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# *A Sculptural Problem: The Measurement of Being*

by

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## **Abstract**

This visual thesis examined sculpture's capacity to operate as a mode of physical and perceptual measurement. It was conducted as an investigation into the relationships and points of intersection between space, object and action; chance and intent; temporality, transience and the 'moment of sculpture'. My proximity as the protagonist, relative to the work and situation, has been a factor in activating these relationships. The final submission comprises a broad range of media encompassing sculptural objects, photographs, video and spatial interventions reconsidered to responsively incorporate the Plimsoll Gallery space – as a readymade object in and of itself. Each of the works within this project declares a particular aspect of its specific sculptural condition through the relationship it engenders between material, form, context and the spatial conditions in which it is experienced.

This inquiry has been investigated through a group of works developed reflexively for a series of exhibitions that occurred through the research period. The works were developed in response to the specific spatial, contextual or curatorial conditions of each of these exhibitions. This approach was intended to allow for relatively contingent methods to determine the form of the research. A number of works within the project operate autonomously, such as the sculptural objects and photographs. However they contribute to the overall reflexive methodology, imbuing the combined installation with a spatial and elemental reference beyond the confines of the immediate architectural space.

The exegesis contextualises my work, process and methodology in relation to specific works and strategies by John Baldessari, Chris Burden, Bruce Nauman and Sol Lewitt. Additional key references for the project are works by Ceal Floyer and Jorge Macchi – contemporary artists who operate within the legacy of Conceptual Art, yet seek to encompass a spatial, perceptual and experiential inquiry.

This research explored the elasticity of sculpture and its potential to function as a conduit between the self, the object, and the context of a situation and space. The aim of this project was to affect and recalibrate the way a viewer measures their state of being through a sculpturally adjusted experience of the quotidian. In presenting counterpoints between the macro and micro, and the banal and poetic, the project

sought to demonstrate ways in which the mundanity of everyday situations may be inverted to infer the contrary. Alluding to time and space, these works collectively demonstrate how moments of profundity can arise when seemingly banal, irrelevant or irrational predicaments are suspended and reframed as serendipitous sculptural moments. These moments, pursued absolutely and at times illogically, can connect us to the immediate and everyday and, equally, to the elemental states that make up our universal reality.

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*In* the opening scene of the film *Werckmeister Harmonies* the main character, János Valuska, choreographs a total eclipse using his fellow drinkers in a provincial Hungarian drinking hall to enact the roles of the sun, earth and moon.<sup>1</sup> As the barman calls last drinks, three drunkards give themselves over to their planetary role allowing János to clumsily spin them around one another as he narrates the story of darkness descending upon all life. He abruptly pauses the dizzy planetary bodies at the point when the three align with one another, creating the moment of eclipse. János suspends the drunks in the darkness of the eclipse in a moment of existential disquiet reminding us of our mortality, and the tenuousness of our lives governed by the forces of enormous planets oscillating within a space we can barely perceive. Despite the profundity of the performance, it resounds more with the physical and emotional qualities of a drunken waltz than a lesson in philosophy or astrophysics. In the context of my project this scene is pivotal as it captures something tragic, humorous yet poignant. It poses the poetic and pertinent question that forms the basis of this research project: *How do we measure our being and presence in the world, and against what?*<sup>2</sup>

Throughout this research project I have sought to explore our position relative to the immediate, tangible and experiential, and to that which is distant, unattainable

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<sup>1</sup> A Hungarian film directed by Béla Tarr and Ágnes Hranitzky. 2001

<sup>2</sup> Transcription of the opening scene dialogue:

*"You are the sun. The sun doesn't move, this is what it does.  
You are the Earth. The Earth is here for a start, and then the Earth moves around the sun.  
And now, we'll have an explanation that simple folks like us can also understand, about  
immortality. All I ask is that you step with me into the boundlessness, where constancy, quietude  
and peace, infinite emptiness reign. And just imagine, in this infinite sonorous silence,  
everywhere is an impenetrable darkness. Here, we only experience general motion, and at first,  
we don't notice the events that we are witnessing. The brilliant light of the sun always sheds its  
heat and light on that side of the Earth, which is just then turned towards it. And we stand here  
in its brilliance.  
This is the moon. The moon revolves around the Earth. What is happening? We suddenly see  
that the disc of the moon, the disc of the moon, on the Sun's flaming sphere, makes an  
indentation, and this indentation, the dark shadow, grows bigger... and bigger. And as it covers  
more and more, slowly only a narrow crescent of the sun remains, a dazzling crescent. And at  
the next moment, the next moment - say that it's around one in the afternoon - a most dramatic  
turn of event occurs. At that moment the air suddenly turns cold.  
Can you feel it? The sky darkens, then goes all dark. The dogs howl, rabbits hunch down, the  
deer run in panic, run, stampede in fright. And in this awful, incomprehensible dusk, even the  
birds... the birds too are confused and go to roost. And then... Complete Silence. Everything that  
lives is still. Are the hills going to march off? Will heaven fall upon us? Will the Earth open  
under us? We don't know. We don't know, for a total eclipse has come upon us...  
But... but no need to fear. It's not over. For across the sun's glowing sphere, slowly, the Moon  
swims away. And the sun once again bursts forth, and to the Earth slowly there comes again  
light, and warmth again floods the Earth. Deep emotion pierces everyone. They have escaped  
the weight of darkness"*

and only imagined. Through the experience and artefacts generated via a process of engagement, I intend to provoke a state of seeking. I conceive of these works as



Fig. 1: Béla Tarr and Ágnes Hranitzky, *Werckmeister Harmonies*, 2001, film still

catalysts for measurement – *the measurement of being* spatially and perceptually, and, further as tools for exploring how we might locate ourselves, physically and experientially, within the everyday.<sup>3</sup> I have employed a range of diverse media, commonplace objects and situations in order to shift the viewers' familiar points of reference from those we typically use unconsciously to perceive and understand things relative to ourselves in the world. Several questions have driven my methods and approach, and underlying them is the desire to explore and reflect: how our physical presence is implicated in our understanding of the world; what arises when our bodies are incorporated within object lessons designed to measure the metaphysical, and how might we locate ourselves within the world through the immediate and banal.

My project encompasses studio and situation-based projects dealing with fundamental sculptural questions about action, space and object. I think of sculpture as being a perpetual 'problem' – something akin to the futility of a Sisyphean action where gravity always has the final say. The diverse mediums and outcomes of the project explore the idea of sculpture in its elasticity, showing how sculpture often operates as a verb or action for engaging directly with the quotidian. Echoing this, my works derive from our physical relationship with the material world that is inherently bound by the universal forces of gravity, time and space. I see this as the

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<sup>3</sup> This phrase is inspired by the title of Eugen Blume's essay, "Bruce Nauman: Live or Die - or: The Measuring of Being" Blume, E. (2010) *Bruce Nauman*. Cologne, DuMont Buchverlag.



existential conundrum at the core of 'Sculpture.' In positioning this research in the context of contemporary sculptural and conceptual practices, I acknowledge the legacy of conceptual art in the 1960's and 70's. Many of the artists I refer to as contextual references for this project emerged in this seminal period while some are 'younger' artists, for whom conceptual art is a point of reference for their artistic strategies.

## Finding the Problem

### ***The Rules of The Game***

*Where do I start? Or more accurately: What do I start with; and how do I establish a beginning point?* The lull period after resolving and realising a work or project echoes the in-between period before a new idea is formed. Perhaps it's an anxious period for all artists. However within my own practice, this period marks a crucial empty space I am interested in sustaining; and so I seek to imbue my work with some of the openness and doubtfulness I experience in this interregnum. Bruce Nauman comments on how he thought that one day he'd "figure out how to do this"; that it would no longer be that same struggle to proceed and make new work every time he did.<sup>4</sup> He goes on to say that he'd realised early on that he would have to re-invent his practice, over and over again...and how depressing a realisation this was. Yet this conundrum became the catalyst for much of his early works, particularly given the modest means he had to purchase art materials if he'd wanted to. It was a 'hand-to-mouth'<sup>5</sup> predicament that drove Nauman's comment, 'art is what an artist does, just sitting round the studio.'<sup>6</sup>

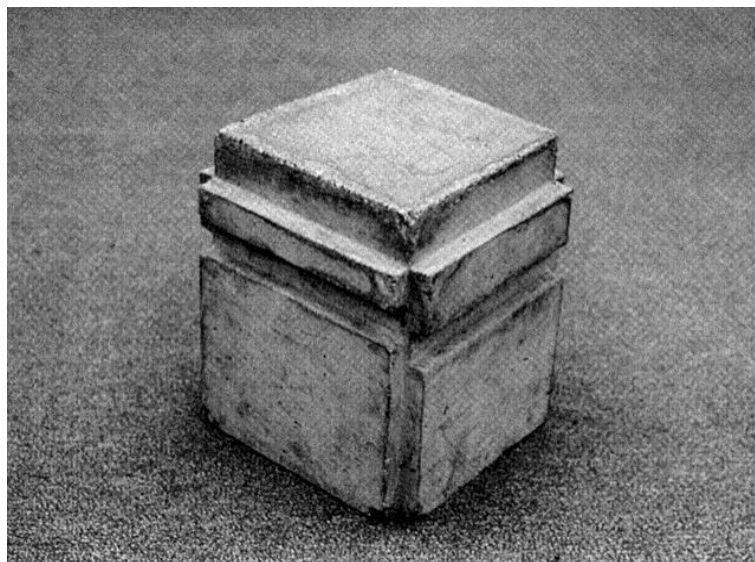


Fig. 2: Bruce Nauman, *A Cast of the Space Under My Chair*, 1965-68

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<sup>4</sup> Nauman, B. and J. Kraynak (2003). *Please pay attention please: Bruce Nauman's words: writings and interviews*. Cambridge, Mass.; London, England, MIT Press, p. 319.

<sup>5</sup> *From Hand to Mouth*, 1967. Wax on Linen. 71.1 x 26.4 x 11.1cm. Collection of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C.

<sup>6</sup> Godfrey, T. (1998). *Conceptual art*. London, Phaidon. P. 127. First published in *Art-Language*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1969).

My awareness of this predicament brought the means of making work back to the fundamental questions around what constitutes art and practice: a physical engagement and dependence on the action and process as a way of generating work. However, this constant deferral of Nauman's, back to a questioning of 'what to do' has for me become an important process of re-establishing the tabula rasa from which to proceed. I wouldn't go as far as to say that I start each new work from nothing, but I do attempt to sidestep referring back to my previous pieces as guides for how to proceed. Rather, I seek to discover new problems and relationships that allow me to proceed.

I conceive of my works as addressing the same key concerns, from different approaches or angles and I see the relationship between individual works as being conversational; all are addressing similar concepts manifesting through diverse means while stating 'the same' things from different perspectives. Together they configure a conversation. This is the way I conceive the potential relationships between disparate works. This is a way of working that does not depend on any consistency of medium or approach in the traditional sense. Ideas resonate and determine a way of working. They can develop via a material, an image, an object, an observation, or the context of a site or exhibition.

My way of working is reflexive and responsive; whether it be a curatorial premise; a personal observation; an anecdotal predicament; experience considered via an object and space; or the certain particularities of an exhibition space. Each of these things act as responsive points of departure that generate and drive my practice. This could be defined simply as a process of establishing a point of response, then making a work that subsequently refers back to that point, and this would be an adequate definition. However defining this common thread of responsiveness and reflexivity, is another area within this project I have sought to further understand. In the preliminary stages of a work I often set about finding a point of friction within a given subject, situation or context, which I establish as a "problem" for myself. Locating this point of friction, as a mechanism for leading to and establishing the problem, is a method I consistently employ. However certain works address this process more explicitly than others. In the following pages I will describe each of these works through the lens of this problem-finding approach inscribed within the methodology of my project.

### ***Two Rights Make a Wrong***

The artist-run initiative Inflight leased new gallery premises within Hobart, and immediately removed all but the hanging rods of a suspended ceiling that had, at some point, been fitted into the space.<sup>7</sup> Twelve months later, in August of 2011, I had a solo exhibition at Inflight and created the work *Two Rights Make a Wrong* (2011). As my starting point, I had an empty space, replete with idiosyncratic architectural interior features that bore the imperfections of the former interior fit-out. The space bore the marks of having previously been divided by the suspended ceiling; the upper wall section being a different colour to the gallery-white walls below. Still hanging were the suspension rods that had supported the false ceiling, and these visually dominated the ceiling space above.

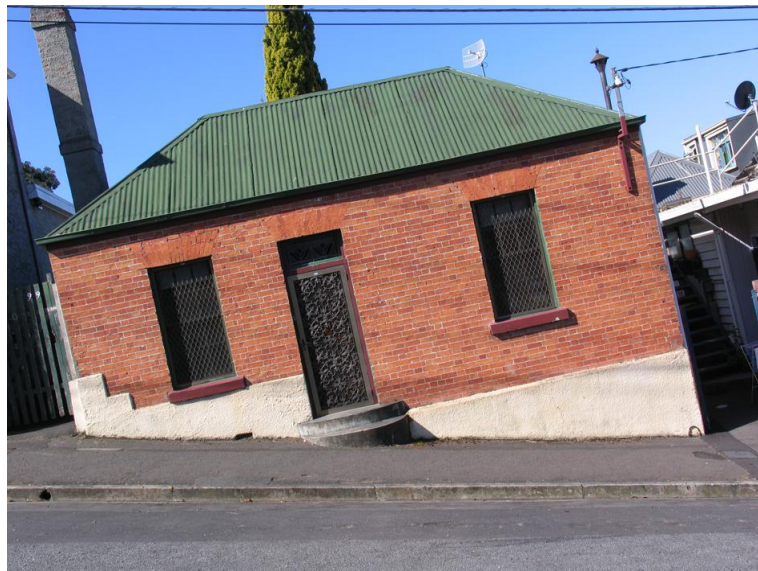


Fig. 3: *Two rights make a wrong*, 2011, detail

During the preceding January I had photographed a house diagonally across the road from the gallery, on a steep hill. It caught my attention for the awkward way it was built on the hillside. The house on the steep hill and the gallery space were no more than twenty metres apart. To photograph the house I stood across the road, directly in front of it and tilted my camera to match the incline of street level as seen within the viewfinder, simultaneously allowing the street and house to re-orientate

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<sup>7</sup> As of February 2013, after a decade long run the Artist-Run Initiative, Inflight, will change its name to Constance.

me and determine the ‘right’ and level composition, before taking a single photograph. The framed image in *Two Rights Make a Wrong* endorses the notion of the earth as a flat surface, governing all other things, relative to it. There is an authority, albeit a distorted one, related to the deranged and adamant beliefs of the *Flat-Earther* Samuel Shenton, who believed the earth to be a flat plane; “a circular dinner-plate resting on the back of four elephants and a turtle”, where ships don’t recede over the horizon.<sup>8</sup> His contemporary followers, the still-active Flat Earth Society, continue to preoccupy themselves with theories that contest what is widely agreed upon as scientific fact, delivering deadpan responses to the basic tenets of reality and physics. I’m intrigued by the persistent divergence of these folk, and their refusal to concede to axiomatic ideas.



Fig. 4: Research image, flat earth image sourced from Internet

After spending enough time with the framed photograph, a shift in one’s perception occurs. It becomes so *right* that the view of the house, from the footpath of the street across the road where the photograph was taken, appears wrong. This house on the steep road, literally a stone’s throw away from the gallery space, remained in the periphery of my mind and quite literally in the corner of my sight as I frequently dropped in to visit the gallery space.

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<sup>8</sup> This is a quote by Samuel Shenton in a piece of writing had I read on the Flat Earth Society website at the beginning of this research project at <http://theflatearthsociety.org/> (21 June 2012)



Fig. 5: *Two Rights Make a Wrong*, 2011, detail

I was struck by how confined, volumetric and strangely pressurised it felt to be inside the gallery; it's a space I feel expands and contracts in and on itself, creating a claustrophobic feeling. There is a painted demarcation between the upper and lower sections of the gallery that are roughly equal in depth. These sections create a kind of mirror effect, dividing the space in half horizontally. In combination with the photo of the house, my deliberations on the subtle destabilising nuances of the space drove my inquiry about how to 'use' it. This disconcerting spatial effect of the gallery echoes that of the photographed house — they echo one another, causing a kind of mutual recalibration, adjusting to each other's peculiarities. When printed and framed, and considered alongside the empty gallery space minus the original suspended ceiling, the photograph offered a logic and set of rules for re-configuring the gallery.

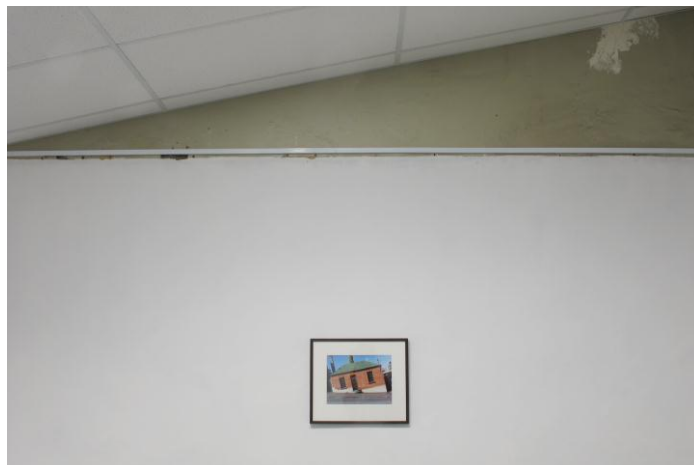


Fig. 6: *Two Rights Make a Wrong*, 2011, detail

In response I decided to re-instate a suspended ceiling into the gallery space, determined by the slanted ceiling line of the house in the photo. The type of new ceiling I installed replicated the original ceiling that existed within the space; the style and design you typically see in office buildings – a generic tiled grid of white textured material panels. By hanging the framed photograph on the gallery wall, a point of reference for the new ceiling installation was established. The photograph responded to the apparent irrationality of the tilted suspended ceiling, justifying the ceiling slope whilst connecting the installation with the immediate and local architectural and topographic context. Together, the framed photograph and suspended ceiling were intended to operate in much the same way as a colour-card operates when inserted into a studio photograph – as a register to calibrate the framed space within the photograph, with a broader universal context of reality beyond the photograph.

The photograph within the gallery space, then became instructional, echoing Sol Lewitt's sentence No. 5:

*“Irrational thoughts should be followed absolutely and logically”.*<sup>9</sup>

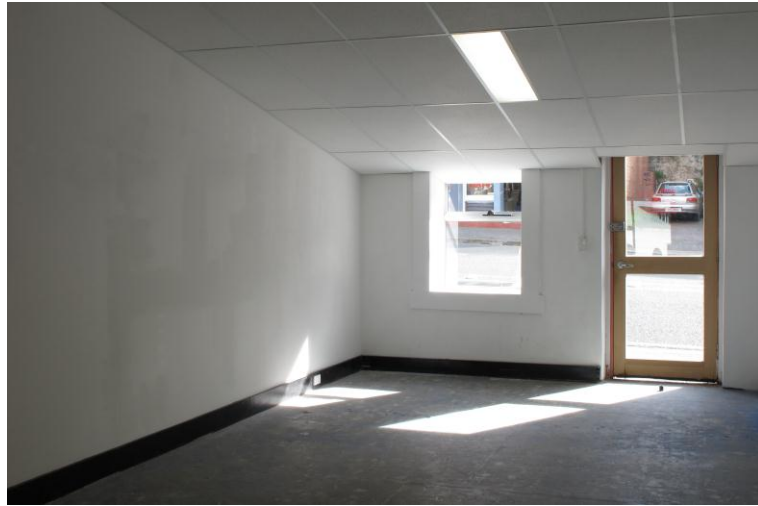


Fig. 7a (above) and 7b (below): *Two Rights Make a Wrong*, 2011

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.altx.com/vizarts/conceptual.html> (25/05/12)





The work follows a logic that begins with identifying one “problem” that leads to another. The tilt of the ceiling pivots on a central axis point, which is determined by the two points where the height of the original suspended ceiling intersected the halfway point of the overall length of the space. Given the location of this point, and its predetermining factors being set by the size of the space, and the remaining markings of the original suspended ceiling, the corresponding high and low points, where the tilted ceiling would meet the opposing walls were then preset – as a continuum stemming from the truth of the framed photograph in relation to the gallery space. The new ceiling was progressively installed along the axis of that tilt, starting from the high-end at the rear of the gallery, while the framed photograph was hung on the eastern wall of the space, so that as you stood before it, you had the same orientation as you would standing in front of the house on the street nearby. The ceiling tilted to meet the entrance, and as a consequence of these predetermined factors, encroached below the top of the inward-opening door that served as the only entrance and exit for the building.

As the protagonist literally built into my own method I was then faced with a serendipitous quandary – another problem; a choice to respect the tilted axis of the new ceiling and forgo the function of the door, thereby leaving the space inaccessible and the door jammed closed by the ceiling (trapping me within the space), or allowing the door to open freely, by recessing a gap into the ceiling to enable it to pivot to its full extent. I opted for a compromise between these two logical options – a happy medium of architectural diplomacy. The result was semi-obstruction; the encroaching ceiling plane partially obscured the door's full trajectory interrupted by a



doorstop fixed to the floor that stopped the door halfway, thereby preventing it from knocking into the installed ceiling. The doorstop marked a moment of the absurd. The audience experience of the work thereby started and finished on a disorientating, humorous and perhaps slightly humiliating note, as participants were forced to awkwardly sidle in and out of the space through a narrow opening, while the door would often swing back off the rubber doorstop towards them.

### ***Wrong***

In 1971 John Baldessari sang sentence No.5, along with the other 34 sentences in order, of Sol Lewitt's *Sentences on Conceptual Art*. By singing those deadpan sentences that contain what apparently constitutes the rules of Conceptual Art, Baldessari both inscribed them into his memory and anchored them with the pop aria he filtered each sentence through. Yet judging by Baldessari's work *Wrong*, which narrowly pre-dates Lewitt's *Sentences on Conceptual Art*, it seems that Baldessari had been following seemingly irrational thoughts and ideas absolutely and logically for some time.

In 1968 Baldessari had himself photographed in front of a palm-tree precisely so that it would appear the tree was growing out of his head. He then had the photograph printed onto canvas and had a professional signwriter to paint the word "wrong" on the canvas directly underneath the picture. Baldessari's *Wrong* takes a given within the conventions of photography – *Do not photograph a person in front of a tree, lest the tree appear to be growing out of the subject's head* – and uses it as a “rule” to dismantle, invert and turn back on itself. While Baldessari might be intentionally deskillling his very medium of choice, there is a considerable degree of attention that has gone into correctly aligning the figure within the composition so as to demonstrate the 'problem'.

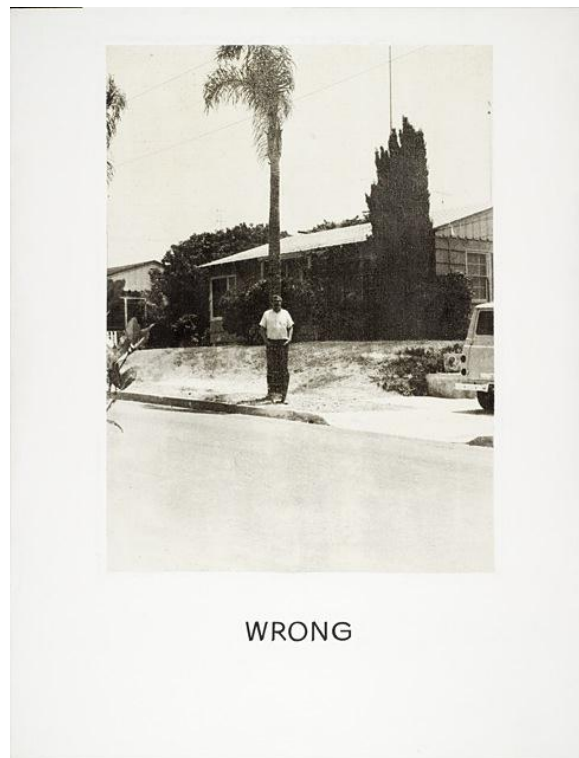


Fig. 8: John Baldessari, *Wrong*, 1966-1968

The permanent part of *Two Rights Make a Wrong* – the artefact that remains after the first iteration of the work at Inflight – is the framed photograph of the house on the hill. I consider this component the determinant of how all subsequent iterations of *Two Rights Make a Wrong* will transpire, in relation to the site and context of subsequent exhibition spaces and opportunities. This photograph calls for a re-calibration of all things relative to it, stubbornly pronouncing itself as 'right'.

Baldessari's *Wrong*, and *Two Rights Make a Wrong* use deadpan humour to question the assumptions that lie behind perception. Humour can prise open gaps in perceptual experience to expose an innate vulnerability and humility that we all share. Like Baldessari, Ceal Floyer orchestrates moments of deception, provoking the viewer to make a double take. '[S]hifting points of view forces the viewer to renegotiate their perception of the world.' Floyer often uses everyday or readymade objects, exploring the dialectical tension between the literal and the mundane, and an imaginative construction of meaning".<sup>10</sup>

A poetic play on our basic modes of perception occurs in Floyer's *Downpour* (2001) and *Two Rights Make a Wrong*. Each of the works seeks to activate a perceptual shift in the viewer by skewing a pictorial composition, then

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.lissongallery.com/artists/ceal-floyer/> (22/06/12)

retrospectively 'correcting' it within the context of the gallery. Floyer's *Downpour* is a relatively small projection of a hand-held video, showing an inconsequential street scene during a downpour of rain. The relevance of this apparently banal footage lies in the simple and poetic way it is presented within the gallery, with the rectangular composition of the video projection slightly angled so that the lines of the rain fall vertically, aligned to the architecture of the space.



Fig. 9: Ceal Floyer, *Downpour*, 2001

The intentional glitch in the projection could be mistaken for someone having accidentally knocked the projector causing it to tilt. The lie of the ground and the angle of rainfall are destabilised in a performative gesture that references the artist-as-vessel re-orientating themselves via a commonplace situation. Despite the apparent irrationality of such a gesture, it nonetheless invites a recalibration from the viewer, as they reconcile a moment of disquiet between the cerebral and visceral.



Fig. 10: *Two Rights Make a Wrong*, 2011

### ***Celestial Table***

Prior to developing *Two Rights Make a Wrong* I made a work entitled, *Celestial Table (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0")*, which set out to explore similar notions of how we perceive ourselves in relation to the earth.



Fig. 11: *Celestial Table (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0")*, 2010

*Celestial Table (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0")* is a standard blue table-tennis table full of holes of equal diameter that appear randomly scattered across the surface plane of the table. The holes cast a constellation of spots within the dark rectangular shadow of the table. There is no net on the table, nor bats, or a ball, suggesting this is

not a table for playing table-tennis. Any attempt to do so would prove futile, for the holes accurately correspond to the diameter of a table-tennis ball. Their positions across the table suggest a mapping of a ping-pong game once played, the bounce of the ball on the table surface now cast permanently as a constellation of points. However the intent of the work is to upturn this didactic and irrational logic, thereby opening the relationship of proximity to the broader spatial context we are bound within. The holes denote positions of stars captured from an amateur astronomer's website of the night sky, that were apparently directly overhead as I sat before a computer screen within the comfort of my living room.<sup>11</sup> After being prompted by the website to fill-in my global position as a city and postcode, I was offered a panoramic and interactive 'night-sky' screen to scroll my mouse across and navigate the current positioning of the Celestial Sphere overhead. This facilitated a detached experience of the mediated sky above me without my having to step out of my front door, let alone bend my neck. I captured this detached yet intimate celestial moment in a single screen-shot on my computer. So rather than being just a representation of a humble game of table-tennis, each hole was made to refer to the co-ordinate of a star or planet located within the celestial sphere.

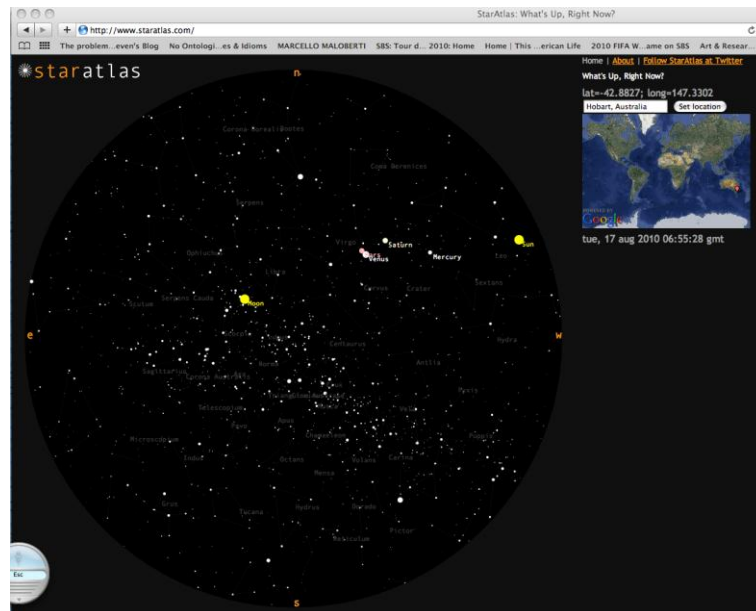


Fig. 12: Research image, screen-shot sourced from Internet

The resulting screen-shot captured on that evening of August at 6:56pm cast the destiny of a table-tennis table I purchased from a sporting goods store later the

<sup>11</sup> [www.staratlas.com](http://www.staratlas.com) (25/05/12)

same week. The pixilated stars captured on the jpeg were then graphed, measured and entered as definitive co-ordinates into a computerised router. The table was dismantled then placed under the knife of the router, I pressed 'start' on a touch-screen, and the machine played the first and only game upon the table's pristine surface.



Fig. 13: *Celestial Table* (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0"), 2010

For me, *Celestial Table* (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0") encapsulated different notions we have of space, in relation to working at the limits of our perception, and compressing theoretical ideas into digestible forms of information. I'm interested in the celestial sphere as a practical yet paradoxical solution for mapping infinity, as something resembling a black curtain full of holes, defining the outermost limits of our spatial understanding and knowledge. The celestial sphere flattens infinity into a fathomable and digestible format, compressing space and time into something perceived two-dimensionally. However the light years between two rocks floating in space that may never have even shared the same life-span or galaxy, that simply can't be reconciled in any definitive, measurable and printable format that views space as a finished game, or fixed view, can nonetheless sit comparatively side-by-side upon the celestial sphere. Those points representing the furthest objects from us, objects that have been sighted at some stage by the human eye, continue to float around within infinity.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> The use of a generic DIY astronomer's web-site was a detached means for considering the disparities of scale pertaining to distance, space and duration – a visual dialogue between two forms of physical orientation and measurement each as equally unobtainable and anecdotal as one another.



Fig. 14: Jorge Macchi, *Still Song*, 2005

Eva-Lynn Alicia Jagoe's description of Jorge Macchi's work, *Still Song* (2005), brings to mind elements of two works within my project, *Celestial Table* (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0") and *Memoirs of a Wall*:

Macchi hung a disco ball in the centre of a room and froze its movement. Then he marked each of the reflections of light that covered the walls, ceilings, and floor, and drilled them out as holes. The little stars of light, ephemeral and coincidental in their dancing movement, were frozen into sites of violence, gashes of permanence. Stars are made of light, and light is movement, but the stars that Macchi has frozen into place are (as) brutal in their logic of permanence...<sup>13</sup>

The catalyst and act that drove the violation of the respective surface planes in *Celestial Table* (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0") and *Still Song* derive from very similar sources. Each makes reference to the greater celestial space beyond the ether by rupturing the surface of a plane that can be seen to imply the facade of the celestial sphere. While the space of the holes in both works is also denoted by the same elemental light source, they each explicitly reference light by inverting it as a

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.jorgemacchi.com/sites/default/files/Eva\\_Lynn\\_in\\_Light\\_Music-2.pdf](http://www.jorgemacchi.com/sites/default/files/Eva_Lynn_in_Light_Music-2.pdf) (22/06/12)



negative space or void; one is localised and refracted off a mirror-ball that would otherwise typically rotate on its axis, like a planet suspended in space, and the other is cast by (virtual) stars seen oscillating through celestial space, yet from a laptop screen. In Macchi's *Still Song* the celestial sphere has been substituted by the cubic space of a gallery, which, full of gorged holes, appears as the *other side* of the black curtain only if we could get beyond the facade of the celestial sphere to see it from that perspective. Whereas *Celestial Table* (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0") depends on a single gallery spotlight to illuminate the punctured table-tennis table so as to project that momentary composition of stars from the amateur astronomer's website onto the gallery floor underneath as a static image. Jorge Macchi's practice shares equally diverse outcomes to my practice. His approach is also similarly focused on chance moments within the quotidian, that when shifted 'a quarter turn' and re-framed seek to incite a profound point of view in relation to how we perceive ourselves within the world.

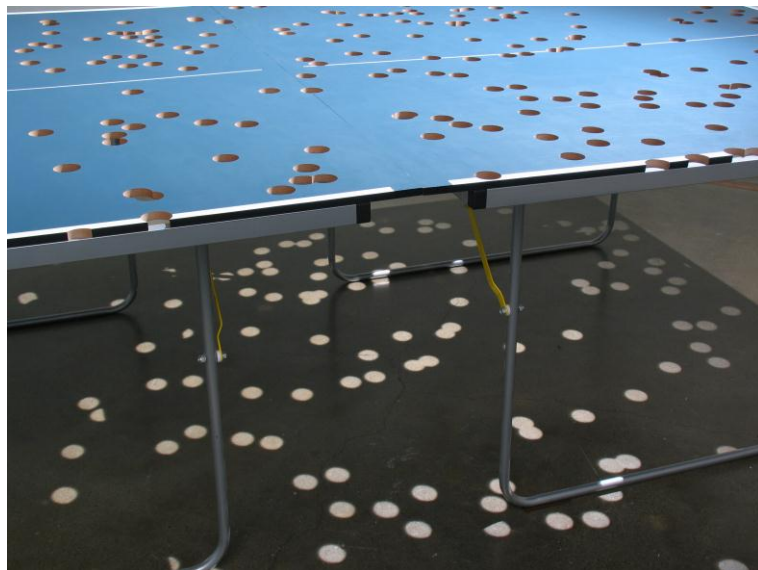


Fig. 15: *Celestial Table* (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0"), 2010, detail

However, all comparisons aside, the holes of *Still Song* are far from the meticulous cut incisions of *Celestial Table* (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0"). They appear as violent punctures that have been incised with the rudimentary means of power tools rather than via the detachment of a computerised router, which, as a method, has more in common with another work I developed in this project after *Celestial Table* (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0") – *Memoirs of a Wall* (2010). This



work could be seen to reference Macchi's *Still Song* quite deliberately, however the parallel formal relationships frame and limit the similarities between these works. The ideas that drove the form of *Memoirs of a Wall* are vastly different from that of *Still Song*, and *Celestial Table* (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0").

## Thinking of Turner



Fig. 16: J.M.W. Turner, *Snow Storm - Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth*, 1842

I don't travel well at sea. I discovered this as a teenager. My unseaworthiness became apparent on a chartered fishing boat, negotiating the trade wind swell off the coast of Fiji. Only moments after passing through the calm waters of the lagoon, the sway of the boat started to challenge my innate spirit-level and stomach. A family member suggested I try the top deck and if that failed to then concentrate my gaze on the horizon. I tried each approach while doing my best to ignore the nausea, instead focusing intently on keeping the blue horizon line perfectly level as the only thing within my sight. As I did this I also swayed my torso naturally in the opposing direction of the boat's sway in an attempt to trick my senses into believing we were on terra firma. However, I was in affect surfing the boat so as to become one with the horizon. For some considerable time I continued my meditative exercise to remain at a perfect and consistent perpendicular angle to the horizon line, despite the sea winning the game in the end. Fishing was the furthest thing from my mind, while thoughts of J.M.W. Turner served as some distraction from the increasing waves of nausea. I'd read that he'd sketched the image of *Snow Storm – Steam-Boat off a Harbour's Mouth* (1842) in his mind, while being voluntarily fixed to the top of a ship's mast in a storm at sea for several hours. The truth of this account is questionable, however the story circulates if only as a way of demonstrating Turner's

absolute, be it at times absurd, pursuit for a real and experiential engagement with the world around him.<sup>14</sup>



Fig. 17: *Strait*, 2011, video still sequence

The video work, *Strait*, is a nod to this J.M.W. Turner anecdote, and his quest to engage viscerally with the elemental forces aboard (the mast of) a ship at sea. *Strait* is also something of a personal reclamation; an attempt to re-attain that moment of synchronicity I experienced off the coast of Fiji, between my physical self and the horizontal plane of the ocean. *Strait* documents a less volatile involuntarily action aboard an ferry crossing the Bass Strait overnight, in which I stood in the middle of a corridor and let my body ‘true’ itself to the perpetual sway of the boat. The nine minutes of footage captures me standing with eyes closed, body swaying rhythmically back and forth in the middle of the corridor, in the middle of the boat, in the middle of the night, in the middle of the Strait. From time to time, the roll of the boat gets the better of the counter-responsive motion of my body, causing me to knock into the wall and bounce back into play with the pitch of the boat. Dressed in nondescript black, my figure is located centrally within the symmetrical composition.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-snow-storm-steam-boat-off-a-harbours-mouth-n00530/text-catalogue-entry> (25/05/12)



Fig. 18: *Strait*, 2011, installation view

The format of the 4:3 image is set vertically, in portrait orientation, while the composition of the video is defined by the perspectival lines of the ceiling and floor running inwards, diagonally from all four corners, to a vanishing point at the end of the corridor. This sense of perspectival depth in the composition was intended to work as a deceptive spatial ploy when presented on a vertically flipped TV monitor on the floor, especially given the conical form at the rear of such older generation TV monitors typically of a 4:3 ratio. To capture the action, the camera was fixed vertically to a tripod that stood in the middle of the corridor. The camera and the ship move as one, while the figure seems to sway within a grounded, motionless space – a corridor with rows of orange doors along one side and a continuous handrail the length of the other. The corridor itself is a generic non-place that could initially be mistaken for an apartment block hallway or hospital, especially given the handrail that might cater for elderly residents or patients. There is no sound in the video, nor a beginning or end— the footage loops, leaving no sense of how things started or finished. The ambiguity of the situation is a deliberate point of confusion reinforced by the controlled composition that sheds little light on the context of a passenger ship at sea, but reveals itself subtly as the figure sways rhythmically at the slow pace of a rolling sea.

The title, *Strait*, performs as a word-play on the range of definitions and variants of the terms, ‘straight’ and ‘strait’; the unsteady figure in the video alludes to the term’s antonym of being crooked, askew and irrational. It was envisaged the

viewer would become somewhat complicit in the work through a form of reciprocation with my experience as an object located within the space of another object - the boat – itself subject to the elemental forces that surround it. With this in mind I was seeking to develop a figurative rapport in *Strait*; a physical dialogue or slow dance between the subject of the video and the audience standing before a vertical screen or projection in a grounded space.

I'm interested in these intimate moments that occur between the audience/viewer and the work, in terms of how the work is perceived and experienced. I think of *Strait* as operating as an intermission within this project's body of work. The perpetual sway of the figure sustains a passively responsive role as a vessel within a vessel; an interlude between other works sited in proximity to it, operating as a passage from one point to the next, like a ferry crossing a strait.

I first exhibited *Strait* at Inflight in the solo exhibition, *Two Rights Make a Wrong*. *Strait* was one of three works within that exhibition along with the gallery intervention, *Two Rights Make a Wrong*; and the sculptural object, *Twenty Minutes I'll Never Get Back* (See next chapter). *Strait* was projected at a relatively small scale and above head height; the projector mounted vertically against a wall adjacent to the projected image within a small cubicle-like space.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> On the floor was situated an additional work, *Twenty Minutes I'll Never Get Back*. The works operated independently, but in this configuration both *Strait* and *Twenty Minutes I'll Never Get Back* served to augment the most prominent work within the show, *Two Rights Make a Wrong*.

## Something to do with Sculpture

### *Transitional Moments*



Fig. 19: Untitled (Mexico City), 2009  
Research image from artists' archive

While present within other visual art disciplines, gravity is a primary condition of the practice and physicality of sculpture. Sculpture can't evade gravity as its inherent condition, just as we can't. Our most memorable heroic feats to defy it – in flight or construction – can't be bragged about without an acknowledgement of failure. Moreover, despite the occasional stumble and fall, like toddlers, we learn to manage the relentless pull of gravity.

Things about to collapse, fall, invert, unravel, fuse, pop, sink, tilt – those moments often barely perceptible, are the kinds of actions and occurrences I explore to capitalise on sculpture's capacity to represent and fossilise a fleeting and tenuous moment. I seize upon these moments where something shifts between states, changes or merges into another form. I'm drawn to the diverse materiality of transitions, given it is within the realm of tactility and tangibility that these moments can be traced, if not directly experienced. The suggestive potential and inevitability of these transitory states are, to my mind, the cornerstones of sculpture; moments where something is leaning, hovering, floating, balanced or paused, heavy or light, can be read almost allegorically, relative to our own physical state, as processes and actions that connect us existentially with gravity, space and time.

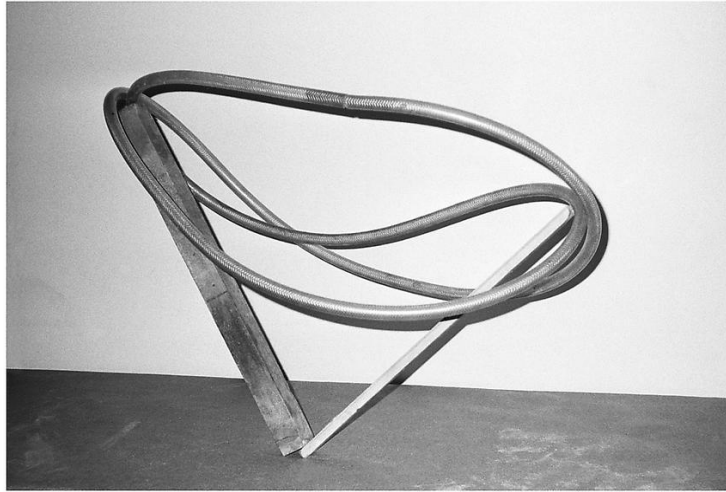


Fig. 20: Fischli & Weiss, *Slumber Loop*, 1984

### ***Where Sculpture Happens***

Sculpture doesn't come alone. To talk about 'Sculpture', it seems appropriate to begin from the ground up and consider the role of the plinth as an object that so often services sculpture. The plinth is a byproduct of sculpture, one we are typically meant to turn a blind eye towards when viewing the object set upon it. However as an object connected to that which it supports, the plinth is arguably the 'Sculpture' itself.

Minus the object that is upon it, the plinth serves as a prop within the context that validates it, and defines 'Sculpture'; it exists as a component in the contextual 'set' of art establishment or institution, similar to the generic white-walled partition, or gallery space. The plinth has become a relatively permanent fixture within the context of museums to artist-run-spaces. For many years I have worked within a diverse range of art spaces, installing exhibitions. I've seen the back rooms, corridors, toilets and offices of art spaces consumed by plinths of varying shapes and sizes – not to mention behind partitions, in loading docks or, in some cases, whole warehouses or spaces built purposely to house this epidemic proliferation of pedestals. Most of these plinths are custom-built to raise and support one particular category of sculpture for an exhibition and, consequently, often ad-hoc solutions for supporting subsequent sculptural works. In this sense I think of the plinth as being symptomatic of a materialised problem of sculpture.





Fig. 21: Untitled (Museum storage site), 2007  
Research image from artists' archive

A lineage of works reference the plinth as *the* primary object: from Brancusi to Hany Armanious via Donald Judd, Robert Morris, Piero Manzoni and Charles Ray and many others. Their respective inquiries into the pedestal of sculpture relates to the notion of “sculpture” itself, and while at times the plinth serves to carry the weight of sculpture – not just in fact but metaphorically – at times the presence of the plinth calls the status of sculpture into question. Attributed to Ad Reinhardt, among other commentators, the quip that “sculpture is what you trip over when you step back to look at a painting”,<sup>16</sup> is a fairly accurate account of how I arrived at sculpture as a constant within my practice, and how I continue to examine it self-consciously.

In 1994 Francis Alÿs stepped on bubble-gum while walking. A black and white photograph documents this action. The feet of the artist stepping out of the frame are at the top of the image. His left shoe has stretched the bubble-gum from the

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<sup>16</sup> Jorg Heiser states that this “quotation is also variously attributed to 19<sup>th</sup> century poet and art critic, Charles Baudelaire, as well as the 20<sup>th</sup> century American painters Barnett Newman and Ad Reinhardt, or Pop artist Claes Oldenburg.” Page 19. Heiser, J. (2008). *All of a sudden: things that matter in contemporary art*. New York, NY, Sternberg Press.

Alex Potts, in *The Sculptural Imagination* (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, p. 1) attributes the phrase to Ad Reinhardt, citing Lucy Lippard: quoted in L. Lippard, 'As Painting is to Sculpture: A Changing Ration', in M. Tuchman (ed.), *American Sculpture of the Sixties*, Los Angeles, 1967, p.31.



ground in an elastic line that has then reconnected itself to the ground before the shoe lifts the gum along the trajectory of the artist's step as he continues on. We see what appears to be an inconsequential unfortunate occurrence. However Alÿs refers to this as the moment when sculpture happens.



Fig. 22: Francis Alÿs, *The Moment Where Sculpture Happens*, 1994

In this photographic work, *The Moment Where Sculpture Happens*, Alÿs takes a familiar, trivial misfortune and reconsiders it as a sculptural problem. Based on a chance occurrence, the framework for an idea is pursued as an instructive action. The artist takes the position of protagonist in a drama, which resolves as a linear image, captured photographically. Other than the photographic trace, his actions go relatively unnoticed within the context they are performed in. This work raises essential sculptural questions about chance and intentionality; the relations between action, object and space, and between performance and documentary trace. I consider Alÿs' gesture as being important for raising the question of 'when' it is that the moment of sculpture occurs...what constitutes a moment of sculpture?

## ***Twenty Minutes I'll Never Get Back***



Fig. 23: Auguste Rodin (1840 – 1917) seated beside his work in his studio

I consider a bucket of plaster as being quintessentially related to the idea of “sculpture”, and Plaster has traditionally been a key material (arguably fetishised) in the process of making sculpture, especially given that the act of mixing up the perfect batch of plaster is something of a rite of passage. Just imagine how chuffed Rodin felt as he went about mixing up the buckets of plaster that would cast the first artist proof of *Balzac* masturbating under his cloak, or picture Michelangelo poised and ready to pour the first maquette of *David*. The bucket of plaster is iconic, particularly in light of these Old Boy’s of Sculpture. In *Twenty minutes I’ll never get back* the sculptural moment stops right there – with the bucket of plaster, or more accurately a plaster cast of the bucket.

*Make up a bucket full of wet plaster. Drop a fishing float into it.  
Watch the plaster set as the float changes states. Lastly, remove the  
plaster form from the bucket.*



Fig. 24: *Twenty Minutes I'll Never Get Back*, 2011

My work *Twenty Minutes I'll Never Get Back* comprises a fishing float perpetually stuck in a bucket of plaster. The plaster has been removed from the bucket as a solid form; a cast of the bucket's negative space, and stands alone on the ground. The work exists as an object-lesson for depicting a visually irreconcilable shift from liquid to solid, flotation to gravitation, simulating a fossilised moment of amateur alchemy. The float has a typical tilt to it; not just upright and at right angles to the surface plane of the plaster, it remains perpetually *in situ* subject to a 5-10 knot breeze, or an outgoing tide. This is typically how we encounter a fishing float buoyant in water and how we've seen them so often. It is a subtle nuance that was as uncontrollable in the studio as it is in an estuary. The fishing float settled itself at this natural tilt in the bucket of plaster. However in an open body of water there are always forces at play, and it is this tilt, combined with the submersion of the float that we watch so attentively while fishing. These visual indicators convey something to us about what we can't see occurring within the surrounding elements, beneath and above the surface of the water. While the tilt of the float is seen as a given, it is how it sits in relation to the surface plane of the set plaster that is less explicable. This float appears ever so slightly more buoyant than normal. It's riding high, which is a result of the viscosity of wet plaster relative to water that has raised it slightly above what would be its typical flotation line.

The title, *Twenty Minutes I'll Never Get Back*, refers to the duration of time I sat and watched the float floating in the bucket as the plaster set. Given that I could neither discern nor experience the moment the float stopped floating and became

fixed – a “moment where sculpture happened” – to then claim that I had *witnessed* the event would be dubious if not absurd. In this sense, the work eludes to the potential relationships and points of serendipity that can occur between chance and artistic intent, while referencing the futility of such an event, or perhaps non-event, but nonetheless an intimate moment mediated through materiality and experience.

Self-referentiality has been an important aspect of this project. My artistic strategy often reflects an idea or process back onto itself as a way of apprehending a subject. My starting point might be a curatorial premise, a personal observation or predicament, which I consider via a related object or space. The resulting experience demands that audience members look, and look again. In the first instance we look, however in subsequent moments of encounter we see the subject more clearly, relative to the context. For example, what was once just a bucket of plaster with a float stuck in it, becomes a self-reflexive object lesson calling into question how we measure ourselves relative to the perceived physical state of things surrounding us. The cognitive framework through which we perceive something relative to our ‘selves’ has been shifted a degree; the plaster bucket becomes a shadow of its former self; a solid form of a contained space, no longer a vessel. It now more accurately suggests the antonym of float – undoubtedly serving better as a weighted sinker than it would as a float. The float itself can no longer participate within this exchange of basic physics. Transformed into a static weight, sunken in a frozen liquid. It now contradicts its former self; float and bucket have been compromised, their purpose sacrificed in the process.

## ***A Black Hole***



Fig. 25: Untitled (*Toilet Action #1*), 2010

The photograph, Untitled (*Toilet Action #1*), frames a corner of a room. We see the upper half of a blue door hinged to a perpendicular flesh-coloured wall. The title reveals the corner to be within a men's cubicle, referring to the context of a public toilet. The composition of the photograph appears to be taken from the position of looking in the direction of the door, which is closed. There is a typical single-stem coat hook on the back of the door. It's the 'cock 'n' balls' type of coat-hook – a straight horizontal main stem capped with a large black knob, and underneath there is a curved hook. Directly adjacent to the hook, on the pink wall, there is a hole, evidently the result of the door being swung back and slammed hard enough against the wall so as to penetrate the pink plasterboard. The impact of the collision has left a fresh ring of paint flakes from the pink wall on the black knob, suggesting that the action causing the rupture in the wall was recent, which would then also point the finger towards the photographer as the likely protagonist responsible for slamming the door into the wall. You might then deduce he was frustrated or just in a rush to sit down; either way, you know he had a camera at hand, confirming it as an action and the ensuing documentation of an artist's visceral trace.



Fig. 26: Untitled (*Toilet Action #2*), 2010

The context of both photographs is recognizably the same by the pink hue of the wall and the fluorescent light source. These cues are sufficient in themselves to indicate that the space is a toilet in an institutional environment. In Untitled (*Toilet Action #2*) the perspective is literally flipped; now the camera frames the space beneath the seat and imagines it as an infinite void or galactic black hole. It's the ubiquitous point of view we share before or after we've done our respective business. The toilet paper runs continuously as an unbroken line from the dispenser rack on the wall down into the toilet bowl, where it disappears into the clear waters, around the bend, and seemingly onwards into the infinite. The moment before the toilet was flushed, the paper roll was fed into the bowl. The photograph was taken immediately after the flushing of the toilet had stopped and the water calmed, and as a result the photograph documents the trace of the action, at the precarious moment before the material integrity of the paper dissolves.

What remains is the beginning of a paper line that has taken an uninterrupted path, induced by the vacuum of the flush dragging the paper from the roll, down the pipes and beyond, into spaces we can only imagine in our minds as the matrix of pipes that weave their way to the sewer, if not into the spatial void of a black hole.

Both actions – the puncturing of the wall and the flushing – were as reflexive as they appear: ideas acted on immediately. I usually have a camera on me, to capture precarious and fleeting moments, such as a takeaway drink cup that has tipped off the kerb and landed in the gutter on its erect straw, balancing by virtue of the remaining

orange juice caught inside acting as a ballast; or a car that has moved back and forth within a parking spot making contact with a piece of chewing-gum on hot tarmac, before the hand-brake is applied. I photographed the latter trace many years ago, capturing the way the car tyre had stretched a piece of gum on the road to its limits, without breaking it. Though this documented observation has an obvious relationship to Alÿs' *The Moment Where Sculpture Happens*, it is a serendipitous one, as my knowledge of the artist's work at the time was limited to only a few of his better known works, such as *When Faith Moves Mountains* (2002). However the stretch of gum under the car tyre had a profound impact on me that extended well beyond the actual observation, and later re-surfaced in the following work, *Eons*.

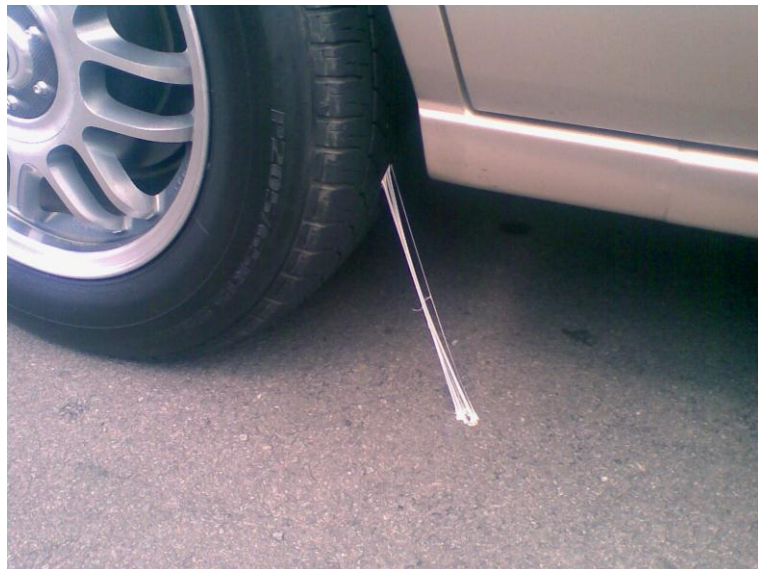


Fig. 27: Untitled (Hobart), 2008  
Research image from artists' archive

## ***Eons***

*Mix 1 part Sculpture with 1 part Painting. Apply substance to a fixed surface or ground and adhere to a similar unfixed surface. Wait several minutes before slowly separating the two surfaces as far as possible stopping before the stretched substance breaks.*



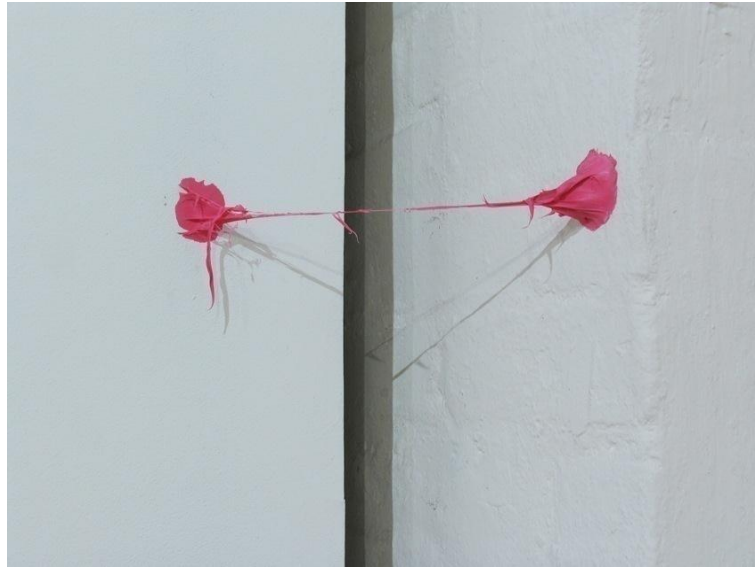


Fig. 28: *Eons*, 2010

*Eons* was a temporary site-responsive work that I installed at Conical Inc, Melbourne, as part of the solo exhibition, *A Fly in a Plane*.<sup>17</sup> The gallery space, Conical Inc, contains a large moveable wall that hinges out from the main brick wall of the building. When this wall is fixed perpendicular to the main wall it defines two spaces – that of the main gallery space and a smaller space referred to as ‘the enclosure’.

*Eons* resembles pink bubble-gum, however it’s a putty substance made from generic building caulk adhesive that has been mixed with acrylic paint squeezed directly from the tube. In the very corner of the gallery where the two walls meet, the putty has been stretched no more than one-foot in length, connecting the walls at waist height. The stretched piece of material immediately identifies itself as the trace of an action to swing the partition wall of the gallery space out from the brick wall, echoing the process of making a butterfly painting or a Rorschach ink blot. The work is quite simply the trace of an action; one that might appear to be a chance occurrence. *Eons* suggests itself as the consequence of a gallery visitor discarding a piece of exhausted gum discreetly behind the wall during a previous exhibition, as a school kid presses their chewy to the underside of their desk. Having remained intact, if only by spider web-like threads, the stretch appears to retain the elastic energy of the material. This action is, however, a suspended moment with a finite life span, and one that will break the moment it is touched or the wall moved.

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<sup>17</sup> *A Fly in a Plane*, Conical Inc, Melbourne, February – March 2010.





Fig. 29: Giovanni Anselmo, *Torsione*, 1968

Giovanni Anselmo's work, *Torsione* (1968), serves as an instructive comparison. Process is implied in the outcome of the work, the tension of a gesture is embodied in the twisted form. Through appealing to our innate understanding of the physical world, *Torsione* appears as though it could uncoil, releasing from the wall through its own counter force, however its volatility is already expended. *Eons* makes an appeal to our innate expectations: it would seem to be elastic, however it too has expended its energy and ossified.

*Eons* took a long time to execute and a number of failed attempts, as trying to stretch the relatively unyielding material to the full reach of the wall's arc demanded that the wall was moved very, very slowly, lest the putty would break. It was a quite literally a long, slow process of trying to hinge open a seven by three metre 'door' without disturbing the air around it. *Eons* relied on expansion, while *Torsione* contracted in on itself. *Eons* and *Torsione* are both sculptural tropes, which only appear to retain the vitality of the actions that made them. Both *Eons* and Anselmo's *Torsione* represent the trace of an action and the artist's presence, and the distilled the moment of time in which they were realised.

As a condensed ball of stored energy, a piece of bubble-gum releases the energy within it when it is stretched. By virtue of its elasticity the bubble-gum's

energy can be restored; after blowing a bubble, you simply re-mould the ball in your mouth, and blow more. The putty mixture of *Eons* doesn't relate to the elasticity of the bubble-gum it's impersonating; it responds differently to tactile manipulation, and its life-span – that finite period of time it can be played with before setting – is comparatively short. The putty of *Eons* ossified quickly. The tension captured within its petrifying moment seems to have ceased only millimetres before breaking point, exposing the fragility and temporality of that moment.

Being physically present in the space standing before *Eons* is unnerving. There is a sense that this very discreet work pulsates from the corner, spanning the hinging arc of the seven-metre wall, in much the same way a spider will strategically position its web within the garden to most effectively consume the greater space surrounding it. The lightness and delicacy of the stretched gum is itself similar to a spider-web, and it is intended to heighten the viewer's sense of their own physicality, as something cumbersome by comparison. Typically, when someone stood close and bent over to look at the work, they would react by slowly backing away sensing the fragility of the stretched gum-like substance.

The intention was to present something so subtle it could possibly pass unregistered by some visitors; if registered, then I anticipated it would be only be noticed in a peripheral way, like a slight glitch within an otherwise “smooth” experience, that connects and reconciles itself later, either through interplay with another work, or perhaps through a personal experience further down the track, not unlike a déjà-vu moment.

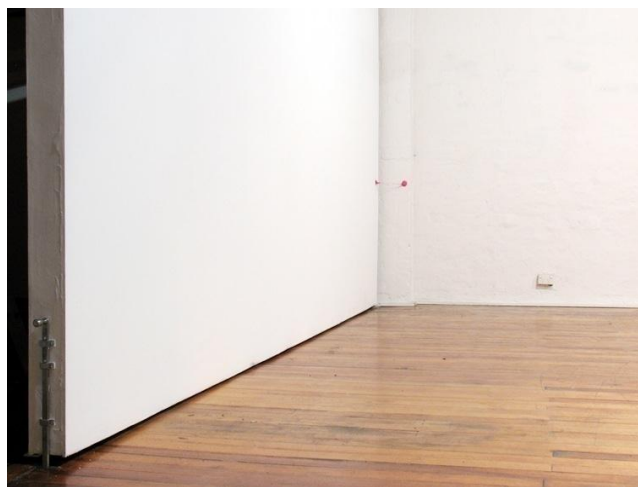


Fig. 30: *Eons*, 2010

## The Blank Canvas

### ***Gallery Space as Readymade***

The way I respond to a gallery space takes in its architectural features and contextual situation. I consider spatial and atmospheric qualities, and identify particular quirks. Contingency and adaptation are important to me in trying to anticipate how an audience may engage with an exhibition. I try to provide some impetus for how viewers' experiences may unfold and expand, through different layers and degrees of complexity in the relations between works, and the space they occupy, as well as the interrelations between audience members. I think of curatorial briefs and gallery spaces as ready-mades, or perhaps found objects. Their particularities form the catalysts for ideas that trigger how to address the space directly.

In this chapter I will elucidate several works within the project that took a site and context responsive approach, similar to *Two Rights Make a Wrong* and *Eons*, relative to the particular space and context within which they were first realised. These will be reprised for the submission exhibition for this research project, and adapted in direct relation to the Plimsoll Gallery. The formal resolution of these works will necessarily differ from the way I've described and addressed them in this exegesis, and I anticipate that the viewing experience may also differ slightly, however I hope to account for, and adapt to, the discrepancies for what will be the second or third iteration for a number of these works.

### ***A Levitating Gallery***

In an open gallery space an off-white card, about double the size of a business card, hangs down from the ceiling. It's attached to a length of white ribbon, tied loosely through a centre-punched small hole at the top of the card. The text on the card reads:

*This space full of helium gas.*

Reading the card perhaps prompts members of the audience to quickly scan the room they're in – and then notice they're sharing it with a helium balloon, caught in a dead spot of the ceiling above. The card hangs by the white ribbon from the balloon.

The initial stage of engaging with this work, *Gesture #1: Levitating Building* is critical for the way the object and text are connected cognitively, and combine to trigger a spatial relationship that momentarily heightens one's physical awareness of their 'self' while creating a momentary glitch in the perception of the architectural space. The work is intended to expand and contract the gravitational relationship between figure and space, echoing the disconcerting moment at the traffic lights, in the split second you realise it isn't your car moving but the one next to you; an intimate experience and a purely a cerebral one.



Fig. 31a, b: *Gesture #1: Levitating building*, 2010

The former Criterion Gallery occupied a small two-storey shopfront space compressed within a row of almost identical shops, adjoining a short lane. The gallery space couldn't escape its weight, despite the visual lightness of the white-washed walls inside and out, and the ground-to-awning glass frontage of the street façade. The space could be perceptually deceiving in this sense, however the materiality of the building was physically undeniable, in much the way Charles Ray's impeccably perfect *7.5-ton Cube* (1990) would be if you tried to physically shift the modesty-sized plinth-like object. The disconcerting state of play between the perceptual and the actual, which I felt the Criterion Gallery space evoked, formed the catalyst for developing the initial idea that resulted in *Gesture #1: Levitating Building* – admittedly a relatively futile gesture offering a momentary suspension of physical and material disbelief by erasing the notion of gravity, if only for a split second.



Fig. 32: Charles Ray, *7.5-ton Cube*, 1990

I have shown two slightly different variations of this work to date, at Criterion Gallery in 2010, and subsequently at the Academy Gallery in Launceston in 2011. On each occasion the card was suspended from the ceiling by the white gift ribbon. In Criterion the card hung from one white balloon, whereas in the Academy the card was suspended from a cluster of six black helium balloons. Given each of these spaces are quite different in size and volume, I felt the work needed to be

reconsidered to address the architectural nature of each space, so as to activate the work within each of these contexts. The process of reconsideration and evolution of this work, *Gesture #1: Levitating Building* resulted in the second iteration, *Gesture #2: Levitating Building*.

*Gesture #1: Levitating Building* was positioned to occupy the in-between space on the stair landing of Criterion Gallery, to be noticed in passing. The landing provided a vantage point to view the whole cubic gallery space, both lower and upper levels. It seemed the right space for a work intended to shift viewers beyond the confines of gravity's relentless pull. I hoped the experience of the work might induce a gratuitous sense of weightless-ness momentarily, before the relentless pull of gravity inevitably returns perhaps even fractionally heavier than before. The card hung a few feet above head height when standing on the landing, making it just legible yet demanding a slight exertion so as to be able to read the small font. The ceiling above the landing was the highest point within the slanted concrete roof-line, so the balloon naturally found its way there, where it remained for the duration of the exhibition.

The gallery walls were left largely blank, to permit *Gesture #1: Levitating Building* to be read architecturally, beyond the material elements – balloon, ribbon and card – that constituted it. The work was intended to activate an audiences' psycho-spatial relationship with their physical self within a built space. The balloon, string and card brought attention structural glitches that one was accustomed to overlooking, such as hair-line cracks throughout the interior of the building and patches of discoloured, peeling paint. These details emerged as the effects of a great pressure imposed by the invisible force of an inert gas.

I requested that the work, *Gesture #2: Levitating Building*, be installed in the main entrance to the Academy of the Arts building in Launceston; a long, open atrium with a sawtooth-style ceiling, thirty metres above the ground level. Out of necessity I increased the number of balloons, so as to float the additional weight of a thirty metre length of the same type of white ribbon as in *Gesture #1*. I changed the balloon colour to black, to contrast the visual elements of the ceiling area where the bunch of balloons would inevitably find the high-point. The other modification for the atrium site was the introduction of a chair, positioned on the floor directly below the suspended card. The chair was intended to interrupt the flow of pedestrian traffic in the middle of the thoroughfare, and served as a prop to stand on, to elevate the

viewer so as to enable them to read the card. Standing on the chair not only allowed the viewer to read the card, but granted them an altered perspective, in tune with the vertically elongated space.

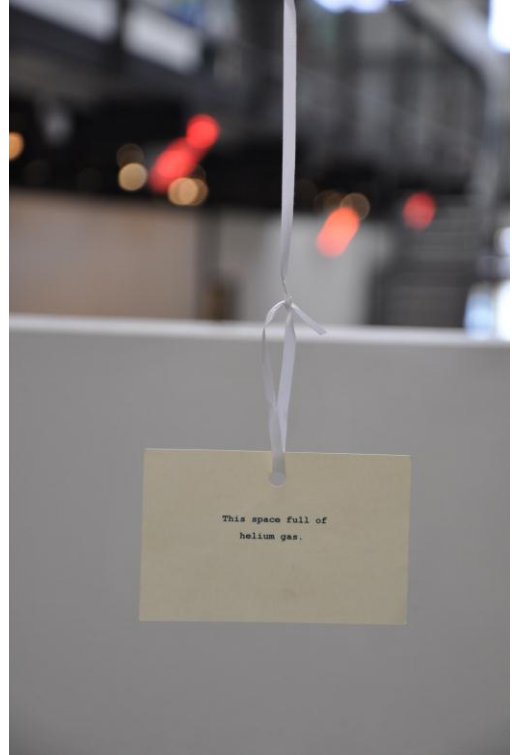


Fig. 33a, b: *Gesture #2: Levitating building*, 2010

I considered that stepping up onto a chair is something we do as second nature, an almost unconscious adaptive action we are all too familiar with. The chair is a ploy as much as it is a prop, to invite an active engagement with the work. The hanging card with its barely discernible text is the bait that locates the chair as a convenience. Its a convenient trap intended to envelop the audience into the work as a prop themselves, one that's elevated, looking aloft, reading the card and following the white string to the bunch of balloons, which apply an insignificant yet undeniable pressure upon the structure of the building.





Fig. 34: Chris Burden, *Exposing the Foundation of the Museum*, 1986/2008

Chris Burden's major work, *Exposing The Foundations of The Museum* (1986) could be considered a visceral counterpart to *Gesture #1 & 2: Levitating Building*. Burden's work quite literally reveals the concrete foundations supporting the Museum Of Contemporary Art building in Los Angeles. A large section of the concrete floor adjacent to a foundation wall of the museum was excavated to a depth of approximately six feet, while rudimentary construction-site stairs allowed the audience to walk down into what looks much like a rectangular indoor crater or landslide. I had the opportunity to experience this work while on a residency in Los Angeles, and there was something quite intense about being able to actually touch the foundations of this building. It was like patting an enormous dormant animal. One's perceptual sense of the space was palpable. The experience left me with a strangely heightened sense of my own physical self. The experience invoked by this monumental work of Burden's touched on the core concerns I am investigating in this research project, by inducing a perceptual recalibration. The experience was of becoming a measure; myself as an object relative to the physical world around me, within the immediate context of the exhibition space I was in, and more expansively, beyond the confines of those walls.

### ***Memoirs of a Wall***

The work, *Memoirs of a Wall* was a response to a curatorial brief for an exhibition entitled *Install*, and a response to a particular site – the Hobart City Council's Carnegie Gallery. The curator, Ben Booth, invited four relatively disparate artists to consider their art practices in light of their 'day-jobs' as exhibition installers, museum



attendants, and gallery or exhibition organisers. As my day-job over the past fifteen years, I have worked in behind-the-scenes roles within the art industry, predominately installing and de-installing artists' works and exhibitions in galleries, museums and other public and private spaces.

In the process of developing the idea of *Memoirs of a Wall*, I followed a line of thought that started with the chronological gap in between exhibitions on a gallery's annual calendar. The role of exhibition installer entails operating within the fallow grey zone on the exhibition calendar, and within the non-exhibited gallery site as a space of labour, when it is in-between exhibitions, and neither here nor there. These notions of inter-state times and spaces were given further form by the given architecture of the Carnegie Gallery, where a façade of white gallery walls stand autonomously within the large heritage-listed council building. I think of it as a room trying to disguise itself as another — architectural cross-dressing, if you like. Between the original walls and the display walls, there runs a long tight corridor only forty centimetres wide, along the longest wall within the space, and accessible only by ladder. I began thinking of this difficult to access passage as an analogy for the grey area I occupy in my roles as an artist and an exhibition installer, to that chronological gap between exhibitions – the space of nothing.



Fig. 35: *Memoirs of a Wall*, 2010, installation detail

For the work, *Memoirs of Wall*, all the pre-existing anchor point holes of the longest wall in the Carnegie Gallery were re-perforated from the back of the wall to

the front. As you'd expect, the vast majority were in a central horizontal band along the length of the wall. Then with a hammer, I punched out two eye-holes for myself in the centre of the wall. Throughout the exhibition opening, I wore the wall like a mask, with my eyes visible to the audience from within the gallery space, who could then visually engage with me. Within the gallery, a microphone on a stand was adjusted to touch the wall at the point where my mouth would be relative to the eye-holes. This microphone was 'live' and connected to a small amplifier positioned next to the stand. However I remained mute throughout the performance, but the volume on the amplifier was tuned relatively high, to pick up on sound within the gallery.

The monotonous drone of the crowded space resulted in a low pitch drone, but at times it neared a point of high-pitch feedback. The shriek of feedback never quite happened, but the immanent threat of the wall screaming created anxious moments within the crowd, and groups would pause conversation to quieten the threatening din. This reflexive adjustment occurred numerous times throughout the performance, the amount of noise in the space shifting, particularly in relation to people's proximity to the wall. The work thus introduced a participatory element, which established a spatial audial rapport between the audience and the wall I occupied.



Fig. 36: *Memoirs of a Wall*, 2010, installation detail

I had not anticipated the degree of interactivity the work would demand of its audience, and I found this aspect gratifying as an unanticipated outcome of a

performative work. The live microphone had been intended as a signal of my semi-presence, and as a metaphoric proposition to the wall to speak, or to indicate that I might 'say a few words on behalf of the wall'. Nothing was said. Just as a wall cannot speak, an exhibition installer should be neither seen nor heard once it's show time. The wall's perforated surface spoke for its history, and my eyes functioned as the shadowy presence of unseen labour. *Memoirs of a Wall* addresses the blank canvas of the 'empty' gallery space idiosyncratically from a personal perspective, and pronounced the problem of 'what to do' as an artist, literally from within the white walls.

*Memoirs of a Wall* engaged the exhibition and curatorial brief and instigated a reflexive and responsive situation for the audience as they became complicit within the work by default of attendance. This approach was carried through in the temporal public work *Eclipse*, which I will discuss in the next chapter.



Fig. 37: *Memoirs of a Wall*, 2010

## The Residual Fifth Dimension

### ***The Ventriloquist***

I think of my relationship to sculpture through a tongue-in-cheek notion of the sculptor-as-ventriloquist. My presence as the protagonist is intended to operate as a palpable absence or physical vacancy by the audience.<sup>18</sup> My proximity and role as the catalyst of the situation may be sensed at the periphery of the audience's perceptions. The implied presence might be so subtle as to be indiscernible, as it was intended in *Twenty Minutes I'll Never Get Back*; or more explicitly in *Memoirs of a Wall*; then somewhere in between, as it is in both *Untitled (Toilet Action #1 & #2)*. All things may point to the hand of an artist, but he may be nowhere to be seen. The idea of the proximity or distance of an artist-as-protagonist and the subject, relative to the audience's experience of a work, has been a mounting concern, which emerged as a primary one during the latter part of this project's development.

I began by considering this relationship through the trace of performative actions, often using photography, such that the perspective is from that of the artists' view of the subject – As I look down at the toilet hole from that ubiquitous position we all share privately before and after going about our private business. The strategy has shifted throughout the project; explored in a performative way in *Memoirs of a Wall*, and finally by encapsulating the audience's perspective in the work *Eclipse*. In this last work, the point of view granted to the audience is highly composed. It is in fact a fastidiously manufactured formal composition, yet so banal that it is hardly decipherable from its contextual backdrop.

### ***Eclipse***

In an interview with Jonathan Watkins, Ceal Floyer states, '(N)aturally, the gallery, or whatever viewing situation, is its own big frame; a four-dimensional one as things are experienced through time... five dimensional even, if you take into account the retrospective fallout, the conceptual 'afterimage' an audience is left with. Floyer's deliberations on the malleability of the gallery space give some indication as to how

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<sup>18</sup> I am thinking here particularly of the photo-based works, *Untitled (Toilet action #1)* and *Untitled (Toilet action #2)* when referring to the palpable absence of myself as author. Then, for the latter when referring to the 'physical vacancy', I am explicitly thinking of *Strait*, in the way the performative action required me to vacate any contrived control of my physical response to the sway of the ferry I was within.

her practice engages with the frame of the exhibition, as a readymade component, in much the same way I consider it within my own work. It is through this notion of framing and the shifting of our own frames of reference and understanding, in relation to the often overlooked and banal within the quotidian, that I relate the concerns of this research project to Floyer's practice.



Fig. 38: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

She alludes to another experiential dimension – the *afterimage*, or the residual effects a work can have for an audience after having seen or engaged in it – as an unconscious delayed response. Floyer suggests that this supplementary perceptual layer could operate as a fifth dimension, in addition to the immediate and temporal fourth dimension experienced within the space of an exhibition or gallery, as being implicit in the experience of her work. In light of the audiences' participation that occurred in *Memoirs of a Wall*, I concentrated on this aspect and employed it in *Eclipse*, a work that had a slow gestation and presented as a gradual unfolding through retrospective accumulative residual layers. It was a work constructed to be experienced cognitively through repetition and its residual effects.



Fig. 39: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

*Eclipse* was a temporary, public work, which took place across four consecutive Saturday afternoons during Spring 2011. Each week the audience wishing to experience this work were invited to board the same non-descript luxury coach, which departed promptly according to a definitive, yet incrementally staggered timetable, set according to the sun's shifting seasonal location in the sky. The coach took the same seemingly uneventful route around the immediate block returning to its same point of departure roughly four and half minutes later. During the brief journey a controlled sequence of mundane occurrences were enacted by performers to recur each week in the same detailed, yet banal fashion. The audience aboard the coach was not made aware of the scripted framework for the work, nor any of the discreet scripted actions. The repetitive time-based nature of the work orchestrated the audiences' revisitation and retracing of the very same actions and decisions down to every minute detail for four Saturday afternoons, in return of a brief chance to fully experience the synchronised repetition of the work. Yet while nothing (and everything) changed within the spectacle of the journey, the work rewarded the regular passenger with a cinematic and mediated sense of *déjà-vu*, as each week's experience eclipsed the previous.



Fig. 40: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

*Eclipse* was developed around the curatorial brief of *Iteration:Again*<sup>19</sup>. In short, the *Iteration:Again* brief asked the invited artists to consider the idea of a temporary public project that would shift, evolve or change in some form over the course of the project's four week duration.<sup>20</sup> Each Saturday of those four weeks was to be the point of change or evolution in each artists' work.<sup>21</sup> These curatorial directives were the cornerstones I used to form an idea for an exploration of temporal and spatial correlates and how these formal modes can be materialize experientially

<sup>19</sup> Artists were asked to consider broadly the notions of public, audience, and site in the development of a temporary public work that will inevitably change over the duration of the project. Beneath the surface of these more explicit points were a set of propositions that permeated the curatorial concept, to my mind, which pertained to the durational and temporal, both in terms of how an audience will implicate themselves, or not, into a work that unfolds temporally, incrementally or subsequently across four weeks. This demands a commitment to revisit and re-engage with something, and/or by potentially requiring a degree of participation perhaps. For the artist, the project offered an expansion on the standard formats of how a work will be experienced and presented, and therefore developed, so as to span the temporal format.

<sup>20</sup> Paraphrased quote from conversations between the artist and the project curator, David Cross during 2011.

<sup>21</sup> The *Iteration:Again* project spanned five weeks, yet was intended to be concentrated within four consecutive weeks and Saturdays. In short, some of the artists and curators involved received the wrong dates for the project series and as a consequence certain projects had already made commitments to commence in the week prior to when the series was originally intended. Hence the project series spanned five weeks rather than the four it was originally conceived around. However *Eclipse* was constructed around four iterations and remained that way, despite the additional week of the series at the beginning, so that the work would conclude on the last and final week of the series.



and be mapped. These were concerns that had arisen in the creation of immediately preceding works within the project.

These concerns invoked a set of questions: how could this audience be implicated into an artwork without explicitly being aware of their complicity? What constitutes a site? What is a 'public' audience, particularly within a relatively small, localised art context? The most problematic curatorial directive remained something of a *comfortable rock* in my shoe through the entire period of developing the work for this project: the notion of 'change'. *Eclipse* was devised around the question of how we recognise and experience change. From the outset it seemed as though change would be unquestionable, something inevitable, particularly within the context of a time-based temporary project. Yet the questioning of (what could) change within such a pre-formulated situation that anticipated change, is what particularly interested me. This problem with change and its presumed role within a time-based project quickly became a key point of friction I deliberated on. I wondered whether the assumption of change could be inverted and how I might antagonise this presumption. In so doing, what would this achieve in relation to the brief?



Fig. 41: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

I sought a way to respond to the bare bones of the curatorial brief so as to turn them towards the ubiquitous problem of being-in-the-world, both in the immediate and banal sense; relative to all the habitual contingencies of everyday life; and in a universal sense related to the larger considerations that determine how we live, such as the way the earth rotates around the sun on a set axis and consequently shifts the



amount of daylight everyday which, in turn, forms a pattern of seasonal change that governs life. We can often remain oblivious and accustomed to such perpetual and universal change occurring in the quotidian, while our inattention makes us passive recipients of change.

In the afore-mentioned interview with Jonathan Watkins, Ceal Floyer reflects on her observations of 'art being seen' and, more importantly, 'art not being seen', while she worked as a part-time gallery invigilator during art college, a formative part of her training. She refers to discovering that “presumption is a medium in its own right.”<sup>22</sup> Floyer refers to the audience’s expectations of seeing something enhanced or heightened, literally or metaphorically in the spotlight. I concur with her observation. My time working in a not dissimilar fly-on-the-wall position within the arts industry has provided me with countless opportunities to observe audience in art spaces appearing ambivalent, underwhelmed or disappointed.

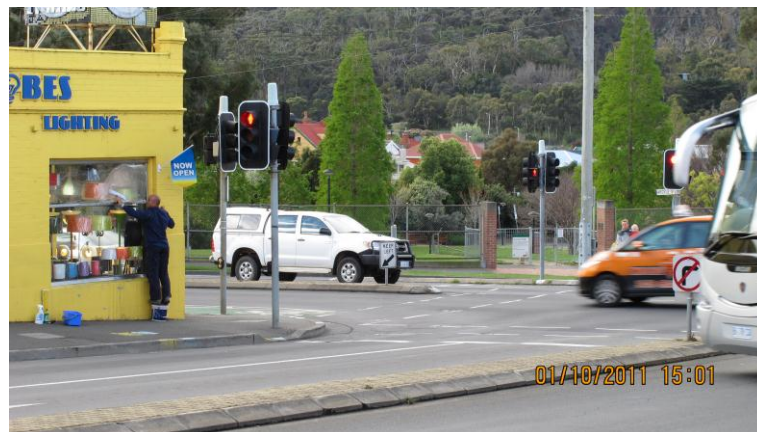


Fig. 42: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

*Eclipse* needed to become a recurring experience for the audience and one that was mediated; positing them in a controlled environment both familiar and desirable, the former simply so as to not detract too much attention from the journey, and desirable enough to lure audience members to return each Saturday, despite an inevitable degree of disappointment over the brevity of the journey and the uncertainty about of what was witnessed. I considered it integral for the experience to evoke a degree of complicity in the audience/passenger experience, while remaining subtle enough to leave the viewer perpetually in a state of ambiguity mentally trying

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<sup>22</sup> A quote by Ceal Floyer from the conversation between Jonathan Watkins and Ceal Floyer, 'Have Trojan Horse, will travel', in the catalogue from her exhibition at Ikon Gallery, Birmingham in 2001.

to register the different levels at play surfacing over the course of the four journeys across the four consecutive weeks.

After much deliberation over ways of discreetly orchestrating an audience member's experience, I arrived at the idea of a short round-trip journey on a bus or coach. A luxury coach soon became the logical decision for providing a mediated experience, given the degree of control already built into such a passenger vehicle and the sense of detachment one can experience watching the silent world pass by, in mute out the window. A mystery trip aboard a coach immediately sets up an anticipation of some imminent arrival at a destination of equal or greater cache to the coach ride itself. Yet *Eclipse* offered disappointment in equal measure to satisfaction for the passenger: it granted the privilege of travelling in a decadent mode of transport, in spite of the journey being too short to even warm your seat before you're back where you started. It was developed as a work that was always intended to leave a visitor inevitably underwhelmed, disappointed or dissatisfied, but possibly curious enough to re-visit again each and every Saturday, in an attempt to reconcile their first time with the subsequent promise of a 'change' from the previous experience.



Fig. 43: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

Outside the usual tourist haunts, a coach of this status is incongruous, to say the least; a giant silver elephant set against a background of distribution warehouses, car-yards, trade supply stores, a corner pub and a veterinary clinic. I constructed the work to occur at a point of time on a Saturday when the streets are almost deserted with many

shops closing for the day. It's that Saturday afternoon lull before the evening begins – the twilight moment of the day.

Along the route, the coach only ever turned left, travelling around four corners to return to the departure point. It orbited the block occupied by CAST, with the passengers aboard sealed in something of a void. The separation established by the coach is not dissimilar from the permeable threshold of the 'fourth wall' in traditional modes of theatre, whereby the audience occupies the same architectural space as those on stage, but cut adrift from the action. In such a situation, both the performer and the audience suspend disbelief of the mutual space they occupy. In the case of *Eclipse*, the fourth wall is defined by the coach, particularly its cinema-like windows, a separate space transporting the audience through the stage set, while being potentially oblivious to the second scenario in the work, which as audience members, they occupy themselves as 'performers' in the work with each weekly (re-)visit. This spatial separation was compounded by the tinted windows of the coach that kept the occupied spaces, both inside and outside, discrete.



Fig. 44: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

Experiencing *Eclipse*, a member of the audience could assume that their position as a passenger on the coach was that of passive viewer, awaiting the curatorial promise of a weekly change to occur. Here they were met with the possibility that nothing would change; that each Saturday may present the same thing. The shifts between each weeks experience were minor and subtle, and depended upon the cognitive awareness and calibration of each viewer, and the collective cross-referencing between passengers.

The information distributed about *Eclipse* during the *Iteration:Again* project was minimal, limited to the title and the announcement of a departure time on each Saturday of the project, along with a location nominated as the ‘point of departure’. This basic information was intended only to instruct the prospective audience as to what to do if they wished to experience the work within the *Iteration:Again* series. There was no mention of a mode of transport, journey route, arrival location or journey duration, so this limited information and title of the work alone created an expectation in the audience, and demanded one to be prompt and observe, leading the assumption that if one did, then something will be occur.



Fig. 45: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

Each iteration took place precisely within the same brief window of time governed by the one shifting universal consistency: The exact point of day predicated by the gradual and constant shift of the sun along it's trajectory across the sky, for each of these specific Saturday afternoons within the year. The times of departure were staggered seven, eight and nine minutes across the four Saturdays.<sup>23</sup> So hypothetically, despite the time of departure being different from the previous week, the relative atmospheric light of the afternoon is effectively exactly the same as the previous week, and as it will be the following week too due to the incremental time adjustment of departure. I say hypothetically as the work embraced the vicissitudes of the weather as a variant that would play a role in the work. As it turned out, there was

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<sup>23</sup> Daylight Savings came into effect in the middle of the four weeks. This hourly shift was ignored in respect of the greater continuum of time. Hence from the second Saturday to the third the departure time changed eight minutes from 2:59pm to 4:07pm, which on the surface confused many, however it provided an even greater reference to the elemental undercurrent of consistency that governed the work.

a torrential downpour during the third iteration after previous Saturdays of mostly clear skies. The timing for such an extreme shift within the experience of the work was impeccable. The weather that week was bad enough to keep most people indoors, so this third week in which regular passengers – *train-spotters* – could have expected to grasp aspects of the work that had for the previous two weeks eluded them, left many feeling sure they'd clocked each and every performer playing their part on the wet and empty streets. Many of the group aboard that week were ecstatic by the time they disembarked the coach for the third time, which was again double-parked across the Maxi-Taxi van that had passed them in the opposite direction only four minutes earlier. The rain had cleared the canvas so to speak, and re-established the tabula rasa. This was enough to convince the train-spotters that the script was revealed, and that together they'd collectively noted the relevant details.



Fig. 46: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

To put another twist into the game, the weather on the fourth and final Saturday was a contrast, with clear spring sky and warm temperatures that brought everyone outdoors. The consequence was that all the regulars' speculations on which street performers and actions constituted the work became a lot less confident. What did become more apparent to the dedicated audience was the immeasurability of the actual scope of the work. This imbued *Eclipse* with the sense of ambiguity that I always felt was crucial to its success. The final week, on the back of the previous wash out, left the work open. Despite the audience having found solace in confidently identifying a handful of recurrences, the full scope of *Eclipse* never has been



revealed. Speculative discussions surrounding how many things and layers it comprised circulated long after *Eclipse* had run its course.

The residual effect of the work upon its audience – members of whom experienced it once, twice or all four times – revealed to me that of all the works within the research project, this one succeeded in effecting the sustained and heightened perceptual awareness that I had been seeking. Within the shifting cognitive space of the work the viewer reconciles the elements of the work and their relationship to what they've experienced, to what is known and assumed: here a process of physical and perceptual measurement can occur...the measurement of being in the world.

On the final weekend of *Iteration:Again*, after *Eclipse* had run its last orbit of the block, a colleague told me about a novel, *Remainder*, by Tom McCarthy, saying it had resonances with *Eclipse* and on reading it, I concur.



Fig. 47: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

The novel's male narrator is a character who has received millions of dollars of compensation for an accident he can't recall, and spends it meticulously reconstructing and re-staging fleeting details from fragments of memories of his life mostly prior to the accident, that re-surface as acute moments of *déjà-vu*. Through the novel the reenactments grow from a sequence of relatively benign poetic everyday occurrences, into a realm of uncanny encounters, staged within tightly controlled spaces that are turned into film-like sets. The staged re-enactments in *Remainder* are seemingly inconsequential everyday occurrences: an old lady putting her garbage out beside her apartment door as the protagonist, on cue, descends the stairs; a detailed

reconstruction of a hair-line wall crack and its relative proximity to a paint sample marking on a wall in the bathroom, which also allows a glimpse through an old window pane of the neighbourhood cats sleeping on the hot roofs of next door's flat apartments; the smell of livers cooking in a fry-pan wafting throughout the building; a pianist continuously rehearsing the same composition in the apartment below. These recurrences are as meticulous and idiosyncratic as those choreographed for *Eclipse*. With both *Eclipse* and *Remainder* there was an intense focus on irrelevant, mundane moments. Through repetition these instances amplify into moments of profundity for the audience as the weeks transpired during *Eclipse*.

McCarthy's character endeavors to re-fabricate even the most miniscule of details within a meticulously re-constructed theatrical scenario, with the sole intent of being able to re-live every detail of a distant memory, random sighting or something completely anecdotal like a bank robbery. So as to experience and control them remotely in real time again and again like a broken record. The purpose of the character's pursuit, as he says, is: “...to be real – to become fluent, natural, to cut out the detour that sweeps us around what's fundamental to events, preventing us from touching their core: the detour that makes us all second-hand and second-rate.”<sup>24</sup>



Fig. 48: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

However *Eclipse* didn't repetitively re-stage scenarios within a meticulously detailed and controlled set, but within the public space of a typical urban block where the uncertainties of such a contingent environment are as crucial to the work as the scripted re-enactments are. These scripted moments happened regardless of all the contingencies that took place on a particular street intersection at 4:09pm on a

<sup>24</sup> McCarthy, Tom. *Remainder*. p. 244.

Saturday afternoon, then at 4:18pm the following Saturday. They diffuse into the dense texture of the public site and its constancy of chance occurrences that perpetually unfold spatially and temporally.

To my mind, the theatricality of those drunken characters in *Werckmeister Harmonies* orbiting one another in that scene is both performative and sculptural, in much the same way that I think of *Eclipse*. While both make reference to the astronomical event of an eclipse, they do so in quite different ways despite both being figurative adoptions of the notion. The temporary participatory work, *Eclipse*, considers the point of syzygy<sup>25</sup> in an astronomical eclipse as a cognitive moment where a banal everyday occurrence, an unconscious action or fleeting observation occurs again at the same point in did previously, and in this moment triggers a cognitive glitch within the viewer not dissimilar to the experience of déjà-vu, within what is an otherwise contingent everyday environment. However, the point of syzygy in *Eclipse* builds across four weeks, as a sequence of meticulously orchestrated actions, movements and gestures that are repeatedly performed by a cast of anonymous participants, supplemented by moments of ephemera and detritus, each Saturday afternoon. The ecliptic alignment of *Eclipse* is as linear as a syzygy that stems from the perspective of the audience aboard the bus who participate in the work by default of traveling onboard the bus, who are then implicated as an object within the syzygy. They mark the point where the performative alignment starts and finishes – The perspectival sightline, as they literally sit comfortably within the shadow path of the eclipse, the parameters of which are determined by that of the grey luxury coach as it orbits the block. Meanwhile, on the periphery of this shifting path these repeated actions, movements and gestures disappear. They become indecipherable and inconsequential gestures as they fall back into the contingent interface of the quotidian like a waning moon.

I consider *Eclipse* to be an ephemeral work that was experienced exclusively within the temporal situation in which it occurred during the *Iteration:Again* project.<sup>26</sup> Whether one subscribed to the unknown yet anticipated experience of some

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<sup>25</sup> The definition of the term “syzygy” is defined as being ‘either of the two positions (conjunction or opposition) of a celestial body when sun, earth, and the body lie in a straight line.’  
<http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/syzygy> (14/01/13)

<sup>26</sup> The work was documented from three points of view: from that of the bus — via a discreet video camcorder that was mounted on the front dash next to the driver. This footage allowed me to retrospectively monitor how the scenario was playing out. Secondly, by photographing one point along the route — the first traffic intersection, when the silver coach came in and out of a fixed



contemporary artwork by boarding the coach, or simply happened to be in right place at the right time more than once to serendipitously witnessed the same sequence of synchronised moments take place before them from the window of the corner pub perhaps; the immediacy of *Eclipse* as a lived experience was authenticated within that very moment. That ambiguous ‘afterimage’ that *Eclipse* left like a residual watermark in the short-term memory of its audience continues to resurface.<sup>27</sup>



Fig. 49: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

Beyond the even smaller art community it became something of a rumour. No details of the recurrences nor the extent to how many there were has ever gone beyond myself. The detail of the work and what it entailed has become an enigma that extends from that which I established as the confidentiality of the work during its

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composition; a camera on a tripod was pre-set and focused towards the intersection from a different perspective each week. Thirdly, from the point of view of a professional photographer on the coach who had no more knowledge of the work than the audience aboard. This was the photographer contracted to document the entire *Iteration:Again* series of art projects. The documentation from this photographer captures the experience somewhat objectively as it unfolded across the four weeks. Literally hundreds of ‘wrong’ and boring photos ranging from the backs of heads, to people initially not looking and appearing oblivious to the moment they’re in, through to people leaning over one another desperately to see something, which they don’t seem quite convinced by. These forms of documentation still manage to retain the elusive and repetitive nature of the work.

<sup>27</sup> Recently when I gave a talk at the symposium, *Art and the Outermost Limits of Site-Specificity*, held at CAST, an elderly couple in the audience told me during the panel discussion that their friend had turned down several Saturday afternoon tea invitations to come to their house, because he apparently had to walk across his front lawn to check his mail-box at the exact moment a silver bus came up his street each Saturday. The couple then went on to say that their friend had apologised for not explaining further at the time why he couldn’t accept the invitation, but did later tell them at the conclusion of the four weeks what little he knew of what he was involved in later as being the artwork called *Eclipse*. As a consequence of learning of *Eclipse* from their friend, this couple then had apparently made inquiries into the work through CAST, which fortunately coincided with this upcoming Symposium that I was to be speaking about my practice and in particular the work *Eclipse*.

development and realisation, and my relative proximity and absence as the artist directing the work from the periphery.



Fig. 50: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

Floyer's notion of the 'afterimage' is pertinent in light of the intimacy of at least one person's experience of *Eclipse*. On the fifth consecutive Saturday, despite the work having taken place across the previous four, a passenger who had apparently traveled aboard the coach each of the previous four Saturdays revisited the point of departure to walk the block himself. It would seem he did so as some attempt to reconcile those few profound moments of banality, and to relive those memories of everyday actions and gestures within the 'empty set' that he'd come to appreciate as a habitual part of his Saturday afternoon.<sup>28</sup>

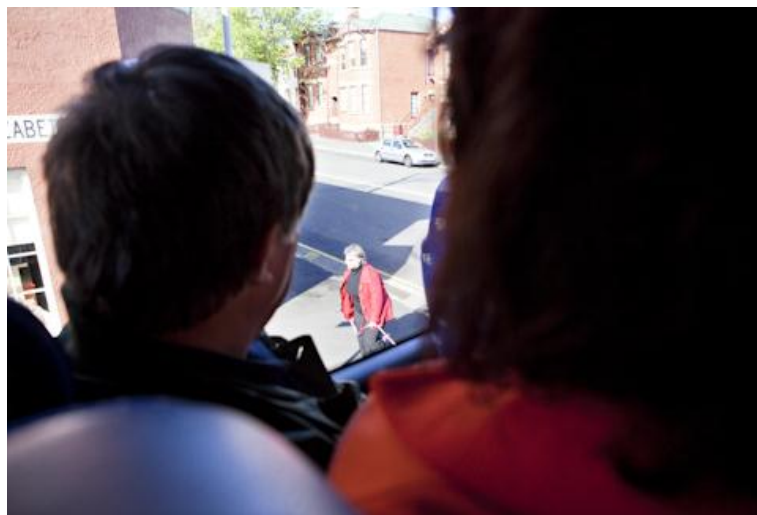


Fig. 51: *Eclipse*, 2011, photographic documentation

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<sup>28</sup> This full anecdotal blog entry can be read on this website:  
<http://supercritical.com.au/2011/10/09/anthony-johnson's-repeated-gestures/> (16/01/13)

### ***Cooking Spaghetti (after Sol Lewitt)***

The final work I will discuss is a step removed from the notion of the residual afterimage. My discussion falls in two parts: First, I account for how I arrived at this particular work serendipitously. Second, how I've retrospectively deliberated on the way it connects to the research project, though at times its relevance has been in doubt.

The work is titled, *Cooked spaghetti not short, not straight, mostly not crossing and touching, thrown at random, using one packet, indeterminately dispersed with maximum density and uncertain longevity, covering the entire surface of a wall*. Like others within this project, it arose from an evaluation of gallery spaces in terms of how to utilise the wall space as a blank canvas or object. It typically consumes a whole single wall, or potentially all walls, within a space, with cooked spaghetti.



Fig. 52: *Cooked spaghetti not short, not straight, mostly not crossing and touching, thrown at random, using one packet, indeterminately dispersed with maximum density and uncertain longevity, covering the entire surface of a wall*, 2011

The wall space is covered evenly with pieces of *al dente* spaghetti thrown from a short distance by myself. The work came about at a time when I was in one of those in-between-things kind of moments, sitting around in the studio like Uncle Bruce<sup>29</sup>, thinking about 'what to do' and cooking lunches for myself, consisting

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<sup>29</sup> A fellow artist and close friend, Simon Horsburgh, and myself have for sometime referred to Bruce Nauman as Uncle Bruce in our email conversations. We use the term humorously as a way of

mostly of spaghetti. The initial catalyst came out of throwing a single string of spaghetti against the wall to check if it was ready or not.<sup>30</sup> Using periodic *wall-sticking* tests to check for *al dente-ness* over the 8 minute cooking time, left more and more squiggled lines of spaghetti against the wall.

The lines that formed at the instant the strand of spaghetti hit the wall were fluid and compelling in their uniqueness. My impulse was to keep throwing the spaghetti so as to see more of these chance lines take form...and the work grew from there. Much like a phone-pad doodle or seeing a dot-to-dot drawing reveal itself with each line, this disjointed line drawing would adjust itself with each new line. I became absorbed within this moment of something slipping in and out of representation in much the way passing clouds can shape fleeting sculptural forms.

Nonetheless, since realising the work relatively early within the project, *Cooked spaghetti not short, not straight, mostly not crossing and touching, thrown at random, using one packet, indeterminately dispersed with maximum density and uncertain longevity, covering the entire surface of a wall* has been a black sheep; I found it difficult to reconcile in relation to the main focus of this research.

It wasn't until quite late that I found the points that connect this work to ongoing formal and conceptual concerns that have been consistently simmering throughout the project: *that of an investigation into the relationships and points of intersection between space, object and action; chance and intent; temporality, transience and the moment of sculpture; trace of an action and that of my own proximity relative to the work.*

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acknowledging the lineage of our respective practices to the work and philosophy of Bruce Nauman. In the context of the conclusion of this text, I use the shortened name, Uncle Bruce, as a means for again referring to the influence of Nauman's oeuvre upon my own practice as being ever-present and a significant influence upon this project, if only indirectly. Further to this, I feel the relationship and dialogue between a nephew and uncle, at least as I've experienced it, can afford a healthy degree of humour and antagonism, while delivered through the utmost respect.

<sup>30</sup> A technique I've known as being best practice for cooking *al dente* spaghetti.



Fig. 53: *Cooked spaghetti not short, not straight, mostly not crossing and touching, thrown at random, using one packet, indeterminately dispersed with maximum density and uncertain longevity, covering the entire surface of a wall, 2011, installation detail*

I remained compelled by the work for the vitality it sustains, its immediacy, its degree of visual subtlety, and the infinite variants of the humble line captured and displayed over a large expanse of wall surface. It takes the idea of a 'lightness of touch' beyond its logical conclusion. The chance composition of *Cooked spaghetti not short, not straight, mostly not crossing and touching, thrown at random, using one packet, indeterminately dispersed with maximum density and uncertain longevity, covering the entire surface of a wall* relates to *Celestial Table* (16h29m24.40s, - 26°25'55.0"), which also plays on the relatively detached proximity I establish for myself as the author of the method for arriving at the composition and process of executing it onto the surface plane. Once again, a reference to Lewitt elucidates the interplay of chance and intent through another intentionally reinterpreted deadpan sentence: this time it is a bastardised version of a title from one of his many wall drawings: *Wall Drawing #65. Lines not short, not straight, crossing and touching, drawn at random, using four colors, uniformly dispersed with maximum density, covering the entire surface of the wall.* (1971)<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.nga.gov/press/2004/releases/spring/lewitt.shtm> (16/01/13)



Fig. 54: Sol Lewitt, *Wall Drawing #65*. Lines not short, not straight, crossing and touching, drawn at random, using four colors, uniformly dispersed with maximum density, covering the entire surface of the wall, 1971, assistant executing drawing at National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 2004

Contingency was integral to Lewitt's philosophy, as was placing precedence on concept over form. However I see my own practice as being strongly formal in its approach and outcome. My works, however, do open onto ideas and allow them to occur within the contingent, as did Lewitt's, given that much of his work and particularly his Wall Drawings, are conceived through simple written instructions only, to be executed by others. Such contingent moments relate to the transient and tenuous – the moment where sculpture happens.



Figure 55: *Cooked spaghetti* not short, not straight, mostly not crossing and touching, thrown at random, using one packet, indeterminately dispersed with maximum density and uncertain longevity, covering the entire surface of a wall, 2011, installation detail



*Cooked spaghetti not short, not straight, mostly not crossing and touching, thrown at random, using one packet, indeterminately dispersed with maximum density and uncertain longevity, covering the entire surface of a wall* is sustained by the same transformative process present in much of the work that subsequently developed throughout the project. It shares the fossilised state of *Twenty Minutes I'll Never Get Back* while being fused to the wall with same degree of temporality and material fragility as *Eons*. It draws its parameters from the area it consumes, much like *Memoirs of a Wall*, and required the same relative distant of myself as catalyst and protagonist, as did as *Celestial Table* (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0") and *Eclipse*.

## A Conclusive Afterthought

This research project employed diverse media in its consideration of the physical and perceptual measurement of being as a ‘problem’ pertaining to sculpture. It began with explorations of materiality and object and developed through sites – and contexts – as a suite of responsive installations specific to given gallery spaces and exhibition briefs.

The works that resulted from the studio enquiry were aimed at implicating audience members in measurement and perception related conundrums. Several of these encounters brought into play perceptions of *levelness*, our innate ability to negotiate space, and orientate our bodies relative to the everyday contexts we inhabit. These works were intended to draw viewers’ attention to the spatial context in which they confronted them, and thus prompt a reorientation.

The works also embodied visual jokes intended to align moments of existential profundity with a sense of impotence or irreverence. To produce the works, seemingly futile pursuits or *stupid* actions were carried out sincerely – in the form of basic physics experiments, tests of spatial phenomena and/or the staging of fleeting occurrences. These strategies balanced sincerity of gestures with irrationality or absurdity; slamming the toilet door into the adjacent wall, or feeding disused toilet paper into the toilet bowl before flushing it, or transposing a simple galactic screen-shot onto and through the dark blue gridded surface of a new table-tennis table. As simple object lessons in forms of relativity, these pursuits are perhaps only relatively stupid – *Stupivity* perhaps.

A preoccupation with points of transition ran through the project; from the tension in the stretched material substance of *Eons*, to the moment of recognition of something witnessed in the disconcerting experience offered by *Eclipse*. In effect, all the works in the project established points of reference grounded in preconceptions about the way physically familiar things behave. However, introduced discrepancies were calculated to disrupt and provoke shifts in perception on the part of the audience. The anomalies presented were often subtle, such as the weight of a seemingly buoyant fishing float in a bucket of plaster, or the slight glitch in what might seem to be an inconsequential street scene where a viewer thinks they are witnessing the same occurrence they encountered in the previous week. In the case



of *Eons*, the title itself alludes to the world beyond the work's small scale, and that of the architectural space it literally hinges off; gesturing to a greater (outer) space, where distances between surfaces and objects are largely unfathomable, and have virtually no relation to even our vastest sense or experiences of time and space.

The research project works are referential: their artistic lineage and influences are overt, though they often depart from their artistic predecessors. Cited works exemplify the potential elasticity of Sculpture and explore the physical limits of their selected materials. As my project progressed, via experiments within various gallery spaces, performative and theatrical considerations assumed increasing importance. In this pursuit, a watershed moment occurred through the work *Memoirs of a Wall*.

*Memoirs of a Wall* had been intended to draw to attention to the formal conditions of the architectural attributes of the exhibition space; the behind-the-scenes conditions of its operations, the presence of the artist, and the role of the audience in upholding a set of exhibition conventions. This work ultimately succeeded, to an unanticipated degree, in bringing the latter aspect to the fore. A field of white noise impacted on the collective behavior of the audience, reverberating feedback through the amp, and the wall, instigating a group dynamic specific to the respective exhibition space and setup. As the sound of the crowd threatened to reach a crescendo, the audience – acting as one – modulated its volume. This self-correcting group dynamic heightened each spectator's sense of themselves as a part of an audience. As well as the mute presence of artist – protagonist behind the wall – the dynamic of the 'activated' audience pointed to a closed circuit of formal and institutional factors. In light of this experience, I sought to deliberately orchestrate these elements and relationships.

I went on to develop *Eclipse* where I sought to generate a more self-reflexive experience for the viewer. The intention was to provoke cognitive dissonance by framing a scenario to implicate the audience in a boundless narrative structure; in other words, to create a highly contrived situation in which the artwork had no apparent boundaries, and for which the participating audience members themselves determined the demarcation between art and life. In this exploration of reality beyond concrete materiality, I contextualized the extended realm of my sculptural practice into a theatrical dimension and turned to the writer Tom McCarthy, author

of the novel *Remainder*, and the director of the film *Werckmeister Harmonies*, Bela Tarr.

My strategies for implicating the audience in the work developed progressively through the project, most evidently and effectively in *Celestial Table* (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0"), *Strait*, *Memoirs of a Wall*, *Two Rights Make a Wrong* and *Eclipse*. Each of these works framed a particular fixed point of view. The final work, *Eclipse*, amalgamated concerns developed through the earlier works, and explicitly concentrated on audience mediation and experience as a medium in and of itself. *Eclipse* also manifested the afterimage as an actual and psychological experience, demonstrating that the *moment of sculpture* can be made to resonate as a residual trace, long after the physical and experiential aspects of a work have been brought to a conclusion.

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(All photographs are original images of the artists' unless otherwise acknowledged)

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Film still

Screen-shot taken from library collection DVD, 2:08 min

*Figure 2.*

Bruce Nauman, *A Cast of the Space Under My Chair*, 1965-68

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21 January 2013 From: <http://www.kunstbeeld.nl/nl/nieuws/13171/how-it-is.html>

*Figure 3.*

Anthony Johnson, *Two Rights Make a Wrong*, 2011

Detail

Suspended ceiling, framed photograph, rubber door-stop, site-responsive installation, dimensions variable

*Figure 4.*

Flat Earth image sourced from Internet

21 January 2013 From:

<http://api.ning.com/files/1uVZymYRjLpyV3Yfx6voGCx8wq6JHn6hF>

[V4IDKyKKvXUoFCuww2\\*FwvVhtrs67AF\\*MMcq0EMQqtzAg6YCHEApDSqJibKD6/FlatEarth.jpg](http://api.ning.com/files/1uVZymYRjLpyV3Yfx6voGCx8wq6JHn6hF/V4IDKyKKvXUoFCuww2*FwvVhtrs67AF*MMcq0EMQqtzAg6YCHEApDSqJibKD6/FlatEarth.jpg)

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Ceal Floyer, *Downpour*, 2001

DVD Projection

Scanned from: Floyer, C., J. Watkins, et al. (2001). Ceal Floyer. Birmingham, Ikon Gallery.

*Figure 10.*

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Anthony Johnson, *Celestial Table (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0")*, 2010

Table-Tennis table, 76 x 274 x 152.5 cm

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21 January, 2013 From: <http://www.staratlas.com>

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25 May, 2012 From: [http://www.jorgemacchi.com/sites/default/files/](http://www.jorgemacchi.com/sites/default/files/Eva_Lynn_in_Light_Music-2.pdf)

*Eva\_Lynn\_in\_Light\_Music-2.pdf*

*Figure 15.*

Anthony Johnson, *Celestial Table (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0")*, 2010

Detail

Table-Tennis table, 76 x 274 x 152.5 cm

*Time Takes Things*, Criterion Gallery, Hobart, September, 2010

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Collection: Tate, London

25 May, 2012 From: <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-snow-storm-steam-boat-off-a-harbours-mouth-n00530/text-catalogue-entry>

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Anthony Johnson, *Strait*, 2011

Video still sequence

Video, 9:00 min (loop)

*Figure 18.*

Anthony Johnson, *Strait*, 2011

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23 January, 2013 From: [http://www.matthewmarks.com/new-york/exhibitions/2007-04-27\\_peter-fischli-david-weiss/works-in-exhibition/#/images/16/](http://www.matthewmarks.com/new-york/exhibitions/2007-04-27_peter-fischli-david-weiss/works-in-exhibition/#/images/16/)

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*Figure 22.*

Francis Alÿs, *The Moment Where Sculpture Happens*, 1994

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Anthony Johnson, Untitled (*Toilet Action #1*), 2010

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48 x 60 cm

*Time Takes Things*, Criterion Gallery, Hobart, September, 2010

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21 January 2013 From: [charlesraysculpture.com](http://charlesraysculpture.com)

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Punctuated eye holes, all the pre-existing hanging holes of the gallery wall re-perforated from behind wall, microphone and stand, amplifier, artists' presence within the wall.

Dimensions and duration variable

*Install*, Carnegie Gallery, Hobart, December, 2010

*Figure 37.*

Anthony Johnson, *Memoirs of a Wall*, 2010

Punctuated eye holes, all the pre-existing hanging holes of the gallery wall re-perforated from behind wall, microphone and stand, amplifier, artists' presence within the wall.

Dimensions and duration variable

*Install*, Carnegie Gallery, Hobart, December, 2010

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A temporary and time-based public artwork

Four-week duration

North Hobart, Hobart, September – October 2011

*Iteration : Again*, Tasmania, Australia

Photograph courtesy of Millie Mutimer

*Figure 39, 42, 44, 48.*

Anthony Johnson, *Eclipse*, 2011

Photographic documentation

A temporary and time-based public artwork

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*Iteration : Again*, Tasmania, Australia

*Figure 52.*

Anthony Johnson, *Cooked spaghetti not short, not straight, mostly not crossing and touching, thrown at random, using one packet, indeterminately dispersed with maximum density and uncertain longevity, covering the entire surface of a wall*, 2011

One packet of Spaghetti, dimensions variable

Panoply, Sawtooth, Launceston, March, 2011

*Figure 53, 55.*

Anthony Johnson, *Cooked spaghetti not short, not straight, mostly not crossing and touching, thrown at random, using one packet, indeterminately dispersed with maximum density and uncertain longevity, covering the entire surface of a wall*, 2011

Installation detail

One packet of Spaghetti, dimensions variable

Panoply, Sawtooth, Launceston, March, 2011

*Figure 54.*

Sol Lewitt, *Wall Drawing #65. Lines not short, not straight, crossing and touching, drawn at random, using four colors, uniformly dispersed with maximum density, covering the entire surface of the wall*, 1971

Assistant executing drawing

Specific wall: 491 x 823 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 2004

26 May, 2012 From: <http://www.nga.gov/press/2004/releases/spring/lewitt.shtm>

*Figure 56.*

Béla Tarr and Ágnes Hranitzky, *Werckmeister Harmonies*, 2001

Film still

Screen-shot taken from library collection dvd, 7:23 min

## List of works included in the Examination Exhibition

*Two Rights Make a Wrong* 2011/2013

Framed photograph (39 x 45.5 cm)

Installation specific to site

*Celestial Table (16h29m24.40s, -26°25'55.0'')* 2010

Table-Tennis table

76 x 274 x 152.5 cm

*Cooked spaghetti not short, not straight, mostly not crossing and touching, thrown at random, using two packets, indeterminately dispersed with maximum density and uncertain longevity, covering the entire surface of a wall* 2011/2013

Two packets of Spaghetti

Dimensions specific to site

*Untitled (Toilet Action #1)* 2010

Inkjet photographic print mounted on archival board

35.6 x 47.7 cm

*Memoirs of a Wall* 2010/2013

Punctuated eyeholes, pre-existing hanging holes of the gallery wall re-perforated from behind wall, microphone and stand, amplifier, sound

Dimensions specific to site

*Twenty Minutes I'll Never Get Back* 2011

Cast plaster, fishing float

31.5cm x 26cm diameter

*Eclipse* 2011

Video documentation of a temporary and time-based public artwork

Looped sequence, 4 x 4:33 min (18:22 min), Silent

*Eons* 2010/2013

Construction adhesive putty, acrylic paint, gallery partition wall

Dimensions specific to site

*Strait* 2011

Video, TV monitor

9:00 min (loop), Silent

*Gesture #1: Levitating Building* 2010

Helium balloon, ribbon, text on card

Dimensions specific to site

## Documentation on Data Storage Device

*Eclipse* 2011

Video documentation

Four channel video (Split-screen images), 4:33 min

Silent

File name and type: "ECLIPSE" QuickTime

*Eclipse* 2011

Video documentation

Single channel video, 4 x 4:33 min (18:22 min)

Silent

File name and type: "ECLIPSE\_x4 looped" QuickTime

*Strait* 2011

Video

9:00 min (loop)

Silent

File name and type: "STRAIT" QuickTime

NOTE: I suggest watching this video on a laptop computer so as to be able to upturn the laptop and view the work in portrait orientation.

Folder name: A.JOHNSON\_MFA documentation

Contains documentation of works in the project exhibition

Folder name: A.JOHNSON\_MFA support documentation

Contains: Support documentation of works in the project exhibition from previous iterations

## Curriculum Vitae (abridged)

Anthony Johnson

Born in Sydney, Australia, 1974.

Residing in Hobart, Australia.

### Education:

2010 – 13	Master of Fine Arts (Research) Tasmanian College of the Arts, University of Tasmania
2000 – 01	Bachelor of Fine Arts (Hons) Tasmanian School of Art, The University of Tasmania
1997 – 98	Bachelor of Fine Art, College of Fine Arts, The University of New South Wales
1993 – 95	Diploma of Fine Arts, National Art School, East Sydney Technical College

### Selected Solo Exhibitions:

2013	<i>A Sculptural Problem: The Measurement of Being</i> Plimsoll Gallery, Hobart
2012	<i>Private Function</i> Museum of Old & New Art rooftop, Hobart
2011	<i>Two rights make a wrong</i> Inflight, Hobart
2010	<i>Time takes things</i> Criterion Gallery, Hobart <i>A fly in a plane</i> Conical Inc, Melbourne
2009	<i>Smart Casual/Dumb Formal</i> Six A, Hobart
2008	<i>The relations which a lie is not in</i> Conical Inc, Melbourne <i>I used to draw a lot</i> Criterion Gallery, Hobart
2007	<i>AMJ Utilities 'Better Solutions for Bad Ideas'</i> Inflight, Hobart
2006	<i>Not all cocktails make good punches</i> Kings Artist Run Initiative, Melbourne
2005	<i>Workrestplay</i> Firstdraft, Sydney
2003	<i>Object Lessons</i> West Space, Melbourne <i>Vacant Space</i> Inflight, Hobart
2002	<i>Three into One</i> Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania, Hobart

### Selected Group Exhibitions:

2013	<i>SydneyContemporary13 "Constance ARI"</i> , Carriageworks, Sydney <i>City of Hobart Art Prize</i> Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart <i>Tape</i> (Curators: Joshua Jobb & Beka Peralta) Roving Projects, Mexico City
2013	<i>Lilt</i> (Curator: Brett Jones) Outward Projects, Devonport
2012	<i>Soma Summer Open Studio</i> Soma, Mexico City <i>Moving Parts</i> (Curator: Ellie Ray) Devonport Art Gallery, Devonport
2011	<i>Iteration : Again</i> International Public Art Project (Curator: David Cross) Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania Initiative, Tasmania <i>Something Nowhere</i> (Curators: Sean Kelly & Marie Sierra) Academy Gallery, Launceston
2010	<i>Install</i> (Curator: Benjamin Booth) Carnegie Gallery, Hobart <i>A quarter turn on every screw</i> (Curators: Kel Glaister & Tamsin Green) Kings, Melbourne
2009	<i>(Untitled) Expand/Contract</i> (Curator: Paula Silva) Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania Initiative, Hobart <i>ONALOG</i> (Curator: John Vella), Plimsoll Gallery, Hobart <i>Lust for Life</i> (Curator: Lucy Bleach) Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania, Hobart
2008	<i>Harmonious Proportions</i> Linden Gallery, Melbourne
2007 – 08	<i>Primavera 07</i> (Curator: Christine Morrow) Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney; Anne & Gordon Samstag Museum, Adelaide
2007	<i>Your call is important to us</i> (Curators: Craig Judd & Michael Edwards) Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart

- 2005 *Dockworks* Constitution Dock, Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania Initiative, Hobart  
*Letitia Street Studios* Plimsoll Gallery, Hobart  
 2004 *Group Material* (Curator: Kylie Johnson) Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart  
 2002 *City of Hobart Art Prize* Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart

Selected Prizes, Awards, Grants, Residencies and Commissions:

- 2013 *New Work Grant (mid-career)* Australia Council for the Arts  
 2013 Winner of the *Jill Freeman 25th City of Hobart Art Prize*  
 2013 – 14 *Studio Residency*, Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania, Hobart  
 2012 *Soma Summer* Soma, Mexico City  
 2011 *Qantas Foundation Contemporary Art Award*  
 2010 *Tasmanian Graduate Research Scholarship* University of Tasmania  
 2010 *Artsbridge* Arts Tasmania  
 2008 – 09 *Studio Residency* (Los Angeles). Australia Council for the Arts  
 2005 *Dockworks* (Commission) Contemporary Art Spaces, Hobart  
 2004 *New Work Grant (emerging)* Australia Council for the Arts  
 2003 *Artsbridge* Arts Tasmania  
*Post-Graduate Award* School of Art, University of Tasmania  
 1998 *Union Steel Award* College of Fine Arts, University of New South Wales  
 1994 *The Gruner Prize* Art Gallery of New South Wales

Selected Articles, Catalogues, Publications and Reviews:

- 2013 David Cross, Sean Kelly, *Iteration:Again 13 public art projects across Tasmania* Published by Punctum Books, Brooklyn, New York, and Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania, Hobart  
 2013 Brett Jones, *'Lilt'* (exhibition catalogue), Outward Projects, Launceston  
 2013 Bryony Nainby, *'Critic's Choice'*, Art Collector Australia, Issue 64  
 2013 Laura Hindmarsh, *'The ARI Experiment: Constance ARI'*, Art Monthly Australia, Issue 257  
 2012 Ellie Ray, *'Moving Parts'* (exhibition catalogue), Devonport Regional Gallery, Devonport.  
 2010 Dan Rule, *'A fly in a plane' Around the Galleries*, The Age, 13<sup>th</sup> March 2010  
 2009 Lucy Bleach, *'Lust for Life'* (exhibition catalogue), Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania, Hobart  
 2008 Ross Moore, *'Feats of clay' Sightlines*, The Age, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2008  
 2008 Simon Horsburgh, *'Draw is a doing word'* (exhibition essay) Criterion Gallery, Hobart  
 2007 Adam Jasper, *'Primavera'* Frieze, Issue 111, Nov-Dec, 2007  
 2007 Christine Morrow, *'Primavera 07'* (exhibition catalogue), MCA Sydney  
 2007 Philip Watkins, *'Drop Dead Gorgeous'* (exhibition catalogue), Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery, Hobart  
 2006 Simon Horsburgh, *'Insert art words here'*, (exhibition essay), Kings ARI, Melbourne.  
 2006 Ellie Ray, *'text me'* (exhibition catalogue), Devonport Regional Gallery, Devonport.  
 2005 *Letitia Street Studios* (exhibition catalogue), Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania, Hobart  
 2004 Philip Watkins, *'Group Material'*, 'Artlink', Vol 24 No 2  
 2003 Philip Watkins, *'Vacant Space'*, 'Artlink', Vol 23 No 2, p. 92.  
 2002 Diana Klaoson, *'Anthony Johnson'*, 'RealTime+OnScreen' Visual Art, August – September, 02 No. 50, p. 18



Selected Talks and Presentations:

- 2012 Artist talk and presentation, *Soma Summer* program, SOMA, Mexico City  
2012 Public artist talk, *Art and the Outermost Limits of Location-Specificity*  
Symposium, Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania, Hobart  
2012 Public artist talk *Moving parts* Devonport Regional Gallery, Devonport  
2011 Public presentation *Iteration : Again* Symposium, Tasmanian School of Art,  
Hobart  
2010 Artist talk *Time takes things*, Criterion Gallery, Hobart  
2010 Artist Discussion *Cronical* series, Conical Inc, Melbourne.  
2009 Artist Talk (*Untitled*) *Expand/Contract*, Contemporary Art Spaces  
Tasmania, Hobart  
2009 Pecha Kucha public presentation, *Room 11* Architecture, Hobart  
2009 Artist Talk lecture series, Tasmanian School of Art, University of Tasmania.  
2008 Artist Discussion *Cronical* series, Conical Inc, Melbourne.  
2007 *Primavera 07* Public Artist Talk, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney.

Selected Professional Activities:

- 2010 – Exhibition Technician, Museum of Old & New Art, Hobart  
2009 – 11 Exhibitions Coordinator, Carnegie Gallery, Hobart City Council, Hobart  
2007 – 12 Exhibition Programming Committee Member, Contemporary Art Spaces  
Tasmania, Hobart  
2008 – 09 Sessional Tutor/Teaching - Sculpture, Tasmanian School of Art, Hobart  
2007 – 09 Conservation Technician, Museum of Old & New Art, Hobart  
2006 – 07 Collections Consignment Coordinator, Tasmanian Museum & Art Gallery,  
Hobart  
2003 – 05 Art Technician, T.E.D. Fine Art Services, Sydney  
2000 – 03 Exhibition Preparator, Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania, Hobart  
1998 – 99 Preparator, Sherman Galleries, Sydney

Collections

Hobart City Council  
Private Collections, Australia and New Zealand