisms are however, met with many different forms of resistance and are subsequently countered by various acts of subversion. Alongside ideas drawn from carceral geography and through my discussions with prison inmates, it is noted that people's attachment to place is always fluid and negotiable. Such negotiations are aimed at producing positive outcomes including creating a sense meaningful place. What becomes significant here - since it resonates with my practice concerns - is that: tactics *can* be invented to resist variable physical and temporal disciplinary mechanisms so as to counter individual *feelings* of constraint and restrictiveness. Furthermore, since these tactics are in fact also transferrable, they can be adapted to subvert the problems of choosing to live a transient lifestyle; and therefore as an artist-in-transit. But; how can I *apply* similar tactics of resistance to the associated constraints and restrictions affecting my practice? How *can* I counter restrictive modalities in the production of art? What is the *potential* of subversion in art practice?

Alongside the aim of place-making or making-place for my practice and the simultaneous (re)negotiation of its artistic outputs, I begin to observe the potentiality of a *revealed* space; a type of *middle-zone* which is both compressed and expanded at the same time. It is perceived as a type of zone *in* which 'designation' of place occurs and one which is also allied to ideas of marginality and liminality. Although perhaps more difficult to apprehend initially, the potentiality of such a space never becomes *fully* realized; however - paradoxically - it still requires an action (mental) to generate it. Importantly, the space also deals with *trans*-positionality: it is fluid yet is deemed to hold all its referent places together. Moreover, once a specific emplacement has been designated, its perceived 'non-positional' field is considered to have been surpassed.

And so; when all the above facets begin to evolve as a cohesive format - having been resolved out of an otherwise complex state of creative flux - I finally arrive at my proposition *per se*: *The Transpositional Art-object (Mezzzone)*. [Furthermore, but ancillary to my practice outputs, is my penchant for naming (things); thus I have - through the agency of *naming*; as a type of subversive act in itself - created the neologism *Mezzzone* - meaning 'middle-zone' as an alternate title for the Transpositional Art-object. Both names are intended to be used interchangeably.] From the outset it is deliberately multifaceted, since it has much to achieve. Firstly, it is both an object *and* a subject. It is a singularity *and* a collectivity and finds precedent in the concept of the subjectile (Tim Long, 2012). It relies on the idea of simultaneity which has already been explored for example in the early 20th century movements of Futurism and Cubism, as well as Foucault's use of it in 1960s. More recently,

simultaneity is integral to Baumann's concept of Liquid Modernity. Mezzone is allied to developments in other art practices which employ ideas surrounding 'material thinking' and 'thinking material' (Tony Cragg, 2013). It is a form of resilience and an act of subversion and finds further precedent in the resistance to and countering of restrictive modalities in commonplace situations. It is, as the name suggests, intended to have a *trans*-positional status. It engages with *motility* theory and the *potentiality* of movement (of goods, services and people) which reflects the dynamism and fluidity of contemporary life. Mezzone has what motility theory calls 'capital' and as such it increases its *possibility* of a greater spatial circulation as a type of commodity ready for a potential distribution to a wider art market. Subsequently, it is meant to also maximize *my* potential exposure to opportunities for a type of social mobility within the art establishment hierarchies.

As a singularity (a physical artefact), Mezzone is a small-scale, low-key, inexpensive 'intervention' purposely contained within a commensurately small scaled box. In also coining these interventions *esotopias* (or 'esotopic landscapes'), they become subjective responses gleaned from the theories explored throughout this research journey. Conceptually, as a type of collectivity, the Transpositional Art-object (Mezzone) in its entirety 'becomes' the subject. It becomes a type of place-making and reflects my observations about my own identity - centred on both my *feelings* of restrictiveness and my position as an artist. Intentionally ambiguous and meant to propose an alternative type of art form and display format at the same time, the Transpositional Art-object (Mezzone) occupies a middle-zone of artistic categorization. The object is neither strictly a sculpture; a model; a maquette; nor a proposal for a potential installation or a type of alternative exhibition space - yet at the *same* time, it intentionally and simultaneously alludes to the potential application of all of these presentational formats. It implies portability and is transportable across a range of (exhibition) sites; as per my intention and the designated application required of it at any given point in time. It is in the very process of 'becoming' trans-positional, that it finds a sense of its own 'belonging' within the wider context of contemporary sculptural practices. As both a conceptual *and* practical development, this original proposition has been entirely commensurate with attempting to establish a sculptural practice whilst seemingly confined by the spatio-temporal limitations of living a transient lifestyle. As a result of ongoing reflections about the position of both my (inter)national and cultural identity, and my subsequent affiliation with the insider-outsider paradox; it has altogether consolidated into what I believe is a new opening for my practice. In its entirety, my proposal *becomes* an act of resilience and subversion; and in creating a fluid and artistically proactive resolution to restrictive modalities; it thus *belongs* to a larger body of work.

Finally, Chapter 5 is wholly concerned with registering the originality of the Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzzone) with the institution of art. Firstly however, I note that Rosi Braidotti uses nomadic politics as a tool for creating spaces for alternatives (by) working from within the belly of the beast; which in turn, allows for the undoing or re-territorializing of the very structure about which we are attempting to identify with; and affirm our own sense of belonging.¹⁶ Similarly, the rationale for the Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzzone) relies on an affirmation of authenticity from the art-institutional framework (academia) to establish its *own* sense of belonging to it. By way of reiteration, I am proposing to undermine art-institutional authority – its *power* structure – by challenging the historical criterion of a tri-fold taxonomy of model, maquette and sculpture as singular classifications; yet, on the other hand, I am also reliant on it to register my proposition - not only as an art-object per se, but also as an alternate sculptural classification grounded in a simultaneously compressed state (collectivity). That is: the Mezzzone object *is* the model *and* the maquette *and* the sculpture at the *same* time. This strategy finds precedent where other artists have used - in both a continuous and coterminous way - the institutional framework to validate their respective 'contra' positions within it. Herein, I examine the practice of Gustav Metzger who; in claiming that out of destruction comes creation, change and renewal, and also new creative territories; sought to articulate the subversion and rejection of power through his concept of 'auto destructive art'. Conversely, Mehmet Ali Uysal manipulates the art-institution's actual material fabric to undermine the 'white cube' as the iconic symbol of its ideology, and thus reveals the transient and ongoing conflict with the traditional gallery space. Finally, and more comprehensively, I turn to the practice of Michael Asher as an exemplar of institutional critique. He reveals in multiple ways the extent to which institutional power-relations are indeed widespread by showing that the production of knowledge is inextricably connected to the physical and temporal contexts in which it is generated. Asher uses the very administrative and political framework of the institution to symbolically invert the explicitly or implicitly applied (restrictive) conditions. In doing so, he exposes how the wider institution manipulates the meaning of art and how market driven agendas can significantly undermine the conceptual basis on which an artwork is fundamentally premised. Effectively, Metzger, Ali Uysal and Asher have all enacted a perceptible type of simultaneous *trans*-positionality; they have similarly entered a perceived middle-zone, a space in-between, a liminal space. They have fully engaged with and subverted the (art-contextualized) insider-outsider paradox and in having ventured outside of its (restrictive) authority, they have necessarily had to return to the inside of the art-institution; at the *same* time.

Ultimately, each of the outcomes generated from undertaking this research journey has emerged from making a comparative study of what I have come to observe as different types of power-relations across a range of situations; which, in pertaining to my personal experiences of mobilities, spatialities and temporalities, have manifested as perceptible forms of restrictiveness for my practice. Through the *pragmatic selection* of theoretical and anecdotal source material, and alongside critical reflections about the subjectivity of them, I draw upon different ways in which various strategies have been co-opted elsewhere which (re)negotiate other restrictive modalities to create broader understandings of place-making. Transposing this into the art context, I adopt the creative strategy of subversion to resist and then counter the effects of similar constraints on art production. In that sense; what was once a compressed state of constraint, now emerges as an expanded state of potential (see Figure 6 below). It *becomes* capital. By claiming an original approach to art-production (the Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzzone)) and also research methodologies (Pragmatic Selection), my aim here is to transform my practice by establishing new *potentialities* for it; one which will enhance my motility and exposure to both scholarly and creative opportunities across the entire art-institutional framework.

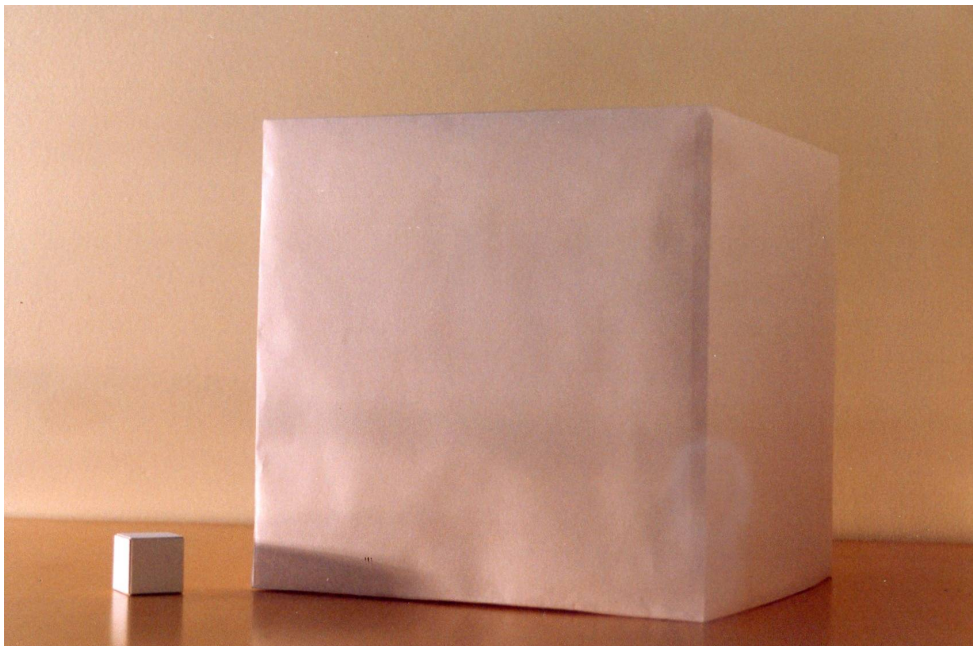


Figure 5: Shaun Martin, study for: $[1^3 + 9^3] = [1 \pm 0]$ 2000-2005. Original lost. Card, paper, 1' x 1' x 1' and 9' x 9' x 9'

CHAPTER 1

PRAGMATIC SELECTION: AN EXPERIMENTAL MODEL IN PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH

"In art and literature, the stylistic conventions of one generation are often made to be broken by the next. It seems likely that as we become more self-conscious about the rhetorical techniques used in research, some individuals will begin to test them and look for new ways to break the mould."¹⁷

OVERVIEW

Pragmatic Selection is an experimental approach to practice-led research. It is a nuanced methodology which whilst responding to ongoing calls that question what constitutes authentic artistic research it remains firmly grounded in existing approaches to it. Pragmatic Selection promotes the use of *grazing* on and *gleaning* from multifarious source materials – *however* remotely derived – and purposely promotes generality over specificity. It ignores the traditional hierarchal processes of validating knowledge and takes heed of a quote I have noted from a poster on an education department's wall which was attributed to Albert Einstein: *Imagination is more important than knowledge*. I am also very mindful here of Damian Sutton's recommendation to me that I would benefit from "some frank self-analysis".¹⁸

Taking the above comments on board, and since I am inextricably linked to my practice and bring to it a multitude of generalized experiences gleaned from a transient lifestyle; I began extending the earlier rural analogy (p.13) to include the pastoral *nomad* who also wanders widely seeking often disparate sources of nourishment (inspiration) suitable to graze upon and glean from in order to maximize (sometimes unknown) opportunities. I concluded that as a transient (practitioner) I am indeed not unlike other nomads, who in roaming multifarious terrains are "carrying with them on their journey an independent 'situated knowledge'" who therefore – according to Paul Thomas – "can choose all possible routes to approach a broader art research culture in the face of institutional silos."¹⁹ To that end, this experimental approach is a similar attempt to generate new opportunities that will maximize the potential for what I feel has become an otherwise stagnant art practice.

Autobiographic reflections about personally experienced spatialities, mobilities and temporalities provide the conceptual basis for this research. Artworks are frequently intuitive in their origins or juxtaposed with anecdotal evidence and guided by critical analyses drawn from eclectically sourced literature gleaned from the physical sciences, human geography (carceral geography), philosophy,

sociology (criminology), and anthropology (ethnography). The following chapter traces the development of Pragmatic Selection and its perceived place within existing research methodologies.

Historically, I have adopted Darren Newbury's *Practice as research process* model which is commonplace in fine art research where "the practice of doing art provides the method of enquiry."²⁰ As an interactive model, which advocates the validity of research completed in the process of execution, it effectively combines 'research completed prior to execution' and 'practice completed prior to research'.²¹ Since these two approaches are not mutually exclusive the continuation of a reflexive studio based (sculptural) practice still remains an integral component of my research. At its core, I use simple craft-based model-making techniques to make 3-dimensional 'notes' of ideas out of 'low-key', inexpensive, ephemeral and readily available materials. Due to inadequate storage facilities and lack of transportability, these 'notes' are normally photographed and archived for a *potential* future reconstruction/manipulation through the possible use of photographic projections, stills, video and installation works. Whilst it is commonplace for sculptors to be interested in both manipulating form and space and in the aesthetics of scale, my personal experiences of transience and the construction industry has also contributed to my penchant for using pre-fabricated materials to make small, minimalist, architectonic forms. Alongside this, I use an eclectic mix of accompanying mind-maps (see: appendix 1), sketches, and referenced notations. The ongoing survey of recent developments in contemporary art practice remains important in order to locate my own practice within it and to ascertain any potential for original contribution; however nuanced it may be. Finally, since I have very rarely sought to show work publicly, the resolution of both aesthetic quality and/or conceptual value considers the invaluable feedback made by fellow artists and academics also.

However, although conducive to producing individual art-works, the above approach has not yet enabled me to go as far as to *subvert* the restrictive modalities that have effectively conditioned my practice outputs historically. Since it has not served to generate new potentialities for my practice I have necessarily had to question the continued efficacy of *only* using these methods. This is not to imply my complete abandonment of these methods, but rather it suggests to me that I need to seek out, create and adopt other (nuanced) strategies commensurate with my personal proclivity for 'roaming' and the subsequent practicalities of working *in-transit*. For me, this brings into question ideas about 'becoming' and it is *not* by being sedentary that I have come to *glean* my own sense of

being-in-the-world. My transient lifestyle has never been about wandering aimlessly but - by personally being rather more *pragmatically selective* - it has been about being open to *potential* opportunities for personal change and renewal. In a sense it is by being *subversive* to the more commonplace sedentary lifestyle choice which has allowed me to *graze* upon the *potential* of transience as a way-of-knowing. In acknowledging that my past subjectivities have informed my present ones, can I then begin to *speculate* that a similar approach for acquiring and generating knowledge could be applied to art-practice? I am mindful of two points here:

Firstly; Simon O’Sullivan’s thoughts on the production of subjectivity, and his point that, *action* ultimately determines all mental life - including intuition as a ‘kind of speculation’.²² Since the present is “co-extensive” with the past, O’Sullivan goes on to claim that the past:

“might be a resource of sorts in the production of a kind of subjectivity”, which leads to the “possibility of breaking habit, since the latter, in its extreme form, staples us to the present and stymies access to the realm of potentiality (indeed, typical subjectivity *is* a habit, constituted as it is by a bundle of repeated reactions).”²³

Secondly; according to Malins & Gray (et. al., 1995) practice-led research (PLR) recognizes that the context in which the research is undertaken is central to the inquiry being made, and importantly also, so too is the artist-researcher. It positions the artist at the centre of a “pro-active research model” which involves “research through action and reflecting in and on action” - this in turn enables the reflexive practitioner to seek methodologies that “reflect their particular discipline-specific expertise.”²⁴

In being at the centre of my own research and with the intention of generating potentiality, I propose here an (intuitive) approach to PLR methodology called Pragmatic Selection. In order to subvert the restrictive modalities of an art-practice that I *feel* has become ‘stymied’ by the ‘habit’ of ‘repeated reactions’ to them, I propose that the (subversive) *actions* of ‘grazing on’ and ‘gleaning from’ eclectically sourced information is a nuanced and viable contribution to PLR methodology and knowledge-production more broadly – one which reflects my own ‘expertise’ of working whilst in-transit.

Since “the artist-as-researcher distinguishes himself from other artists by taking it upon himself to make statements about his thinking process and the production of work (such that) the matter and medium function as the instruments in the research or thinking process”²⁵; the issue for me concerns *inclination*. Throughout my life, I have never *accumulated* any significant level of expertise

in any one particular discipline, preferring instead to acquire a more generalized level of understanding across a wider range of subjects. This approach to skills acquisition is acknowledged in the everyday phrase: *jack of all trades but master of none* - which the Cambridge Online Dictionary notes that it is “said about someone who is able to do many things, but is not an expert in any.”²⁶ With this in mind, I am fully aware of my exposure to a plethora of objective *and* anecdotal information of which I have embraced to various degrees. For example; I have distinct memories of ‘roaming’ and ‘sifting’ through a dictionary or encyclopaedia in my youth, where I would start with either a specific or randomly chosen word or subject and simply ‘forage’ through the pages of connecting threads of information. This was not however a haphazard exercise since each avenue thus pursued was a direct result of that line of enquiry which preceded it and, therefore, directed subsequent lines of investigation in turn. At the end of it, whilst I could not recite *exactly* what I had learned, I could at least reasonably account for each stage that had linked the itinerary of a more generalized journey. In that sense I was already undertaking a *way* of learning by remotely engaging with the world around me. As such I can claim that my *natural* inclination is towards gaining a ‘familiarity’ with any given topic through the *eclectic* processes of ‘grazing on’ and ‘gleaning from’ information about it. This way of learning extends to physical action also in as much as I am quite ‘handy’ with craft based skills but again I am not an expert in any them. This results in the acquisition of a more generalized ‘understanding’ rather than an explicit and localized ‘knowledge’. Paradoxically then, for me the generalized *becomes* the specific; or alternatively put: generality is a kind of specificity. Several questions arise here:

1) If the ‘jack-of-all-trades’ scenario is commonplace in the everyday context, and if *my* sense of being-in-the-world is based on a relativist ontology grounded in the processes of grazing and gleaning, could this approach then be *transposed* into other ways of knowledge-production; that is through art-practice?

2) Could this same inclination towards generality (rather than specificity) form the basis of an independent, authentic and robust approach to practice-led research?

3) Since the dominant discourse here deals with how restrictive modalities effect art production (including established methodologies), could an act of resilience subvert those constraints and in turn create a fluid and proactive resolution to them?

Noting that good PLR avoids making one’s practice the sole focus of the PLR exegesis yet it “does not render an intellectual or theoretical framework instrumental to the practice” itself²⁷, I look now to the ongoing debate about PLR in order to locate the case for Pragmatic Selection within it.

PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH (PLR): DIVIDED OPINION

Gray and Malins (2004) stated that “academic research in Art and Design is in its infancy relative to a whole raft of methods from which to choose – as in science and social science, having 300 years and 150 years of research experience (respectively).”²⁸ According to Brad Haseman (2006) PLR has emerged as “an entirely new” paradigm distinct from ‘orthodox’ modes of research and forms a potent strategy for artists pursuing research through their practice.²⁹ However, PLR is not unequivocally considered as a totally prescriptive methodology in itself. In Britain at least, the Research Excellence Framework (2011) declares that the criteria for validating academic research is a “process of investigation leading to new insights, effectively shared.”³⁰ Despite this tenet, the PLR debate has changed little since 1990 when Allison wrote that the term ‘research’ and its use in the discipline of art and design “is a contentious one”.³¹ That Andrew McNamara wrote as recently as 2012 that “the elementary groundwork of the (PLR) research method is still being formulated”³² seems to attest to this underlying and continuing problem. Despite these authors recognizing PLR’S contribution in terms of its generative potential in the enrichment and advancement of academic research in general, the specifically defined parameters of the emerging phenomenon of PLR remain apparently seminal and largely unresolved.

McNamara claims that of PLR is “sometimes (a) precarious mode of research” which has common and ‘recurring difficulties’ for researchers “irrespective of the level of research experience”.³³ These common difficulties arise because of the tendency for researchers “to rely on a few select authors or narrow range of formulations” – here he cites the example of quoting “so regularly and so often” Carole Gray’s declaration that, whilst PLR is “initiated in practice and carried out through practice (as) formed by the needs of practice and practitioners”³⁴, that Gray’s statements about PLR “now appear like founding principles.”³⁵ McNamara claims that Gray’s view about PLR creates a ‘major pitfall’ for researchers who continue to fall foul of the tautological trap of justifying their research *as* research simply because it *is* PLR. This leads to a “solipsistic feedback loop” caused by the self-referential aspect of the PLR getting confused with the ‘essential ingredient’ of the research at hand - that is “the research aspect of the research project.”³⁶ Paradoxically, self-reflexivity is an important part of the PLR paradigm and as a research ‘tool’ it can only contribute to ‘the trap’ and its potential solipsism. Researchers must be vigilant and mindful of this paradox but at the same time, as Haseman puts it, they need to “reach beyond their own labours in order to connect to a research context of their work.”³⁷

According to some academics in support of PLR it is *because* of its inherent novelty, innovativeness and hyper-self-reflexivity, that PLR is in itself intrinsically research based.³⁸ Some go as far as to argue that as a research outcome the artwork “is, in itself, an embodiment of a statement about the nature of the problem, the pathway of the enquiry and the solution to the problem” and, as such, “no other reportage is necessary.”³⁹ However, despite being called a ‘potent strategy’ this is countered by the ‘conservative’ scholar’s claim that not only is the emergence of PLR simply in opposition to other ‘more’ established research methods⁴⁰ but furthermore, the art-work is only “the object, rather than the product, of intellectual enquiry engendering, rather than manifesting, thought.”⁴¹ Such divisiveness over a concept which is already very difficult to grapple with – even by the ‘experts’ – seemingly provides the artist-researcher with potentially exciting opportunities to contribute further to it.

Until these opposing views can be reconciled then undoubtedly the exegesis will continue to serve “the role of validating the new knowledge embedded in the artefact.”⁴² That being the case, researchers should address exactly what their ‘needs’ are and how these can be “defined in a research context” rather than rationalizing the conflation of the research question with the ‘hyper-self-reflexivity’ of their practice.⁴³ It is after all, the research *process* that is under examination where *value* is assessed in relation to the research methodology, the implementation of it and the quality of reporting research outcomes.⁴⁴ However, without losing sight of the relationship between practice and research enquiry, it is more likely, that a closer examination by researchers of the exact point in their research where these two aspects *do not* correlate, will in fact expose the ‘generative’ insight required by authentic PLR research - and *potentially* lead to the ‘greatest innovations’.⁴⁵ It is interesting for me to consider that the PLR paradigm has its own concerns about its ‘true’ identity, and that its parameters still appear to be in a *state* of negotiation through similar processes of grazing on and gleaning from other research paradigms. It might well be ‘doing and undergoing’ its own simultaneous process of compression and expansion. Finally, and in support for Pragmatic Selection, I note that McNamara advocates that good PLR should not only acknowledge other already existing research paradigms but it should do so without fear that PLR itself will be subsumed by them.⁴⁶

CUE ‘PRINCIPLED ECLECTICISM’

Pragmatic Selection takes note of developments in pedagogical science, in which Henry Widdowson (1984) suggests that there is no one specific ‘best method’. Instead, as an advocate of *Principled Eclecticism*, he proposes that rather than “clinging tenaciously to past practices of self-contained

techniques” - such that one cannot derive expertise from experience - one should undertake operational research which uses “intellectual enquiry and experimentation....guided by implicit theory or by intuition....to test out principles explicitly spelled out.”⁴⁷ As the name suggests *Principled Eclecticism* does not promote the idea of an ad-hoc approach to research but is based on ‘principled choice’ where its effectiveness is measured by asking ‘why?’ and ‘on what basis?’ the methods are chosen. Support for adopting a similar approach to PLR in visual art and design is gaining momentum as recently evidenced in a call for applications (June 2013) for the PhD programme at the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague (NL). It recognizes that since this type of research is by its very nature speculative, the final results “cannot be restricted to one particular form” and consequently “the criteria for the form the research may take are kept as open as possible.”⁴⁸ Additionally, in a call for papers in the peer reviewed Journal for Artistic Research (JAR3) it was noted that whilst still being “hotly debated” the increasing emphasis on the ‘open condition’ of research *in art* could potentially lead to the enhancement of “artistic research methodologies across the arts, sciences and humanities.”⁴⁹ Whilst it could be argued that it is the funding bureaucracies (e.g. AHRC) that dictate what constitutes PLR; Luis Garcia (2013) exemplified the ‘open condition’ of research *in art* by notably encouraging the “(bringing) together (of) several theoretical streams” *because* such an approach is “better suited to today’s increasingly fluid, volatile, flexible and precarious times.”⁵⁰ Indeed; in taking Garcia’s comments on board, individual disciplines within the visual arts field “may well evolve particular and distinctive methodologies of their own.”⁵¹

SUPPORTING THE USE OF PRAGMATIC SELECTION IN PLR

Pragmatic Selection allows the artist-researcher to resolve a problem through the critical exploration of what might be considered as seemingly disparate avenues of enquiry. Whilst an eclectic approach may appear to contravene the otherwise inflexible rigour ordinarily associated with other traditionally ‘academic’ methods; they are *all* a means to an end. In the art-research context the end constitutes the artwork which must be fully resolved and wholly commensurate with any kind of philosophical reasoning employed.

Pragmatic Selection legitimizes research output which is equally eclectic. Any apparent stylistic discord in either writing style or visual form is only seen as indicative of and commensurate with the eclectic methods and techniques used during the research process. Although any line of enquiry thus *elected* is based on the artist’s subjective logic, it must be researched in a *pragmatic* way thus establishing the rigour required of all authentic research: “pragmatism is above all a way of working, it starts from the present.”⁵² Research outcomes formulated through *pragmatic selection* exposes

the possibility for new interpretations to emerge and has the *potential* for reaching the widest audience possible.

If the *object* resulting from the research is itself fluid, it makes sense to have employed a methodology which was equally fluid and adaptable. This proposition simply adds to the existing debate in which a “tangible tension (exists) between those who practise artistic research, but are rather sceptical about the development of a meta-discourse on that practice, and those who, as theoreticians or as critics, reflect on practices of artistic research.”⁵³

The word ‘principled’ in Principled Eclecticism means that despite advocating for the use of a variety of methods in conjunction with each other, each method must be specifically chosen with integrity and not in an ad-hoc way. But this raises a series of questions: What if choosing ‘ad-hoc’ is *the* principled means of selection? Can an ad-hoc approach be written into a robust practice-led research methodology; and what are the potential outcomes for PLR? Similar questions were raised at a conference in Melbourne (2013) which focused on research practices which could work through alternate strategies to the “sharply defined conditions of disciplinary practices”.⁵⁴ It was suggested that eclectic research methods supported critical perspectives and innovative research about the *practice of art* by helping to define what it means “to work between, under, through and without discipline”.⁵⁵ Also explored were concepts and behaviours of ‘trans/ill/un disciplines’ as a “means of studying modes of practice and objects that are at the margins of existing disciplines and that are themselves already complex and multi-faceted.”⁵⁶ Research which didn’t “quite speak the language of formal disciplines” and consciously sought to “avoid a disciplinary base” was seen here to “form a nomadic discourse in relation to the broader contemporary art research culture.”⁵⁷ It was also suggested that by exploring the possibility and implications of ‘trans’ as being “beyond” states, that it will lead towards un-discipline or ill-discipline being considered as a “new subversive modality.”⁵⁸

Perhaps, on the face of it, both the terms un-discipline or ill-discipline have negative connotations for research in art practice in general - particularly regarding the issue of determining rigour - and may only add fuel for those already questioning the validation of PLR against the rhetoric of established protocols. However, when viewed as a *kind* of research method – a specific type of method satisfying all the requisite parameters of any valid research practice – then it becomes a meta-discourse, offering fresh insights into the role of artists in the theorizations of their own practice. Paradoxically, to argue for and validate its case as a new subversive modality, such an approach must necessarily employ the rigours of discipline in any case. However eclectic the method

chosen may be, it must nevertheless be pragmatically applied. Eclectic approaches to art research are potentially far reaching, not only in terms of how artists go about making work but also regarding epistemological and pedagogic development, amongst others – such is the potential position being argued for below with the Pragmatic Selection model in practice-led research.

THE DUCHAMPIAN PARADIGM AND PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH: AN EXEMPLAR?

“Marcel Duchamp thought that an artist should never crystallize, that he should remain open to change, renewal, adventure, experiment.”⁵⁹

Pragmatic Selection is not entirely novel and finds precedent elsewhere within the art-context; specifically with Marcel Duchamp as a master in manipulating the conflation of artistic research and praxis. Anne Sheppard acknowledges E.D. Hirsch’s view that the correct critical interpretation of every art-work relies on evidencing the theoretic and artistic intentions of the artist because “to allow anything else would be to open up the field of criticism entirely and to be left with no standards by which to discriminate between interpretations”; and thus leaving it to a consensus based on the logic of “the most probable”.⁶⁰ Duchamp was clearly aware of this problem when - in regard to his penchant for breaking with tradition - he replied that “decoding something by law is a bit tautological” because of being caught “by the same repetition of cause and effect”; but there is “no deep validity” for accepting it because it only amounts to ‘habit’.⁶¹

In breaking with habit, Duchamp very actively sought to engage with an eclectic mix of theoretical and technical tools and was clearly ambivalent about the rules predicated by the art establishment at the same time. When asked about whether his work was influenced by science for example, Duchamp replied rather evasively but typically: “No. Ironically, yes. I don’t believe in the explanation, so I have to give a pseudo one: pseudoscientific. I’m a pseudo, all in all. That’s my characteristic.”⁶² He added that it simply amused him to introduce mathematics into the art domain which had “very little of it generally”, and in doing so it allowed him create work that “wouldn’t be dictated by taste.”⁶³ MacLeod and Holdridge wrote that what ‘precipitated’ Duchamp’s “radicality of his thinking (was his) refusal of what he termed the ‘retinal’.”⁶⁴ In reference to the album of written notes (‘Box’) which were intended to accompany the visual artwork (‘Glass’), Duchamp declared that it was ‘very logical’ for him to present them in conjunction with each other *because* it completely removed the ‘retinal aspect’ – this was an exemplary gesture of what has been termed as the logic in *‘the enactment of thinking’* within the domain of the visual.⁶⁵ Furthermore, in acknowledging the above example (alongside his ‘ready-mades’) as a kind of *subversive* action against the determining

conventions and traditions of the art establishment, MacLeod and Holdridge contend that “it is precisely this subversive-ness that must be at the heart of all deeply intellectual art practice.”⁶⁶ That being the case, Duchamp (as the master agitator) clearly demonstrated his own proclivities towards eclecticism and subversion - to which a plethora of critical debate attests to – not only in terms of what could be considered an art-work, but importantly also in terms of the types of methods used (or rather *elected* to be used) in developing it. Duchamp’s contribution to knowledge-production challenged the primacy of existing tenets in art practice and ignored the mode of ‘justification by comparison’ to empirical approaches to research, and moved instead towards setting PLR up as *the* authority of its *own* jurisdiction. In the meantime, however, achieving full acknowledgement of the value of *eclectically* sourced reflective processes in PLR “will require an ontological and epistemological shift in the research culture of universities.”⁶⁷

CUE PRAGMATIC SELECTION: A NUANCED ECLECTIC APPROACH TO PRACTICE-LED RESEARCH IN FINE ART

Not only grounded within the methodological debates in which practice-led research is embroiled and generated directly from an examination of it, the term Pragmatic Selection is a neologism - a specific type of nuanced term based again on a kind of personal subjective logic. Although it is a result of my natural inclination towards ‘grazing’ on *all* forms of information - both theoretical and anecdotal - and ‘gleaning’ source material from it, it is also a by-product of a purposefully elected line of enquiry which has been selected and pursued in a practical and deliberate manner. It has, I believe, potential significance in how future practice-led research could be undertaken and philosophically also, how knowledge is both acquired and produced. There is precedent for this: Saskia Olde Wolbers’ audio installation *Yes, these Eyes are the Windows* (2014) was made “from a piecing together of information gleaned from local residents, council archives and tabloid headlines telling of Van Gogh’s apparent love affair with his landlady’s daughter.”⁶⁸ Similarly, Leo Saul Berk’s debut exhibition *The Uncertainty of Enclosure* (2014) combined his personal reflections of growing up in Ford House built in 1948 with archival research and his subsequent discussions with its present owner.⁶⁹

The phenomenological philosopher Benedetto Croce espoused in his theory of aesthetics that despite being different, science and art are in fact ‘linked’ - a view which “recognised simultaneous modes of knowing and expressing that occurred separately, and together, across all intelligent human action”.⁷⁰ Croce viewed *intuitive* knowledge at one end of a spectrum standing for “the intelligence of perception (as) a synergic reading of ontological experience”, whilst at the other end

logical knowledge stood for “rational, epistemological intelligence”; this, Sally Morgan claims, was written at a time when “he was arguing against the received wisdom that had established a methodology and set of values, for most academic subjects in universities across the world, that was based on the latter definition of knowledge.”⁷¹

Philosophically, to be a pragmatist means to adopt the distinctive rule or method, a maxim, which requires the identification of the ‘practical consequences’ of a concept in order to reflectively clarify its theoretical position.⁷² Pragmatism was formulated in an attempt to reconcile the age-old philosophical dilemma of reconciling the claims of the materialists and the idealists and as such was promoted as a form of empiricism. Instead of proving that the principle of pragmatism is correct, the pragmatist puts the principle into practice by solving problems by “explaining how we can understand propositions.... in a disciplined (and) self-controlled way”⁷³ - a paradigm seemingly wholly resonant with the reflexive practice of the artist-researcher.

As an interactive series of actions with our immediate environment, experiences enable us to “obtain information that helps us to meet our needs” and according to John Dewey (an advocate of Pragmatism), experience itself is “full of inference”.⁷⁴ Furthermore, not only is the material for conceptualization and knowledge provided *by* experience but one’s ability to think and understand ‘external’ things will continuously improve *because* of it.⁷⁵

Declaring that there is acceleration in the tempo and experience of (social) life, Mark Davis of the Bauman Institute suggested that we need more than a prosaic approach to study these accelerated experiences, and rather than merely following rules in obedience to a real or imaginary external authority we should activate an act of choice which provides us with a novel way of seeing the world.⁷⁶ Davis was referring to the metaphor of ‘liquidity’ which one might easily extend here and suggest that by perceived as being ‘liquid’ also; a subjective but pragmatically elected methodology would similarly provide novel insights into eclectic world views.

Pragmatic Selection argues for a process in which *all* elements however eclectically sourced are *selected* in a way that is both *pragmatic* and *traceable*; thus ‘specificity’ is activated, established and validated both in the individual project itself and the theoretical context in which it is positioned. Since it advocates for a pluralistic approach to PLR that encourages experimentation and speculation it also paves the way for a synthesis of multiple reflections and interpretations which are *all* valid since it dismisses the need for hierarchies of knowledge at the same time. In this way, Pragmatic

Selection suggests the potential of creating a *middle-zone* of artistic sensibilities which is *intended* to be neither wholly objective nor subjective, but rather a *hybrid* of both; one which perhaps pre-empts the increasingly eclectic ways of understanding I expect will continue throughout the 21st century. Interestingly for me at the time of writing, the curators Kreuger and Van Leemput (*A Temporary Futures Institute*, MUHKA, Antwerp - forthcoming exhibition until Sept. 2017) wants us “to think critically about things to come” by addressing the future autonomy of art and artists relative to the rest of the world by asking “how shall (future) exhibitions stimulate our thinking?”. In acknowledging what they call the “increasingly absurd symbiosis with information systems”, the curators seek here to identify both practice and method (as) a ‘possible’, ‘probable’ and ‘preferred’ “tour of understanding rather than a path to knowledge.”⁷⁷

LIMITATIONS

Any research enquiry should be mindful of its methodological limitations of course. According to Roberts, bias is created when epistemologically privileged sets of techniques are correctly applied such that they *will* discover how things out there really are and in turn the research outcomes *will* be validated accordingly.⁷⁸ On the other hand, one must also be mindful that the degree to which certitude is possible is undermined where idealist and non-epistemologically privileged methods are employed which support notions “of reality as mind-dependent, no separation of facts and values, truth as agreement and so on”.⁷⁹ Having said that Putnam argues that a particular strength of pragmatism is that it promotes an epistemological standpoint which is not only anti-sceptical but it also recognizes its own fallibility. Rather than beginning with the absolute certainties required of Cartesian enquiry, pragmatism instead emphasizes openness towards uncertainty and subjectivity. Pragmatism focuses epistemological inquiry towards understanding how to “possess methods of inquiry that contribute to our making fallible progress (such that) when we do go wrong, further discussion and investigation can hope to identify and eliminate errors.”⁸⁰

As principled eclectic methodology, of which Pragmatic Selection is a derivative, it provides the artist-researcher the epistemic toolkit to confidently elect and pragmatically validate a line of enquiry unfettered by the disciplining rhetoric of historic knowledge production particularly prevalent in traditionally empirical research practices. All researchers have a vested interest in their own research paradigm – irrespective of the discipline in which it is activated. In the context of research *in* visual art the challenge which continually provides a source of ‘agitation’ about the discipline is the problem of rigour. Rather than stifling artistic research - for fear of ridicule or reprisal from those concerned with maintaining the power of established protocols that limit the freedom of artistic practice – artist-researchers should continue, without idealizing, to put forward

and test research methodologies which negotiates and mediates the polemic positions in the debate on artistic research; irrespective of any perceived limitations.

THE QUESTION OF RIGOUR

Rigour is of course a fundamental measure of quality in any academic research undertaking and it is through the establishment of a robust methodology that provides the premise to which the test of rigour can be applied; which in turn validates the authenticity of the research itself. The problem of establishing the means through which to test rigour in PLR is as young (or old) as PLR itself and essentially originated with the amalgamation of art schools into the university construct and where it was compared against the already well established traditional research models. However, rather than “continue to be greeted by the exertion of traditional academic values being imposed where they do not adequately suit” there are ongoing calls for methods that can confront “the tension between research uncertainty and concrete research measures”.⁸¹

Continuously building on already established PLR protocols will not only add authority to the rigour against which PLR is measured internally but will also assuage further those traditional and externally based reservations about the legitimacy of PLR generally. Despite being notoriously difficult to define the concept of PLR can no longer be dismissed as “lacking in appropriate academic outputs” since there is a clear appreciation, supported by an increasing body of evidence which, according to Green & Haseman (2006), positions research in art as “not only rigorous in itself, but (that) it has relevance to other (more traditional) research and disciplinary practices”.⁸² That PLR was being promoted as such only relatively recently seems to have had little accord with the question of how trainee-researchers might achieve rigour within their own agendas - especially when the parameters of the emergent PLR paradigm are constantly being renegotiated. It appears, for this trainee-researcher at least, that regardless of its augmented development the only recourse is to continue to adopt a ‘trial and error’ approach and more importantly, pragmatically trace its application via thorough written and visual documentation.

When questioned on the issue of how to establish rigour within PLR, Adrian Rifkin’s response was effectively to challenge the artist-researcher community to set their own research parameters testing them against currently held assessment procedures.⁸³ Of course for the trainee-researcher Rifkin’s advice appears not only quite vague but also immensely risky; but at least it is consistent with the plethora of guidebooks and manuals which - despite being able to identify *what* art practice by research is and *how* it contributes to existing knowledge more generally - can only proffer similarly non-prescriptive methodological advice to the PhD candidate. McNamara exemplifies this

situation in stating that “No theory or history or context will ‘apply’ readymade to a particular creative practice, nor should it be expected to.”⁸⁴ Such lack of specific direction can be very disconcerting at times for the trainee-researcher especially in a field of research still very much considered in its formative years.

PLR is at the frontier of emergent research paradigms. Although exciting, PLR remains a vast unexplored territory simply because of its perceived possibilities and potential and can be intimidating for any level of PLR expertise. But this is exactly the point at which new knowledge is developed and forged.⁸⁵ It requires considerable deliberation or ‘a deft touch’ on the part of the trainee-researcher particularly, even after the realization that it is exactly these characteristics which are compelling and attractive in the first place. At the very least the chosen methodologies should be specifically orientated towards the promotion, validation and celebration of the subjective logic – a ‘subjective logicism’ - inherent of research in creative practices in general. By treating it as a type of “research in the making”⁸⁶, the selected processes would permit practice-led researchers “to remain open to our liquid selves”.⁸⁷ The issue of methodological rigour is similarly problematic for other allied creative fields. Across this alliance similar lessons can be learnt particularly about “how to escape deterministic or instrumental formulations” such that it engenders unique insights and understanding - either empirical or ‘abstract’.⁸⁸ In acknowledging that practice-based design research is “in some way, different from the research that is developed in other disciplines”, Biggs and Büchler addressed the question raised by J. Wood about whether design research ‘really needs’ the culture of academic rigour.⁸⁹ In doing so they recognize that encouraging a different approach to artistic research which is different from traditional academic research furnishes certain ramifications. That is; not only would it “allow each type of researcher to develop their own criteria independently” but such an election process may be extended to “omitting or modifying the criterion of rigor (sic)” itself.⁹⁰ At the very least these views concur with those described previously but such an admission as the last one only adds to the challenge presented earlier by Rifkin.

McNamara’s contribution to the PLR debate is intended by him to add rigour to PLR’s position amongst historically well-established research methods. Amongst his ‘rules’ for practice-led research, he advocates for an approach to PLR that acknowledges within it other research paradigms as part of its validating process. Considering his observation that “PLR looks set to stay”,⁹¹ it appears equally important then to not only continue to put forward and test research methods which assist in the elimination of those commonly recurring difficulties and pitfalls experienced by PLR trainees,

but by doing so also continue the ongoing contribution to the standards of rigour against which the flexibility - synonymous with this type of research - is measured.

Whilst being mindful of the compounding effect of the recurring difficulties experienced by trainee-researchers in PLR, what is always of underlying importance is that the line of enquiry remains critical and *traceable*. It is argued here that a traceable process of practice-led enquiry which involves a pragmatic selection and application of multiple methods is equally beneficial to the PLR candidate because it not only assists in determining the research specificity and rigour for the researcher-practitioner *in art*, but in doing so, it does not intimidate nor stifle the creative impulse of the artist as researcher.

PEDAGOGIC IMPLICATIONS

“Arts-based curriculum-making has the flexibility either to spring up from traditional Tylerian objectives-based curriculum architectures or to trickle down from non-traditional practice-based pedagogies.”⁹²

That there is a growing number of international forums - inviting critical debate about the potential of the emergent methodologies in art-research - suggests quite clearly that there already exists a small but vocal community of artist-researchers who have, as Rifkin has advised, sought to challenge not only the received wisdom developed from historically established research protocols, but have also, *already*, sought to challenge the tenuously set parameters of the still fledging practice-led research paradigm. All research outcomes have potentialities affecting interested parties to that other than the discipline in which the research was originally undertaken. A seemingly obvious one here is the educationalists – particularly those interested in its potential pedagogical ramifications for teaching and learning in the visual arts.

By way of example, the forthcoming AAANZ conference (mentioned above) similarly recognizes the pedagogical implications of an eclectic or interdisciplinary approach to research in art. In calling for research papers that assess ‘integrative learning in creative interdisciplinary teaching environments’ this particular panel will “discuss, explore and critique the ways in which alternative assessment techniques can enhance and improve students’ learning achievements, knowledge development, professional competencies, and the quality of their educational experiences, and establish new connections”.⁹³ Evidently, this issue is of interest not only to academics but also the Australian Federal Government - their Office for Learning and Teaching awarded funding to the conveners of this particular panel “to evaluate these assessment practices in the undergraduate elective unit Art

and Social Change”.⁹⁴ Prompting this development is the claim that “where the boundaries between literature, philosophy, history, science, politics, technology, environmental studies and creative practice merge”, there has in turn been “an increasing focus on interdisciplinary conversations in the creative arts, (which) demands new methodologies and practices for models of assessment *for* and *as* learning in the higher education sector.”⁹⁵

Haywood Rolling writes that arts-based theoretical models are typically “poststructural, prestructural, performative, pluralistic, proliferative, and postparadigmatic”.⁹⁶ It is *because* they offer “the promise of divergent pedagogical pathways” - which moves away from wasting arts-based learning engagements on dates and figures about dead artists, conveying facts about historical movements and aesthetic styles - that these emergent research models are “worthy of new exploration”.⁹⁷ Despite a variance of opinion here - since I believe that it is in fact important for the student of art to appreciate the historic and aesthetic elements of a genre in which they need to situate their own practice within – I do wholly agree with Haywood Rolling’s argument that “arts-based learning engagements are more ideally suited for habit-forming exercises, rituals of perception, (and) acts of reflection, personal expression, and social agency”.⁹⁸ However, these potentialities cannot be measured in the short term since any perceived benefit would only materialize after the ‘trickle-down’ effect of its application has been realized. Haywood Rolling argues that sensible evaluation of the pedagogic effects of emergent art-based methods have to be “assessed over the long run to document how the life practices, thinking habits, and communities of the learner have been transformed.”⁹⁹ As a college lecturer of 10 years in the visual arts, specifically in adult-offender learning, I have maintained throughout an open approach to curriculum development, planning, delivery and evaluation. Often against established protocols and to the chagrin of some management teams I have adhered to a similar argument to that presented by Haywood Rolling. Arts-based learning is a dynamic enterprise and completely suited to a style of teaching based on open-ended questioning techniques, irrespective of the learners’ level of expertise. Too much closed questioning and direct instruction can quite often stifle the originality for which informed art itself strives for - regardless of whether it ‘ticks-the-boxes’ required by management reports.

Drawing on Bourdieu’s view of culture as “a system of perception, expression, and historically constituted and socially conditioned thinking”, Derek Whitehead argues that “through the filter of cultural pedagogics”, the student-artist engages with an interpretative and searching imagination which not only “transmits his/her own sense of the aesthetic in the making of art, but also in the

making of a *life* through art".¹⁰⁰ It is through promoting an open and eclectic approach to teaching art - and from which cultural pedagogics stems - that the learner is encouraged to engage fully with their *own* creative resourcefulness, both practically and cognitively and, importantly, it allows them to become more fluent in communicating *their* understanding of their own subjectivity. This last point is not only significant for all students in art who strive to do 'something' original but it also important in the offender management paradigm where increased self-esteem, reductions in recidivism and social re-integration are measurements of success. In any case the potential changes in life practices and thinking habits, both individually and communally, can only be measured over a protracted period, as Hayward Rolling has suggested.

CONCLUSION

It is perhaps at this point that consideration may need to be directed towards the potential as to whether Pragmatic Selection could indeed mediate for its position within the emergent PLR paradigm – that is, at a *middle-zone* between calls for principled eclecticism in general and trans/ill/un disciplined research methods in particular. Furthermore, one begins to speculate that the open and deliberate move towards exploring inter-disciplinary methods in PLR may, at some future point, pave the way towards further epistemological discussions about whether pragmatic selection could in fact mature as an impetus for explorations about a perceived conflation of *intra* – disciplinary methods. This development has of course already been anticipated by Petelin (2006) who according to Leila Green attributes the claim that “no sooner will the boundaries of acceptable arts enquiry have been enlarged to accommodate practice-led research than artists will be challenging these limitations”.¹⁰¹ Visual art practices in general have been flourishing for centuries and will undoubtedly continue to do so with or without practice-led research. However in light of the still relatively recent trend towards positioning PLR within the traditional academic system a deliberately eclectic approach to PLR could provide a twofold benefit. Not only could it contribute towards its academic position generally through its rigorous application, but it could also provide a means through which research is understood in the emergent paradigm of practice-led research in particular.

As an analytical tool used in this specific research project, a pragmatically selected yet eclectic research methodology allows for a thorough exploration of the perceived interconnectedness between simultaneously compressed and expanded spaces with a subjectivity conditioned by a perceptual awareness of transcendental mobility and the subsequent 'emplacement' of being human. It can never provide a definitive viewpoint naturally, since at its very *subjective* core there

are inherent mechanisms which not only trigger potentialities for further discourse but for future practical application elsewhere also. That the resultant outputs are seemingly eclectic is simply commensurate with an underlying ontological stance that situates the human experience as one which is similarly eclectic and *perpetually* in transit, and therefore simultaneously both compressed and expanded. It is a position which could potentially foster only ambivalence – but; however arcane it may be, it offers equally for example, the potential for exploring at the same time the duality of a perceived human state of simultaneous emancipation and suppression.

Advocating support for an approach to artistic research that is quintessentially eclectic does not by any means promote haphazardness; but rather, it is for the promotion of a principled research enterprise which is subject to the parameters of the context to which it is applied. A *pragmatic* research process based on tracing a natural inclination towards the techniques of ‘grazing’ and ‘gleaning’ permits this artist to *elect* how to explore his own subjectivity; the openness to enquire into a (multifarious) view of a reality that is peculiar to himself and the research tools to do so; and finally, the opportunity to *elect* how to articulate his own position within it. As an artist, I am not predisposed to any specific outcome but rather the outcome is merely the result of a process of resolved enquiry. Having established in the examination above that there is *now* a ‘genuine historical network of influences’, albeit over a relatively short period in comparison to other research paradigms, the adoption of an eclectic approach to a line of enquiry within practice-led research - which supports a negotiable context in which we all share, partake in and contribute to - permits the fitting of the ‘best’ method to the researcher and not vice versa as is more often the case.

According to Jonathan Lahey Dronsfield, part of what art research always is “is to draw out either or both what the art says, and what can be said about the art”.¹⁰² He adds that despite neither element needing to be materially seen in order to be present it is the negotiation between the visual and the textual as a “space of disjunction that a researcher on art resides”.¹⁰³ The research being undertaken here concerns a potential epistemological development through PLR and is mindful of Dronsfield’s observations above. As an artist-researcher it is indeed the case for me that as Hookway suggests: we are “in the end, inspired by these applications, (and) are encouraged to adopt the maxim (of pragmatism) and see how well things work out when we do so.”¹⁰⁴

The act of grazing itself implies a type of mobility – an action requiring movement. It is an act of transience. It is a process of selection - pragmatically gleaning from an eclectic source of ingredients in order to create a satisfactory meal - all chosen by the subjective logic of (Duchampian) taste.

Grazing is a process analogous to the research method being argued for here, namely Pragmatic Selection. It is a continuous process in which information is gleaned from a variety of sources, and both ideas and creative impulses are generated. It permits the researcher to elect as necessary any method which 'best suits' the researcher's needs - at any point in the research trajectory. Never chosen ad-hoc, the methods are in fact selected in a principled manner which follows directly on from that which preceded it. It is a *traceable* process showing how one system of thought may 'play itself out' as practice-led research whilst maintaining the erstwhile 'golden thread'. That the selection process is indeed a pragmatic one consequently engenders the quality of being robust; commensurate with all thorough and meaningful research. It is an eclectic but authentic approach to practice-led research with implied pedagogical significance and the potential of contributing to an existing body of knowledge which centres on epistemological development; otherwise considered as only one of the multitude of 'ways of knowing' the world in which we participate.

Pragmatic Selection is not about constructing a *new* subjectivity - it is grounded in already existing theory and is in fact already in place; it is embedded not only within my own practice but inferred within other artistic practices also - judging by the numerous calls for discussions circumventing it. Neither is it opposed to the binary oppositions in the existing methodological debate; instead it offers a kind of auto-experiment and a catalyst for further development. It is by actively engaging in a 'personal epistemology' that, as Barbara Hofer suggests; "we become 'active constructor(s)' of knowledge".¹⁰⁵ Furthermore - as a type of mobility (action) - it is affiliated with Ruby Wallis' suggestion in *Unfixed Landscape* that, it is through experiential research that a sense of place emerges that is located both within and outside of herself and the place she attempts to represent.¹⁰⁶

At the very least, arguing for Pragmatic Selection as an authentic approach to PLR acknowledges the call to promote and add to other sets of "attempts at making inroads into the (PLR) problem and at exposing how practice may count as research."¹⁰⁷ In keeping abreast of more recent developments in PLR, I note the following:

Firstly; in aiming to bring practice closer to research and yet "seeking integrity, sincerity and authenticity" whilst doing so, Franziska Schroeder (2015) wrote that; "in order to impart practice, and with it embodied knowledge, we need to pave the way for researchers to question frameworks, allowing them to engage in conflicting ideas, and ultimately enable them to 'look sideways', to see things in unusual fashion."¹⁰⁸ Schroeder continued by adding that, "any practitioner needs to embed herself into an interplay between practising and theory generating, and that, if one can immerse

oneself fully at all levels of the institution and be part of shaping one's environment, it can be highly creative work that allows research to be driven and made through one's practice."¹⁰⁹

Secondly; in 2016, Annette Arlander noted that "there is not one form of artistic research but many types" and, whilst asking "what can be done with or within artistic research", she claimed that "the aspect of experimentation and play with alternatives, artistic research as a speculative practice, is more and more valued within Academia (sic) as well as in society at large."¹¹⁰

Thirdly; that PLR is still in its formative stages and remains open to new approaches to it, was acknowledged in April 2017 at the 8th International Conference on Artistic Research in Helsinki. Various panels sought to discuss, for example; "how knowledge produced in artistic research differs from other forms of knowledge"; and, "how embodied encounters *can* be an integral element in artistic research and how such practices *may* influence what we come to know, how we approach our work *and* life"¹¹¹ (emphases added). At the conference also, the "paradigm of diffraction" - meaning to bend something (rules) - was proposed by Alberto Condotta which, based on promoting "generativity", he claims is an alternative to already existing reflective practices and has "the potential to revolutionize the understanding (and development) of art and art methodologies."¹¹² Despite the questions raised and methodologies proposed, it was also noted that, "one must do it (research). Experiment and fail. Let go, and experiment again."¹¹³

And finally; a forthcoming event scheduled for the 18th September 2018 clearly evidences that the PLR debate remains very much alive at the time of writing this thesis. To be hosted by The Centre for Practice-Led Research in the Arts (CePRA) at the University of Leeds, it will provide "a forum for leading international academics within the arts disciplines to debate the framing, articulation and documentation of practice-led research methods."¹¹⁴ The aim here is to "explore these issues within and across disciplines, and in interdisciplinary contexts."¹¹⁵

I reiterate that in the end I cannot extricate myself from the pasture of my own subjectivity, my own 'hermeneutic circle', nor move through it in a way that is different from the one which I am naturally inclined to take. Irrespective of whether the impetus for my creativity is gleaned from grazing upon a hybrid of academic or anecdotal sources, if this is both traceable and contributes to original and effective research, I can only consider it as both a generative and valid approach to my art practice.

CHAPTER 2

MOBILITY: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Tim Cresswell writes that although “mobility is everywhere (and) central to what it is to be human”, its very nature is “slippery and intangible” and therefore makes it “an elusive object of study”¹¹⁶; however, he also adds that “mobility is both center and margin”¹¹⁷. Indeed, attempting to unravel how mobility has affected my own sense of identity has not been straight forward; albeit, I recognize that it has been central to my *personal* experience of marginality; especially my appreciation of the lived experience of the insider-outsider paradox. By being defined as both the insider and/or the outsider at the same time has generated in me feelings of restrictiveness or confinement. Epitomizing this paradox is the fact that I am a British born citizen *and* a naturalized Australian, and yet, having lived for protracted periods of time in both countries, I have often felt that I am neither wholly British nor Australian. I am often reminded of this when, because of my absence(s) from either place, I cannot fully engage in conversations which reference specifically related political, cultural, or social events; despite my travelling frequently between both countries. Furthermore, and despite currently considering myself as an insider since I am living as a returning migrant to the UK, I am nevertheless considered an outsider here also; and not only because of my Australian connections. That is, more locally still, and irrespective of having lived on the Isle of Wight for several years, I am reminded of my outsider-ness by the often used vernacular, ‘overner’ – a shortened version of the word ‘overlander’ used to describe “a person who is not a native of the Isle of Wight.”¹¹⁸ The question arises that, since I *cannot* separate myself from my art-practice, how might a critical examination of those same experiences not only steer me away from feelings of restrictiveness or confinement but also *yield* new directions for my artistic development?

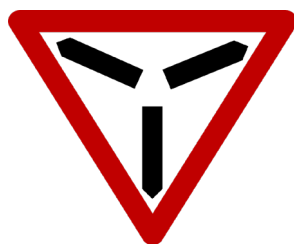


Figure 6: Shaun Martin, study for *Yield* 2017. Computer generated image. Dimensions variable.

The above question is quite visceral for me, since while reflecting upon my uncertainties about the trajectory of my practice I have had to concede that the spatial and economic limitations conditioned by my transient lifestyle is unlikely to significantly change in the foreseeable future. However, rather than simply succumbing to this ongoing predicament, I have concluded that an act

of resilience is required which must continue to yield to it *but* in a proactive way instead. How then can I counter those modalities that have seemingly restricted my practice? Can a type of conceptual *shield* be constructed through a simple turn in my attitude about these perceived limitations?



Figure 7: Shaun Martin, study for *Shield* 2017. Computer generated image. Dimensions variable.

Tim Cresswell's list of what mobility implies ranges from simple hand movements, walking and dancing to the complexities of immigrating and travelling¹¹⁹. To this I would also add the practise of art-making - and perhaps more especially for me where it is also performed whilst being transient. I am undoubtedly *undergoing* a journey by *doing* the travelling with the aim of establishing my sense of being-in-the-world; both personally and artistically.

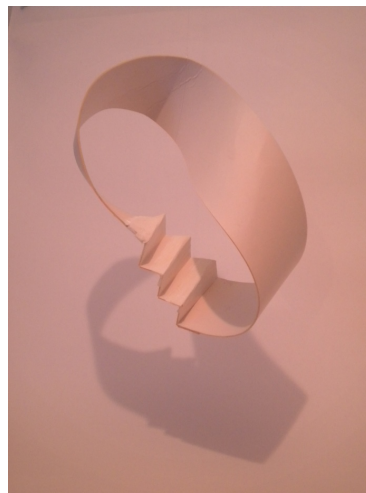


Figure 8: Shaun Martin, study for *Doing & Undergoing* 2015. Card, tape, nylon string. Approx 26.5 x 14.5 x 15 cm.

In order to map out the conceptual and practical journey towards *Mezzone* - which I shall elaborate in chapter 4 - I begin here by critically reflecting upon my personal progression through different types of mobility and glean from it significant points that become fundamental in its development. Reiterating from my introduction, the one notable but paradoxical constant throughout my formative years was the numerous houses that were briefly occupied during various stages of *simultaneous* construction, deconstruction and reconstruction. Although born in the UK, these

temporarily static yet always transitory situations were further extended with protracted periods of *voluntary* migration - firstly to Australia with my family where the movement between numerous domiciles continued; secondly onto Holland as an independent adult with a similar pattern of transience and occupancy of assorted domiciles; and thirdly as a returning-migrant to live in the UK. As mentioned earlier I have become very familiar with the insider-outsider paradox in which I have at times lived the experience of being the 'insider' and, conversely at other times, the 'outsider' of these respective cultures; but always being both the insider and the outsider at the *same* time. Artistically, this perceived *simultaneity* of a personal spatio-temporal *trans-positionality* becomes an integral component in the conceptual development of *Mezzzone*.

VOLUNTARY MIGRATION

I use the term *voluntary* migration in the first instance to differentiate my own experiences from other issues related to the plethora of *involuntary* or 'forced' migrations, including: diasporas, slavery, gender, (post) colonialism, capitalization and globalization for example. Furthermore, I had meant voluntary migration to be no more complicated than the type of migration perhaps more commonly understood and portrayed in television programmes such as *Wanted Down Under* in which families are invited to consider migrating either to Australia or New Zealand as a lifestyle choice. Indeed, it is a type of reality that I am also familiar with - if only vicariously through my parents who as skilled workers formed part of Australia's immigration policy in the 1970's.¹²⁰ Although I can point to the above experiences as the impetus for my continued transitoriness, it has since become more important for my art-practice that I address its practical ramifications and how it has come to create feelings of restrictiveness in relation to it. Following the idea that "we experience the world as we move through it"¹²¹ the more pertinent issue becomes an *existential* one and relates to how migration has affected my own sense of 'belonging' - particularly socially, culturally, geographically and personally. This introduced me to Greg Madison's coining of the term *Existential Migration* (below) and subsequently the conception of an unfettered movement in art-object classification.

EXISTENTIAL MIGRATION

In seeking to address the "largely neglected" topic of the "lived experience of migration", Madison sought to challenge previously held assumptions that "*choosing to leave* makes the migration less evocative, less distressing, less interesting, and in fact less meaningful."¹²² To that end Madison defines existential migration to be "unlike economic migration, simple wanderlust, exile, or variations of forced migration, (but) is a chosen attempt to express or address fundamental issues of

existence by leaving one's homeland and becoming a foreigner".¹²³ Furthermore, "in contrast to the usual assumptive definitions of home as place (it is) a specific experience of self-world interaction."¹²⁴ Madison identifies a commonality shared by most existential migrants that they "never felt 'at home' in the first place" which - by "seeking to resolve deeper 'existential' questions such as 'who am I?'; 'how can I fulfil my potential?'; 'where do I belong?'; and 'how can I feel at home?'" ultimately results in the feeling of "not being at home anywhere in the world, leaving these individuals to live within a sort of 'homelessness'".¹²⁵ Madison suggests that "these individuals raise interesting questions about our definitions of home and belonging"¹²⁶ which in turn leads him to speculate that it reveals deeper issues for all of us; that is: "as more and more of us are expected to have mobile lives, a kind of global 'homelessness' may be on the horizon (and) perhaps we are heading towards a time when no one really feels at home anywhere anymore, signalling the *end of belonging*."¹²⁷ For me the following question arises: If the possibility for fulfilment of personal potential could be based in the 'end of belonging' to a *specific* place, could this idea then be transferred to the context of art production? That is, could an art-form be conceived which does not belong to a specific classification but rather (paradoxically) fulfils its potential in a perceived *transpositional* state of multiple belonging(s)? I say paradoxically here because I am dealing with a tautology since any sense of an 'end of belonging' *becomes* a new sense of belonging in itself. In that respect I am mindful of the criminologist David Wilson, who commented that my response to his question as to whether I feel "unsettled" in myself as a result of my accumulative migratory experiences was a "Foucauldian" one; since I had replied that - despite empathizing with the perceived simultaneity of the inside-outside paradox experienced by prison-inmates under my personal tutelage* - I felt it personally feasible to find a sense of 'belonging' by feeling quite settled in my own transience.¹²⁸ This anecdote pre-empts Section 2 of this thesis in which I acknowledge that the art-object arising from the concept of *Mezzzone* paradoxically relies on the precepts of art-academia in which to settle (validate) its potential trans-positionality; that is, its *emplacement* in *not* belonging to a singular classification.

(*NOTE: Inmates are highly mobile across the entire prison estate and experience multiple occupancies of small cramped spaces (cells). My discussions with them about their own *feelings* of restrictiveness become an additional source for reflective data collection later on in this research.¹²⁹ It would serve to direct me towards the emerging sub-discipline of carceral geography¹³⁰ and subsequently the artistic application of resilience and the agency of subversion as tools to counter my own experiences of restrictive modalities.

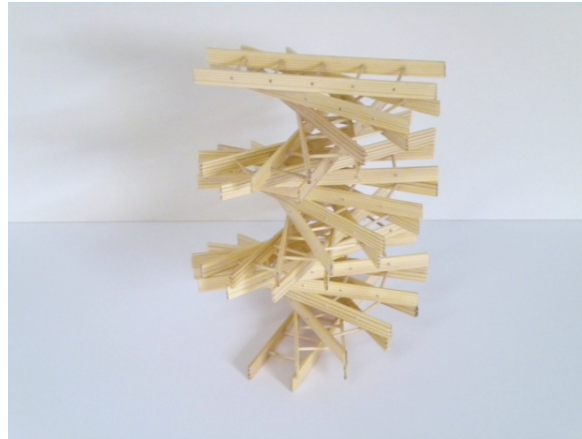


Figure 9: Shaun Martin, study for *Undergoing & Doing*, 2014. Modelling woods. 18 x 15 x 15 cm

GLOBAL NOMADISM

Continuing with Madison's last point about the (paradoxical) 'end of belonging', and since my appreciation that personal identification with a *specific* place is a constantly changing one, it suggests to me that instead of continuing to live confined by the binaries of 'belonging' and 'not belonging' - in terms of 'self-world interaction' - there exists the *potential* for speculating about a *third* culture of experience in which any sense of personal belonging becomes no longer an issue. Beth Kebshull's observation about the migratory experiences of Adult Third Culture Kids (ATCKs) seemingly attests to this. She claims that they are a kind of 'global nomad' who by adopting a three-dimensional world view they can to construct "relationships to all cultures, while not having full ownership in any"¹³¹; that is, they become part of a *third* culture which is simultaneously connected yet disconnected from other cultural referents. Furthermore, Schaetti and Ramsey claim that global nomads live in a 'cultural marginality' where a sense of home is "a quintessentially liminal reality (encouraging) complex, multiplistic perspectives"; and identification of "a fundamental humanness" amidst difference.¹³² Again, this serves as an interesting point that will later be transposed to the art context.

I have nurtured similar ideas about 'a fundamental humanness' as a kind as a *hybrid* singularity via my interest in yogic philosophy, specifically in 'becoming' at least sympathetic about my *potential* emergence into a state of 'oneness' - not only with the multiplicity of *myself* but with other outside referents also. Homi Bhabha (2006) seemingly supports similar ideas about this kind of singularity in his notion of *Hybridity*. Bhabha addresses the untenable nature of 'inherent purity and originality of cultures' and in doing so, he also identifies the 'Third Space of Enunciation' in which we can "elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves."¹³³ By transposing these observations to the art context the following question arises here: Could a similar third space of enunciation be

constructed such that a hybrid singularity emerges amidst difference - that is it is *both* object *and* subject at the same time - which by eluding the politics of polarity also addresses the (untenable) purity and originality of art-institutional culture? The idea of hybridity however is already explored in terms of art-practice and new media technologies which attempts to 'synthesize' virtual and physical experiences - for example *combining* the traditional gallery space with online display.¹³⁴ Since "art and technology are transcendental extensions of humanity", according to the writer Amy Knight (2013), "hybridity and new art is *about* transcendence (and) the fluid transaction between states of existence and different forms of media"; such that "something metaphysical starts to surface in the space between."¹³⁵ As a sculptor preferring to make 3-dimensional objects I wonder if something similarly metaphysical might also be afforded to physical art-objects through a kind of transcendence of its own historic positionality?

Further gleaning from the notes above – and since my life experiences are inseparable from my practice - I not only begin to *personally* affiliate myself with the idea of the ATCKs and particularly the idea of the global nomad, but I can therefore begin to transpose it artistically; as a kind of movement enacted through the agency of 'art-world interaction'. It is the combined *idea* of simultaneity, hybridity, nomadism and a 'third' classification (of something) which becomes significant in my later formulation of *Mezzone*; again in terms of supporting my case for the 'liminal reality' of the *trans*-positional art object. It is a concept which proposes a broader 'multiplistic perspective' of art-object classification which is paradoxically positioned in a type of singular 'marginality' with its existing sculptural 'home'.

The *idea* of home is simply a subjective construct. It is an abstract place viewed (conceived) through the perceptive *window* of the individual imagination, yet it is generally thought of as a familiar landscape identified with and related through a recognizable set of signifiers; seen here as the 'identifiers of belonging'. The idea of home - often associated with the familiarity of a house for example - is what Gaston Bachelard refers to as "the topography of our intimate being"¹³⁶; albeit the way in which it is constructed is not the same for everyone. As my personal experiences have proved; *any* space - real or imagined - can be de-constructed, re-imagined and re-constructed. The study for *Hiraeth* (below) is indicative of this idea.

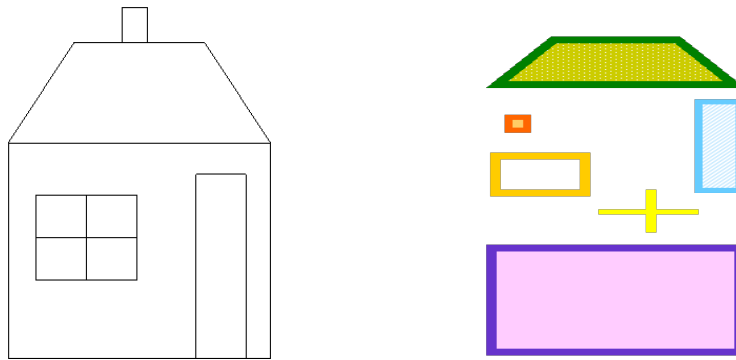


Figure 10: Shaun Martin, study for *Hiraeth – the topography of our intimate being* 2012. Computer generated image, dimensions variable.

If the art-institution and the canon of sculpture are perceived as a symbolic type of house and home respectively, what are the possibilities for me to deconstruct its (familiar) topography and (re)construct a new relationship with it?

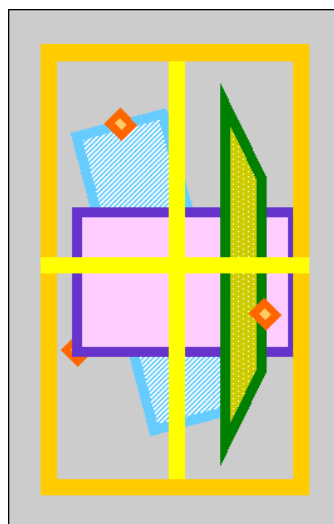


Figure 11: Shaun Martin, study for *Hiraeth – the topography of our intimate being* 2012. Computer generated image, dimensions variable.

In terms of speculating about my personal sense of artistic homelessness and that my practice was undergoing a kind of ‘experiential nomadism’, the artist Sonia Boyce pointed out that I was dealing with something akin to a kind of “confinement in motion where place itself is continually in-transit”¹³⁷. I subsequently discovered that the term *experiential nomadism* had been previously applied within a feminist perspective of space by Giuliana Bruno (2002) in her book entitled *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film*. In it she declared that “interiors make sense of our passing. They are a site of experiential nomadism, for they outline the movement within.”¹³⁸ This is seemingly a contradiction since I personally connote nomadism with moving away from something;

an outward trajectory; yet following Bruno's idea it connotes an inward movement also. However, I do in fact appreciate that my own transience has been as much an inward (spiritual) journey as much as it has also been an outward (physical) one. In terms of moving inward of the art context, I begin to query the actual location of 'interior', and more specifically: interior to what? In terms of 'place-making' for my art-practice this line of enquiry would eventually reveal that the interior which I am *potentially* about to move into is the very art establishment itself; specifically its academic framework – once again to seek validation for the conceptual premise of the trans-positional art object. Furthermore, as we shall see in the following chapter about spatialities, I will consolidate Iain Bigg's reference about the relationship between 'landscape and becoming' with my own aspirations about *becoming* a legitimate artist within the *landscape* of art-academia.



Figure 12: Shaun Martin, study for *Landscape of becoming* 2000 – 2005. Original lost. MDF, polystyrene, Christmas-tree lights, dimensions variable.

Of course I am not alone in my endeavour to return 'home' to the art institution however. Relying on her completed doctoral submission, Lily Markiewicz (2006) consolidates her own migratory experiences and the perceived insider-outsider paradox - specifically her anxieties about 'trauma and witnessing' - in terms of "housing oneself" by conceptualizing "artistic practice as dwelling, which is understood as synonymous with both a making of place and feeling at home."¹³⁹ In terms of seeking accommodation for the *trans-positional art-object* (the outsider) in its art-institution 'home' (the insider), I am fully aware that the position prescribed for *Mezzone* is paradoxical. With that, I am mindful here of Markiewicz's reference to Irit Rogoff's idea that "a deliberate action towards *becoming accommodated*" also references a dimension of already inscribed 'unbelonging'."¹⁴⁰

Supporting my affiliation with the idea of the 'global nomad' mentioned earlier I turn to Rosi Braidotti's (1994) insightful distinctions between that of the exile, the migrant and the nomad. Unlike the exile who either chooses or is forced to reject their home, or the migrant who has a clear destination, the nomad is neither homeless nor displaced but rather is "the kind of subject who has relinquished all idea, desire, or nostalgia for fixity."¹⁴¹ Braidotti's definitions certainly resonate with my own experiences and barring any connection with Braidotti's exile; I can reasonably claim to have had in varying degrees the experience of being both *her* migrant and *her* nomad. In addition to my experiences of (formal) migration I have also enjoyed an extensive period of being a global 'adventurer' in which a 'permanent' place of abode has also been non-existent, and, until very recently, a Traveller dwelling in a multitude of 'mobile' habitats. In that sense, my experiences of mobility have been extended beyond the international or transnational spheres to further include what I might otherwise call the more localized 'intra' national arena. For me the distance travelled becomes inconsequential because it is the continuity of the total journey which remains paramount, and in that way, my sense of destination is found in the very journey itself; both personally and artistically. Supporting this idea, I note that George Hartley (2000) states that the travelogue *Narrow Road to the Interior* penned by the Japanese poet Basho, "reveals that the journey is the destination", in which Basho himself declares that "...every day is a journey, and the journey itself is home".¹⁴² If that is the case, the journey and the destination become both the subject and the object at the same time. This state of simultaneity resonates with me as a type of combined personal and artistic 'inner-place' in its entirety; for this I have coined the term *Esotopia*, which I introduce in chapter 4. This term becomes an integral component of *Mezzzone* in which my interventions with a constructed empty space designates a type of place - as 'esotopic landscapes'.

In each one of the types of mobility personally experienced by me, I have tried to maintain a semblance of an art-practice but still I desire to resolve my concerns about its authenticity and recognize what Joseph Distefano (2002) describes as the "the tension of knowing both worlds and never being able to arrive or entirely depart."¹⁴³ To that end I have come to identify myself as a *type* of 'nomad-artist' - or perhaps more accurately as an 'artist-in-transit'. (See later in this section). Once again by being unable to disassociate myself from my practice another question arises here. If Braidotti is indeed correct about the nomad, could then a similar position be found within the art context? Is it possible to create a subject which whilst relinquishing fixity to one specific *emplacement* it does not become displaced or homeless either? Could it become located in multiple positions at the same time?

I want to briefly return to reflecting on my appreciation of the insider-outsider paradox mentioned earlier - as a specific type of spatio-temporal paradigm. As an immigrant to the United States, the German ethnographer and writer Christiane Alsop (2002) states that the term self-reflexivity was developed by anthropologists “to understand ethnographic limitations and potentials” since the practice of ethnography meant “shifting one's notion of center and periphery and coping with the complexity of multiple centers with multiple peripheries”.¹⁴⁴ Consequently ethnography required a self-reflexive approach - hence *auto*-ethnography - which had the effect of enabling “a closer look at one's own longings and belongings, with the familiarity that—when viewed from a distance—it can change one's perspective considerably.”¹⁴⁵ Furthermore Alsop identifies that “boundaries made up by dialectic connections and paradoxical twists and turns... is a characterization of auto-ethnography” stating, by way of example, “that being home and being away are two very human states of being that are intimately connected”.¹⁴⁶ Further still, Alsop adds that “between the here and there, the we and they, the gap of not belonging opens up to the outsider (and that) there are various ways of reacting to this not-belonging.”¹⁴⁷ The idea of ‘reacting’ to that ‘gap of not belonging’ provides me - as the artist-in-transit who is both home and away - with the possibility of re-evaluating ‘this not-belonging’ as a *positive* construct in which my artistic potentiality might be situated; or as Alsop suggests a position which “disturbs the order of the divide”¹⁴⁸. If the ‘gap’ is neither entirely attached or detached from its referent physicalities and it has also neither left the past nor embraced the future; it must therefore occupy its own spatio-temporal paradigm. This resonates well with my practice and thinking about the spatial dimensions of my works. Could a similar ‘shifting’ of position be conceived for an art-object – one that ‘disturbs the order’ and ‘opens up’ potentials intimately and paradoxically connected to the multiplicities of being here *and* there; home *and* away; of belonging *and* not-belonging?

Gleaning further still from the idea of ‘belonging’ I want to highlight certain ‘identifiers’ of it that will contribute to conceptual grounding for *Mezzzone* in chapter 4. I turn first to Yoka van Dyk - a multi-media artist *and* migrant also - who has used the transportable familiarity of domestic objects (cups, blankets, bags) in her prints to instil in her a sense of identity and belonging (see below).¹⁴⁹



Figure 13: Yoka van Dyk *Travel Blanket* 2004. Woodcut, photo transfer prints, written text, sewing, flax konae¹⁵⁰

It is the *transportable familiarity of domestic objects* which catches my attention here. But rather than domestic objects per se, for me this idea is particularly resonant to domestic spaces. Since I am very familiar with the inter-related and co-dependent processes of deconstruction and reconstruction of individual domestic rooms; I begin to suspect that it could also be transposed to the art context. How might this idea be mapped onto specific art-spaces; the ubiquitous ‘white-cube’ gallery/exhibition space for example?



Figure 14: Shaun Martin, study for *Concavex* 2010. Modelling board, acrylic spheres, figurine. 21 x 30 x 29 cm

Van Dyk references Lucy Lippard by quoting that: “‘the deeply rooted psychological need to belong’ - in connection with geographical place – ‘the search for homeplace is the mythical search for the *axis mundi*, for a centre, for some place to stand’.”¹⁵¹ Whilst I might *personally* affiliate myself with the

idea of being quite settled in my own transience, this does not transfer so easily to my concerns about '(not) belonging' as an artist. In that sense, in seeking 'some place to stand' and alleviate my 'psychological need to belong' artistically, my search for the 'axis mundi' must (for me) necessitate my return to the art establishment. Furthermore, Alsop notes that "just like the dialectic of home versus away there is the dialectic of nationalism versus the foreign (and that) connotations of a nation include the incarnate belonging, to a place and its people, to a heritage, to a community".¹⁵² Once again Alsop's observations clearly resonate with my desire to belong as a legitimate artist. Furthermore, Linda Basch et al (1994) describes the search for belonging as a phenomenon and process "by which migrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement".¹⁵³ In wishing to forge and sustain relations between my artistic origins (based in transience) with the perceived settlement of the wider art-establishment, I anticipate that my emergence into the heritage and community of the art-academic framework will indeed become my artistic home – my identifier of artistic belonging.

ARTISTS WORKING IN THE FIELD

My purpose here is to establish my preference for identifying myself with the nuanced term of 'artist-in-transit'. I mean for it that it is allied to adopting transience as a *personal* lifestyle choice and *not* for the reason of seeking artistic employment however derived. In that sense I consider myself as a kind of artist operating whilst being transient and it is therefore different from its appreciable associations elsewhere in the art context, including:

- The itinerant or peripatetic artist of the Italian Renaissance period for example who, according to Francis Ames-Lewis (2015), purposely travelled to: acquire new technical skills or perfect existing ones (Colantonio); for the purposes of artistic inspiration (Raphael), for diplomatic reasons (Bellini) or for gaining lucrative patronage (Raphael, da Vinci).¹⁵⁴
- The "emerging phenomenon"¹⁵⁵ of artists working within contemporary global practices who, as Palomino puts it, "travel to work, to learn and to interchange with their new cultural circumstances and human environments."¹⁵⁶

The reason I make the above distinctions is twofold. Firstly, this project only attempts to address my uncertainties about the potential *emergence* of my (professional) practice in as much as it remains *in-transit* still. Secondly, it leads me to a later examination between perceptible correlations of similar restrictive working conditions to mine with another type of *non-employment* based art-practice; that is with art-students within the penal context. Once again this will be shown later to

have proved invaluable for me artistically, in as much as it not only introduces me to the field of carceral geography and subsequently to ideas about acts of *resilience* and the agency of *subversion* but also the possibility of utilising these tools to counter my own sensations of restrictive art practices.

Given that I am addressing the issue of restrictiveness as it relates to art-production whilst being in-transit I can distinguish my practice concerns from other artists working within the wider ambits of mobility. However, since I am also a returning UK migrant and therefore have an attachment to that identity also, it means that in order to practice within the nuanced position as an artist-in-transit, my creative endeavours require an approach which must be differentiated from other sculptural practices having associated ideas specifically about either voluntary migration or contemporary nomadism. According to DiStefano, the nomad no longer experiences “the tension of knowing both worlds andbeing able to arrive or entirely depart” as is the condition ascribed to the migrant’s state.¹⁵⁷ In this respect it is similar for me as an artist-in-transit who, like the nomadic-artist, finds there is no need to articulate our relative experiences in terms of alienation, displacement, loss, belonging, or nostalgia. This is quite different for those artists who have explored those same themes through identifying themselves as *migrants* rather than as nomads. For example, U.S based Korean artist Do Ho Suh, has made sculptures using semi-transparent fabrics as “replicas of his living spaces” - because he has a “longing” for them and wants “to recreate (and) bring” them wherever he goes.¹⁵⁸ The purpose here is to counter the artist’s “disorientation” in what he “describes as ‘transcultural displacement’; a feeling of being neither here nor there.”¹⁵⁹ Another example of the migrant-artist’s perspective is found in the practice of Australian based Filipinos Alfredo and Isabel Aquilizan and their use of personal belongings to convey their personal trauma whilst claiming that “it is human nature to want to constantly move and look for another and better place.”¹⁶⁰ Similarly, the previously mentioned New Zealand based Dutch artist Yoka van Dyk, has used familiar domestic objects to imbue a connection between her homeland and adoptive place of residence.¹⁶¹ Despite the above, there are always some recognizable crossovers in relative experiences of mobility; if only in terms of recognizing that any amount of movement, however slight, must generate sensations of both emplacement and therefore displacement at the same time (see study below).

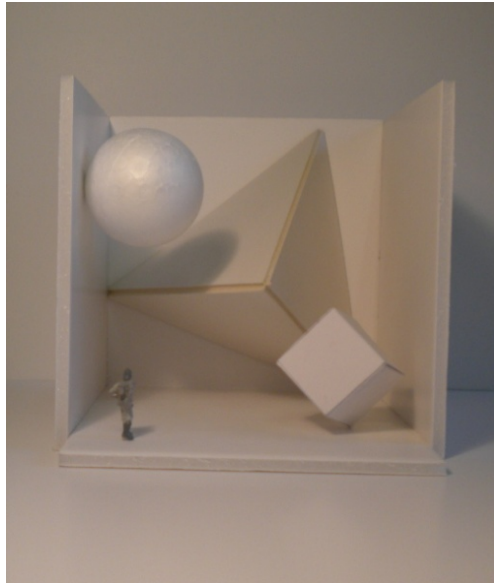


Figure 15: Shaun Martin, study for *Dis-EmPlaced* 2013. Modelling board, card, polystyrene sphere, figurine. 14 x 14.5 x 16.5 cm.

Although nomadism is “a fundamental dimension of our era”¹⁶² according to Federica Buetti, like the itinerant artist that historically preceded them the contemporary-nomadic-artist similarly moves about for the purposes of securing some degree of artistic employment; either as a working artist or, at the very least, to create the experiential resources from which to draw inspiration and articulate through their practices – as opposed to a personal choice rather than an artistic one. For example: the exhibition *Mapmaker, Mapmaker, Make Me a Map* (MoMA, 2013) in which the “peripatetic artists” exhibiting characterized the course of their “wanderings” by appropriating “objective cartographies” or maps in the first instance and then variously altered them with their own “subjective itineraries”.¹⁶³

Furthermore, although “artistic traditions are inherently limited among nomadic peoples” and are ordinarily small craft based art works made specifically for utilitarian reasons,¹⁶⁴ the following survey of contemporary sculptors under the search thread of ‘nomadic sculpture’ showed significant differences in both form and content to my own. For example: Angel Orensanz “capture(s) the transient texture of a land and the peoples”¹⁶⁵; Hasan Fuat Sari’s stylization of western modernism with Byzantine, Roman and Eastern influences¹⁶⁶; Maria Carlini’s transportable public artworks as “temporary interventions with urban space”¹⁶⁷; Amalia Pica’s ‘ethnographic’ objects for use in “participatory art practice”¹⁶⁸; Dashi Namdakov’s influence from “the heritage of the Central Asian nomadic empire”¹⁶⁹; and finally, Andrea Zittel’s small portable structures exploring perceptions of freedom, self-sufficiency and contemporary living.¹⁷⁰

It is notable that whilst purportedly making sculptures reflecting the spirit of nomadism, not all the artists mentioned above position themselves as either migrants or nomads, nor as an artist-in-transit. Furthermore, in the absence of any contrary disclosure, their working method appears as a type of *settled* response to the theme of mobility in as much as, whilst their work considers nomadism thematically, their works are not made in direct response to the affective restrictive spatialities arising from their personal experiences of mobility; if any. Again, whilst I am aware of certain perceptible similarities between our respective explorations of mobility, it remains difficult to fully assimilate myself with the idea of being either a nomadic artist or a (voluntary) migrant artist.

Particularly interestingly for me, The Guardian's Anne Madeleine reflected in March 2015 on what she called the 'career in transit' of the UK based Australian artist Shaun Gladwell. Madeleine writes that "the presence of water" in both Gladwell's recent video installation, *The Lacrima Chair* (2015), and in his earlier *Pacific Undertow* (2010), "encompasses movement and reflection at the same time (and) the honest, physical sensation of making a journey, of floating in a space in between"; and furthermore, it is communicated "not only visually, but through his experiences as an Australian artist working internationally."¹⁷¹ Gladwell uses an aeroplane passenger seat as part of his *The Lacrima Chair* installation which, according to Madeleine, not only reflects both the artist's fixation with flight and the self-reflective places one might find in moments of air travel. Nevertheless, although for me it remains a simple illustration of his international travel experiences - which I am very familiar with also - it is not too difficult to also view it as a creative response to the actual (restrictive) physical conditions in which his praxis has developed.

Of course, I cannot and do not want to entirely distance my practice concerns with that of some nomad-artists. To that end I am mindful of the exhibition *No-Mad-Ness in No Man's Land* (2013) in which its curators acknowledge the historic contribution of "significant numbers of artists" who through travelling across "all regions of the world" have "transformed art-making processes, theory, and criticism, and ultimately art history altogether."¹⁷² This particular exhibition sought to examine "the nomadism of contemporary migrant artists who deliberately resist location and de-territorialize the origins of their work....in view of contemporary lifestyles relative to ideas about space, place, people, movement, and nature."¹⁷³ This resonates greatly with my subject-area interests and indeed like my contemporaries I also wish to contribute to "an art that is of this world for the world."¹⁷⁴ According to Federica Bueti, nomadic working practices are dependent on the contingencies experienced in different positions at different moments; yet from this scenario emerges a

“progressive change that could be defined in terms of a re-appropriation of time” in which “the various practices of temporally based artists are responding to this.....based on the will of creating a condition for the discursive.”¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, Bueti argues that since the nomadic artist moves forward and back along a “kind of timeline” and doesn’t occupy any particular space, in doing so they not only attempt to “produce alternative energies (in) “a dialectical relationship with the environment that surrounds them (by) breaking with the modern and the post-modern”; within their own timeframe they also become “settled in being in motion.”¹⁷⁶

Although my personal experiences of mobility and its consequential (restrictive) effects currently feeds into my practice concerns and might therefore be considered somewhat applicable to the example above; I have been well versed in transience long before becoming an artist or indeed even making it a subject for investigation. Having said that I am particularly mindful of two things here:

Firstly: Newbury’s third model of artistic research (adopted here) which recognizes the interrelatedness of research undertaken pre- and post- practice¹⁷⁷ and the fact that it is seemingly now getting much harder for me to distinguish one from the other.

Secondly: Heidegger’s philosophical concept of the Hermeneutic Circle which advocates that: “interpretation is circular, a constant process that we are already engaged in” and also that “all understanding begins somewhere in the middle of things, with some sort of pre-understanding already in place.”¹⁷⁸ Again, I am fully aware that I cannot disassociate my own experiences from my art practice since one informs the other and therefore of course, I am very much central to my own Hermeneutic Circle(s); all of which are compressing and expanding at the same time; as visualized in the following study.

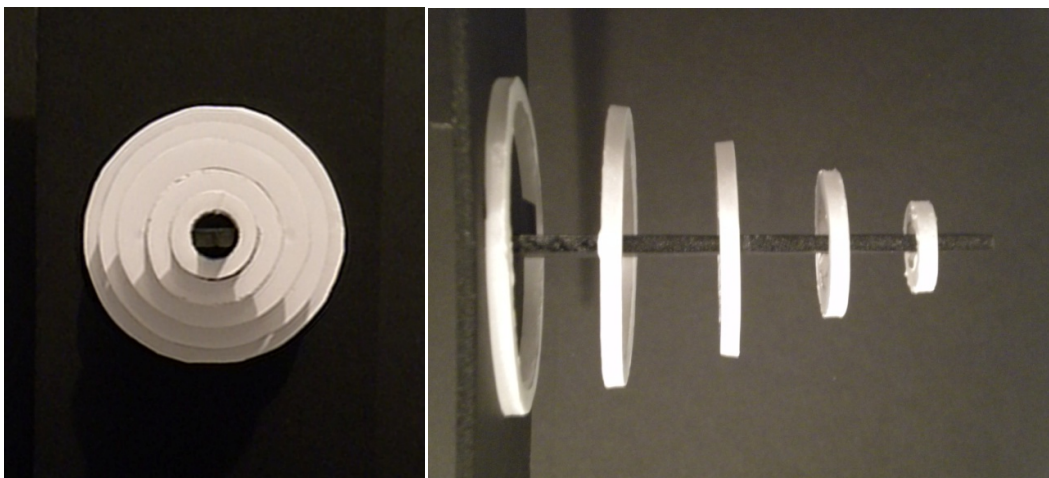


Figure 16: Shaun Martin, studies for *Self-Portrait* 2012. Modelling board. 29.5 x 12 x 18 cm

PRELUDE TO AN EXAMINATION OF SPACE AND PLACE (AND SOME DERIVATIVES)

As a prelude to the following examination of the terms space and place (and derivatives, I fully acknowledge that mobility has had a profound and consequential effect on my personal identification with place. Epitomizing the dichotomy of contemporary mobility is the ethnographic phenomenon called ‘time-space compression’ which Doreen Massey refers to as the “movement and communication across space, to the geographical stretching-out of social relations, and to our experience of all this.”¹⁷⁹ I am frequently reminded about Massey’s idea when flying to Australia in approximately 24 hours by noting the amount of different places travelled over is in stark contrast to the shorter distances travelled during the same timeframe by those over whom I am flying. My sense of increased mobility is relative to the restricted mobilities undertaken in a multitude of other everyday spatialities and contexts and thus the implications for multiple perceptible experiences of sensory restrictiveness or constraint; all of which can only emanate from a single point in space - that is the individual’s interpretation and articulation of their relative sense of place-in-the-world (see study below).

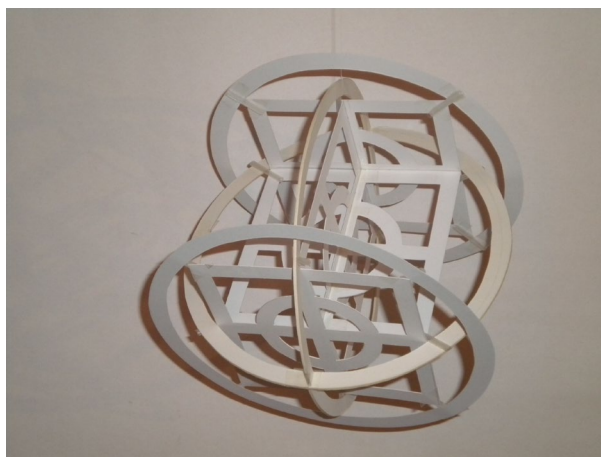


Figure 17: Shaun Martin, study for *Geometric expansion from a single point* 2012. Card, nylon cord. 19 x 19 x 19 cm.

That artworks about place can be generated through explorations about mobility, the questions that Leo Saul Berk’s explored in his debut exhibition *The Uncertainty of Enclosure* (2014), provides a starting point and some degree of parity against which to locate an original position for my practice: Can a house make you who you are? Can its materiality and design influence the way you see your surroundings? Can the treatment of space within it later inform the way you choose to move through the world?¹⁸⁰ Proving instrumental in the development of his practice¹⁸¹ and through

combining archival research and subsequent discussions with its present owner, Berk's videos, photographs and sculptures were all informed by his personal experiences of growing up in Bruce Goff's "architecturally iconic residence"¹⁸²; Ford House built in 1948. Berk's work serves to reflect the ways in which experiences of certain spaces can "captivate and inspire us"¹⁸³ and also, "the transformative potential that architecture can have on the open, creative mind."¹⁸⁴ Based on my own experiences the short answer is a resounding 'yes' to all three of Berk's questions above; however since any sensation of restrictiveness is seemingly only a relative construct felt across a wide and often disparate range of scenarios; other questions arise here: Can a type of studio-space make you the artist who you are? How might *multiple* occupations of different spaces (positionality) be reflected in art-practice? How might working in small, cramped, mobile places be subverted to generate 'transformative potential'?

CHAPTER 3

AN EXAMINATION OF THE TERMS SPACE and PLACE

I start firstly by reflecting on Damian Sutton's comment that I "need to establish a clear understanding of the development of space-place theory"¹⁸⁵, and secondly Alsop's (earlier) comment that distance can considerably change one's perspective¹⁸⁶. Since I am concerned about how 'spatialities' affect art production I have taken the above comments quite literally here and begin with an investigation into the perceived connection between space and place. This is followed by an exploration of some explanations about derivations of the term place. Various, the presented analysis is grounded in the physical sciences, human geography, philosophy, sociology, and anthropology and serves only to indicate that these terms are in no way definitive, but rather, they are subjective concepts defined purely through the contexts in which they are explored. Since space-place theory is continually developing – which must also reflect our continually developing sense of identity - how might this perspective be portrayed within the art context? Could space-place theory, give rise to the potential development of new type of *place-making* artistically?



Figure 18: Shaun Martin, study for *Place-making* 2013. Card, glass, aluminium rod, figurine. 42 x 24.5 x 20.5 cm.

What do we mean by the term 'space'?

Space is a difficult concept to define. The following examples attest to this by highlighting that there appears to be no consolidated definition as to exactly what space *is*. In the field of physics, the term 'space' is considered as a basic concept but remains impossible to correctly formulate a "vouchsafed constructive definition (in the) frame of the existing physical paradigm."¹⁸⁷ In urban planning Manila De Luliis' research into 'spatiotemporal experience' concluded – after investigating a plethora of spatial theories drawn from ancient and modern mathematical and philosophical disciplines - that despite it being constantly experienced the "apparently simple question" of what is space has, in fact, "hardly a unique answer".¹⁸⁸ The postmodern political geographer Edward Soja argues that "space is never given. It is never an "empty box" to be filled, never only a stage or a mere background"; but instead it is always "a cultural (sic) constructed entity."¹⁸⁹ Euclide's posits that space is a construct of infinite expansiveness in as much as it is a "manifold in which positional relationships may be expressed."¹⁹⁰ Both these views contest the notion that space is a 'big-box' container of an "immutable and fixed structure" as determined in Democritus and Leucippus' atomistic doctrines.¹⁹¹ Already one must concur that the notion of space is a complex one attracting differing viewpoints and its complexity necessarily invites "a multidimensional approach."¹⁹² Other attempted definitions vary enormously from C. Brown's simplest view that for the 'common' man space is evident "within the boundaries of everyday life-world"¹⁹³, to Kant's more expansive view that as a purely subjective construct it is like trying to locate "a substance to a substantive."¹⁹⁴ Additionally, when space is defined as a 'system of relations', it "presupposes the existence of a relation man – surrounding space (environment)."¹⁹⁵ In other words, when space is articulated through *action* - as subjective human engagement in time - the derivative 'position' thus created is the spatial environment otherwise known as place. However, before examining the plethora of definitions allied to place one must first broach the subject of time; since any notion of place is played out in the interrelationship of both space and time.

What do we mean by the term 'time'?

The Oxford dictionary defines time as a 'mass' noun - "the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole."¹⁹⁶ However, like space, time is defined according to the context in which it is referred to; the following three examples have been chosen only to exemplify this point:

(i) The 20th century scientific theory of space-time continuum originated in 19th century literature when Edgar Allan Poe (*Eureka*, 1848) first presented the suggestion that as simply different perceptions of the same thing, "space and duration are one,"¹⁹⁷ which fluctuates according

to “the vacillating energies of the imagination.”¹⁹⁸ H.G. Wells (*The Time Machine*, 1895) added that science knows “very well that Time is only a kind of Space.”¹⁹⁹

(ii) Claimed as another basic concept in physics explanations as to why time has only one dimension remains problematic²⁰⁰[16]; albeit contextualized in the ‘real’ universe, it is simply defined “as ‘change’ in any form state, shape, size, color, temperature, force applied or the place etc.”²⁰¹

(iii) Although prominent in the last 2500 years of philosophical enquiry, the ‘nature’ of time remains similarly unresolved.²⁰² Despite being especially important since the beginning of the 20th Century, philosophers remain deeply divided about what it actually *is* – particularly the ontological differences perceived between the concepts of present, past and future time as debated by the ‘presentists’, ‘growing-block theorists’ and the ‘eternalists’.²⁰³

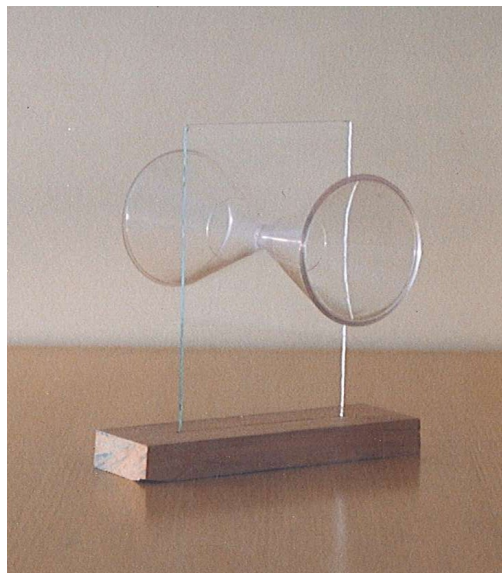


Figure 19: Shaun Martin, study for (*Kriya*) *Past, Future, Elsewhere* 2000 – 2005. Original lost. Glass, perspex cones, wood. Dimensions variable.

Essentially, both space and time appear beyond our full comprehension but are nevertheless perceived through the vagaries of discreet applications. Despite ongoing debates there is the general consensus that a fluid interconnectedness exists between space and time - measured by the subjectivities of the human condition – it is a position held in Kantian philosophy which advocates that the human experience is fundamentally structured by *both* time and space.²⁰⁴ Regardless of whether both terms are studied in absolute or relative contexts, the above examination has effectively served to highlight that the investigation of them remains an ongoing enterprise; the exploration of which has a considerable longevity preceding it.

What do we mean by the term 'place'?

Consensually, the introduction of relative time into space predicates that human 'action' must have occurred simultaneously, resulting in the promulgation of one's sense of identity with place. However, there is equally as much supposition attributed to notions of place, which, created through a similarly complex set of parameters ascribes to it certain identities, meanings and usage. The plethora of contemporary critical analysis, the so-called 'spatial turn', simply evidences the extent of its considerable complexity, but one which Edward Soja (1996) identifies as "one of the most important intellectual and political developments of the late 20th century."²⁰⁵ Prior to this development, spatial thinking had been asserted from either one of two perspectives, namely Firstspace and Secondspace thinking; each one addressing the concept of space in either quantitative or qualitative terms respectively. Considered as incomplete, Soja introduced the alternative concept of 'Thirdspace' as a way of overcoming this historic dualism. The criminologist Michael Fiddler's summation below of Edward Soja's and Henri Lefebvre's triadic spatial analysis is useful here. Soja uses the terms first-, second- and thirdspace which reflect Lefebvre's earlier terminology (1991) of perceived, conceived and lived space respectively.

"To use Soja's adapted terminology, 'firstspace' is that of 'empirically measurable and mappable phenomena'. It is that which the discipline of geography seeks to describe. It refers to the 'spatial outcome to social processes'. 'Secondspace' is that of 'representations and image'. It is the means by which 'the real material world' of firstspace is interpreted (and) the images and representations of space generated by secondspace, in turn, order firstspace. 'Thirdspace' offers the *both-and* dialectic of first- and secondspace. It combines both and extends them, breaking down the binaries of subject-object, mental-material and imagined-real. Thirdspace offers a space to re-imagine the first and secondspaces, disturbing the boundary between the two. It is lived space. It offers the 'conditions of possibility for creative social practice'.²⁰⁶ These are, as Lefebvre termed them, 'moments'. They represent ruptures in normal practice."²⁰⁷

Both space and time can be considered singularly - but when considered as integral to the multifaceted lived arena, there is no surprise that it has attracted an equally commensurate large amount of analysis - all renegotiable according to the expansiveness of those lived experiences. Historically the interconnectedness of space and time was exemplified in the 'urban contexts' of ancient civilizations, where the founding of a city marked the start of time and the passing of which was reflected not only within the "evolution of the spatial urban structure" but also sequentially became "a palimpsest in which the personal and collective sense of identity is rooted."²⁰⁸ Establishing one's sense of identity in place requires the spatiotemporal combination all three elements of space, time and action which is exemplified in the prison environment - in which I currently teach. It is defined not only by its physicality, but also as a space having a number of cognitive uses commensurate with the multiple identities of those participating within it, in terms of:

politics, community, education, employment and of course, freedom and emancipation and punishment and rehabilitation. Urban planner Kevin Lynch suggests that since the human experience compels us to create place, and therefore consider the qualities of both time and space, it is as “a continuum of the mind” (or “Timeplace”) experienced in terms of biological rhythms - the weekly transformation of a city’s central business district from a hub of bustling human activity to a desert of lifeless concrete exemplifies this he claims.²⁰⁹

The geographer Edward Relph, stated that places are derived from spaces when “imbued with personal and/or shared meaning (and that) meaning is created through use.”²¹⁰ The huge variance of complex cultural experiences and the time in which it occurs is significant in any interpretation of place - as indicated in the following:

(i) Historicizing place in the 15th century would need to consider the role of the Western Church - particularly its religious and spiritual politics - at which time it had greater cultural authority and affectation upon how their parishioners’ perceptions of imagined spiritual spaces directly affected “their experience of the outer world.”²¹¹

(ii) Yi-fu Tuan writes that where space “is stretched over a grid of cardinal points (it) makes the idea of place vivid, but it does not make any particular geographic locality *the* place.”²¹² Introducing the notion of place as ‘idea’, Tuan cites the Australian Aboriginal whose attachment to ‘homeland’ as a nomadic people serves to highlight that the ‘idea’ of place is both sentient and flexible depending upon which purpose it is applied to.

(iii) A place’s identity may alter over time via multiple renegotiations from its initiating purpose. For example: Osborne House, originally the ‘holiday’ home of Queen Victoria is now a museum, tourist destination and sporting venue²¹³; and similarly Somerset House, originally a Tudor palace²¹⁴ and once tenanted by the RCA.²¹⁵

(iv) An extreme renegotiation of the above applies in those cities identified by Eyal Weizman which - where once designed for housing and commerce - have now become “not just the site, but as the very *medium* of warfare.”²¹⁶

The problem with defining space and place

Of course, space-place analysis is important simply because, as David Harvey claims, “everyone occupies a space of individuation (a body, a room, a home, a shaping community, a nation), and how we individuate ourselves shapes identity.”²¹⁷ Furthermore, since personal experience is inextricably linked to place there is an “affective bond”²¹⁸ between the two writes Tuan. Place profoundly shapes human experience and being in the world and therefore, ‘place identity’ which is the “extent to

which a person can recognize or recall a place as being distinct from other places."²¹⁹ This in turn, according to Harold Proshansky, is "an elemental constituent of 'self identity'".²²⁰

However, although place is intentionally created out of the natural environment²²¹ and is generally considered both trans-historical and universal and can be perceived both visually and spatially, its meaning is constantly created through acts of interpretation²²²; which - according to Einstein - is dependent upon the subjective position of the observer within it.²²³ For me, this raises questions as to what is meant by 'with-in'; what is that relationship to its referent position 'with-out'; and is there a fluid transition between these two states? Like the *pith* found in fruit, does the point of division occur simultaneously?

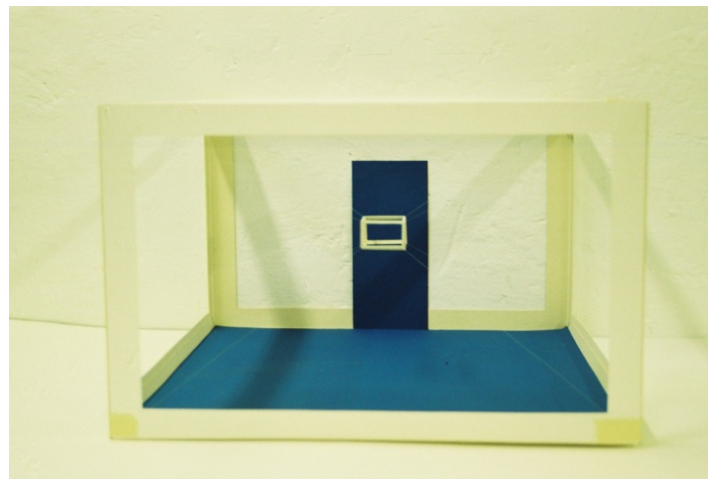


Figure 20: Shaun Martin, study for: *Pith* 2000 - 2005. Original lost. Card, paper, nylon string. Dimensions variable.

Epitomizing this problem is the ethnographic phenomenon called 'time-space compression' which Massey refers to as the "movement and communication across space, to the geographical stretching-out of social relations, and to our experience of all this."²²⁴ One must be mindful of the contexts in which these interpretative processes occur - as exemplified in 'The Trobriand Island Problem' which uses the analogy of an anthropologist attempting to study a culture of which he is *not* part of (the Trobriand Islanders). *Any* outcome must be bias however - even where the anthropologist *is* a Trobriand Islander - this is due to the dilemma of either having a subjective standpoint or lacking an objective one; otherwise termed by Baldwin as "this inside/outside problem".²²⁵ The conundrum remains for me in identifying the point at which I am considered an insider, or an outsider; or is it more aligned to the idea of having multiple experiences of the same singularity?

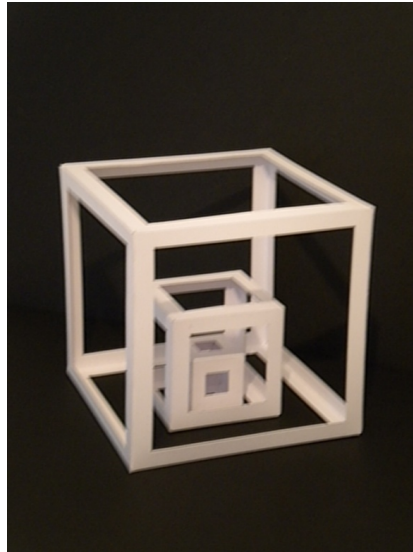


Figure 21: Shaun Martin, study for *The Trobriand Islander* 2012. Card. 7 x 7 x 7 cm.

As will be shown later in chapter 4, these last two points in conjunction with the examination of the terms above has opened up the possibility that an artistic concept *can* be based on the development of a 'third' type of emplacement within the field of sculpture – one which consolidates the perceptible '*simultaneity* of compressed space and expanded place'.

Despite the conceptual magnitude of notions of space and place, the above investigation has served to establish a foundation from which a future oblique position may be more clearly formulated. However, before attempting to elucidate any further on this, the following observations have been drawn from the examination above. Space is an infinite expansiveness always existing in its own right; it does not *require* human beings to corroborate its existence. It is beyond full comprehension. Nevertheless, once perceived through human experience activated in time, it is articulated as 'place' and its cognates according to the prejudicial contexts in which it is 'used'; only to be continuously renegotiated in either absolute or relative terms. It is only through the action of being, can we appreciate *any* perception of space – however remotely, in all its definitions. I might safely suggest that the simple enormity in variance of meaning attached to both space and place leads me to conclude that there is not, and never will be a definitive definition; only that the most comprehensive definition would include *all* of those definitions – indeed, as yet, much remains to be *revealed*, let alone fully comprehended (see study below). The idea of *simultaneity* comes into play here and will become an integral element in the formulation of a new development for my practice.

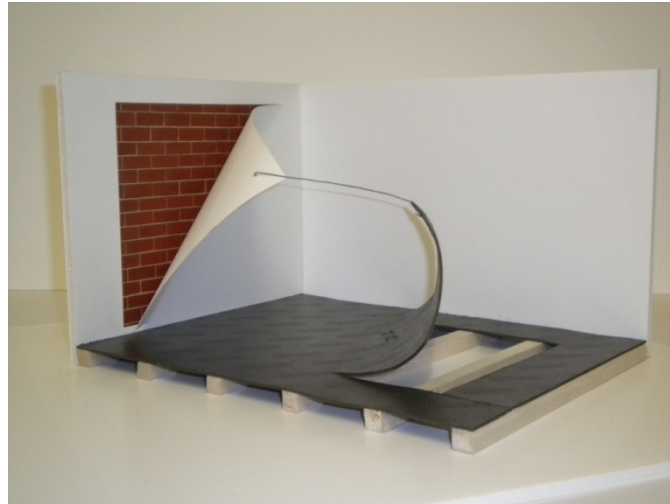


Figure 22: Shaun Martin, study for *Concealed - revealed* 2013. Card, printed paper, balsa wood, steel wire. 17 x 42 x 38.5 cm.

In the next part of this investigation, I will examine more closely certain nuanced concepts of place which pertain to a sense of ‘marginality’; these include non-place, liminal places and heterotopias. The aim therein is to not only generate further material for individual artworks, but also to see what conceptual potential might be *revealed* within those margins.

PLACE - AN EXAMINATION OF SOME OF ITS DERIVATIVES

Critical geography turned its attention towards analysing “the role of geographic forces in the explanation of other things” as opposed to previously regarding its objects purely as the “description of regions” according to Cresswell.²²⁶ Whilst it still cannot explain everything, its exploration of the role of place and space fills in the “void in previous social and cultural theory”; in doing so it erodes altogether the otherwise normative “binary form of the society-space relationship.”²²⁷ Paradoxically, this process of erosion is at the same time a generative one, providing a determinative process through which space is ‘actualized’ through human engagement and thus articulating it as place and its derivatives; and, where there is a change in those actualizing processes there is a consequential change in the imbued meaning designated to that space. These determinative contexts can be both cognitive and physical and include the architectural, environmental, natural, political, psychological, the imaginary and the social. Effectively “space is a practiced place produced by the operations that orient it, situate it, temporalize it, and make it a function in a polyvalent unity of conflictual programs or contractual proximities.”²²⁸ This very notion that place is practiced through the mechanisms of conflict and contract simply confirms - for me at least - the presence of a pre-existing ‘restrictive’ paradigm. That any *sense* of place is a consequence of human action suggests that the process of determining place is based on a cognitive relativism where conflict and contractuality are

simply (re)negotiations of perceptible degrees of sensations of restrictiveness. The contexts in which spatialities are determined are neither static nor mutually exclusive, but rather they are negotiable constructs in themselves often determined by language; which as Griffiths writes: “even articulating who we are seems to change us: we grasp at the self, it dissolves in our hand – reassembling itself somewhere else.”²²⁹

With the above in mind, the following is divided into several sections with the aim of gleaning from and reflecting on seemingly apparent crossovers, parallels and similarities. Furthermore, it aims to generate new insights and original artworks in order to contribute towards nuanced understandings about *emplacement* - by affiliating it with ideas of perceptible confinement, constraint and restrictiveness.

Non-places

Marc Auge coined the term ‘non-place’ to refer to those places markedly different to other places and spaces which, as places of transience, they are exemplified in motorways, airports, hotels and supermarkets; however, despite creating a “profound alteration of awareness”, the perception of them remains only partial and incoherent.²³⁰ Paradoxically, these places of transience are highly populated but are also mainly non-social sites which “create solitary contractuality”²³¹ – they remain however, as a derivative of place, subject to a definition centred on utility and function. As spaces of circulation, consumption and communication, they are “empirical non-places... characteristic of the contemporary world.”²³² Additionally, Kristie La suggests that because of the interchangeable and invisible nature of the contemporary art space (including the museum, gallery or art-fair) its visitors are situated “in some sort of limbo” and therefore it should also be added to the register of the other “universal institutional non-spaces” identified by Auge.²³³ It is noted here that the terms non-place and non-space are also ostensibly interchangeable.

Auge’s non-places are seemingly ‘used’ in the pursuit of solitary gains in terms of meeting, for example, an individual’s shopping, transport, entertainment and temporary accommodation needs. Although on the surface these functions appear to be played out in a communal field they are more precisely played out in a populated field having little sense of community. Related to the generic term ‘action’ the associated terms of utility and functionality are employed thus to differentiate in the first instance place from notions of space, and in the second instance, place from its derivatives. However, action in the second context is an individualized undertaking creating “atomization and anonymity”, rather than a communalized undertaking which creates “organically social”

anthropological places applicable to the first context.²³⁴ Despite their apparent bleakness and the sense of alienation that they generate, and to the contrary of signifying a loss of identity, non-places also create unique experiences for “new and previously unexpected identities”²³⁵; which when applied to the art context it could potentially give rise to a further, yet oblique art-form grounded in the ‘partially coherent’ idea that a ‘non-place’ or indeed a perceptible *lack* of place is simply an ‘altered awareness’ of a nuanced type of emplacement in itself.

Liminal places

Anthropologist Arnold van Gennep, first used the term liminal in his seminal work *The Rites of Passage* (1909); and in observing ‘cultural ceremonies of renewal’ led him “to believe that every community develops rituals in order to deal with the uncertainty of threshold experiences” - which he categorized as rites of separation, transition and incorporation; or pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal states respectively.²³⁶ Derived from the Latin ‘limen’ meaning threshold, Charles La Shure ascribes to the anthropologist Victor Turner the definition of liminality based on his studies on ritual society as: “a midpoint between a starting point and an ending point, and as such it is a temporary state that ends when the initiate is reincorporated into the social structure”²³⁷; or as Ruth Jones ascribes to Turner, “a place that is not a place and a time that is not a time.”²³⁸ In working towards a more concise definition of liminality, Turner states that although the subject in the ritualistic liminal period is “structurally, if not physically, ‘invisible’”, the realm of liminality is one “of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise.”²³⁹ It is especially with initiation processes, as a rite of passage, which “best exemplify the transitionality, or *becomingness* of the liminal state” in which the subject remains reliant on the presence of both the departure and arrival stages, and, whilst not having fully arrived has all the same departed from whence he came; only to enter a zone which is at the same time neither here nor there.²⁴⁰

Although originating in anthropology in the early 20th century, the term liminality has been used since the 1960s in wider cultural contexts in which the liminal realm is deemed a passage way between two distinct states of ‘consciousness’ or ‘being’; that is for example, either being human and animal or asleep and awake.²⁴¹ The ‘normal’ understanding of ‘everyday’ time - which promotes order and gives sense to one’s experiences - is suspended in liminal space, and because of the “enormous potential that this space offers in terms of developing our understandings of place and identity.....we may experience an altered understanding of ourselves and our environment.”²⁴²

Ergin Cavusoglu (2009) declared that one role of the artist is to “detect, reflect and record” the subjective nature of both social and political places and also ephemeral and absolute places. Whilst presenting notions of transience and mobility as attached to the idea of ‘liminal’ spaces, he suggested that space “is a tool for examining social places” at which point he referred to two places in particular – the orient and the occidental. He identified the Bosphorous Strait as an example of a liminal space existing between two places; in as much as the body of water does not belong in or to each of the two places to which he had originally referred.²⁴³ It is notable here that the role of the artist as advocated by Cavusoglu is a limited one in comparison to that of Barnett Newman who, in stark contrast, claimed that he did not manipulate or play with space, he in fact *declared* it.²⁴⁴ Since I believe that the capacity to declare space is a generative sense, the philosophical problem arises as to how one could actually elevate the status of the human condition to that of cosmic proportions thus enabling one to ‘generate’ space, ‘construct’ space; indeed *make* that which is already there – that which is already in existence. Surely this is quite impossible. It is with Cavusoglu’s more limited role of the artist as one who ‘reflects’ notions of place, that the trajectory of this research finds allegiance.

The above disparity simply demonstrates the multifaceted nature of liminality, but one which also generates the *potential* of introducing further articulations about it. That there is constant shift between the different dimensions of liminality, the architect Catherine Smith recognizes it as a “zone between; the physical and the conceptual; people and space; the artist and the audience; one practice and its marginal alternative.”²⁴⁵ By extension one such nuanced idea can be mapped onto the artist’s ‘inside-outside’ relationship with their studio. In being emplaced in a different type of regimented time-space - since artistry requires discipline after all – artists working inside their studio do so in an altered state of speculation and action outside of ordinary every-day time; whilst also reflecting upon their experiences of the outside world (from which they draw inspiration) in order to make sense of those experiences. In this context the studio is considered here as a liminal space. Sibyl Coldham (2009) reveals a similar reading in her own research about the artist’s studio and claims that there is general appreciation of the studio as a type of liminal space in which new meaning is created through the processes of speculation, study and reflection that takes place there.²⁴⁶ Writing in 2013, Julian Williams states that Coldham’s findings “reveals an understanding of the need for both professional and academic discourse” in this area since “the process of defining our disciplinary threshold concepts should be an active and collaborative one, because the definitions are relative and shifting”²⁴⁷ As such both Coldham and Williams’ appear to hold a position which seems commensurate with my research here.

Furthermore, artists do enter into a liminal space, according to Pravin Pillay (2006), since “within the present globalizing cultural development of the human species such intercultural and sub-cultural perceptive space provides a liminal position for the artist to map the realities behind the synthesized symbolic fictions.”²⁴⁸ Being a transient, or an artist-in-transit, is a type of sub-cultural perspectival space, a liminal space connected to the cultural sphere more widely and one through which other realities can be mapped onto; especially in terms of considering it as a type of *restrictive* spatiality. Irrespective of degrees of mobility, on entering the liminal space of the studio, the artist adopts the position of being a kind of ‘Liminoid’, as a specific type of identity who engages in the liminal space.

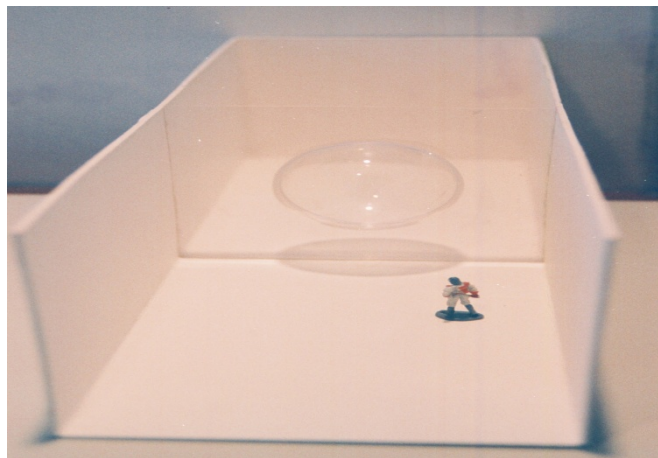


Figure 23: Shaun Martin, study for *The Liminoid* 2010. Original lost. Card, acetate sheet, perspex sphere, figurine. Dimensions variable.



Figure 24: Shaun Martin, study for *Limen ad Infinitum* 2010. Perspex spheres, nylon line, figurine. Outer sphere has a 14 cm diameter.

Originally conceived as an installation work in the *landscape* of a ‘standard’ white gallery space, Figure 24 shows a transparent partition wall as a metaphor indicating the liminal space between two referent places, a space through which one moves, or travels, or migrates. It alludes to the physical

'here' and the metaphysical 'there' and also the space in which classifications are used to differentiate 'us' and 'them'. The clear sphere within the liminal wall indicates perceived liminality within liminal states, a continuum - extended beyond which is another place as a type of *non-place*; its shadow. Figure 25 is simply an extension of that continuity; both inward and outward at the *same* time; the process of *trans*-positionality enacted in a state of *simultaneity*. This last point will become pivotal in the later conceptual development of Mezzone in chapter 4.

Heterotopic places

Comparing it to the notion of utopia as "fundamentally unreal"²⁴⁹, Michel Foucault's heterotopias are both "utterly different" from, yet also reference other real "localizable" emplacements and, since they are also "temporal discontinuities" existing simultaneously outside all of them, Foucault also refers to these spaces as 'heterochronias'.²⁵⁰ Exemplifying this spatiotemporal combination is the prison environment which Foucault identifies as a "heterotopia of deviation."²⁵¹ Furthermore, since "each heterotopia has a precise and determined function"²⁵² the prison is not only defined by its physicality, but also as a space having a number of cognitive uses commensurate with the multiple identities of those participating within it; in terms of: politics, community, education, employment and of course, punishment and rehabilitation. As an environment it exemplifies the notion of the heterotopia as 'spaces of difference', both in the physical sense as promoted by Michel Foucault²⁵³ and in the political sense because "there is a Politics of Space", according to Henri Lefebvre.²⁵⁴

Heterotopic spaces seemingly occur at multiple levels simultaneously; that is spatial otherness is also found within heterotopic sites themselves, only at deeper levels inside them. Within the prison context the isolation block exemplifies this multiple layering of heterotopic sites; or as one of my students put it that isolation is a "separate space within prison, a bit like a cell within a cell."²⁵⁵ When inmates are sent to the isolation wing; or 'down the block' as it is more commonly called; they are effectively segregated from the main prisoner population, which in turn only compounds the insider-outsider paradox – not only have they been excluded from society at the point of their original incarceration and thus becoming an outsider to it, after becoming an insider to the prison population they are further excluded from that population thus becoming an outsider once again; yet simultaneously becoming once more an insider with those other inmates also occupying the heterotopic site of the isolation wing.

The levels of introspection that isolation generates varies widely of course, in some cases in the most detrimental and tragic of ways yet in others with much more positive and creative outcomes as the prison-tutor and activist, Luk Vervaeke explains. As testimony to his extraordinary strength of character the performance artist Jean-Marc Mahy draws upon his own time spent in isolation and, in his one-man show *A Man Standing* which has been performed over 200 times since 2010, he acts out the psychological “horrors he experienced in solitary confinement.”²⁵⁶ Mahy shows us that periods of isolation can be generative, even in the most deprived of circumstances. Similarly, but perhaps more notably, Ai Weiwei’s period of “solitary detention” during his prison sentence in 2011 proved creatively generative for him also and culminated in his making *S.A.C.R.E.D* (2011-2013) which, shown at the 2013 Venice Biennale, depicts six “lifelike dioramas of a man inside a prison cell”, each viewed through a slit in the iron box housing it. Irrespective of whether the time spent in isolation is forced or self-inflicted, the point being made here is that because a heterotopic site is separated from yet simultaneously connected to all other sites it provides the creative mind a space for contemplation and in the best of cases becomes the site from which inspired artistic production arises.

“Heterotopias are designed to be temporal and are often hidden from public view”.²⁵⁷ That the art studio is a temporal site, in as much as that site becomes a studio for the period of time in which the artist is present and artistry is taking place, so too is the prison-cell which is likewise a hidden place and a temporal site for the duration of the inmate’s occupation of it. Like the prison cell, “the heterotopic site in general is not freely accessible like a public place”²⁵⁸ which is equally true of the artist’s studio especially if it is located within a complex of other (studio) spaces and thus requiring either coded entry, permission from the guard/receptionist or indeed a direct invitation from the artist.

In creating a studio-space, artists also create a counter-site (to use Foucault’s idiom) as a separate and perhaps idealized space which is removed from other everyday places so that we can reflect, record and respond to our experiences by often turning them upside-down. In doing so the studio-space becomes “a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within the culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted.”²⁵⁹ If this is in fact true of the artist’s studio, could this position then be further transposed onto an artistic concept and indeed an art-object?

Given the spatiotemporal qualities noted above, one might begin to consider that on a deeper level within the prison itself that, beyond its punitive function, the prison cell is a type of transcendental emplacement. Not only is it a type of compressed space used for industry - in as much as inmates often use or convert their cells for multiple purposes; including as an office, a gym and as an artist's studio – the cell is also an expansive place used for the joint purposes of penitence and contemplation as well. In that respect the prison-cell has degree of metaphorical resonance with the artist's studio which similarly has activating transcendental qualities in which a contemplative and creative space is revealed between the conceptual realm and the actualized. Indeed, the artist and theorist George Legard, pointed out that metaphorical space always intersected with physical spaces, and since “the physical interaction between the artwork and its maker must have a location of some sort” it will occur “somewhere within the *heterotopia* (sic) of intersecting virtual and physical spaces.”²⁶⁰

Whilst it might be argued that it is perhaps a far stretch to attempt to forge an analogy of the artist's position on entering their studio with that of the prison-inmate entering their cell, I am apparently not alone here. Annie Hogan's photographic series *Distraction* (2010) explores the tensions between imagination, human experience and the objective world by depicting images of prison cells that are meant to prompt questions about “the prison cell as a space of the constrained body” but also “the site of possible psychic transcendence”.²⁶¹ Whilst Hogan acknowledges that the *Distraction* series is indeed an “extreme metaphor” it nevertheless directs our attention towards analyzing the “tensions of our own will toward the confines and structures of our own society and the transcendence of these constraints through a conscious awareness of their existence.”²⁶² Hogan adds further that despite having different topologies and geographies an examination of the solitary cell's singularity “provide(s) different views of spatial similarity” which in turn “highlights a relationship of the body, vision and thoughts of life beyond (it).”²⁶³

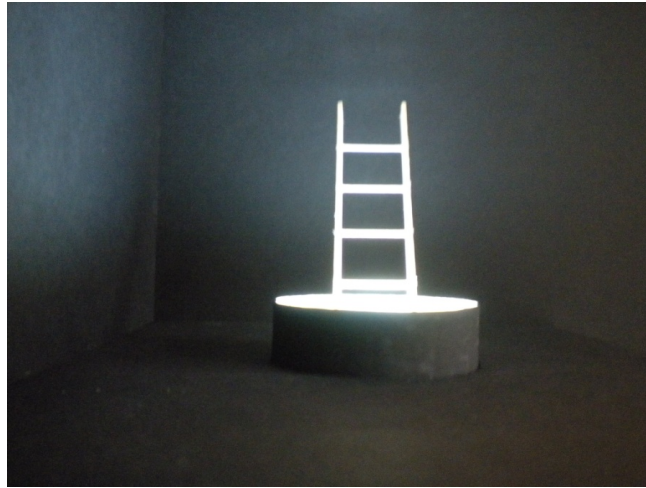


Figure 25: Shaun Martin, study for *Passage to, from and between* 2014. Card, modelling woods, LED lights. 29.5 x 22.5 x 29.5 cm.

The points made above particularly resonate with me since I too am conscious of the relative tensions, confines and structures felt by me artistically and I also have visions and thoughts of an art-practice that has transcended them. The question remains however as what to do with them; what action can I take that will circumvent my feelings of restrictiveness?

Whilst being mindful of the contextualization of relative notions of freedom, choice and privilege, I have reflected on the sense of restrictive mobility and spatiality (and time) experienced by a dying woman. In a conversation with her, we were talking about God and our perceptions of what *it* means. When asked as to my own belief in the Godhead, I simply replied “Yes” whilst gazing out and above me. “Why are you looking out there?” she *said*. I didn’t know why. Despite having an interest in Yogic philosophy at the time, it was a learnt, almost instinctive response to gaze around me when considering the location of God. It was clearly evident that I remained a product of a (spiritual) culture predominantly steered by a Christian world view – the 12th century depiction of monks ascending a ladder towards God in Heaven as “spiritual fulfilment”, in *The Ladder of Divine Ascent*²⁶⁴, is perhaps indicative of this. In questioning the whereabouts of God and what happened after death it was naturally followed by an enquiry as to the location of that place called ‘Heaven’. By inferring that God is all around us and was in fact a part of me, the dying woman drew attention to my own understanding (or lack of) about the human existence, the location of our sense of place and the nature of the space we physically and cognitively occupy. Reflecting on this sense of *location* the following, and seemingly contradictory, observations were made:

Firstly; in a traditional Christian view 'Heaven' is considered as a place elsewhere, beyond and above this material world and on death we *ascend* to this 'higher' place. However if God is in all of us, and Heaven is where He resides, it follows that this human existence is located in Heaven.

Secondly; if God permeates all and everything, He must exist in all directions, including above and below. However, these considerations of 'above' and 'below' creates a separation, a *different* space, a space between two planes which may be considered as a liminal space, a place of transition between above and below.

Thirdly; in Yogic philosophy this worldly existence is seen as a place in which we 'work out' our human frailties, a place to (karmically) redeem ourselves before we return to the place from whence we came, namely Godhead. This process, the journey of life, is seen as repetitive one, one in which spiritual purification is finally attained with the ultimate aim of remaining in Godhead. If the aim then is also not to return to this place of existence again, it infers that this place is an inferior one, one without the 'light' of heaven and therefore a place of relative darkness.

And finally; a commonality exists between these considerations in that there is the notion of having come from God/Heaven and that there will be a return to God/Heaven. That is, birth and death are considered the two ends of a journey in which we travel, yet throughout that journey we are constantly connected to the 'all and everything' but we are also separate, existing in a transient place.

Heaven, in general terms, is often considered by its believers as a very real 'perfect' place - a utopia. However in considering the emplacement of utopia, Michel Foucault states in his essay *Different Spaces* (1984), that they are "emplacements having no real place....that maintain a general relation of direct or inverse analogy with the real space of society (and) are spaces that are fundamentally and essentially unreal."²⁶⁵ He goes on to draw a comparison with emplacements he terms 'heterotopias' saying that they are "sorts of places that are outside all places, although they are localizable (but) they are utterly different from all emplacements that they reflect or refer to."²⁶⁶ In addition to identifying the prison as a heterotopia, Foucault employs the example of the cemetery in which he describes it as a 'curious' heterotopia which is "a different place compared with ordinary cultural spaces, and yet it is a space that is connected to all the other emplacements (of society)"²⁶⁷; that is, every member in society will have at least some connection with a cemetery, however remote – although this position has probably changed considerably with the proliferation of crematoria and with it that family members are able to take possession of the ashes of the deceased and dispose of them elsewhere if so desired. Further to this, Foucault introduces us to the concept of 'heterochronias', in which he states that "more often than not, heterotopias are connected with

temporal discontinuities.”²⁶⁸ Again referring to the cemetery as a “highly heterotopian place”, he adds that the “heterotopia begins to function fully when men are in a kind of absolute break with their traditional time (and) that the cemetery begins with that strange heterochronia that loss of life constitutes for an individual, and that quasi eternity in which he perpetually dissolves and fades away.”²⁶⁹

A problem arises when one starts to consider the originating position for such a discourse on heterotopias and its affiliated heterochronias. If one starts from the inside looking outward, positioning oneself at the centre of all knowing, then heterotopias may well be considered separate from the ‘unreal’ inverse analogy of utopia. However, if one considers that we are not the centre of all knowing and are incapable of attaining it, however remaining an integral part of it, we can attempt to look inward from an outside place, thus positioning utopias as real places located in real time; albeit outside the confines of a time frame marked by the pointers of temporal phenomena, birth and death. In that sense, the ‘discontinuity’ alluded to by Foucault is then perhaps a perceived one. Regarding the above preparatory study for *Passage to, from and between* (2014), and claiming the light source as a metaphor for the ‘light of heaven’ and a ‘higher’ place of existence, an ambiguity arises in relation to its positioning *below* the actualized (dark) space and the direction in which the ladder is perceived to be heading. Ladders are generally considered in the first instance to be used for ascending to higher places; however, they have of course the function of enabling one to descend also. If notions about the location of a ‘Heaven’ include both spaces above and below, here and beyond, before and after, then it is possible to consider a journey both physical and cognitive having no specific direction; it is neither forward, backward, upward nor downward – it is all of these; a continuum in which the vagaries of incarceration are experienced, both real and imagined. Irrespective of whether one lives out their existence as an artist, a prison-inmate or indeed in any other capacity for that matter, could then, all human experience be lived out in both a heterotopia and a heterochronia – that is, a state of simultaneously compressed space and expanded place?

Returning to earlier observations about non-spaces and specifically the contemporary art-institutional ones, I begin to wonder if they are also a type of heterotopia which, if I could conceive of a way of breaking away from my ‘traditional time’ of operating within restrictive modalities, might I then surpass a ‘sort of limbo’ and ascend into another different but connected *landscape* of artistic spatio-temporality? (See: Figure 26; p.80).

Landscape

Attesting to the ubiquity of 'landscape' and its significance in establishing one's identity as a sense of emplacement in space is the view that: "there is no escaping landscape: it's everywhere and part of everyone's life."²⁷⁰ That landscape is an arena in which to establish one's sense of being-in-the-world is advocated through the observation that it "is environment and habitat, physical and mental, real and imagined, natural and cultural, experienced and vicarious.....from (which) we construct the sense of who, what and where we are."²⁷¹ As yet another example of a contested spatial term, Stephen Daniels "talks of the 'duplicity of landscape', by which he means the irreducibility of landscape to either its material or its ideological dimensions....it exists in between."²⁷² With regard to its ramifications to art there is again, like notions of space and place, a general lack of agreement as to what exactly constitutes 'landscape', as exemplified in the statements that: "there has been little consensus about how to understand the relationship between landscape and art"²⁷³ and that, "we are constantly engaged in acts of interpretation....(leading) some to talk of places and the landscape as a text (and) like a book, the landscape is created by authors.....to create certain meanings."²⁷⁴ Constructing meaning through the interplay between landscape and art is invaluable in the process of creating a sense of self-identity; a position advocated by Biggs' declaration that the most valuable contemporary art, "whether it deals implicitly or explicitly with 'landscape', with our place in the world, addresses issues of becoming."²⁷⁵ Since notions of landscape appear limited only by application to context, and therefore potentially unlimited, the possibility arises for the development of a conceptual framework from and through which allied notions of emplacement may be revealed and negotiated; both personally and artistically.



Figure 26: Shaun Martin, Study for: *Ascension* 2000 – 2005. Original lost. MDF, wood, twigs, cloth, perspex, light box. Dimensions variable.

That the generic definition of place *becomes* more concretized in its derivative forms (and its multitudinous possibilities) is simply commensurate with the huge variety of human action essential to its conceptualization and actualization. The apparent tendency to put aside the interrelatedness of the 'greater' notions of space and time when examining place specifically is, to a greater extent, indicative of 'our' incapacity to objectify succinctly either of those terms. As concepts, the perceived enormity of both space and time effectively precludes our fullest comprehension. Place on the other hand is inextricably linked to one's sense of being-in-the-world - or at least 'becomingness' - and is seemingly played out in the huge diversity of meaning found in the idea of what constitutes 'landscape'. It follows that because the human experience is articulated *in* place; we should perhaps have a better grasp of what this term means to us - however derived and contested - both individually and collectively.

The question remains as to why an investigation into the perceived '*simultaneity* of compressed space and expanded place' - as analogous to the human condition - is relevant in the 21st century? The answer lies in the fact that since attempts to articulate one's sense of 'being-in-the-world' has been a philosophical and artistic preoccupation for millennia - "Plato's hypothesis that our soul was once in a better place and now lives in a fallen world"²⁷⁶ and, much later, Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* as a set of stories is "unable to arrive at any definite truth or reality"²⁷⁷ seemingly attests to this - then such endeavours are reasonably expected to continue for millennia to come; as evidenced above by both modern and contemporary theoretical and artistic attempts to do so. This practice-led investigation is seen as a continuation of that entire exercise; one which, will contribute to it by adding a nuanced insight towards the further understanding of it.

Since place-making appears to be a process of continual (re)negotiation it permits me to glean certain elements from the above examination and apply them within an art context; the purpose being to locate and articulate more concisely a definition of a perceptible 'non-space field' allied to terms of 'marginality'. It is a *revealed* space, which is situated in a type of middle-zone and is considered to be both compressed and expanded at the same time. Since it is perceived as a zone *in which* 'designation' of place occurs, it never fully becomes realized; yet like place, this type of classification still requires an action (mental) on our part. This 'field' of *trans*-positionality is perceived as fluid yet is deemed to 'hold' all referent places together; however, once a specific emplacement (purpose) has been designated for it, this non-positional field is perceived to have been surpassed. (I have included in appendix 2 a study for a painting as visual aid to assist me in

clarifying these ideas.) This concept, which I have coined as Mezzone (middle-zone), will be elaborated upon in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

POTENTIALITY AND THE TRANS-POSITIONAL ART-OBJECT (MEZZONE)

INTRODUCTION

Mezzone is both an object AND a subject. It is a singularity AND a collectivity. As a concept it finds precedent in the theory of the *subjectile*.

Mezzone relies on the idea of simultaneity. It is a model, a maquette and a sculpture at the same time. It is allied to other art practices which incorporate ideas surrounding 'material thinking' and 'thinking material'.

Mezzone is a form of resilience and an act of subversion which finds precedent in certain ideas of countering restrictive modalities felt by some in quite commonplace situations.

Mezzone is intended to have a *transpositional* status and as such it engages with *motility* theory which applies ideas about the *potentiality* of movement (of goods, services and people) as reflected in the dynamism and fluidity of contemporary life. The transpositional status afforded by Mezzone gives it what motility theory calls 'capital'; that is it increases its *possibility* of a greater spatial circulation as a type of commodity ready for a potential distribution in wider art market. It also maximizes *my* potential exposure to opportunities for a type of social mobility within the art establishment hierarchies.

Physically, a mezzone object is comprised of a small scale; low-key, inexpensive 'intervention' purposely contained in a commensurately small scaled box; thus, the *whole* form is considered as the artwork – a singularity. Since these interventions are subjective; but made in response to a number of theoretical points examined throughout this research project; I have coined them *esotopias* (or 'esotopic landscapes').

Conceptually, its entirety 'becomes' Mezzone the subject – a type of place-making. It reflects observations about the (true) nature of my identity centred on both my *feelings* of 'restrictiveness' and my position as an artist. Being intentionally ambiguous, Mezzone is meant to propose an alternative type of art form and display format at the same time. Conceived as *occupying* a middle-zone of artistic categorization, a mezzone object is neither strictly a sculpture; a model; a maquette; nor a proposal for a potential installation or a type of alternative exhibition space - yet at the same time it intentionally and simultaneously alludes to the potential application of all of these presentational formats. It is a type of collectivity. It is meant to imply portability and as such it is perceived to be transportable across a range of (exhibition) sites in accordance with the designated application required of it at any given point in time.

Whilst reflecting on what has become for me a body of small-scale works, yet still not having resolved what to do with them at the time, I was reminded of Jean-Christophe Bailly's comment about Marcel Duchamp. Writing in 1986, Bailly stated that: "It is a splendid paradox. What is significant can be encapsulated in the smallest of spaces, but equally it functions as a constant within the larger body of work"; he continued by adding that: "monumentality was the least of Duchamp's temptations.....and meant always creating new openings." ²⁷⁸ Similarly, I care less about making large-scale art works; however I have a strong inclination towards what I can only describe as making-small-but-thinking-big. This development has been entirely commensurate with attempting to establish a sculptural practice whilst seemingly confined by the spatio-temporal limitations of living a transient lifestyle. As a result of ongoing reflections about the position of both my (inter)national and cultural identity, and my subsequent affiliation with the insider-outsider paradox; which, alongside the personal and artistic *feelings* of restrictiveness conditioned by my mobility; it has altogether consolidated into a 'new opening' for my practice. This proposal is seen as an act of resilience which subverts those restrictive modalities felt by me in order to create a fluid and proactive resolution to them; thus becoming part of a 'larger body of work'. Mezzzone is solely concerned with the perceived potential of the trans-positional art object.

In the first instance my proposition addresses the following question: If human geography has already provided me with the idea of the *transnational* subject whose position is grounded in a specific 'spatial-temporal liminal register', and also the idea of the contemporary nomad whose position is without 'fixity' to a *specific* place; *and*; if spatial theory has already provided me with the idea of hybrid, liminal and heterotopic places: could a triangulation of those ideas (see study below) mean that a similar trans-positional *state* could be observed and applied in sculpture and sculptural practice?

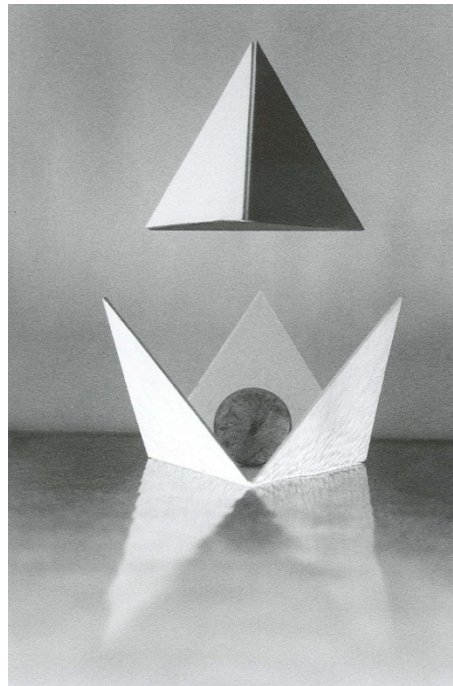


Figure 27: Shaun Martin, study for *The Triangulation of Idea B* 2000 – 2005. Original lost. Card, nylon string, glass, lights. Dimensions variable.

Although involving the intertwining of multiple ideas at the same time, in order to trace the development of my proposition it is necessary to divide it into several parts. Since I will be using the term *mezzone* from the outset I will start with its linguistic origins. Following this, but before I introduce the physical and conceptual development of *Mezzone*, I will begin with the topics of simultaneity and potentiality so that the reader is mindful of the concept's foundation in them.

Etymology

The word *Mezzone* (*mezzo* + *zone*) is a neologism and means 'middle-zone'. Reflecting my penchant for making up words, I have derived it from an amalgam of the mid-18th century Italian term '*mezzo*' meaning "middle" or "half"; and '*zone*' meaning a designated separate area with a *specific* function for something (to occur).²⁷⁹ It also borrows from the language of relief sculpture and specifically the term *mezzo-rilievo* meaning middle-relief.²⁸⁰ Relief sculpture is about *enacting* a type of *transpositionality* in as much as it involves creating an artwork from a completely flat surface towards an almost 3-dimensional form. Nonetheless, I started to query the point at which low-relief becomes middle-relief, and middle-relief becomes high relief – this is also reflected in my interest in the insider-outsider *divide*. Since I have historically generated 'models' as part of my methodology, but have rarely been able to realize them beyond this point, I began to question that if an art object *can*

be realized as a type of 'middle' form (of itself), could it also be realized in its *potential* to function in an-other 'designated separate area' (form) at the same time. In other words could an art object to be grounded only in a state of simultaneity?

Simultaneity

Mezzzone relies on the idea of simultaneity so I will introduce its connection to it here. It requires establishing a singular position in which the separate (expanded) classifications of model, maquette and sculpture are deemed to be compressed into a single state that is *simultaneously* hybrid, liminal and trans-positional. Importantly however, this new state does not deny the now intentional *potential* expansion into other contextual formats (or 'spatio-temporal registers').

The term simultaneity was first coined in the early 20th century and referred to the "distinctive character of (the) modern urban experience"²⁸¹. It matched the philosopher Henri Bergson's "vitalist ideas" which not only stressed the significance of the 'life force' (*élan vital*)²⁸² but also emphasized time (*la durée*) as the basis of reality in "recognition that the world never stands still".²⁸³ This theme was interpreted by many artists of the time including: the Futurists' pre-occupation with capturing "the unprecedented dynamism of modern life"²⁸⁴; the Cubists' central premise of "simultaneous visibility"²⁸⁵; writer Jules Romains' celebration of the "innumerable collectivities (of place, occupation, custom)"²⁸⁶; and, Octave Mirbeau's musical tribute to the vitality of modern urban life.²⁸⁷

Furthermore, Michel Foucault claimed in 1967 that: "we are in the epoch of simultaneity, we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed. We are at a moment."²⁸⁸ In respect of Foucault defining this concept more than half a century after Bergson, it does not seem unreasonable to suggest that another half a century further on, the idea of simultaneity should be any less relevant nowadays. My exploration of the term 'simultaneity' is grounded in modernity also, or to be more specific in Zygmunt Bauman's concept of 'liquid modernity' which in refuting the existence of the notion of post-modernity, views it instead as simply a fluid extension of modernity itself.²⁸⁹ My concerns are not too dissimilar to that of my predecessors, in as much as it deals with articulating a contemporary experience also. In my case, it is the experience of contemporary nomadism; that is, being or feeling perpetually in-transit. Such a condition is likewise multi-perspectival, distinctive, dynamic, visual, mnemonic, and one which encompasses 'innumerable collectivities'.

Simultaneity has the condition of holding within itself the potential of further - but seemingly also - an as yet unresolved development. The *state* of simultaneity appears to have characteristics of being both the object and the subject; the defined and the definer. Paradoxical as this might seem, it is also in line with Cottingham's claim that Bergson's ideas on simultaneity were similarly adaptable and consequently "used to support a variety of (sometimes contradictory) political and cultural platforms".²⁹⁰ It is interesting to note that in addition to his ideas on time, vitality and movement, Bergson also insisted "on the importance of intuition as against (the) scientific analysis" of modernizing processes and the growing anxieties attributed towards them.²⁹¹ It would be a little remiss to ignore that certain modernizing processes are still at force - especially in terms of advances in communications technology for example. With them come increasing opportunities for the artist to respond to the numerous calls for papers, proposals, residencies and community projects; let alone funded PhD opportunities and invitations to exhibitions, biennials and art fairs. However, the problem of gaining access to these emerging platforms might also come with ever increasing uncertainties about how best to maximize one's potential in such a new and dynamic market (collectivities). In the memorable words of a successful businessman I know very well: "It's all about maximizing your exposure, Shaun."²⁹² In other words I am dealing here with ideas about *potentiality*.

Potentiality

According to Kaufmann (et al), mobility studies based on empirical observation and description are limited to actual (past and present) movements and are therefore "insufficient to understand the impact of a particular social phenomenon"²⁹³. He continues however, by stating that *motility* on the other hand, as the study of "the potential of movement (of goods, services and people) will reveal new aspects of the mobility of people with regard to possibilities and constraints of their manoeuvres, as well as the wider societal consequences of social and spatial mobility"²⁹⁴. In motility theory this is what is called 'capital'. That being the case then, I can begin to consider a (potential) movement that is both inward and personal - which in turn, generates subjective artistic responses to my *feelings* of restrictive modalities, which is normally seen as an outward and physical gesture. Such a development would consolidate my reflections about simultaneity in relation to the insider-outsider paradox and thereafter materialize also as the object-subject paradox. Following on from this, the question arises as to the possibility of developing an art practice that is commensurate with increasing levels of mobility which is seemingly becoming more commonplace; specifically, the emerging social phenomenon of 'contemporary nomadism'.

The potentiality offered by Mezzone is that it is both an object and a subject at the same time. As an object, it maximizes its manoeuvrability by being a model, a maquette or a sculpture ready for its potential application across increasingly globalized commercial and non-commercial settings. In that sense, as far as motility theory allows, (the) Mezzone has potential as a type of transportable commodity with the possibility of multiple applications. With its widening potential application as a type of transpositional 'good', the Mezzone concept also brings with it a potential increase in my own mobility as a type of service provider. The potential here is not just limited to physical mobility but it also applies to the potential transference of information through the ever-increasing use of and reliance on new digital technologies.

In addition, the Mezzone concept as a subject simultaneously articulates my subjective responses to those practice concerns which I have been exploring here. Even the PhD journey is about searching for a potential contribution to the already existing body of knowledge in the field. An integral part of this research process lies in generating (sets of) small-scale (model-maquette-sculpture) pieces. Working as an accumulative contribution towards a resolved research outcome - which addresses my concerns about the restrictive nature of working in-transit and art production - they are intended to act together as the *singular* record of *multiple* thoughts-in-progress. They serve as a kind of analytical reportage through which its synthesis has generated *a* potentiality. Whether potentiality is actually discovered and can then be applied remains to be seen. Since it is an unknown, any perceived destination point is immaterial to some degree. What is of greater importance for *my* practice lies wholly in the undertaking of the journey, that is, the (re)search itself. It is the act of doing which is crucial here – research *as* art practice. It becomes a collaboration of 'material thinking' and 'thinking material' (see later in this chapter); the realization of which materializes a social phenomenon in the act of place-making and where practice *becomes* place.

Vaughan claims that invention "creates the place(s) of practice"²⁹⁵ and with that in mind, by physically engaging with this creative act, I *feel* that I am also effectively 'place-making' by actualizing my position as an artist and creating a bona-fide practice. The 'models' serve to create *potential* by subverting the limitations imposed by the landscape of transience and the consequential effects of restrictive practices on the production of art. In adding to Whiston Spurr's idea that 'the language of landscape can be imagined'²⁹⁶, Vaughan goes on to refer to the "transient nature of knowledge" and sees the act of making and creating - which in turn realizes the act of invention - as "an experience of the *local* and the articulation of *place*."²⁹⁷ My 'lived' experience of the 'local' includes the construction of real physical places (landscapes) followed by various attempts

at creating some sense of *intimacy* with them – if only by the act of naming or labelling them as familiar. (As mentioned later on page 100, ‘naming’ is an act of subversion and a way of negotiating certain (restrictive) spatial relations. Prison-inmates engage in this practice by naming and (re) claiming their prison cells as ‘home’, ‘gym’ or ‘studio’ for example, as a way of dealing with their own *feelings* of the physical and psychological restrictiveness imposed upon them. Naming Mezzzone serves a similar purpose for me also.)



Figure 28: Shaun Martin, study for: *Transition by Gesture (A line made by thinking)* 2013. MDF, steel cord. 22 x 42 x 22 cm.

Whilst the contents of the white box above is constructed from steel cord, the use of a simple line alludes to a simple action in time (mobility) as a requisite (minimal) gesture of physical engagement with space in order to create place; hand movements are equally simple forms of mobility according to Cresswell.²⁹⁸ This piece also references similar gestures made by Althamer and Long, both of whom engaged with and altered a given space of an ‘empty’ field by creating a (simple) line through the action of walking in their respective works: *Path* (2007) and *A Line Made by Walking* (1967).

Transition by Gesture (above) is an example of Mezzzone (object and subject). In making it, I note in the first instance that creating a sense of place requires ‘virtual immersion’, according to Lucy Lippard, and is dependent upon both the “lived experience and a ‘topographical intimacy’”²⁹⁹. That being the case then, I can take an empty white box as a metaphor for a familiar blank architectural *space* - to which I am also ‘topographically intimate’ - and through the agency of my ‘virtual immersion’ with it, I can begin to materially think *and* think materially about realizing a *potential* landscape within it as a type of *eso-topia* (an imagined inner-place). Taking Cresswell’s idea that

movement includes the simple gesture of hand-waving, I can similarly make a simple gesture of 'drawing' a straight line in an empty space and make it my own (place). As mentioned above, to my mind this act of place-making is not too dissimilar to Richard Long repeatedly walking a straight line across an empty field and consequently making *his* place in an otherwise empty space. Long said of this work, *A Line Made by Walking* (1967), that it was "my own path, going 'nowhere'".³⁰⁰ This transient and ephemeral gesture reflected his interest in producing art works that had "little or no physical form" which sought to "critique the materialist values of consumer society, and even circumvent the art market"³⁰¹; albeit the potentiality of Long's 'dematerialized' works were in fact realized through photography. In Long's case the photograph served as "the document or record of the work that became the art 'object' to be displayed, bought and sold."³⁰² Despite the mezzzone object being far less materially ephemeral than Long's 'walking' projects, the photographic realization of their potentiality remains a real possibility, and to that extent it is not dissimilar to the methods used by either Thomas Demand or James Casabere for example.

Again, as a visual tool to aid my own clarification of ideas about potentiality and the perceived simultaneous positions of multiple middle zones, I first began conceiving Mezzzone by applying its premise to the multiple spatialities I perceive inherent in a painting – see appendix 2.

An examination of some artists working in the field

In order to locate my own art practice within the contemporary framework of artists exploring notions of space and place I refer again to Cavusoglu's idea that the artist can "detect, reflect and record" the subjective nature of both social and political places and also ephemeral and absolute places.³⁰³ In supporting his point of view - whilst refuting Newman's claim to be able to *declare* space³⁰⁴ - I am also allying this investigation to Naum Gabo's practice of making constructions *in* space as a *revealing* process. Specifically, my aim here is to reflect places and identities in-transition; a *trans*-positionality.

Artists attempting to 'actualize' space have adopted various strategies including, addition (Tatlin), subtraction (Moore) and also the performative (Klein). That these artists are representative of the 'modern' epoch is of little relevance to this investigation since they could be easily replaced by contemporary artists - Heivly, Hartoum and Wilson-Eflerová respectively. The point simply references Baumann's view that we do not reside in a 'post-modern' era at all, but rather in one which he terms 'liquid modernity'³⁰⁵ which recognizes the non-linear relationship of place and

promotes the idea of “simultaneity of place” instead.³⁰⁶ This point also lends credibility to the research here such that ‘simultaneity’ is commensurate with the nature of liquid modernity as an ‘inseparable separation’ - and so “provides us with a novel way of seeing the world.”³⁰⁷

In holding a belief system based on deference to the enormity of the cosmos, I must limit the perceived artistic capacity of ‘declaring’ space by describing it in less emphatic terms but allied to notions of: *manipulating* space through “defining, dividing, opening and entering” it (Serra)³⁰⁸; *displacing* it (Wilson)³⁰⁹; *making* de-constructions and re-constructions *in* it (Matta-Clark)³¹⁰³¹¹; *interfere* with it (Ali Uysal)³¹²; and more pertinently here, one’s capacity of (only) being able to *reveal* aspects of its fluidity - which ordinarily hidden, can also be both real or imagined. This position seemingly coincides with the practices of: Abramović, Eliason, Fontana, Gormley, Heivly, Nauman, and Rothko, who have similarly acknowledged an interest in the transcendental; but less ardently than Newman.



Figure 29: Shaun Martin, study for *Picture-Box* 2013. Modelling board, wooden frames. 24 X 29 x 22 cm.

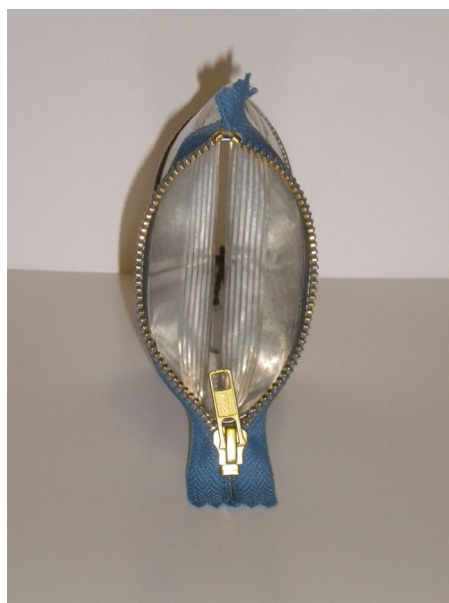


Figure 30: Shaun Martin, study for *Zip-Slit* 2013. Steel can, zip, figurine. 12.5 x 6 x 13 cm.

Figure 29 and Figure 30 are 3-dimensional responses to, firstly; Lucio Fontana’s Spatial Concept paintings in which he “slashed” the canvas in order to create a “sense of depth”³¹³ and, secondly; Barnett Newman’s use of “thin vertical lines or ‘zips’ as Newman called them (which) define the spatial structure of the painting, while simultaneously dividing and uniting the composition.”³¹⁴ In *Picture-Box* the painting support has been extended beyond the picture frame to create a middle-

zone, which connects and divides its boundaries at the same time. Whilst *Zip-Slit* clearly references physiology, it nevertheless alludes to the opening up to another type of space which also has further generative potential.

Furthermore, in terms of artists using 'models' as part of their work, I am mindful of Schneckenburger writing that models "stimulate our imagination in an interim zone in which attitudes, memories, associations and projections become fluid."³¹⁵ Ali Uysal has shown work termed by him as "unrealized projects", which is a phrase seemingly allied to the work of Kawamata and Graham. Exhibiting 'models' references not only my preferred means of documenting idea, but also the practices of Casabere, Demand, Morton, Walsh and Zimmerman – albeit these artists' models appear to have a greater degree of verisimilitude to actual recognizable places than do mine. Having said that I note that the curators of Casabere's exhibition *Fugitive* (Haus De Kunst Munich, 2016) said that his models "exemplify what might be characterized as the architectural unconscious of a given spatial system", and quoted him as saying that "I am trying to create something that embodies or dramatizes the kind of psychic space that exaggerates certain ideas and experiences".³¹⁶

Finally, 'models' are also associated with the artist's studio and working methods which, according to Brian O'Doherty, not only traces the relationship between the work and the artist but allies itself to questions about the position of the artwork itself.³¹⁷ Herein lays another level of compressed space and expanded place relative to this research proposal; that is, the 'creative' space revealed between the conceptual and the actualized. By extending its potential towards a critique of the art institution, Mezzzone also brings forward Rosalind Krauss' 'expanded field' theory by referencing both historic and contemporary practices which have challenged the traditional gallery/exhibition space - including the conceptual work of Duchamp, Schwitters, Turk and Eliasson for example. On this last point, in chapter 5 I will introduce a case study of Michael Asher's practice as an exemplar of institutional critique so as to establish a precedent for Mezzzone; both as a challenge to historicized sculptural classification and also modes of 'display'.

Physical development

This part traces the *physical* development of mezzzone as an *object*. The object itself is a relatively small and easily transportable (white) box which contains within it subjective 'interventions' responding to a number of theoretical points examined throughout this research project – which as a type of 'inner-place' I have coined the term: *esotopias* (or 'esotopic landscapes'), as mentioned

earlier. These act as sculptural objects in their own right and have been introduced throughout the entire thesis in accordance with the timeliness of when a particular point is being examined. Other preparatory works are fully expected to be generated from this research, once again as visual notes of ideas for me to again *potentially* develop outside the specific remit of this project. That is, the generative potential of Mezzzone is necessarily ongoing.

As an object, a mezzzone object is derived from actualizing the cursive 2-dimensional symbol of the hyphen into a 3-dimensional form. In arriving at this point I had previously read the multi-media artist Yoka van Dyk's exploration about ideas concerning 'home' and 'house' which; despite sharing a similar transnational experience and feelings of the insider-outsider paradox (van Dyk was a Dutch born migrant living and working in New Zealand); more importantly for me was her introduction to the concept of hyphenation. Van Dyk draws upon Giuliana Bruno's (2002) references to (what she calls) her 'territories' about which Bruno declares that they are "'...places I have lived, loved, absorbed, traversed. I negotiated myself in them, wrote myself in them, wrote about them. I have called them home.....home is a hyphen. Hyphen is my home.'"³¹⁸ Van Dyk elucidates on Bruno's declaration by stating that the home is "the intersection point, marked by hyphenation, (which) always performs across multiple borders and thereby emphasises the spatial-temporal liminal register experienced by many transnationals".³¹⁹ What is important here is that the idea of 'home' within the narrative of the insider-outsider paradox is conditioned by the simultaneous processes of construction, de-construction and re-construction; and not only on a physical *scale* but on a meta-physical one also. And "scale matters"³²⁰ wrote Pelin Tan in July 2016. Whilst the house, home or even a cave are confined spaces which "might cause a physical distance" with an (outside) society, they are nonetheless *interdependent* of it.³²¹ For Tan the matter is indeed one of "proximity and narrative" since society is "not only physical, but endlessly fluid; intertwined with infrastructure".³²² Furthermore, claims Tan, the scale of each aspect of that infrastructure starts to "*simultaneously expand and contract*"³²³; *not only architecturally speaking, but variously politically and domestically also*. It is in this entangled relationship to which Tan refers, where *spaces contract* and *places expand* co-dependently of each other, which informs the material substance under investigation here. I refer the reader to the title for my project here: *Compressed Space – Expanded Place*.

At this point I am reminded of Dan Graham's *Pavilion* works on several points. In an exhibition at the De Pont Museum in 2014 Graham exhibited some fifteen "realized and unrealized architectural models" of his *Pavilions* – a "hybrid form of visual art and architecture".³²⁴ In the development of the Mezzzone, the idea of the 'hybrid form' is of particular interest here; as too is the definition given at an earlier exhibition (Hauser & Wirth, Zurich, 2008) in which Graham's pavilions were classified as

“hybrid structures, operating simultaneously as functional spaces and as sculptural objects.”³²⁵ The pavilions quite clearly operate as object, but in an interview with Coline Milliard (Artinfo UK, 2012), Graham declared that “people really don't know what I'm doing.”³²⁶ However in the same interview Graham went on to say that “all my work from Dia Foundation (his ‘roof-top’ works in 1991) up until the present is really about the city plan, (and) not about the gallery white cube.”³²⁷ In that sense the pavilion seems to fit the bill as being both object and subject. Again the idea of simultaneity is prescient here – Mezzone is similarly meant to be both object and subject. Interestingly, Graham says that whilst his pavilions “might look a bit like minimal-art sculptures” he goes on to emphasize that it is “not what they're meant to be”.³²⁸ In empathizing with Graham’s observations here, in as much as my own stylistic influences lean towards minimalism, I too am in the position of not being wholly interested in the minimalist’s reduction of form to its most basic of elements. In his interview with Milliard, Graham stated that “my work is closer to Russian Constructivism. It's halfway between design, art, and functional architecture.”³²⁹ Whilst I do not aim to fully ally my work to Graham’s pavilions, I can at least claim that there appears to be certain similarities with mezzones; in as much as: a mezzone operates as an art object in its own right; the contents of some mezzones function as designs for (potential) installation; and on a review of them the cultural historian Dr. Marius Kwint claimed that they are architectonic in form and lend themselves towards the theatrical.³³⁰ *Potentiality* can then start to be considered as *the* very material in which my proposal is grounded. It serves as the mechanism (tool) from which I can begin to make place. Graham states that his pavilions derive their meaning from Sartre’s idea in *Being and Nothingness* that when “you look at somebody who sees you, and you see them at the same time that you’re being seen.”³³¹ This too is seemingly in line with my interest in what I perceive as the fluid state of simultaneity that is found in the insider-outsider paradox referred to earlier; that is, in order to look *out* towards something requires the act of looking *in* to it at the same time. (The prescribed position for my work shown earlier, *Hiraeth: the topography of our intimate being*, requires such a reading also). Furthermore, Graham has referred to his pavilions as a “kind of heterotopia”.³³² According to the De Pont Museum’s curators, “Graham offers his own pavilions as potential ‘heterotypes’” – a Foucauldian term coined to define ‘different’ places of meaning that interrupt the “continuum of everyday space.”³³³ Perhaps (rather obliquely) I can suggest here that mezzones also ‘offer’ a potentiality as a type of ‘heterotype’; one which might interrupt the way in which sculpture in an ‘everyday’ sense is viewed and engaged with. The art historian Ian Wallace claims that Graham will ‘readily admit’ that his pavilions allude to “resonant universals: presence, light, and time” and that as ‘quasi-functional installations’ Graham views their reflective qualities as if they were “like a showcase window”.³³⁴ I very much like the idea of making work that acts like a showcase window about the ‘resonant

universal of presence' and as such Mezzone works in a similar way – both as an object and a subject. For his show at Lisson Gallery, London (2012), Graham selected 'unrealized projects' saying about his choice to do so that "they are basically done to acquaint people with my work" (again, *because* people really don't know what I'm doing).³³⁵ He pre-empted this comment by claiming that "I may have an idea that you see as a model, but actually is just sketches in a notebook."³³⁶ As it has been with my own practice I have always maintained that the premise that each mezzone starts with a model of an idea (or '3-dimensional sketches' as I prefer to call them) which - because they have tended to be restricted by their ephemerality and non-transportability - are normally photographed for later reference. Not only do the photographic images bring new insights to an existing methodology, this way of working has been entirely appropriate for me as an artist working in-transit. When Graham sees the (proposed) site for a pavilion he then considers whether to modify the work to fit that particular site; but in the end he has said "the realized projects are always site-specific."³³⁷ Having had done some site-specific work previously, I am also aware that certain (re)negotiations have to be made when exhibiting in a given space – this remains the case for the (potential) exhibition of Mezzone either as an object, group of objects, or indeed a full-scale installation of any of the (model) contents.

Informing part of this research, I presented a portfolio of (model) works to gallery director, Jonathan Watkins (2014), who asked me if I had envisaged them being exhibited as full scale works; to which I could only reply that whilst some would need to be modified to best fit an exhibition site, it was not a primary concern for me at the time; however, I always consider the possibility to do so. I also informed Watkins of my penchant to think-big-but-make-small, yet at the same time I would of course welcome an opportunity to explore its *potential*.³³⁸ It was at this point that the idea of incorporating *potentiality* as a primary characteristic in an art work's resolution was borne. It would later become a significant part in the conceptual development of Mezzone, especially as my research had led me to consider its connotations with the theory of *motility*. Another review of my work 18 months later by Damian Sutton (Oct 2015), supported the proposition that this project was indeed veering towards the exploration of *potentiality* as a core element of its overall trajectory.³³⁹

Conceptual development

This part follows the *conceptual* development of Mezzone and sets the premise as to what it actually is. It is about Mezzone as a *subject*. In order to establish my claim for its originality this section will examine comparable degrees of precedent found within the context of art and philosophy and thereafter more broadly within a wider social and cultural context. This concept is reliant on

consolidating a theoretical position that never fully departs nor fully arrives at a definitive position other than its own *potentiality*.

Art theory and 'Thinking Material'

The artist Tony Cragg considers that the process of “thinking material” is in effect similar to the process of writing. A writer has an idea and expresses it by recording it in the material of words and sentences, and then by pushing them around creates a form that corresponds and clarifies the writer’s thinking - often resulting in the creation of new thoughts to work on.³⁴⁰ Cragg claims that similarly to ‘material thinking’ both engage with “a chain of decisions” and that each decision made “leads to another response to the material” which he says becomes like “an adventure, a dialogue with material”.³⁴¹ It is at this juncture that I have observed both similarity and distinction between the ‘thinking material’ processes undertaken in Cragg’s practice with that undertaken in mine. The first similarity might only be an attitudinal one but it does lend support to the idea of a fluid, non-fixed state for each of the positions in the model, maquette and sculpture relationship and suggests that each potentially share the same spatio-temporal liminal zone. With the exception of *Runner* (2013) and one other sculpture made in stone, all of the works appearing in Cragg’s *Sculptures* exhibition were cast in bronze; but not before firstly being made in wood. However, Cragg advised that despite the wooden pieces from which the bronzes were cast acting like “a kind of a model”, at the same time he *also* considered them to be sculptures in their own right. Again the ideas of simultaneity and potentiality seemingly come into play here too in Cragg’s practice. The second similarity lies in Cragg’s admission that in the end it all amounts to “creating something that is an extension of myself”.³⁴² My affiliation with this sentiment stems from an oblique reading of what Cragg is claiming here. By viewing his raw material as a metaphor for the greater expanse of space, Cragg’s manipulation of it infers the creative act as place-making; that is like all other engagements with space we all create an extension and awareness of our self through place-making. To that end I do not see the creation of Mezzzone any differently.

The distinction in our respective processes occurs in as much as Cragg *manipulates* the raw material of wood in what I perceive as a fluid way – this is reflected in his admission that he doesn’t know where the process will end up simply because each decision made within the chain of decisions leads to another response to the material used. This creates awareness in him that had he acted upon a different decision it would have resulted in the creation of a completely different work; however he acknowledges that this kind of predicament also “leads to a lot of entries into, or beginnings of new works.”³⁴³ In this respect our respective methods are quite different. I do not use raw materials and

prefer using prefabricated materials instead (e.g. MDF, acetate sheet, modelling board and mirrors, etc.). These have certain characteristics already defined by their manufacture in terms of size, shape, density and flexibility etc., but this also completely suits my own artistic sensibilities towards a *construction* approach to making sculpture and my interest in architectonic forms. Of course there are certain decisions necessarily made in response to the type of prefabricated material used but I am less able to respond to it in the same fluid way as Cragg might do. Ordinarily, I have already decided how I want the artwork to appear and as is similarly found within the construction industry there is a co-dependent gravitation towards the use of pre-existing materials. Although, having said that, I might suggest that pre-fabricated materials *are* my raw materials and whereas another type of artist will use pencils and paints as their preferred medium to 'sketch' out their ideas, I on the other hand will prefer to use low-key 3D materials to similarly 'sketch' with. Again like Cragg, I simply view this as an extension of myself; conditioned by my experiences in the construction industry and also by the limitations imposed by working in-transit.

Art theory and 'the Subjectile'

I note that in defence of his PhD thesis, Tim Long clarifies several key points. Firstly, that the subjectile "cannot be reduced to theory" since the art work is both a physical fact as well as a theory which assists with practice by opening out 'creative investigations'.³⁴⁴ Secondly, since a subjectile's symbolic significance can change depending upon individual responses to it, he reminds us that whilst Louise Bourgeois expressed support for an artist's feelings about their work, she remained cautious about what they said and believed instead, that "the core of his original impulse is to be found, if at all, in the work itself."³⁴⁵ Thirdly, after considering the subjectile as a "site for fruitful artistic production and self realization"³⁴⁶, Long acknowledges that whilst Jacques Derrida did not want to discard its paradox he was 'exasperated' by trying to "understand how in art subject and object are inextricably linked" and, in attempting to do so, Derrida discovered that Antonin Artaud's use of the term (in his explorations of his own pain and suffering) presented "far-reaching possibilities, because as an idea it always asks questions."³⁴⁷ Derrida's exasperation culminated with his declaration that: "we have to have done with the subjectile. And, for that, to determine it, to *analyse* it in making it come out of itself. Let it finally become something or someone!"³⁴⁸ Again, I am reminded of Jean-Luc Goddard's line which has remained resonate throughout this project: '*you can only think about something if you think of something else*'.³⁴⁹ I too have been exasperated by the idea that the object and the subject can be one and the same thing, often tripping over its own seeming (looping) contrivance. However, like those before me I am of a similar opinion that it is a site for artistic production and, for me at least, it holds within it *a potential* for addressing my

practice concerns about dealing with the restrictive nature of working in-transit. Tim Long finally concludes that, however problematic the paradox appears the subjectile nevertheless registers “at a subjective personal level and at the broader level of society”, and what remains “most significant about this unrealised project is the idea of the site as a possibility”.³⁵⁰ Development of such a site will require an act of subversion on my part; that is, I can *use* my feelings of personal and creative ‘restrictiveness’ as a tool, a mechanism that will subvert my artistic concerns in and on itself so that it ‘becomes’ the locus of my practice – the locus *is* potentiality; no more, no less.

COUNTERING RESTRICTIVE MODALITIES IN ART PRODUCTION: THE POTENTIAL OF SUBVERSION

In this section I turn to the field of human geography as a means of seeking an alternate perspective on those restrictive modalities that have conditioned my lived experiences. I examine how similar restrictive modalities are seemingly commonplace across a range of environments and how they have been met with resistance and subsequently countered by certain acts of subversion in order to produce positive outcomes. I must first point out that whilst I will refer later to theories drawn from the sub-discipline of carceral geography it is important to note that the primary motivation for this research is *not* driven by my background of teaching in the prison service. My experience of it, as well as an analysis of discussions I have had with prison-inmates, has served *only* as a source of material for reflective data creation; however, I acknowledge that I must remain highly circumspect when drawing any apparent corollary between our respective experiences of restrictive modalities. My aim here is to add further support to case that Mezzzone is a viable conceptual and practical alternative for *my* practice outputs - as well as leading to a useful contribution to sculptural practice more generally - and one which *resists* and *subverts* the restrictive conditions in which I ordinarily operate.

One of the restrictive modalities to have had a profound effect on the way I work is the matter of practicing in small, transient, non-dedicated spaces. The practical limitations imposed by working in such cramped environments has pre-determined, for me at least, the adoption of making small, low-key and often disposable art works – which until now have generally been considered as simple models for future development should the opportunity arise. Since this predicament is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future, I have directed this part of my research towards the possibility of adopting suitable tactics which could potentially *turn-the-table* on those feelings of restrictiveness that I have historically encountered.



Figure 31: Shaun Martin, study for: *Syntactical (A turned table turning on a turntable)* 2014. Wooden occasional table, turntable. 59 x 39.5 x 35 cm.

Syntactical (above), is the result of reflecting on the idea of potentiality and the problem of how I might counter the restrictive modalities that have historically conditioned my practice outputs. Taking literally the commonplace saying of *turning the tables* - meaning to turn “a position of disadvantage into one of advantage”³⁵¹ - I have inverted (or turned) a wooden table, whose vertical stand has been turned on a lathe, and mounted it upon a piece of revolving (music) equipment - the turntable. Effectively, I have simultaneously subverted the conventional and perhaps restricted purpose intended for each object; thus, by combining these singular objects, I have designated an alternative collective application for them. Although this work is indicative of the scope of my practice outputs and remains outside the direct remit for this particular project, nonetheless it provided a visual point of focus and informs an important conceptual development for it; namely the act of subversion.

Restrictive modalities in the context of the everyday

Of course there are other examples where notions of restrictive modalities permeate the ‘everyday’ places with which the majority of us engage and are situated in. Familiarity of location is an expansive development in one’s sense of meaningful place, but at the same time they are also places compressed through one’s sense of uncertainty towards them. They become places where the simultaneity of compression and expansion occurs. People’s attachment to place is always fluid³⁵² claims Proshansky (et al, 1983) and different emotional responses to place fluctuate according to

how alternate meanings become embedded in them, writes Tuan.³⁵³ According to Berman the street is an example in the expansive network of public spaces in which we negotiate a sense of self-identity through our presentation and performance in it.³⁵⁴ Alternatively, it can be equally become a compressed space where meaningfulness is simultaneously unpredictable; a site where feelings of restrictiveness is embodied in a sense of “uncertainty and danger at every turn”³⁵⁵ according to Flynn; yet it simultaneously creates unexpected “provocation and arousal”³⁵⁶ claims Sennett. Clearly evident in local communities are the “close knit social relationships” which, enabled by support structures and camaraderie, establishes a “common identity” for its inhabitants.³⁵⁷ This inclusivity, whilst expansive in terms of creating neighbourhoods as meaningful places, can however be countered by its capacity to constrain at the same time; “where individuality can be suppressed by the pressure to conform to a sense of community and a common local identity.”³⁵⁸ I am reminded of a very recent episode (Jan '17) in which having returned to my ‘local community’ pub, I was greeted by enquiries as to how I had enjoyed a short trip off the Isle of Wight where I live. I replied that although it was a good one, I was nevertheless glad to be home - to which the return comment came: “what do you mean ‘home’; you’re not from *here*.” Whilst my friend and I nodded our heads in mutual acknowledgement of the provocation being made, it nevertheless served to remind me that, even very locally, I remain uncertain about sharing a common identity and again I am aroused by the paradox of feeling as an insider and an outsider at the same time. In a sense, I am perhaps a type of *extrusion* formed from my surrounding environs (see study below).

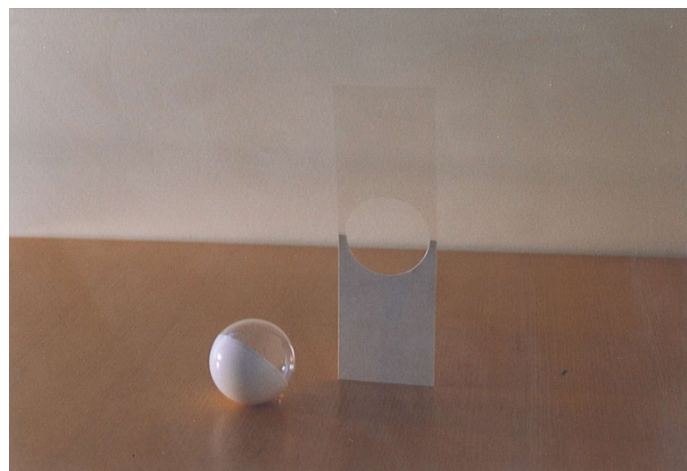


Figure 32: Shaun Martin, study for: *Extrusion* 2005 - 2010. Original lost. Card, acetate sheet, perspex sphere. Dimensions variable.

Despite the conflicts noted above, “a defining characteristic of everyday life *is* resistance”³⁵⁹ (emphasis added) according to Flynn - which is seen as a mechanism through which people actively intervene and engage with the restrictive structures that suppress their daily lives. Furthermore, de

Certeau claims that by “engaging in reiterative social and cultural practice in different spatial locations”³⁶⁰ people seek to re-negotiate and expand an otherwise compressed sense of one’s place-in-the-world. This perceived sense of compressed space might be “framed within a grid of socio-economic restraints”, yet such “mechanisms of discipline” and conformity is actively evaded by certain “tactics, creations and initiatives”³⁶¹ (adds de Certeau). Moreover, in the course of expanding place-meaning in everyday life, people manipulate and evade the defining strategies used by urban planners and politicians in determining what places and spaces are; examples here include the spatial occupation of city-dwellers by employing the simple tactics of walking the streets, talking and desiring goals.³⁶² It’s interesting to note here that running until May 2017 is an exhibition called *Please Come Back* in which twenty-six artists give an account of prison as a metaphor for the ever more closely controlled contemporary world and vice versa – the title comes from the same name given to work by the collective *Claire Fontaine*, which was “born out the artists’ thinking about the society at large as a space of imprisonment and our uncanny position in it.”³⁶³ Whilst personally not wanting to dismiss my lifestyle choices entirely, as an artist-in-transit I similarly desire some degree of resistance against the restrictive ‘mechanisms of discipline’ affected by the transient modalities of my everyday life. I too am looking at ways of intervening with the restrictive structures that I feel somehow suppresses my emergence into a wider art context. Conceptualizing the position for Mezzzone serves as a type of tactic that aims to initiate some potential for my practice.

Restrictive modalities in the context of the carceral

Whilst it is clear that any sense of restrictiveness is played out across the wider social context, it is perhaps surprising that *similar* ‘reiterative social and cultural practices’ are also affective in other quite different spatial locations outside of ordinary circulation – namely the prison environment. I turn here to the sub-discipline of carceral geography and note that in taking Holt’s view of *carceral habitus* - in which habitus means an ‘always sociospatially contextualized, nature of practice’ – Dominique Moran adds that “mass incarceration is not just ‘out there’ in media representations, political rhetoric and everyday penal functioning(s), but (is) also ‘in here’”; that is, it is negotiated in the productions and mapping of the everyday social world.³⁶⁴ It’s helpful here to recognize that prison-inmates do in fact engage in an ‘everyday social world’ albeit their habitus is located differently to civic space; but they do however similarly intervene with localized restrictive practices. They too map out their own experiences of restrictive spatialities into meaningful place. One of the ways that this mapping of place occurs lies in the agency of ‘naming’ according to Cresswell, which as a subversive gesture can “act as a bridge to the past or a break from it”.³⁶⁵ Their own interventions with restrictive modalities are the very ‘tactics, creations and initiatives’ that de

Certeau mentions and are undoubtedly calculated to “manipulate the mechanisms of discipline”³⁶⁶ within the prison environment. For example, as my discussions with student-inmates have borne witness, they have re-named their cell (from a place of incarceration and punishment) as a place either of ‘solitude and quiet contemplation’, a private space as a type of ‘home’, and in some cases even re-imagining it as an art ‘studio’.³⁶⁷ This type of intervention is apparently transferrable it seems, since prison-inmates are highly mobile across the *whole* prison estate rather than remaining fixed to one specific location. This is seemingly at odds with what I imagine as a common misconception that once committed, he or she remains fixed in *the* prison as a singularity; but this is not the case in fact. According to some inmates under my tutelage they are regularly transferred at very short notice and for varying lengths of time - not only up and down the country but within individual prisons also.³⁶⁸ The important point to note here - as it relates to my practice concerns - is that tactics *can* be invented to resist variable physical and temporal disciplinary mechanisms, and they *can* also be successfully employed to counter individual *feelings* of restrictiveness since they are transferrable and commensurate with being transient.

Directing his question towards the prison as a specific type of building with its inherent ‘barriers to behaviour’, Fiddler asks about how its inhabitants might break beyond these barriers in order to “impose their own meaning on (such) a given place?”³⁶⁹ Picking up on the idea of pre-determined barriers to behaviour, a similar question could be levelled towards my own experiences of being an ‘artist-in-transit’ who is striving to create a viable and sustainable artistic practice whilst tackling the very limitations imposed upon it by the ‘everyday’ conditions encountered through transience and mobility. Certainly in my own case - and to assume the term ‘contemporary nomadic artist’ - adopting a transient lifestyle (and co-joined art-practice) has precluded the economic stability necessary to secure a dedicated studio space or the material quality and range of manufacturing facilities required for the desired final outcomes. In fact it has only been through my returning to the institution of art, and particularly its educational arm, that these required components have become available to me and activated all in one place. Indeed the very undertaking of this research degree offers exactly the same practical opportunities required by me to sustain what is considered here as an art practice still in its infancy. Of course, this is not to say at all that this scenario is in anyway an unusual paradigm for emerging artists; suffice to add that the accumulative experiences being portrayed here is being used as an analytical tool to assist in the (ongoing) comparative study about types of carceral geographies as it specifically relates to restrictive practices and art production.

On this last point I draw attention to the feminist theorist Rosi Braidotti’s declaration (2014) that her use of the ‘nomadic’ is (simply) as a ‘navigational tool’; in her case for the analysis of advanced

capitalism.³⁷⁰ It is interesting to note at this juncture Braidotti's comment that, whilst set against some views to the contrary, nomadic politics is not about being defeatist; since it offers a creative technique that is not only "continuous and coterminous with itself" but also assists in analyzing the "perverse political economy of controlled mobility and opportunism".³⁷¹ She goes on to add that the outcome is a "subject that is multiple and becoming, constantly in flux"³⁷² - a condition considered not too dissimilar to the subject being explored herein and one envisaged for the 'continuous and coterminous' spatial field in which there is a simultaneity of compression and expansion of restrictive modalities. It is an outcome which is mobile and transient *and* static and fixed at the same time. Furthermore, Braidotti considers that employing the tool of nomadic politics allows for "opening up space for alternatives (by) working from within the belly of the beast", and by doing so, it allows us to undo or re-territorialize the very structure about which we are attempting to identify with and affirm our own sense of belonging.³⁷³ At this point I can acknowledge that the impetus for this very research project had its origins in the self-reflexivity of my own experiences of mobility and also, in seeking affirmation of my own sense of being-in-the-world with an allegiance to the emerging phenomenon of 'contemporary nomadism'. With that in mind, I can only concur unreservedly with Braidotti's sentiment that: "I am of this world; there is no other".³⁷⁴ Nevertheless contextually, the legitimacy of Mezzone must be sought by venturing within the 'belly of the beast'; that is the art-institutional framework, and for that I look at the precedents set by other artists in the next chapter; namely Gustav Metzger, Mehmat Ali Uysal and Michael Asher.

CHAPTER 5

REGISTERING THE TRANS-POSITIONAL ART OBJECT (MEZZONE) WITH THE INSTITUTION OF ART

As noted earlier in the introduction to this thesis, each of the outcomes generated from undertaking this research journey has emerged from making a comparative study of what I have come to observe as different types of power-relations across a range of situations; which, in pertaining to my personal experiences of mobilities, spatialities and temporalities, have manifested as perceptible forms of constraint for my practice. Having interrogated these issues and thereafter arriving at the conceptual premise underpinning the Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzzone), it is necessary of course to ground it in contextual precedent in order to register my claim to an original contribution.

Beforehand however, I note again that Rosi Braidotti uses nomadic politics as a tool for creating spaces for alternatives (by) working from within the belly of the beast; which in turn, allows for the undoing or re-territorializing of the very structure about which we are attempting to identify with; and affirm our own sense of belonging.³⁷⁵ Similarly, whilst attempting to reject types of power-relations, the rationale for the Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzzone) relies on an affirmation of authenticity from the art-institutional framework (academia) to establish its *own* sense of belonging to it. This type of paradoxical co-dependency between an art-practice that pushes the boundaries of the contextual framework upon which it is wholly reliant is not unusual however. Imagining that *any* challenge to a power structure is measured across a kind of 'scale of subversion' – and believing that my proposition will be suitably measured accordingly by art-institutional politics – I draw upon artistic precedent in the practices of three established artists finding (to varying degrees) particular conceptual and practical affiliations with each of them. Firstly; since I am concerned with creating 'potentiality' through the creative processes of de/re-construction I turn to Gustav Metzger who; in claiming that out of destruction comes creation, change and renewal, and also new creative territories; sought to articulate the subversion and rejection of power through his concept of 'auto-destructive art'. Secondly; since I am interested in subverting traditional modes of display alongside the issues of transition and positionality, and also because Mezzzone structurally alludes to the 'white cube' exhibition format, I align it with Mehmet Ali Uysal's not too dissimilar manipulations of the art-institution's actual material fabric. By undermining the 'white cube' as the iconic symbol of its ideology, Ali Uysal reveals the transient and ongoing conflict with the traditional gallery space. Finally; since I am proposing to undermine art-institutional authority – by proposing an alternative to the historical criterion of a tri-fold taxonomy of model, maquette and sculpture – whilst also using the PhD platform as a type of administrative/political tool through which to present and validate

Mezzzone's value to the wider art-institutional framework (including academia, commercial art-markets, and other artist-researchers); I refer far more comprehensively to the inspirational and extensive practice of Michael Asher as an exemplar of institutional critique. He exposes in multiple ways the extent to which institutional power-relations are indeed widespread by showing that the production of knowledge is inextricably connected to the physical and temporal contexts in which it is generated. Asher uses the very administrative and political framework of the institution to symbolically invert the explicitly or implicitly applied (restrictive) conditions. In doing so, he exposes how the wider institution manipulates the meaning of art and how market driven agendas can significantly undermine the conceptual basis on which an artwork is fundamentally premised.

Effectively, it appears that Metzger, Ali Uysal and Asher have all enacted perceptible types of simultaneous *trans*-positionality similar to my own; they have similarly entered a perceived middle-zone, a space in-between, a liminal space. They have fully engaged with and subverted the (art-contextualized) insider-outsider paradox and in having ventured outside of its (restrictive) authority, they have necessarily had to return to the inside of the art-institution; at the *same* time. In each case there is the perceived 'continuous and coterminous' issue of *becoming* an artist and *belonging* to the art establishment.

Gustav Metzger and *Auto-Destructive - Auto-Creative Art*

The Mezzzone concept is a kind of destructive act which aims to re-negotiate and re-territorialize sculptural nomenclature with the intention of constructing new and unknown potentialities for my practice. This idea of generating change by simultaneously creating renewal and growth out of destruction is similarly allied to the practice concerns of Gustav Metzger.

Metzger has also had to contend with the effects of upheaval and transience. As a refugee and political activist, he developed the artistic concepts of Auto-Destructive Art (1959) and Auto-Creative Art (1961); both of which were borne from his experiences of the devastating destruction caused by the Second World War, and his subsequent exploration of "destruction as a precondition for creation and growth."³⁷⁶ Metzger said that his earlier works were "to do with rejecting *power*"³⁷⁷ (emphasis added) and although initially made to "decay and disintegrate over time"³⁷⁸, very soon after they would be superseded by other works which took the idea of destruction as a generative process instead; one which was auto-creative at the *same* time. Tate curator, Valentina Ravaglia writes that the destructive act in the context of art is seen as "a precondition for creation and growth" and since it leads to positive "change and renewal", Metzger was able to confront society

about its “destructive uses of technology”³⁷⁹. His *Acid-action painting* and *Construction with glass*; both of which were designed to either corrode or disintegrate with unknown outcomes; serve as examples of his working strategy here. It is this perceived association with ambivalence to holding a specific form (positionality), whilst commenting on wider social, cultural and political issues, which is particularly relevant here. Similarly, whilst commenting on restrictive modalities experienced more broadly, the premise of Mezzzone is based on rejecting historical nomenclature (power) and being ambivalent to its position as model, maquette and/or sculpture.

As is also the case with Mezzzone, it seems with Metzger’s combined destructive-creative act that once again the idea of simultaneity has materialized here too in the exploration of his *own* particular concerns; it would lead him to declare that “art will enter new territories that are inherently creative.”³⁸⁰ Interestingly for me, Metzger also makes reference to the object-subject paradox (referred to earlier in chapter 4) by writing that “self-destructive painting, sculpture, and construction is (sic) a total unity of idea, site, form, colour, method, and timing of the disintegrative process”.³⁸¹ Furthermore, Adrian Searle writes that whilst Metzger “tore down the old to build the new” he in fact “didn’t want to destroy art”; instead his work was “an anti-capitalist gesture against global corporate power and domination, rather than simply a formal gambit.”³⁸² Whilst Mezzzone appears to be deliberately undermining the canon of established sculptural classification, it is a creative (re)action to certain restrictive pre-conditions which sets out to generate new territories for *my* practice (at least); through which new opportunities for renewal and growth of it will potentially emerge. Since I do not foresee any significant change to my current (restrictive) working conditions which; whilst not unusual for most ‘emerging’ artists I expect; it adds further to the question as to the extent to which I can manipulate those (pre)conditions of working in-transit to my best advantage. It seemingly becomes a matter of power and degrees of control over it. Similarly with Metzger, subversion serves as the mechanism through which to ‘sculpt’ those historicized events experienced by me by both yielding to and taking control of those perceived restrictive modalities that have resulted from them. With that in mind the following passage seems entirely prescient here:

“The fascination of Metzger’s work lies somewhere in (the) tension between control and release of control....there are limitations to scientific processes of visualization and analysis in informing us about the core motivations or desires we might hold closest to ourselves. As Metzger described aspects of his childhood and how Judaism has been the epicentre of his life since boyhood, it is inevitable that one might consider perhaps at a deeper level the historical event which becomes ‘cut out’ or sculpted.”³⁸³

Of course Metzger's personal experiences with types of 'power' struggles are quite different to mine; yet both deal with perceptible forms of oppression and attempting to control pervading power structures. The point here is that it is in the controlling of each set of experiences that has become the subject which has been sculpted. Metzger subverts the act of destruction to generate *places* for a new act of (unknown) construction and - I think not too differently - I have subverted certain restrictive modalities to also 'sculpt' *places* for (unknown) potential. For me, the nature of these potential new territories can only be speculative at this point in time, since I am *only* referring here to the *possibility* of potentiality as the *material* for thinking, making and distributing art works. Therefore, in addition to the possibility of increasing my exposure and access to a range of applications across the wider art context, with both the practical *object* and the academic *subject*, Mezzzone may well go on to stimulate debate about *how* the 'territories' of idea-making *can* be generated and tested; and also how and where those ideas can be disseminated thereafter.

Mehmet Ali Uysal and Peel

The idea of fulfilling the need for originality whilst exposing the co-dependent economies of art and contemporary life has also been of interest to Mehmet Ali Uysal – an artist I have met and reflected upon (with his use of the architectonic) during the course of my research here. Ali Uysal alludes to institutional power by altering the eponymous 'white cube' as the iconic symbol of its ideology; by literally venturing *into* the very fabric of its interior with *Peel* (2013). By 'peeling' back its walls as if it was like 'skin' and placing it into the gallery's internal space, he reveals the *transient* and *ongoing* "conflict with the gallery space" and, by destroying the "compulsory perception of a perfect space for display", he declares that it is not a "sacred entity" but is instead simply like any other.³⁸⁴ Interestingly, the question of what constitutes a perfect space for display has been embodied within the mezzzone object; since it physically references the conventional white cube exhibition format by containing within it my (artistic) interventions. In claiming that the gallery space is in fact "a living entity"³⁸⁵, Ali Uysal's tactic effectively serves to interrupt aspects of the institution's wider power-base - however explicit or implicit it at first appears - by drawing our attention to the restrictive nature of both its physical and temporal framework. In this respect it is not at all dissimilar to that employed by his predecessor, Michael Asher (see below); when four decades earlier he created work by employing the "symbolic inversion of an explicit or implicit institutional condition"³⁸⁶; that is by *simultaneously* revealing (expanding) what is ordinarily concealed (compressed) - see again Figure 22.

Ali Uysal's position is similarly reflected by the art initiative *Beirut* whose workshop at the *steirischer herbst festival* (2014), sought to "reconceive the institution - including its identities, resources and economies - as a fictitious entity."³⁸⁷ They argue that art institutions must re-imagine themselves as open works that are constantly moving if they are to remain relevant, responsive and extant within their time of "fast-altering economic, political and social realities."³⁸⁸ In other words, the very political framework that currently embodies the art institution must extend its sphere of influence if it is to retain its position as the preeminent broker of that power. In that respect; and in order to validate my claim for an original contribution which also reflects existing but increasingly mobile realities; I am relying on the institution (academia) to retain its' influential position.

In addition to this, an *exhibition* (per se) of mezzone art works would constitute a paradoxical realization of them *beyond* the state of potentiality in which they are intentionally positioned. In order to circumvent this apparent contradiction I propose an alternative form of dissemination to the formal exhibition format, one that would see *only* the *display* of a small number of sample mezzone art works as a type of (variable) 'non-exhibition' of them – see appendix 5. In this way, and rather than being taken as a regressive type of action, the gesture of manipulating display formats becomes an act of continued subversion; one set in precedent by the affiliated practice of Ali Uysal.

Furthermore, since this research is an ongoing enterprise, and in order to indicate this, I have included below a study for *Push* (2017-ongoing) which for the first time sees an expansion beyond the constraints of the white box used in all the other mezzone objects. In (re)considering the insider-outsider conundrum, it serves as a visual means of connecting the responses to the co-dependent power-relations in Ali Uysal's manipulations of the *internal* structures of the 'white-cube' exhibition space with Asher's manipulations of its' *external* structures and beyond it (see next section).



Figure 33: Shaun Martin, *Push* 2017 - ongoing. MDF, glass. 52.5 x 22 x 22 cm.

Michael Asher and *Institutional Critique*

The development of Mezzone reflects my formative experiences of observing the simultaneous processes of de-construction and re-construction of physical (architectural) objects; the combination of which not only reveals the material sub-structure but also exposes the conceptual structure – as its wider power-base. After all, a building's (re)design is only an idea materialized through a process of negotiated power relations involving multiple entities; including: the client, the architect/draftsman, the building contractor, the financier, local planning authorities and the legal profession. As it is for the three artists mentioned in this chapter, any project's success requires full participation of all interested parties. This is similarly so for Mezzone. Whilst I consider that Mezzone's trans-positionality reflects a contemporary global society with its interconnected economic, political and cultural structures, its resolution is reliant on being morphed by and subsumed within the wider art-establishment hierarchy; this includes the university's submission criteria, the internal verification procedures and external examination processes, and by future academic and/or commercial entities thereafter. Its potentiality *is* its capital; its asset. In that sense the issue of claiming and validating originality in the production and transference of knowledge becomes a political one. Emmelhainz expressed in her paper *Art Under the New World Order* that; "art has joined the economy of knowledge and become subject to the culture industry, as it has become an asset on the one hand, and has fulfilled its avant-garde potential having morphed

everywhere to become embedded into everyday life, on the other.”³⁸⁹ Nonetheless, and judging on its previous and extensive record of subjugation of difference and change into its fold, any future challenges to the institution of art will and must necessarily be subsumed by it; no matter how an anamorphosis of its underlying power structure occurs. After all, without the dominant underbelly of the institution there could never be any critique of it in any case. The point being made here is simply that, despite it being an ongoing process of (re)negotiation, the power structure remains fully extant.

Exposing the power relations proliferating institutional contexts has been of major concern for a number of artists associated with the genre of Institutional Critique that emerged around the 1970s, as was the case for Michael Asher until his death in 2012. Described by the artist and writer Michael Baer as “the most influential artist of his generation”³⁹⁰, Asher held the view that our understanding of works of art is conditioned by the practices and spaces that galleries or museums use in their exhibition of them, and that by combining various methods of interpretation, display and publicity, they exercise a specific power over the presentation of art and therefore manipulate its meaning.³⁹¹ Asher firmly believed that “no individual art object has a universal meaning, independent of its institutional context”,³⁹² and throughout his career he set out to expose the mechanism that exists between works of art and the institutional framework. By using the very institution itself in its various guises as his ‘medium’, Asher “called attention to the architectural, design, or administrative strategies of the organizations that present art, and help to control or shape its significance.”³⁹³



Figure 34: Michael Asher *Untitled* 1991³⁹⁴

Similarly, with Mezzzone’s reliance on the subversion of an existing system of art classification, Asher’s 1991 installation work *Untitled* (above) *subverts* sculpture’s traditional use - as a monument to events - by replacing the “traditional grandeur of water fountains (with) an ironically monumentalized fragment of any banal administrative environment (the office water-

dispenser/fountain).”³⁹⁵ Presented as an outdoor sculpture, Asher exemplifies his often adopted strategy of what has been referred to the “relocation of a-priori elements”; which in turn serves to engage another of his artistic strategies in the “logical or symbolic inversion of an explicit or implicit institutional condition” - according to the artist and critic Allan Sekula.³⁹⁶ Similarly, the transpositional status advocated in the Mezzone concept is logically premised on relocating separate a-priori elements (institutional classifications) to form one collective and unified symbolic identity.



Figure 35: Michael Asher *Installation at Pomona* 1970³⁹⁷

At the 2011 exhibition *It Happened at Pomona: Art at the Edge of Los Angeles 1969–1973*, based on his ‘landmark’ installation in 1970 (above)³⁹⁸, Asher created a work which reflected his view that the recognizable “shift in artists’ approach to creating work” offered the potential to transform “how art functioned in the museum.”³⁹⁹ Furthermore, by de/re-constructing the gallery’s interior space to introduce noise and light from the street outside, he brought to it ‘experiential elements’ which he considered “fundamental to a meaningful work of art.”⁴⁰⁰ Similarly, it is through my own reconfiguring of the experiential elements ordinarily attributed to the model-maquette-sculpture relationship that is fundamental to the meaningfulness attributed to the Mezzone concept. Asher’s installation provides another important affiliation for my own practice here; particularly in relation to issues about the reception of various production values in an artwork. He exposes the audience’s complicity in this by directing them to consider “the complex, subtle, unexpectedly beautiful nature of their visual landscape”⁴⁰¹ beyond the constraints of the gallery walls. In doing so, he revealed certain institutional structures which, in referencing the “often hidden conventions that surround(s) art”⁴⁰², included a specific ‘hidden convention’ in the form of the public’s collusion in determining how art is viewed, used and valued. Asher was adept at bringing to the fore “the larger discourses that inform the production of art – be it an aesthetic object or a system of exchange” – by challenging viewers to re-consider their thoughts on what actually makes an artwork and how it

functions as part of a wider social context.⁴⁰³ This particular skill, according to the art historian Marie Shurkus, “cemented the placement of Asher’s work within the discourse of Institutional Critique.”⁴⁰⁴

Additionally, the particularly monumental architectural intervention of his 2008 installation (see below) at the Santa Monica Museum of Art (SMMoA), not only further emphasizes Asher’s view that meaningfulness is brought to art with the experience of it, but importantly for me - according to the art critic Christopher Knight - it is a gesture in which Asher “grant(s) privilege to the art idea over the object.”⁴⁰⁵ In proposing the case for Mezzzone, I am also placing greater emphasis on the underlying idea itself. Furthermore, art historian Miwon Kwon said of its skeletal form that Asher’s work here described “the temporariness of the architecture of temporary exhibitions”⁴⁰⁶; in doing so it served as an extension of Asher’s practice by his continual exposure of how galleries and museums interpret and display art.

[Note: Based on expanding the two-dimensionality of exhibition floor plans, this particular installation of Asher’s provided me the impetus to reconsider my study for *Mind-map*; and thereafter projecting a potential three dimensional development of it as a kind of experiential topography of this research project (see the addendum to appendix 1)].



Figure 36: Michael Asher *Installation at Santa Monica Museum of Art 2008* ⁴⁰⁷

Adding to Kwon’s observations above, this specific work certainly suggests a discourse about *institutional* transience and mobility; which must raise about degrees of (its) permanence – not only in terms of the specific locations of individual galleries and museums but also in relation to the efficacy of the entire art institutional framework as a type of hierarchal power structure. If the institution of art (in all its manifestations) both influences and reflects wider cultural developments, could it not then be considered to exist in a perpetual state of flux by having to constantly change and reinvent itself as a reflexive function to societal developments more generally? It appears that a

type of restrictive mobility (power relation) is paradoxically at play here also. The institutional power brokers cannot ignore wider issues about transience nor their need to constantly mobilize to reflect, record and respond to (any) change. They must continue exercising proactive strategies in order to keep abreast of the most recent artistic developments and thus maintain their relevance and authority as promoters of culture. Reiterating an earlier point by *Beirut*, that the institution's relevance (if not indeed its very survival) continues to require a strategic trajectory based on consistently moving-with-the-times is indicative of its need to constantly explore and reveal any of its restrictive proclivities; however latent it may appear to be. That is, "to stay relevant and responsive, institutions cannot afford to be hemmed in by normative conceptions of what an institution really is, or has to be."⁴⁰⁸

In establishing a further (nuanced) affiliation, one final point here is that Asher often employed what the curator James Rondeau simply called the strategy of "removal"⁴⁰⁹; or reiterating Sekula's much more elaborate referral to the strategic "subtraction of a priori elements"⁴¹⁰. One such example of this technique occurred at Galleria Toselli, Milan (1973; see below) which saw Asher sandblasting the very architectural fabric of the gallery's immaculate walls to expose an underlying layer of brown plaster. Rather than acting as a space entrenched with the "conventions of display" the gallery now became like a construction site; one which Victor Burgin later described as indicative of (the later) Situational Aesthetics since Asher's gesture saw a "shift in focus from material effects toward a concern for the more immaterial effects of content."⁴¹¹ One might surmise equally that Asher is simply drawing attention to the transient nature of things, including hierarchal structures. The point here is that comparable to architectural structures, sculptural structures (including its' nomenclature) are not only equally 'mobile' as a result of the manipulation of their physical qualities, but so too are the political, social, cultural and economic purposes which they are variously intended to reflect. This is similarly the case intended for Mezzzone.



Figure 37: Michael Asher *Installation at Galleria Toselli 1973*⁴¹²

This (extended) case study has served to show that Michael Asher's practice is an exemplar of carceral analysis, irrespective of the fact that the artist nor those who have written about his work has never referred to it in such terms. Although beginning as an approach to re-defining modernity, Institutional Critique signalled the move towards "the so called 'internationalization process' and is still used in many art practices today."⁴¹³ Biljana Ciric writes that the 2013 exhibition *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back - Us and Institution, Us as Institution*, presents a 'negotiable context' which positions a multinational contingent of "artists as agents that linger between power and powerlessness."⁴¹⁴ As a platform enabling an investigation into "what an institution is and how we institute", it also sought to challenge the understanding of an institution as merely a museum or a gallery, leading furthermore to an examination of the "power structures, institutional protocols, and the role of the market and capitalism in art."⁴¹⁵ Although Asher's suggestions have sometimes "run counter to the institution's own interests", Rondeau noted that in doing so, Asher's insights would also provide a 'useful irony' simply because of the necessary "collaboration with the institutions under scrutiny"; and furthermore, it would function as a 'catalyst' for "changes in attitudes, perceptions and even policies"⁴¹⁶ within its overall carceral framework. This research project not only addresses the carceral mechanisms underpinning my practice and its subversive output, but in seeking to expand perceptions about what an artwork is and can do; I am intentionally subjecting both to the scrutiny of academic and public opinion (politics). As a function of its carceral structure, the institution of art has historically adopted many new developments perceived as challenges to its authority. With that in mind, it is fully anticipated that the Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzzone) will be similarly subsumed as another extension of a naturally occurring metamorphosis if its' entire framework. In doing so, and not unlike the abovementioned artists, there is the active engagement with the 'continuous and coterminous' issue of *becoming* an artist and *belonging* to the art establishment.

ADDENDUM (2018): At this juncture, it clearly became apparent on further reading of Asher's practice that power relations are similarly prevalent in all kinds of institutional frameworks (however applied), if only as part of what Foucault identified as the 'carceral continuum'.⁴¹⁷ With this in mind, I began to (re)consider other projects which, although they are extensions of this one, remain works-in-progress and are outside of the specific remit of this particular thesis. However, as further indications of the scope of my practice, I have included in appendix 3, *The PTV Project* (2014 - ongoing) and in appendix 4, *Studio en Valise* (2000 - ongoing); both of which respond to countering

restrictive modalities in art-production. Although having personally worked within the penal institution for several years and recognizing that it is exemplary as a place of carcerality, it does not monopolize the condition however. It is in the broader social context in which we all participate, that bears witness to “the governing ideologies of (the) great systems of control (since) we are, and have been for centuries, living in a grand carceral continuum.”⁴¹⁸ Foucault conceived this expression to explain the practice “by which the carceral or punitive techniques of the prison gradually gained circulation, thus seeping into the wider social milieu as a whole”.⁴¹⁹ Included in an expansive definition of carceral space; proffered by researchers in the (new) field of carceral geography; are those “forms of confinement that burst internment structures and deliver carceral effects without physical immobilization, such as electronic monitoring, surveillance and securitized public spaces”.⁴²⁰ Adopting these developments as precedent, current research into the complexity of carceral geographies paves the way for using an examination of the prison system as a tool to analyse other spatial frameworks through which projections of other carceral spatialities can be put forward (including non-dedicated, transient studio spaces for example). By comparing certain inherent relationships within the penal context, it is possible to reveal, record and respond to the carceral nature of similar ‘governing ideologies’; namely, in this case, in an examination of the institution of art and with certain interventions created by those participating within it.

CONCLUSION

In recalling the earlier anecdote used at the beginning of this thesis, I have in a way come full circle; as my painting lecturer had indeed predicted many years ago. I did of course return to my practice and, in having done so; it has also led me to question whether in fact I had ever left it at all. At the very least, I can claim to have arrived at a greater understanding of myself within my artwork and how I conduct my practice. Undeniably influenced by the multifarious experiences and conditions outlined in my introduction, I have realized through this critical exploration that I cannot separate them from my practice; I have in a sense, also ‘become’ my practice. By extension, I have developed my own sense of ‘belonging’ to what (for now) has culminated in this ‘live’ document – one which is not only ongoing but, based on its current trajectory, is fully expected to generate further potentialities.

This of course, leads me to the following question: What *is* my contribution to practice-led research in art? I have certainly contributed to the continuing academic-artistic discourse perhaps mostly by asking questions of it; rather than providing any specifically definitive answers as such. Yet; that is *also* to say that in a series of questions, each question ‘becomes’ a type of answer to the previous one and thus prompting the next question and so on: What is art practice? Where is the practice of art? How might it evolve? How might it reflect ever-evolving lived experiences? How might it respond to increasing globalization and to emerging and established markets? What can it contribute to continually emerging theories (from physical geography to human geography and its sub-discipline carceral geography; from mobility to motility; and so on)? Indeed more questions follow still: How will art-practice keep pace with the apparently increasing phenomena of contemporary nomadism? Will it have to become more mobile; more transient and fluid? Furthermore; in a future of yet unknowns – of unknown political, economic, social and cultural structures – how might art practices respond to and record these new, rapidly changing developments? For example; it is anticipated that there will be human exploration to Mars and the settlement of space stations on it within the next 20-30 years⁴²¹ – yet this generates ever more questions: What kinds of relationships will emerge in these new and different power structures? And what of the offspring of those space pioneers who will probably never know what *this* world is actually like; will they think it alien and possibly ‘backward’ thinking? How will art-practice and theory evolve in these newly projected geographies? What kinds of creative reflections/responses will emerge from these not so very distant potentialities?

Perhaps, it is simply a matter of anticipation and preparation. Art has to be prepared to evolve by *always* being: adaptable; flexible; progressive; and rapidly responsive to newly-emerging contexts.

To remain relevant, art *must* continually examine and challenge itself; its constraints, its framework and its underlying power-relations. It *must* be open to its own potential. Over a comparatively short period of time within the extended art-historical framework, access to works of art is no longer confined by traditional power-structures; such was the sole preserve of religious institutions, stately homes, museums and galleries. Indeed, we have moved on a long way from these now canonized exhibition formats. In addition to them, there has been a rapid and expansive trend towards making art more easily accessible to an emerging global audience via the use of newer, multivalent modes of *display*. The advent of art fairs, biennales and pop-up events that emulate the canonized forms of production values and representation, exemplifies this trajectory. By reflecting and responding to these recent developments, it is not unreasonable to expect that artwork *and* art practice should also evolve correspondingly and exponentially; similarly capable of *becoming* adaptable and transferable across a range of platforms - at the *same* time. One way of establishing its own sense of *belonging* to this ever-increasing pace of change and renewal, is for art and practice to continually resist, (re)negotiate and subvert already existing territories by developing their capacity for transpositional potentialities. To that end, as noted in chapter 2, such a 'nomadic turn' in both practice and output would contribute to an art of the world for this world.

Since I am inextricably entwined with the singularity of my practice - which in turn is undeniably linked to the larger collective set of activities engaged by humankind - it is important that personal subjectivities (however remotely derived) are critically examined *because* of their inherent entanglement with the continuing problem of defining meaningful place; including nuanced ideas about *potential* emplacements within emerging geographies; and ultimately with defining identity also. As observed in chapter 3, it is important that this knowledge is disseminated across a broad spectrum of contexts so as to elucidate further on the millennial-old philosophical and artistic preoccupation about articulating our sense of being-in-the-world. This is especially so in a contemporary paradigm which is increasingly populated by those engaging with (and marginalized by) the emerging phenomenon of multivalent mobilities. For me, the particular conundrum has been in identifying the point at which I recognize myself contextually as an insider and/or an outsider; and subsequently with (re)negotiating the simultaneously inherent biases therein – due to the further dilemma of either having a subjective standpoint or lacking an objective one. It has led me to (re)alter my viewpoint about the interconnectedness of identity, mobility and place-making by employing an oblique inversion of the 'Trobriand Islander' problem also mentioned in chapter 3. Whilst entering further into that (problematic) space, I began to identify with each new (inside) point of arrival; thus realizing that its' trajectory must necessarily create multiple new (outside) points of departure at the same time. In that sense, the journey (altogether) simultaneously becomes the

singular object made up of a collection of subjective insider-outsider experiences. It simultaneously becomes both a compressed and an expanded state of being (see study below).

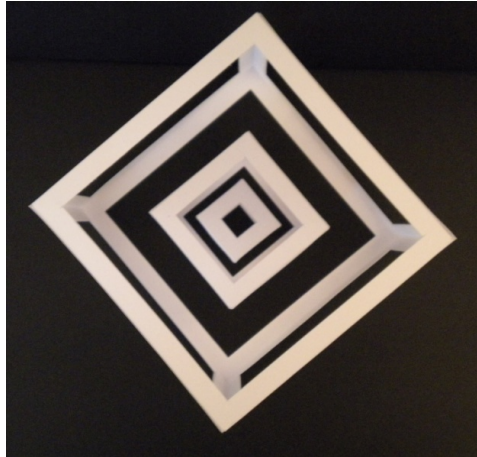


Figure 38: Shaun Martin, study for: *The Trobriand Islander (top view)* 2012. Card. 7 x 7 x 7 cm.

Had I not interrogated my penchant for using the language of binary referents (here-there; this-that; etc.) within my preparatory studies; which, alongside my investigation in chapter 3 into theories about heterotopias, liminality, hyphenated living and cognitive landscapes; I could not have conceived the physical manipulation of the hyphen as a type of ‘structural’ middle-zone (latterly; *Mezzone*). Furthermore; this very three-dimensional expansion of the compressed two-dimensional written form of the hyphen symbol itself (–), has not only generated a space in which to ‘house’ my artistic responses to theory and anecdote, but – since they are (subversive) interventions within it – they have also generated what I have termed ‘esoteric landscapes’. All of this in turn, has provided a point of focus around which a sense of becoming has been formulated. That is; whilst beginning this research with some reservations about my place as an artist (belonging) and the trajectory of my practice (becoming), I can now claim to have fully entered into that apparently negotiable space of the liminal threshold. By now having contested it and ventured through it, I have emerged into a new place by firmly establishing my current position as being firmly grounded in the historic art-academic timeline.

By constantly reflecting upon how this objective might be achieved, and by way of reiteration here; I fully embraced the idea that: “the artist-as-researcher distinguishes himself from other artists by taking it upon himself to make statements about his thinking process and the production of work (such that,) the matter and medium function as the instruments in the research or thinking process.”⁴²² In the meantime, I have been mindful of my complicity in the accompanying constraints that I felt had defined what Susan Lok (2017) described as a “complexly-woven artistic-existential

positionality”⁴²³. In order to extricate myself from these feelings of restrictiveness, I concluded that I needed to formulate a strategic methodology based upon my lifelong inclination for grazing upon and gleaning from variously sourced anecdotal and theoretical information. In doing so; and grounding it within the ongoing debate about practice-led research; I have presented Pragmatic Selection as an original and generative approach to research in art practice in chapter 1. By extending the grazing/gleaning approach to accumulating knowledge – from the personal context to the artistic – it has permitted me considerable autonomy in the creative application of those personally experienced subjectivities relating to ‘becoming’ and ‘belonging’. By taking ownership of my practice concerns; whilst also gleaning from mobility theories examined in chapter 2; I have adopted the attitude of non-fixity to any one particular issue - as place and/or identity – thus allowing me to more fully interrogate, subvert and manipulate the complexities formulating my previous perceptions of a restricted and marginalized development as an artist.

Consequently, I have since answered in the affirmative, the question I had raised earlier in my introduction to this project. That is; since concluding from my observations of the building industry – that all kinds of spaces are potentially made transitory through the processes of (de/re-) construction – it is indeed *possible* to transpose similar processes within the context of art; such that I *have* now created a comparable situation of trans-positionality in it. Furthermore; by simultaneously grazing upon interrelated spatial and mobility theory and linking elements gleaned from both, I have undoubtedly established the following assertion:

Where human geography provides both the idea of the *trans*-national subject whose position is grounded in a specific spatial-temporal *liminal* register; *and* also the idea of the contemporary nomad whose position is without fixity to a *specific* place; *and* where spatial theory provides the idea of hybrid, liminal and heterotopic places: THEN; a *triangulation* of those very same ideas can in fact materialize in a similar trans-positional *state* being observed and applied in both sculpture and sculptural practice.

Derived from a self-reflexive criticality of the restrictive modalities which have perceptibly affected my art-practice; it has altogether culminated in the original ‘idea’ of the *Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzone)*. In chapter 4, I have defined and grounded the concept in both historic and contemporary ideas of simultaneity. As such, it is both object *and* subject and finds established precedent in the notion of the subjectile. Furthermore, by pro-actively seeking to address my sensitivities about a perceived sense of constraint, I have examined how similar ideas have been resolved elsewhere; not only in the context of commonplace ‘everyday’ situations, but also as experienced by more

marginalized populations within the context of the carceral; specifically by prison-inmates. This revealed that by developing resilience to them, different types of restrictive modalities are contested through various forms of resistance, and *can* be, in fact, effectively countered through engaging the agency of subversion – the act of ‘naming’ being just one example here. By subverting that which was perceived to be (al)ready-made within my practice outputs, an original concept emerged which not only meets my objective for a new development within my practice, but it does so without the need to alter my (current) restrictive working conditions – including the scale of the objects ordinarily made; or their low-key material and craft-like qualities. Positioned on the margins of established art categorization; the historical tri-fold taxonomy of model, maquette and sculpture as singular classifications has been subverted to form a new, alternate collective positionality for them. That is: the Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzzone) *is* the model *and* the maquette *and* the sculpture at the *same* time.

Again in chapter 4, I have shown that I have mobilized myself artistically and by going further inside the geography of my practice, I have not only engaged with contemporary theories about ‘material thinking’ but I have also intervened with extant power-relations by enacting a type of challenge to art-institutional authority. Consequently, I have navigated myself to a position which has expanded my motility; that is my potential movement across an increasingly multifarious and globalized art-market. However in doing so, I necessarily had to return to the ‘belly-of-the-beast’ in order to authenticate that very same process of *becoming*; in as much as I have had to return to the art-institutional framework to concretize my newly acquired sense of *belonging* to it. Subsequently, another form of place-making occurred within chapter 5 which, in the acknowledgement of Institutional Critique as a creative tactic and its analysis, has further verified the originality of my contribution to the wider artistic-academic discourse. The conceptual premise of the Transpositional Art-object (Mezzzone) has been underpinned by the subversive tactics similarly employed by Gustav Metzger, Mehmet Ali Uysal and Michael Asher respectively. In the first instance, Metzger’s concept of ‘auto destructive art’ articulated his subversion and rejection of power; he (re)claimed *new* artistic territories though creating change and renewal by transforming what was (al)ready-made by him also. Thereafter, Ali Uysal’s manipulations of the art-institution’s actual material fabric undermined the eponymous ‘white cube’ *display* format – as the iconic symbol of its ideology – and thus revealed the transient and ongoing conflict with the traditional gallery space. Finally; as the founder at large and an exemplar of institutional critique; Asher revealed in multiple ways the extent to which institutional power-relations are indeed widespread. He showed that the production of knowledge is inextricably connected to the physical and temporal contexts in which it is generated.

By using its administrative and political framework to symbolically invert the explicitly or implicitly applied (restrictive) conditions, he exposed how the wider institution manipulates the meaning of art and how market driven agendas can significantly undermine the conceptual basis on which an artwork is fundamentally premised. Altogether, these three artists have effectively enacted perceptible types of simultaneous *trans*-positionality; they have similarly entered a perceived liminal space; a middle-zone; a space in-between their practice and the art-institution itself. They have fully engaged with and subverted the (art-contextualized) insider-outsider paradox and, in having ventured outside of its (restrictive) authority, they have had to – as I have done also – necessarily and simultaneously return to the inside of the art-institution.

Whilst I have undoubtedly undergone a creative process of *trans*-formation, I have effectively remained in-transit; only now I have emerged at a different (liminal) threshold on the margins of another artistic 'landscape' defined by its *potentiality*. I will however, remain subject to the insider-outsider paradox on a personal level; a type of *Liminoid* indefinitely reflecting, recording and responding to the multiplicity of being (see study below); albeit I may or may not continue to lead such a transient lifestyle as I have done previously.



Figure 39: Shaun Martin, study for: *The Liminoid* 2010. Acetate sheet, plastic sphere, modelling board, figurine. 15.5 x 13.5 x 30 cm.

In summary; my research is led by my practice and at the same time my practice is led by my research. Ultimately, each of the practical and conceptual outcomes generated from undertaking

this research journey have emerged from making a comparative study of what I have come to observe as different types of power-relations; which, in the context of my personal experiences of mobilities, spatialities and temporalities, have manifest as perceptible forms of constraint within my practice. Through the process of pragmatically selecting information from theoretical and anecdotal source material, and alongside critical reflections about the subjectivity of them, I have drawn upon and co-opted a variety of strategies in order to (re)negotiate broader understandings of place-making. Transposing this development into the art context, I have proposed a novel and original concept which adopts the creative strategy of subversion to resist and then counter the effects of restrictive modalities on art production. Whilst appendix 5 shows examples of artworks developed herein for the potential *display* of the Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzone) in itself; what will perhaps become increasingly more significant at a later date, is the concept's potential expansion beyond its structural boundaries; as exemplified with my preparatory study for *Push* noted in chapter 5. This explorative approach to PLR has *already* contributed to other ongoing ancillary projects pertaining to wider issues about constraint and restrictiveness; as shown in appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4; they nevertheless wholly compliment the generative nature of this project in its entirety. In that sense; what was once a compressed state of constraint, now emerges as an expanded state of potential. It *becomes* capital. By claiming an original approach to research methodologies (Pragmatic Selection) and also art-production; my aim has been to *trans*-form my practice by establishing new *potentialities* for it; thus enhancing my motility and exposure to both scholarly and creative opportunities across the entire art-institutional framework. To that end, I have met my objective in the creation and *display* of an original 'idea': the Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzone) constitutes a new development in contemporary artistic-academic discourse and an original contribution to it.

APPENDIX 1

MIND-MAP

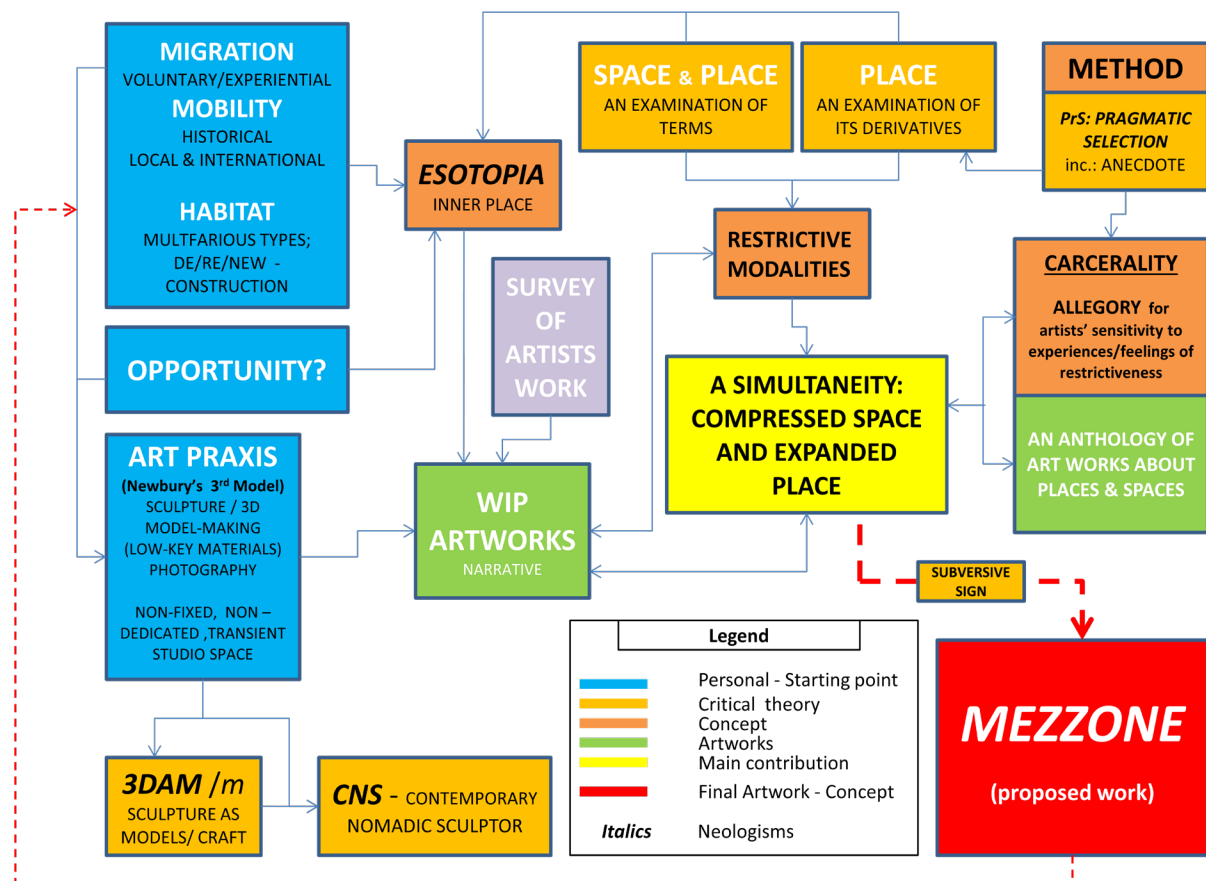


Figure 40: Shaun Martin, *Mind-map* 2012 - 2017. Computer generated image. Dimensions variable.

Addendum (2018): Being mindful here of Asher's installation at SMMoA (2008) – see Figure 18 – in which he made an interactive three-dimensional structure based on (two-dimensional) exhibition floor-plans; the above illustration may similarly serve as a type of floor-plan for a potential future installation/exhibition of multiple Trans-positional Art-objects. In addition to those already conceived throughout my research, each of the boxes within the current mind-map – and any subsequent additions made to it – could generate (other) ideas from which to conceive a specifically related Mezzone (subject/object). Reflecting further on my earlier study for *Place-making* (2013) – see Figure 18; p.62 – I envisage replacing the glass vessel (as shown) with a single Mezzone object. Furthermore, by vastly extending the network of aluminium rods (as shown) – which then terminate

at multiple points throughout the (proposed) installation - it would permit any number of other Mezzone objects to be added to a larger network of interrelated objects. If increased to human-scale and installed in a suitably sized 'white-cube' exhibition space that would permit the audience to enter and move freely through it; the installation/exhibition would not only mirror the 'interventions' already made within the current individually boxed (Mezzone) forms themselves; it would also become another form of place-making in its entirety. Altogether, the proposed (interactive) exhibition space could become a type of three-dimensional topography mapping out the co-dependent network which connects ideas about identity to interrelated ideas about space, place and mobility.

APPENDIX 2

MEZZONE AS A (POTENTIAL) PAINTING

As a tool to aid my own clarification of ideas about potentiality and the perceived simultaneous positions of middle zones (refer end of chapter 3), I first began conceiving *Mezzone* by applying its premise to the multiple spatialities I perceive inherent in a painting. In this context, the middle-zone is 'located' between the back of the layer of paint and the front of the canvas layer upon which it is painted. If I could peel the paint-layer away from the canvas a middle zone would be revealed which is at the same time independent and co-dependent on each plane adjacent to it. This mid-zone is both compressed and expanded; it 'flows' between both the mental and the physical. Appreciating that an artwork involves multiple middle zones and as with a painting for example, a further mid-zone occurs simultaneously with all other associated middle zones required for its exhibition. The viewer engages with a painting - including the conceptual and non-retinal properties of an image - in the mid-zone of reception as the front, outer surface of the picture plane. Conversely, the artist's intention defines the mid-zone which lies between the back inner surface of the painted plane and the front outer surface of the canvas plane. The layer of paint thus applied to the canvas plane is the 'concretization' of the artist's intention – from front to back – but although it remains a cognitive place, it is *not* the artist's intention itself. Rather, the canvas is like space – closed in itself and complete in the magnitude of its entirety, but at the same time open to the 'action' taken upon it - its use (identified previously as a requisite in the definition of place) is manifest by the impression the artist has placed upon it. In that sense, the canvas is ambivalent about what is placed upon its surface and is contented in its 'wholeness'....the canvas does not need the artist, but it is a space which conversely the artist needs. Between the front surface of the canvas plane and the back surface of the painted plane is the middle zone in which the artist's intention is formulated. That is, both intention as cognitive action and formulation as physical action occur simultaneously in *Mezzone*, therefore predicating its quality as a 'type' of fluid place.

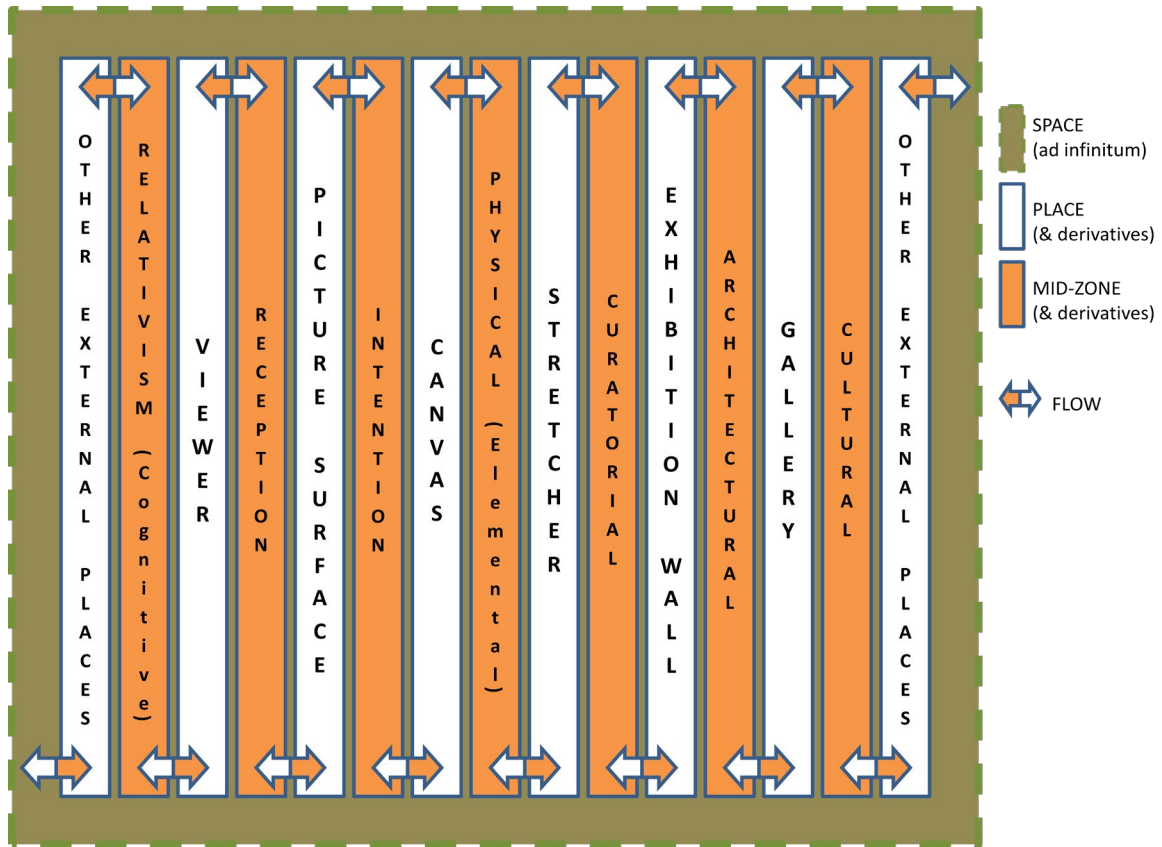


Figure 41: Shaun Martin, study for *Mezzzone applied to the creation and exhibition of a painting* 2013 – 2017. Computer generated image. Dimensions variable.

APPENDIX 3

Study for *THE PTV PROJECT* (2014 – ongoing)

As identified in the addendum to chapter 5 – although outside the specific remit of this research project but as an extension of it – I have begun to consider that the carceral continuum should not be perceived solely as a continuously outward expansion of power (brokerage). The continuum is both outward *and* inward, both explicit *and* implicit and must also function in a state of simultaneity; expanding and contracting at the same time. New place identities are constantly being (re)negotiated from existing space identities in all kinds of spatio-temporal contexts, including amongst others, the economic, political, and cultural. This leads me to consider the possibility of comparable carceral geographies existing between the art and penal institutions. By grounding this hypothesis in certain scenarios drawn from everyday life, I have started to correlate certain perceived similarities between two particular spaces which function at the margins of societal spaces; namely the prison cell and the artist's studio. In order to site the critical, theoretical and anecdotal research undertaken so far, I have turned to the 'emerging discipline' of carceral geography. The purpose here is to bring to bear a (potential) critical spatial practice which both reflects upon and intervenes in an ideological (mis)representation of a particular type of real life emplacement; namely the penal environment. In preparation for this proposition I have looked at Jane Rendell's 'artist's walk'⁴²⁴ as it relates to my prison-teaching experiences in order to locate Hal Foster's notion of the 'subversive sign'⁴²⁵; both of which has led to the proposed conversion of a prison transportation vehicle (PTV). Furthermore, the triadic spatial analyses of Soja and Lefebvre - mentioned in chapter 3 - can be applied to an examination of the 'lived space', where the art studio is simultaneously a *mobile* one also - in the ruptured and re-boundaried PTV. Here, the lived/thirdspace of the mobile 'home' cum art studio/gallery space is not solely defined by its architectural plans (secondspace/conceived); or its real-world representation (or image) as a material prison vehicle with its internal cells designed for the purposes of confinement and punishment (firstspace/perceived) - but rather it has been 're-imagined' here via an intervention of this 'creative (social) practice' thus becoming designated; for a Lefebvrian 'moment' at least; as the artist's studio (thirdspace /lived). The mobile studio and gallery space is re-imagined as the embodiment of the idea of a compressed space and expanded place as an interstitial site of meaning. By encompassing 'the binaries of (the) subject-object, (the) mental-material and (the) imagined-real', it has served as an intervention enabling the interpretation of simultaneity variously being explored here. It is seen as both an art work in itself and an alternative mobile studio-cum-gallery space which in turn houses other potential artworks. Potentially, the vehicle could be parked

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outside an exemplar of the art-institution's power structure - the Tate, London for example - as a gesture through which the simultaneity of compressed space and expanded place is further actualized and serves as an allegory for a space of 'carceral flows'.



Figure 42: DAF 45/150 6 cell prison van, 15ft box, 7.5tGVW 2.250⁴²⁶

APPENDIX 4

STUDIO-EN-VALISE (2000 – Ongoing)

Again as identified in the addendum to chapter 5; this research project proved very generative for an unfinished yet ongoing project - in as much as it enabled me to re-engage with it in terms of applying the context of subverting restrictive modalities on art-production. It also served as an example of my adoption of Darren Newbury's *Practice as research process* model previously discussed in chapter 1.

In his seminal essay *The Function of the Studio* written in 1971, Daniel Buren ventures to describe the function of the studio as "generally a private (and) *stationary* place where the work originates (and) where *portable* objects are produced (original emphases)."⁴²⁷ In that sense the studio might again be considered as a liminal space; however for me as the artist-in-transit, the studio is not stationary at all but instead it can be a highly mobile site in which objects historically made therein have been considered portable simply because they are necessarily materially ephemeral and consequently deteriorate very quickly. The question arises: could this situation be re-negotiated such that conception of idea and its resolution occur at the same place in time?

Preparatory studies (models) begin to display associations with the artist's studio and working methods which, according to Brian O'Doherty, not only traces the relationship between the work and the artist but allies itself to questions about the position of the artwork itself.⁴²⁸ Herein lays another level of compressed space and expanded place; that is, the creative space revealed between the conceptual and the actualized. Within this contextualization, an additional layer of meaning is inscribed in the work below which infers the compressed space of exhibition; for both the creative activity and the creative object. In other words, the pervasive and restrictive spatialities that have undeniably influenced my practice and the subsequent and necessary use of 'models' as my preferred means of documenting idea, have been subverted through the realization of them as a combined *sculpture*. They are intended to form part of a larger installation which includes the conversion of a technician's toolbox into a combined mobile studio and display forum), free to be transported to wherever the exhibition is required; including on-site in the traditional gallery space or indeed off-site if deemed more appropriate to the resolution of future projects (not yet conceived).



Figure 43 & 44: Shaun Martin, study for *Studio en Valise* 2000 - ongoing. Technician's toolbox, MDF, perspex, foam, 12v lights, acetate sheet, assorted tools.

Linking the artwork to the artist-in-transit, and clearly referencing Duchamp's *Boîte-en-Valise* (1935-41) - "a portable miniature monograph including sixty-nine reproductions of (his) own work"⁴²⁹ - *Studio-en-Valise* is designed as a 'model' for alternative types of mobile-studio-exhibition-spaces and, functioning also as an *actual* site for artistic production, it questions the very location of the artwork itself. It also responds to Buren's comments that whilst the archetypal studio remains a dream for most artists to possess one, in the meantime however, for those artists "who maintain ramshackle work spaces despite their drawbacks are obviously artists for whom the *idea* of possessing a studio is a necessity."⁴³⁰ This includes me.

As a (re)appropriated 'readymade' tool-case converted into a 12-volt light-box for displaying images of my work, and whilst clearly referencing the portability of new technologies used by many 'contemporary nomadic' artists - especially the ubiquitous laptop computer - the work also responds to the rise of post-studio practice and the subsequent challenges brought about by increased mobility, alongside its attendant associations with restrictive working practices. It also subverts the idea of the studio to which O'Doherty refers as a place where "the artist remains *imprisoned*" (emphasis added); but like the studio window which O'Doherty also refers to, *Studio en Valise* is also considered to be "emblematic of the creative process in whatever configuration it may declare itself" and thus the "transaction between outer and inner" is mediated.⁴³¹

Additionally, as a renewed development in my practice, the actual use of the object is seen to have a degree of performativity (mobility) embedded within the *circular* journey from place of inception to gallery or other exhibition space; the perceived simultaneous circularity of compressed space and expanded place. Furthermore, in order to add to its capacity for extended mobilities, it is fully intended that a projector will be built into the case, thus allowing images of external spaces to be projected onto internal walls (and vice versa) thus referring to the (multiple) places for which the

sculpture is intended. For example, the image below of Five Barrows, (Iron Age burial site), Isle Of Wight, UK, could be projected in a gallery space with the referent art object displayed alongside; or indeed inversely - as is shown here - the image of a referent art object is displayed at the site to which it refers.



Figure 45: Shaun Martin, *Studio-en-Valise* at Five Barrows, (Iron Age burial site), IOW, UK. 2005 - 2010

The potentiality of this body of works could be further tested later this year by taking it to Melbourne, Australia and applying for funding and exhibitions there. I have made a proposal concerning this project in the past, but it was not entirely successful. In May 2015, *Studio-en-Valise* was submitted in a call for proposals for the *Boîte-en-Valise* project; a collaboration between Aspek Gallery, Portsmouth and Syracuse University, New York. It was intended to be showcased during the preview week of the 2017 Venice Biennale before returning for further presentations of it at Aspek thereafter. The project aimed “to encourage transportability of practice, the nurturing of collaboration and the cross fertilisation of artistic practice” and sought artworks suitable for “transport in a normal sized suitcase, able to be transported as luggage on a normal flight/train/bus journey and for presentation without any fixing to walls, floors and/or ceilings of the venue.”⁴³² Needless to say, I thought *Studio-en-Valise* to be a very significant response to the artist’s brief.

Reflexively, whilst the above experience is allied to the commercial art-market, and apart from thinking that the time for *Studio-en-Valise* has plainly not arrived yet, it made me reassess an issue raised in March 2014 - when I was shortlisted for a 3-year residency (about carcerality), offered jointly by IKON Gallery, Birmingham and HMP Grendon (UK). Since then, I have reconsidered my discussion with gallery director, Jonathan Watkins, about the scale of my work in general and whether they were intended to be made larger. By extension, I began to query: ‘larger’ to what? Is this referencing a physical expansion or a conceptual one (or both)? This proved to be a highly

productive speculation for me. In terms of making an original contribution to research in art practice, I realized that I had to delve much deeper into my own – especially in relation to expanding its conceptual framework. The above experiences fed directly into my PhD research and ultimately my proposition for Mezzone and the potentiality of the trans-positional art object.

APPENDIX 5

Images of the Trans-positional Art-object (Mezzone) – for a potential (variable) *display*



Figure 46: Shaun Martin, *Transition by Gesture (A line made by idea)* 2017. MDF, nylon cord. 22 x 42 x 22 cm.



Figure 47: Shaun Martin, *Concavex*, 2017. MDF, modelling board, perspex, nylon cord. 22 x 42 x 22 cm.



Figure 48: Shaun Martin, *Re-appropriated immobilities*, 2017. MDF, modelling woods, nylon cord, figurine. 22 x 42 x 22 cm.

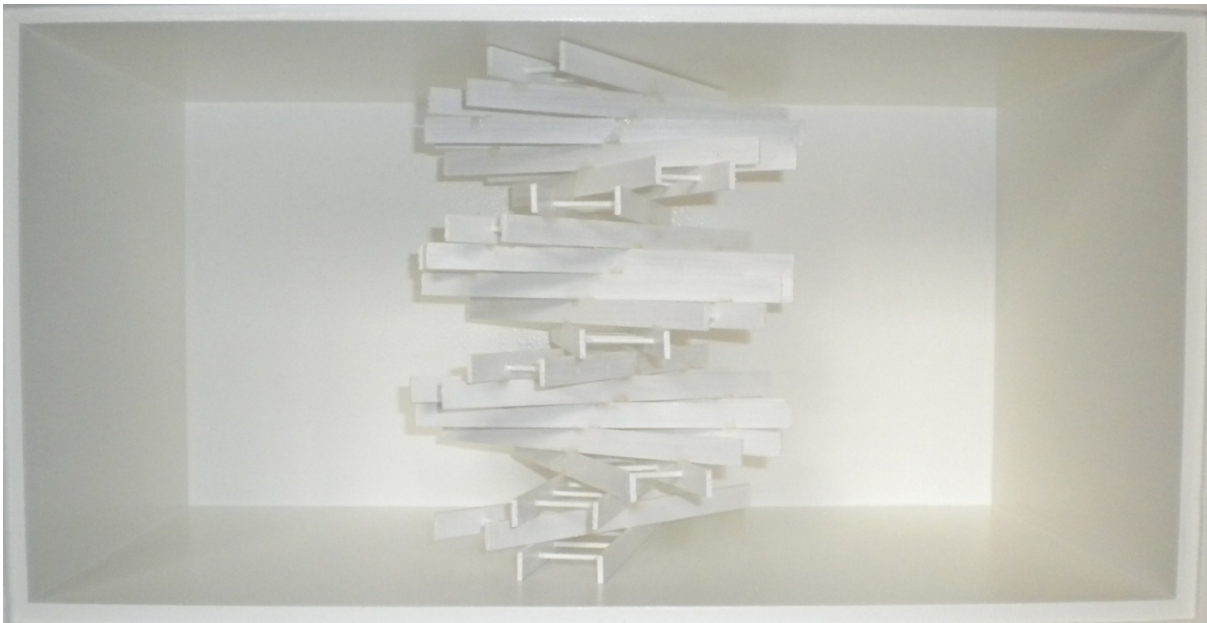


Figure 49: Shaun Martin, *Undergoing & Doing*, 2017. MDF, modelling woods. 22 x 42 x 22 cm.

ADDENDUM (2018): The images below more clearly show the physical 'white cube' form which is fundamental to the Mezzone concept. However, both the space and the *display* configurations shown here differ considerably from that used during my viva examination (Nov. 2017). In that instance, the audience was briefly permitted to walk around a larger set of Mezzone objects in a purposely pre-determined academic setting that also intentionally referenced restrictive spatialities, mobilities and temporalities. Nevertheless; by consistently not having ready access to a dedicated display/exhibition space, these (variable) configurations below are simply symptomatic once again of the restrictive modalities in which I ordinarily practice and indicative of the themes covered during the course of my research.



Figure 50: Shaun Martin, *A (variable) display of Mezzone objects*, 2018 – ongoing. Dimensions variable.



Figure 51: Shaun Martin, *A (variable) display of Mezzone objects*, 2018 – ongoing. Dimensions variable.

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