

The Entropic Landscape

Exploring the Intersection Between Digital Media,
Large-Scale Drawings and Sculpture in Response to the
Cultural Landscape of Zeehan, Tasmania, Australia.

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Signed Statement of originality.

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Abstract

This research is an investigation into a visual language as my response and *reading* of the narrative related to a *sense of place* in an altered landscape: a space where humans have carved their autobiography into the earth. Robert Smithson, in the 1960s characterised regions like these as the edges of post-industrialism or *Nonspaces*. They also exist as communities, holding onto an identity forged by their definitive history and cultural influences. Incorporated in the research is the exploration of *ordinary* or *everyday* landscapes within the context of Cultural Landscape studies.

In focussing on the ‘shaping’ of the town and environs of Zeehan, a once burgeoning mining settlement on the West Coast mining strip of Tasmania, history, industrial archaeology and the impact on the natural environment are taken into account. Zeehan is a shadow of its dynamic past, a boom and bust story that is now enshrined in a local museum, and evident in the relics adorning the main street and surrounding countryside. It is a place of hidden history inextricably linked to the development of Tasmania. However in the new millennium the underground continues to be the lifeblood of this former silver boomtown.

Seeking an appropriate format of presentation of this cultural landscape resulted in the development of installation-based artwork: an intersection between digital media, large-scale drawing and sculptural concepts. Re-interpreting and re-presenting the spirit of nature and technological interaction in the so-called *Nonspace* incorporates the exploration of a phenomenological approach as well as more formal methodologies. The research also examined the concept of the *Nonsite*. According to Smithson, the *Nonsite* was a *representation* or interpretation of a particular site: an abstract three-dimensional logical picture.

With its integration of diverse media, the project relates to a field of artists and filmmakers working within the themes of *Cultural Landscape* (Jan Senbergs, Susan Norrie and Jem Cohen), *Museum Strategy/Archaeology as Myth* (Mark Dion, Alan McCollum), and *The Grand Narrative* (Joan Jonas, Kutlag Ataman and Bill Viola).

I discuss their works in relation to matters concerning landscape and human intervention, historical discourse, fragmentation of time, the blurring of boundaries and the overlapping of genres.

My original contribution to the field is to extend the presentation of the documentary film/video genre from an ostensibly two-dimensional medium to an installation based artwork within an art gallery space utilising the seemingly incongruent mediums of large-scale drawings and sculptural elements. Within this context the resulting narrative creates an environment, which both immerses the viewer and provides contemplation, presenting a re-interpretation of the *Nonsite* as reading of the *Nonspace*.

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INTRODUCTION



1: Vickers General Store, Main Street Zeehan, 2002

I'm happy to be riding back into this country.
It is a kind of nowhere.¹

The noise was unmistakable. Initially, the clearly audible high-pitched whine of a single machine followed by deeper rumblings, gradually building to a roaring crescendo. Eventually the sound of the machines spluttered and died one by one. As I heard the distinctive sounds of heavy heels on the wooden floor, I visualised bearded, aging *Bandito's* in tattered denims and leather jackets. Instead, I became aware of resplendent red and black neck-to-ankle designer leather suits, complemented by clean-shaven faces and neat hairstyles; company executives in another time and place. Vickery's supermarket had become the hub of the action, as the manager excitedly told another local 'if they each buy an ice cream it will be really good for Zeehan's economy'. Outside, both sides of the main street, (for around 400 metres in either direction) had been miraculously transformed from an almost deserted, 'ordinary' landscape² of the townscape of Zeehan I had known barely twenty minutes earlier, to a visual feast of chrome and high tech design intermingled with the classical shapes of yesteryear. The 'invaders', it turned out, were modern, vintage and veteran motorbike enthusiasts tripping around Tasmania. It wasn't the day of the *Bandito's* but the day of *Zen and the Art of Motorcycles*.³

¹ Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, Bodley Head, London, 1974, p.11

² When referring to landscape, the term 'ordinary' is used in a particular context denoting the *everyday* landscape as espoused in the field of Cultural Landscape theory.

³ I have adapted the title of Pirsig's book, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* for my own purpose in the opening narrative.

Being there

The introduction to this paper opens with a narrative style for a reason; it serves to locate and to transplant the reader, if only for a moment, to Zeehan, the place.⁴ As I develop the thesis, the narrative style will be used to reveal the richness found in an everyday place both through my writing and in the artwork, as art interweaves with history, myth, anecdote and contemporary culture.

The arrival of the bikers and motorcycles had transformed an everyday scene into something extraordinary. I can remember many experiences on various treks, traverses and wanderings where the landscape has been transformed from ordinary to exotic in a moment. Often it happens in the most unexpected places and at the most unexpected times. It is as if the mundane is swept aside and the place takes on another life. The commonplace is liberated to reveal the rich social and cultural layers of place. Nowhere becomes somewhere.

The initial impetus for my current work came from a desire to extend the theme of industrial archaeology, which had been a key factor in my Honours research. I chose the remote town of Zeehan because it is a post-industrial site offering numerous conceptual and aesthetic responses. It has a rich industrial heritage, a legacy from the late 1800s when European explorers and prospectors mined and shaped an inhospitable region into a place of habitation and production. Following the discovery of silver in 1882, Zeehan's population eventually expanded to such an extent that, for a time, it was the third largest town in Tasmania. The region also had other attractions such as the lifestyle and severe climate. There was also a formalised history in the museum archives consisting of photographs, documentation and artefacts.

⁴ See Map of region studied on page 4

Exegesis Outline

The exegesis is divided into four parts and a conclusion.

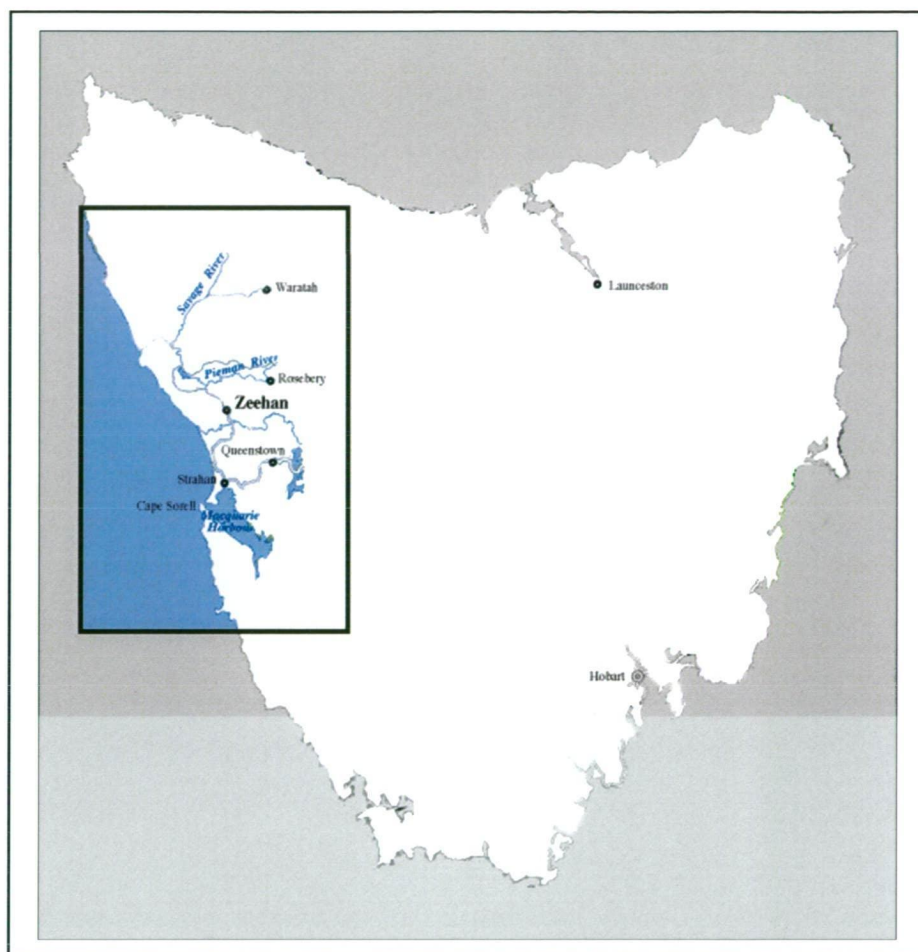
In *Part One - Investigating the Narrative*, I discuss the central argument, introducing the subject – the exploration of a visual language as a response to the shaping of the cultural landscape of Zeehan and its environs. The concept of the intersection between interdisciplinary media as a *grand narrative of collage* is presented. As a departure point the notions of *Nonspace* and *Nonsite* are introduced.

Part Two - Associated Theory investigates the frameworks of the theoretical research in more detail. Cultural Landscape as a foundational theory is explored. Associated theories of the art field are introduced outlining historical perspectives in Conceptual Art, its lineage to Neo-Conceptualism and Installation Art.

Part Three - The Artists and the Field, presents an overview of a number of artists in the associated art field. This group of artists blurs the boundaries of genre and media, in dealing with narratives related to *Cultural Landscape*, *History as Myth* and the *Grand Narrative of Collage*, all themes incorporated in my own work.

Part Four - How the Project was Pursued sets out to show how the practical research work was undertaken in four stages.

In the *Conclusion* I sum up the progress of the research project and discuss the relevant outcomes addressing the research questions and the final exhibition of the installation.



2: Map showing the region studied: The West Coast of Tasmania.

PART ONE: INVESTIGATING THE NARRATIVE

Each time we enter a new place, we become one of the ingredients of an existing hybridity, which is what all local places consist of.⁵

My research project, *The Entropic Landscape* investigates the intersection between digital media, large-scale drawing and sculptural objects as a means of presenting a narrative in response to the shaping of a cultural landscape in Western Tasmania.⁶ Zeehan and its environs is part of a heavily impacted mining region nestled amongst a natural environment. It can be described as a post-industrial landscape. Industrial and post-industrial spaces have been termed disrupted space or *Nonspace*. The term *Nonspace* was associated with the post-minimalist earth artist Robert Smithson in the mid 1960s.⁷ Abandoned mine sites, quarries and, a range of other human wastelands, became spaces where much of his work commented on the industrial and technological encroachment into the natural environment and the notion of entropy.⁸ In addressing dialogue and critical discussion concerning place as *Nonspace*, my project employs an impartial standpoint in the investigation of the site and the re-presentation of the visual responses in a gallery setting. To achieve a comprehensive interpretation of a cultural landscape from a contemporary artist's point of view, I incorporated the concept of installation as a *grand narrative of collage*.⁹ The research contributes to the area of interdisciplinary media installation as an experience to induce sensory responses.

⁵ Lucy R. Lippard, 'All Over the Place', *The Lure of the Local: senses of place in a multicentred society*, The New Press, New York, 1997, p. 6

⁶ In this context the use of the word, *shaping* means the tangible results from individuals' efforts to make and re-make environments to fit their needs.

⁷ Robert Hobbs, *Robert Smithson: A Retrospective View*, Wihelm Lenhmbbruck Museum, Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, New York, (unknown date), pp.12-13 Hobbs refers to the term, *Nonspace* as being the 'new space' indicative of spatial concepts originated in the 1950s as massive industrial development altered the physical space of the landscape on the earth and technological development transformed spatial concepts in relation to space outside the earth.

⁸ J. Rifkin, 'World Views', *Entropy: A New World View*, The Viking Press, New York, 1980, p.6

⁹ J. Ronald Green, 'Maximizing Indeterminacy: On Collage in Writing, Film, Video, Installation and Other Artistic Realms-as well as the Shroud of Turin', *Afterimage*, May, 2000, in, http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2479/15_6_27/ai_63193945 visited, February 12, 2004

Responding to the Regional *Nonspace*

It has been argued that Installation Art, and the digital field, are prevailing but separate trajectories of *collage* discourse. As such, the installation is related to *the grand narrative of collage* where things in the world are treated as units of signification. According to theorist J. Ronald Green, there is a powerful affiliation between video and installation as each 'uses a different register of the real, the readymade and the object itself as an element of discourse via collage'. Green bases his argument on 'The Object of Post-Cinema', an essay by Gregory Ulmer, which 'centres on the emergence of *post-criticism*'. It is a criticism analogous to postmodernism and post-structuralism, which relates to writing, collage (and object mimicry) and includes 'ideas that a literal concrete essay would be comprised of not words but things, as in Installation Art'. Green suggests that this notion was explored by the philosopher Kant who discussed landscape gardening as a kind of concrete painting, an idea that is akin to Installation Art.¹⁰

One is tempted to say that installation goes one step beyond the digital, incorporating painting, sculpture and all of the other collage machines including the digital... The evolving discourse of collage and the technologies and aesthetics of collage machines have a privileged relation to the whole in that they use 'real objects that represent themselves', and thus are not finally abstracted, but remain connected to the whole.¹¹

As I developed the concept of the collage into a *grand narrative of collage* as installation, a number of challenges presented themselves as research questions related to the practical outcomes:

- In what way could a visual narrative be presented to explore the intersection between diverse media as installation-based artwork?
- How could the confluence of these elements, result in a narrative of place, space and history?
- Was there a sense of place in *Nonspace* of the region studied?
- How could I re-interpret the *Nonsite* in context of Robert Smithson's theory?

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Ibid

The research influenced the progression of the work that began with the investigation of re-interpreting industrial artefacts as sculpture and developed into the potential for an appraisal of how the exhibition related to contemporary interdisciplinary media.

Finally the depiction of cultural landscapes provided a means of expression to:

- Determine the 'hidden' history of a place.
- Present an alternate way of looking at history and landscape.
- Investigate entropy and the industrial aesthetic in natural environments.

As a foundation to the practical outcomes, the supporting theory of Cultural Landscape studies also posed questions that were inter-related. The argument concerned the fact that disrupted landscape may be construed as an artefact, a palimpsest which, through reading a range of signs and symbols was able to be re-interpreted in an art context as a reading of the human imprint.

As well as an artefact, was it able to be interpreted in a similar fashion as a written document?¹² Within the context of Cultural Landscape theory, my intention was to show that the ordinary landscape of Zeehan was worthy of study as a post-industrial landscape. While the project fundamentally related to the field of landscape representation, the study questioned what landscape is or can be in terms of contemporary art. My artwork has emanated from responses to the intervention of technology into natural environments. It forms a contemporary continuum to the history of visually recorded altered landscape in Australia from the time of first European settlement.

¹² In the study of landscape, many forms of metaphors have been applied. To scholars of Cultural Landscape studies, an ordinary landscape scene, as well as distinctive landscapes can be potent vessels containing social and cultural layers giving the place particular significance. When a natural environment is involved, there may be an environmental experience, providing an understanding to managers of the environment and others concerned, leading to better management of resources.

Installation-based art and the Conceptual Art movement provided a context for the research outcome.

I consider my original contribution was to:

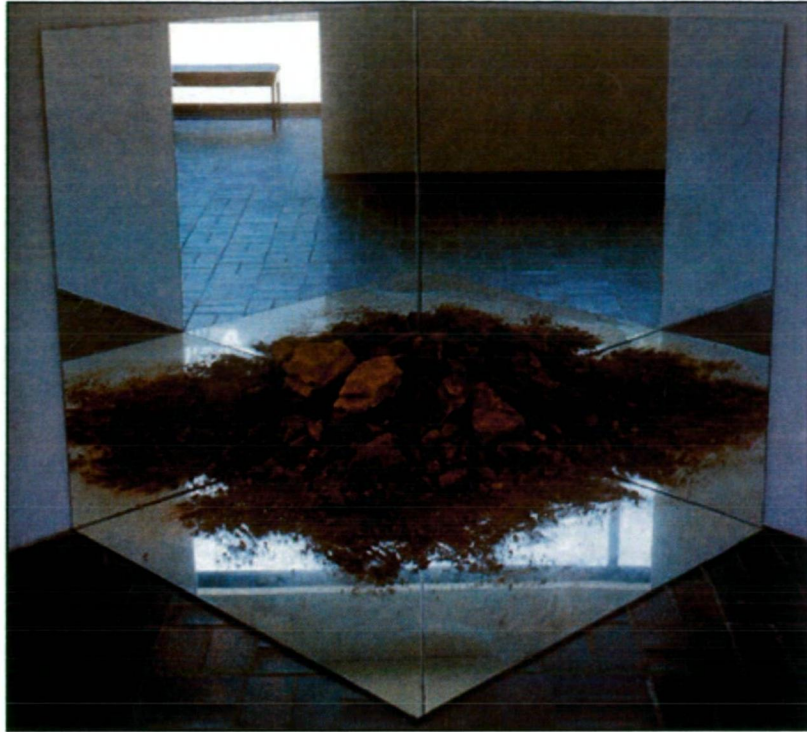
- Present concepts in both a phenomenological and methodical approach in art, extending the notion of the documentary film genre from a two dimensional expression to a multi faceted exhibition of seemingly disparate mediums.
- Add to the rubric of Cultural Landscape studies.¹³
- Demonstrate how industrial history is an important area of study.
- Show how artists and craftspeople can use regionalism to articulate and strengthen ties to *home* sites.¹⁴

Given some time for reflection, the production of this project enabled research, which led to further development of these ideas and approaches.

¹³ Lippard, op. cit., *The Lure of the Local: senses of place in a multicentred society*, p. 6. Lippard observed how she was 'struck by the neglect and miscomprehension of contributions made by artists, who read, think, and see from angles not often found by scholars'. I considered this a 'gap' in the research worth investigating.

¹⁴ See Appendix 2

Relevant Art Practice



3: Robert Smithson, *Red Sandstone Corner Piece*, 1968

Site and Nonsite

I first became interested in Robert Smithson's concepts in the late 1960s and began experimenting with site and *Nonsite* works from that time until the mid 1970s. Smithson developed specific site works, and what he termed *Nonsites*, creating visual vocabularies that defined disrupted or post-industrial space. According to Smithson the *Nonsite* essentially referred to an indoor earthwork as a *re-presentation* or interpretation of a particular site: an abstracted three-dimensional logical picture. He further stated,

The indoor *Nonsite* is a reflection of the uncontrolled, uncontained outdoor site from which materials are gathered. The *Nonsite* symbolically and physically reflects containment; order out of chaos, and a geographic place.¹⁵

¹⁵ R. Smithson, 'A Provisional Theory of Non-Sites', in, J. Flam, ed, *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Second Edition, 1996, p.364

By creating a dimensional metaphor, he argued that one site could represent another site that did not resemble it.¹⁶ His use of mirrors became a re-occurring theme to present notions of double reflection and a reinforcement of displacement, place and time. In relation to my own work from 1969 - 1974, the use of mirrors by Smithson and a range of other artists became an influence.

The influences of Conceptual Art were being felt in Australia at that time. The attraction to Conceptual Art for me was the intellectual risk-taking of producing art that did not rely on specific art objects or other traditional art forms. In order to have a suitable and supportive venue in which to exhibit this form of art I became one of the inaugural members of the artist run gallery co-operative known as *Inhibodress*, in Woolloomooloo, Sydney. Solo and group exhibitions of artists working within a conceptual framework were shown in the former dress factory space in the early 1970s.¹⁷



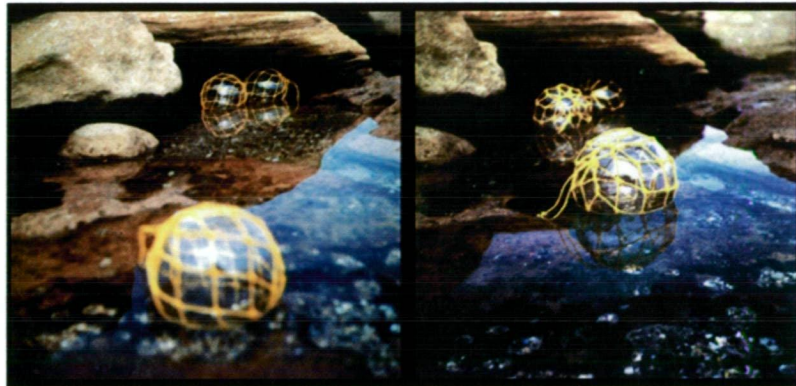
4: Entrance to Inhibodress Gallery, 1971

¹⁶ Hobbs, op. cit., *Robert Smithson: A Retrospective View*, p. 14-16

¹⁷ Sue Cramer, 'Inhibodress: The Gallery', *Inhibodress*, Institute of Modern Art, Brisbane, 1989, p.7

Inhibodress began as an experimental gallery and it has been argued that it was a seminal artist-run conceptual art gallery in Sydney. During 1971 a range of international conceptual artists were invited to exhibit at Inhibodress. The most influential was perhaps an exhibition titled 'Activities, Performance, Participation, And Art by Instruction'.

Influenced by Smithson's ideas, I performed small works within the natural environment and documented them. By late 1971 I had produced enough work to hold my first solo exhibition at *Inhibodress* entitled *From the Sea-to the Sea*. The exhibition consisted of a number of site-specific works using found objects in both natural and altered environments on the South Coast of New South Wales and other locations in the Sydney region.



5: Niels Ellmoos, *In and Out*, 1971

For the exhibition, I had recorded the site-specific works in both still photography and film. I incorporated film into my concepts after visiting an international experimental film festival held at the New South Wales Art Gallery in 1968. Conceptual artists globally were also using porta-pack video for documentation and to record performances. By the 1970s, international trends of video and film were moving towards artists using video as a cultural tool by the democratic vanguard movement that questioned commercial television and more conventional film production. Video became a provocative new type of moving image and installation medium, enabling artists working in a post-minimalist vocabulary to highlight the phenomenology of perceptual or conceptual process.¹⁸ My practice of experimental film within the conceptual art framework evolved into a career of formal film and video production that would last for over thirty years.

¹⁸ D. Boyle, 'A Brief history of Documentary Video', in, Doug Hall and Sally Jo Fifer, (eds), *Illuminating Video*, Aperture/BAVC, (publication undated), pp.51-53

A return to art practice

In 1999 I returned to fine art practice as an undergraduate student at the University of Tasmania. Having recently been involved in a commercial ceramics business from 1995-1998, I decided to explore the challenge of ceramic sculpture as a means of artistic expression in an art school environment. I was influenced by the funk ceramics of Robert Arneson, as well as the super realism of Richard Shaw and Steven Montgomery.

I investigated their techniques of slip casting, press moulding and hand building, as a way of developing my own style of creative ceramic expression. Influenced by a video documentary I had produced in 1998, I explored the notion of fossils, museums and archaeology,¹⁹ referencing Robert Arneson's, *Fragment of Western Civilisation* 1972. The work consisted of crumbling brick walls and scattered debris with an iconic head and bust of the artist constructed as a 'monument'.



6: (left) Robert Arneson, *Fragments of Western Civilisation*, 1972

7: (right): Niels Ellmoos, *The End of Culture*, 2000

I responded with a re-interpretation of this work in October 2000 by constructing a chaotic room installation titled *The End of Culture – A Critical Mass*. It was a futuristic archaeological landscape, made of slip cast and hand-built raku clay forms which were modelled on

¹⁹ N. Ellmoos, Producer, *Message in the Rocks*, Audio Visual Unit, University of New South Wales, 1998

The video documentary followed a team of palaeontologists as they returned to a fossil site in Queensland's far north. The 20 million year old fossils were encased in limestone rocks and were released by a technique of soaking in a sulphuric acid bath, which eventually eroded the rocks leaving the fossil intact.

cultural icons such as computers, guns, musical instruments, hand-grenades and shattered 'precious' ceramic objects.²⁰ Smithson's drawings and installations of entropic environments also provided an influence. It was in September 2000, the same year as the realisation of *The End of Culture – Critical Mass*, that I travelled to the West Coast of Tasmania for the first time. During that initial visit I became interested in the industrial artefact.

The entropic landscape

Smithson's ideas re-emerged in my consciousness in 2001, the year of my Honours degree, especially his theories on entropy. The theory of entropy is derived from physics, applied to what is termed the Law of Thermodynamics.²¹ Entropy became a concept that was embraced by many artists in the 1970s. The disrupted space Smithson used in his artworks and theories echoed a sense of everything beginning with structure and order but ultimately moving towards random chaos and waste.²² The entropic characteristic that attracted me related to the industrial relic, which was left to rust and corrode until it became part of the earth again.²³ It was the visible history of the *industrial aesthetic* in the Lake Margaret power station, on the West Coast of Tasmania, which initially had drawn my attention.²⁴

²⁰ Vincent McGrath, 'Ceramics at the Academy of Arts', *Ceramics Technical*, November 2001, p. 102

²¹ Rifkin, op. cit., *Entropy: A New World View*, p.6

The Entropy Law is a scientific theory that states that matter and energy can only be changed in one direction; in essence: that the entire universe is irrevocably moving towards chaos and waste.

²² Flam, op. cit., *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, p.301-302

In an interview with Alison Sky, Smithson articulates his ideas of entropy. He uses such examples as Watergate (socio/political entropy), the energy crisis, recycling, earthquakes and strip mining to name a few.

²³ Ibid, p. 104

Smithson writes about 'the tools of technology becoming a part of the Earth's geology as they sink back into their original state and 'machines, like dinosaurs, must return to dust or rust'. In the new millennium his concepts continue to be relevant.

See Appendix 4

²⁴ The turbines, installed in the power station in 1912 were still operating as part of the Hydro electricity power grid at the time of my visit in 2001.

In particular, I was fascinated with the design and form of the components of the turbines. Outside of the Lake Margaret power station, the industrial relics remaining in the surrounding landscape were the other part of the story. The power station's machinery and pumping components were recognisable as industrial forms. However as isolated fragments, it appeared to me that both the function and origin of the abandoned parts were ambiguous.



8 (left): Industrial artefact, Lake Margaret, 2000
9 (right): Niels Ellmoos, *Dashpot Joiner*, 2001

My intention was to exploit the disjuncture that I had perceived between the abandoned relics in the landscape and their original place as a functioning part of a machine system. The work, titled *Anecdotal Evidence* resulted in a presentation of industrial artefacts in slip cast ceramics. Exploring the trompe l'oeil nature of the clay I re-interpreted the surfaces as well as the fragmented characteristics of the abandoned relics at Lake Margaret.²⁵ The objects I made looked like they had been transformed by decades of exposure to nature. My aim was to subvert the 'preconceived nature' of what ceramics *should* look like (glossy surfaces, bright colours), by transforming the surface into a corrosive metal finish.

²⁵ Flam, op. cit., *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, p. 106
Smithson discusses the characteristics of surfaces on metal sculpture in the 1950s and 1960s when 'the product of industry and technology began to have an appeal to the artist who wanted to work like a 'steel welder' or a 'laboratory technician'. He continues... 'In the technological mind, rust evokes a fear of disuse, inactivity, entropy and ruin.'

Similar to sculptor Tony Cragg's notion of 'the mechanism of an existence situated between human beings and objects'²⁶ - the works articulated an unknown industrial usage but above all the unmistakable imprint of human beings. I extended the illusion by exhibiting the final concept within a scientific strategy, concluding in an artist's statement, that 'the industrial artefact is imbued with a human imprint telling us about our relationship with materials and objects. It has gained a metaphysical quality through the cultural aspects we bring to that object including its history, mythology, meaning and aesthetic.'²⁷

My investigation of the industrial theme encouraged me to further explore the industrial relic in relation to the landscape. A concept of landscape as a cultural document provided a trigger to extend the research, whilst still incorporating the industrial artefact. Broadening the field to explore the landscape, as an artefact in itself, required researching beyond the parameters of the art field.

²⁶ Germano Celant, *Tony Cragg*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1996, p. 23

²⁷ Niels N. Ellmoos, *Anecdotal Evidence*, unpublished paper, School of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Tasmania, 2001, p. 11
See <http://www.ellmoosartworks.com>

PART TWO: ASSOCIATED THEORY

Reading the Landscape

My specific exploration into the industrial artefact in 2001 encouraged a more intensive investigation in 2002 as the focus turned to the new research of the industrial sublime landscape of the West Coast. After a five-hour bus trip I had my first glimpse of Zeehan. It instilled in my consciousness the impression of a landscape that had an elusive attraction, unlike the more obvious 'terrible beauty' of nearby Queenstown.²⁸ Although the background reading of the history of Zeehan told another story to the landscape I had glimpsed, I became attracted to the concept of a *hidden history*, of the unseen layers that encoded a place with specific signs and symbols.²⁹

Geographer, Yi-Fu Tuan refers to landscape in a general sense as 'a composite feature in which elements of function and use combine with values that transcend them', and 'that it should be clear that landscape is not domain plus aesthetic appeal'. He makes the point that landscapes are not only villages with orderly fields, mountains or valleys, but also denuded terrain with bed springs and tin cans. He questions the importance of studying landscape and he answers it in part by explaining that:

Landscape allows us to dream. It does function as a point of departure. Yet it can anchor our attention because it has components that we can see and touch. As we first let our thoughts wander and then refocus them on the landscape, we learn to see not only how complex and various are the ways of human living but also how difficult it is to achieve anywhere a habitat consonant with the full potential of our being.³⁰

²⁸ Richard Flanagan, *A Terrible Beauty*, Greenhouse Publications, Melbourne, 1985
I refer to the title of Richard Flanagan's literary history of the West Coast of Tasmania.

²⁹ See Appendix 3

³⁰ Yi-Fu Tuan, 'Thought and Landscape: The Eye and the Mind's Eye', in, D. Meinig, ed, *Interpretations of the Ordinary Landscape*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1979, p. 90

The landscape as artefact

The West Coast of Tasmania is a *living museum*, a layered location, replete with human histories and memories.³¹ It is a place stamped with the unmistakable human imprint of a former industrial intervention. The rusting artefacts remain in the landscape as visible evidence, 'dormant and silent but for their meanings stretching beyond their physical and chemical makeup'.³²

The landscape is also an integrated image, a construct of mind and feeling. All these factors make up the shaping and manipulation of landscape by humans in the creation of a *cultural landscape*. The word *cultural* in this context implies a process in which people are actively engaged in understanding the world by creating spaces, regions and environments in order to articulate culturally distinctive beliefs and responses. In turn, this process defines *place* and its meaning to people.³³

Like a language, a landscape will have obscure and undecipherable origins, like a language it is the slow creation of all elements of society...a landscape, like language, is the field of perpetual conflict and compromise between what is established by authority and what the vernacular insists upon referring.³⁴

On my return to Zeehan to begin *The Entropic Landscape* research project, I had noted in my diary that:

...the tall rainforest trees and dense vegetation overhanging the road gave way to an open landscape as the outskirts of a sprawling rural township came into view, in every sense, an 'ordinary landscape'.

³¹ I refer to the idea of the museum being the landscape itself, unbounded by walls or barriers. The relics either still stand proudly or lie where they have fallen or have been dumped.

³² Ellmoos, op. cit., *Anecdotal Evidence*

³³ K. Anderson and F. Gale, (eds), 'Introduction', *Inventing Places*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1992, pp. 3-4

³⁴ J. B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1984, p. 148



10: Main Street Zeehan, 2002

Describing a landscape as *ordinary* was a new concept for me. The term ordinary landscape came into use as a result of social geographers trying to delineate between an exceptional landscape and the everyday features of landscape.³⁵ The study of the ordinary landscape grew from the tenet of Cultural Landscape studies, which originated in Germany and France at the turn of the nineteenth century in reaction to the domination of physical geographers interpreting landscapes by the application of biographical systems.³⁶

The word *culture* became critical to the way that cultural geographers looked at and interpreted the land. The expressive ways places could be known, invented, coveted, understood, memorised, articulated, resided-in and disputed over, bound them, metaphorically and metonymically, to identities reflecting specific beliefs, values and ideologies about how to live. Culture, *as a set of meanings*, became

³⁵ Paul Groth, 'Frameworks for Cultural Landscape Study', in Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi, (eds), *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*, Yale University press, New Haven and London, 1997, p.3

Groth refers to examples of exceptional landscape being monuments and high-style design, and everyday landscape being such things as front yards, fields and houses in both rural and urban settings.

³⁶ Helen B. Armstrong, *Sustaining Cultural Landscapes as Sites of Production*, SAHANZ, Brisbane, 2002

The geographers, Schluter and de la Blache proposed that the use of biographical systems did not take into account other more human factors. They argued that people and their activities encoded the land with signs and symbols.

synonymous with how human beings decided to interact with the environment, either in a harmonious or discordant manner. The duality of untouched, unspoiled nature and its antithesis, a landscape affected in some way by human actions or perceptions, provided an understanding and appreciation of natural environments and the cultural association of landscape. Tuan describes landscape as being evaluated as beautiful or ugly, productive or infertile whilst simultaneously being a clue to a region's human personality.³⁷ Zeehan exhibited its own character, reflecting beliefs, values and ideologies as I noted:

...a historical narrative had been etched into the landscape of Zeehan by its hard living and working people. In a small community where nature, culture, history and ideology have formed the ground the people stand on, the notion of the local remains the main appeal.

Lippard refers to *the local* as being 'entwined with personal memory, known or unknown histories, marks made in the land that provoke and invoke'.³⁸ The feeling of the local being an out-of-the-way place may be quickly overtaken by the awareness of another phenomenon, 'that the local is at the centre of things and finds itself reeling in the wake of every move and manoeuvre'.³⁹

Daily narratives of events are remembered and retold in local ways of talking and fusing anecdotes, myth and creativity. In the cycles of industrial and post-industrial maelstroms sweeping through many communities, local places find themselves lurching between the susceptibility of social and cultural destabilisations. Transitional dysfunction, mass migration to the cities, dichotomies between past and the present and the effects of history and modern life, all add to the densely textured poetics of place. Since mining exploration in Zeehan in the 1880s the cycles of industrial change have affected the

³⁷ Tuan, op. cit., *Interpretations of the Ordinary Landscape*, p. 93

³⁸ Lippard, op. cit., *The Lure of the Local: senses of place in a multicentred society*, p. 7

³⁹ Kathleen C. Stewart, 'An Occupied Place', in Steven Field and Keith Basso, (eds), *Senses of Place*, School of American Research Press, New Mexico, 1996, p.137

region, both physically and psychologically. What remains has been termed a disrupted landscape and 'the detritus of history piled high on the local landscape has become central to a sense of place emergent in remembered ruins and pieced-together fragments'.⁴⁰

Since human beings inhabited the earth, they have altered and interacted with the space around them in order to flourish as a culture and survive all kinds of conditions. In so doing, both individually and collectively, societies and cultures have designed landscapes, which are peculiar to them. As cultures have changed over time, so too have their landscapes. Scholars of cultural landscape theory have used the analogy of a landscape as being a gigantic *palimpsest*, an enormous ragged informal document. Over time, parts of the palimpsest have been lost, written over or altered in a repetitive cycle of transformation.

The argument by the geographer Peirce Lewis follows that if landscape is a form similar to a written document, then it should be able to be read and interpreted in the same manner as written material. If landscapes are documents from which their definitive histories can be read and brought to light, then the existence of a contemporary altered environment, and what constitutes the landscape, take on a different meaning and one well beyond the ordinary observed scene.

Reading landscape in a method comparable to reading written documents has inherent problems. Frequently there is no regard for the evidence. The creators of altered landscapes did not design these new landscapes to be read or understood as if they were a written record. The narrative of a constantly changing landscape often produces a messy outcome, which can be difficult to interpret. Cultural Landscape studies opened up a way to interpret the results of people altering the landscape, according to the different motives and different tools at their disposal.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ibid

⁴¹ Peirce Lewis, 'Common Landscapes as Historic Documents', in S. Lubar and W. D. Kingery, (eds), *History From Things*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington and London, 1993, pp.116-117

Responding to the palimpsest - above the ground

...If landscape is a way of seeing, there are potentially as many landscapes as individual ways of seeing, or at least as many cultural ways of seeing...⁴²

Multiple and contested meanings have been a feature of the West Coast region of Tasmania since the discovery of mineral wealth in the late 1880s. The land holds the culture and the culture holds the land. As a document with many 'missing pages' of history, Zeehan in the new millennium appeared to be a struggling tourist town with a population approximately matching the 1890 statistics. However the scene in the 1890s was very different, as described in an article from the local minefield newspaper:

...Miners with their swags, surveyors in their blueys, groups of men here and there or on hotel verandas, clad in rough but often picturesque bush costumes, discussing the latest new finds, all aid effectively in the panorama, while the varied characteristics of the habitations themselves, peculiar to a city built in a day, add a sort of romance to the scene.⁴³

In *reading* the contemporary landscape as an artefact it was helpful for me to use a methodology in my research associated with Cultural Landscape studies to provide a context for the metamorphosis from a theoretical concept into a practical activity. In his reading of a specific landscape Lewis applies the analogy of a pathologist examining cells through a microscope at different stages of magnifications. He begins by observing a town from a hill, preferably from a long distance, then closer in from another high point, finally descending into the streets to obtain a close-up view.⁴⁴

Another approach for reading a landscape is by Psychogeography. This method of engaging with the landscape is based on an intuitive

⁴² Lippard, op. cit., *The Lure of the Local: senses of place in a multicentred society*, p. 61

⁴³ C. J. Binks, *Explorers of Western Tasmania*, M and P Brewer, Launceston, 1980, p.151

⁴⁴ Lewis, op. cit., *History from Things*, p. 119

response to the environment by a *dérive* or *drift* as defined by the Lettrist Situationists. The Situationists have described the process as a 'technique of locomotion without a goal in which one or more persons during a certain period drop their usual motives for movement and action, their relations, their work, and leisure activities, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there'.⁴⁵

The King Hill traverse

I began my exploration of the landscape by traversing to King Hill, a small rise overlooking Zeehan's township. As I walked, I intuitively responded to the landscape. Torrential rain accompanied me as I made my way through the 'outer suburbs', past the Cecil Hotel, the local school and the drab, brick and concrete fast food take-away; past tumble down timber dwellings in overgrown paddocks and past pre-fabricated cottages with fridges, children's toys and empty homemade swings lying abandoned in the front yards.

I was looking at the contemporary while simultaneously feeling the history behind it. The rain intensified as I walked beside a swollen red ochre creek and up to the top of King Hill. I noted in my diary at the time that:

I reached the top of the hill in a fierce squall. A water tank offered the only shelter. I imagined what it would have been like for the track-cutters or prospectors. The latter inhabitants had transformed it into a place of industry. What I saw were the remnants, marker points of history.

⁴⁵ Sadie Plant, cited in <http://www.geog.leeds.ac.uk/people/a.evans/psychogeog.html> visited March 12, 2003

The Lettrist Situationists were a group of radical artists and philosophers in the 1950s. The term psychogeography was suggested in 1953 during 'wanderings' through urban environments. A journal called the *Internationale Situationniste* became the group's manifesto and defined *situationist* as 'having to do with the theory of practical activity of constructing situations.'

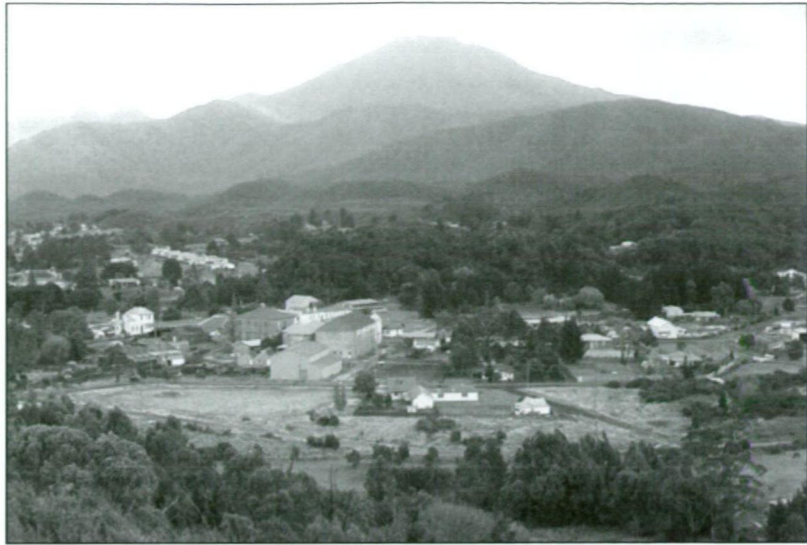
See also Ralph Rumney, *Art Monthly*,

<http://www.stewarthomesociety.org/interviews/rumney.htm>



11: Framework of Aerial Ropeways King Hill, Zeehan, 2002

The rusted frameworks of the aerial ropeways were the kind of historical remnants I had been searching for. Underneath them lay a human rubbish dump, an entropic picture made up of urban artefacts: discarded mechanical artefacts, burnt-out car chassis, tyres, rusted machinery and dumped garbage bags. It was precious visual fodder to store in my mind for future reference. Those vast, complex topographies of human rubbish-dumps eventually manifested as a theme in my large-scale drawings. From a new position, further along the ridgeline, a bird's-eye view revealed a scenario of a scattered patchwork rural 'toy' town. The township, situated on a flat plain surrounded by small mountains and hills, revealed little evidence of its dynamic and destructive past. In the past, a tent settlement had been superimposed over the denuded landscape.



12: Zeehan Township from King Hill, 2002

It had expanded to a bustling small city in the early part of its history and over time had evolved into its present state, as a scattered rural backwater. Looking down at the scene I tried to imagine another dimension of history in time and space.



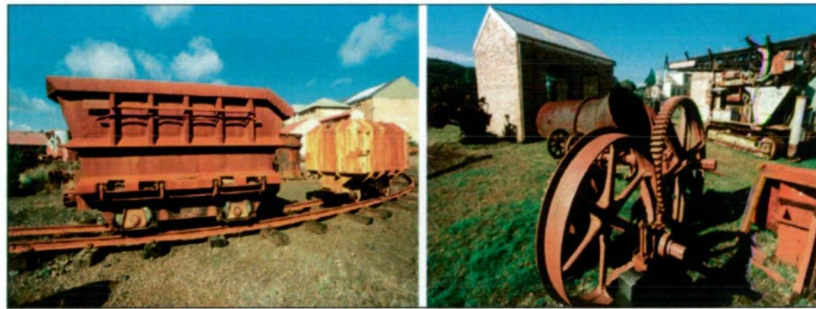
13: Zeehan, circa 1890

Archival photographs of Zeehan had indicated a vast cultural landscape pockmarked with mine shafts and an expansive grid of roads and building structures.

Geoffrey Blainey writes that:

In the winter of 1888, the Silver Queen, Silver King, Silver Hills, Silver Harp, Silver Trumpet and twenty more of these silver syndicates were prospecting at Zeehan, and more than 24,000 acres embracing 370 claims, had been pegged as mining leases.⁴⁶

Descending into the town, my perception of a rural settlement, from an elevated perspective, took on another persona at street level. My main response was to the sense of scale: a toy town had become an explicit human imprint. The reddish, brown splashes of colour at the rear of the museum that I had seen from a bird's eye view were transformed into a complex array of textures and designs: a crumbling entropic landscape.



14 (left): Rail Trucks, Zeehan Pioneers Museum, 2002

15 (right): Relics, Zeehan Pioneers Museum, 2002

Boilers, ducts, rusted tractors and corroding trucks on rail lines going nowhere, drew me into the detail of the shapes and forms. The more I was drawn in, the more I realised I was responding as an artist and not as a cultural geographer. I was responding to the antithesis of a museum: an anti-museum. I noted at the time:

I wandered out of the museum, 'drawn by the attractions to the terrain and the encounters found there'.⁴⁷ Absence was everywhere. I felt that there was a resonant energy of the missing history. It was behind the shuttered and cracked windows of the abandoned buildings. It hovered above the concrete slabs where substantial buildings had once stood.

⁴⁶ Geoffrey Blainey, *The Peaks of Lyell*, Melbourne University Press, Third Edition, Victoria, 1967, p. 51

The tramways as they were known fanned out across the region linking other mining settlements and the seaport of Strahan. Zeehan was a bustling town of eight thousand people at the height of the boom.

⁴⁷ Plant, op cit., <http://www.geog.leeds.ac.uk/people/a.evans/psychogeog.html>

Inspection of a grey structure, overgrown with deep green foliage, revealed the foundations of a vanished mine. It was part of the palimpsest, part of the hidden history. The 'monument' was from another time. A time of boom and bust: when a lived-in town was also a mineral field and an industrial arcadia. Poppet-heads, battery stampers and ore dressing sheds were part of the vernacular of the large mechanised mines that had been one of the layers of Zeehan's history.

Continuing my traverse, I encountered a timber hut and a prominent concrete foundation in a fenced off manicured park. A plaque revealed the location of the initial discovery of silver in 1882 by Frank Long. Long, prospecting along a rivulet known as Pea Soup Creek had struck his pick into an outcrop of gossan dislodging chunks of galena. What followed was the creation of the cultural landscape of Zeehan.⁴⁸



16: Replica of Frank Long's hut and concrete foundation of first silver mine, 2002

⁴⁸ The plaque was fixed to the concrete foundation for the hoist used to mine the lead sulphide ore that began the silver boom. Although being the discoverer of the first silver deposits, Frank Long was unable to raise the capital to exploit his lease because of the cost of heavy machinery needed for exploration.

The smelters traverse: ruins in reverse



17: Zeehan Smelters, circa 1900



18: Zeehan Smelters, 2002

The following day I explored another place foundational to the history and cultural landscape of Zeehan; the Smelters, described to me by a local as ‘those dirty great heaps of slag about three kilometers along the Strahan highway’. I reached them after a thirty-minute traverse through the hinterland along a muddy overgrown track. Looking across to the slag hills littered with crumbling rusting remnants, I remembered Smithson’s writing, in which he stated that he was convinced ‘the future is lost somewhere in the dumps of the non-historical past’.⁴⁹ At the time I recorded in my diary, the sensation of walking on history:

I envisioned what the smelters would have looked like at full blast - pumping plumes of toxic fumes across the pristine landscape. I became absorbed by the perspective and distance, as macro and micro influenced my senses. Strangely eroded, shaped mounds of debris, crumbling brickwork, splintered beams and magnificent rusted forms were strewn across the site. Other relics harked back to more sinister practices: the den of alchemists, where dull rocks were turned into precious metals at the cost of lives and the environment.

In the 1970s Smithson sought to find new ways of looking at the land and recorded industrial scenes not as futuristic dystopias but as decaying ruins of lost civilizations. For me there was a real sense of a *Nonspace*, an entropic landscape with the indelible mark of the human imprint. The smelter site was a three-dimensional document that told a story of the past, the present and portents of the future.

⁴⁹ Flam, op. cit., *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, p.74

Below the ground: traversing the underworld

A traverse at another time and place took me into another *Nonspace* as I noted in my diary:

Driving into a fine mist of rain, we approached the black hole in the side of the mountain, known as the decline shaft. There was a sense of danger and the unknown as our four-wheel drive vehicle passed under the sign proudly stating the words SAFETY BEFORE GOLD.



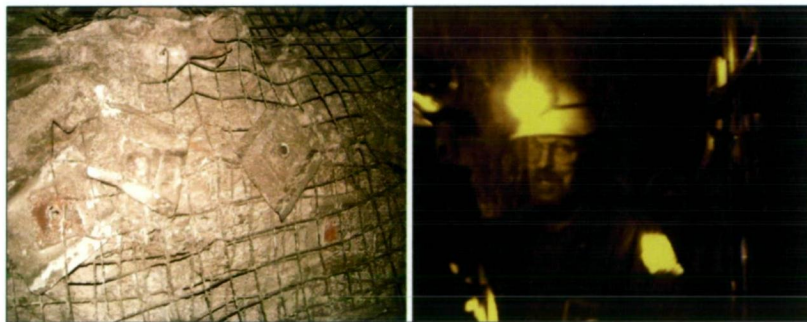
19: Entrance to Henty Gold Mine, 2003

Our vehicle became enveloped in a science fiction ‘worm hole’ as we descended at a steep angle into an alien world. Mysterious hieroglyphics and symbolic graffiti daubed the sides of the tunnel; a secret language spray-painted onto the rock walls denoting depths and drilling paths, obtuse codes for archaeologists of the future to decipher. Occasional tunnels cut through at right angles to ours, revealed dim flashing lights in the murky depths. Periodically we passed eerie green lighting indicating refuge-bays. Little more than caves, but big enough to fit a four-wheel vehicle: refuge-bays provided a place for refuelling and more importantly, a place to gather in event of an accident.⁵⁰ Apart from the low rumble of our vehicle’s motor, the only other sounds were the incessant radio static and regular interjections of

⁵⁰ I had been told about the refuge-bays at the surface induction. They were equipped with fuel and oxygen for emergencies and identified by green safety lighting.

human babble.⁵¹ It was for a good reason. Sinister glowing eyes approached us in the deep black of the tunnel. Our driver identified himself by radio and switched off the headlights in a sign of submission to something much larger, and began reversing to find a safety bay to avoid being crushed.

In the safety of the refuge-bay we waited in the pitch black for what seemed an eternity, until we saw the flashing lights and heard the overwhelming roar of pure power. The surreal machine glided past us like a gigantic insect searching for prey. It could have been a progeny of Smithson's prehistoric mechanical creatures.⁵² As we descended deeper into the earth, normal senses of space became increasingly disorientated. Openings through to parallel worlds revealed other large, indistinct shapes lumbering past in blinding backlight. Finally we came to a stop and saw the silhouette of man wearing a hardhat riding another mechanical monster as it attacked and gouged out large slabs of rock from the cavern walls.



20 (left): Meshing and bolting the ground, 2003

21 (right): Underground miner, 2003

Alighting from our vehicle required adjusting to that surreal world of containment. Overhead, nature was restrained. Steel meshing and rock-bolts kept the ceiling of the underground landscape at bay, as it promised to smash our skulls with loose rocks. That delicate balance seemed all too real in the wet and unfamiliar terrain, as I stumbled

⁵¹ At each level, our guide (a mining geologist) provided a report of our position clearly. Because there was constant two-way traffic with large vehicles taking ore to the surface and then returning, revealing the position of a vehicle by radio communication was imperative.

⁵² Flam, op. cit., *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, p 70-72

towards a silhouette of an amalgam of machine and landscape. Alien-like tentacles protruded into the cave ceiling and water cascaded from the wounded flesh of rock. Something became detached from the machine and walked forward to make contact – he was a human.⁵³

Following numerous trips to the West Coast of Tasmania I completed many more traverses across the landscape by bus, car and foot, taking in the towns of Queenstown, Rosebery, Tullah, Trial Harbour, Granville Harbour, Waratah and Strahan.⁵⁴

Conclusion

The resounding memory images I have associated with specific events and experiences are the result of a lifetime of encounters with particular landscapes. Responding to unfamiliar landscapes requires the acceptance of a fresh set of values and assumptions. Landscapes, which have gone through social and cultural upheavals, become imbued with a vernacular peculiar to the social and cultural past and present.⁵⁵ Zeehan was not *my place*; I was not a local with local values and sensibilities. The choice of Zeehan in a way had been as a result of a gradual experience over periodic visits not specifically to the town itself but the West Coast region in general. It was more that it suited me because of the visual narrative it presented in the form of the industrial and post-industrial environment and in the unseen: the region's dynamic history. In approaching the grand narrative 'written' in the landscape of Zeehan by social and cultural shaping, my response to both the narrative and the form, had its roots in the Conceptual Art movement as a continuum of my foundational art making and my recent artwork.

⁵³ There was no cavernous space deep under this mountain as I had imagined - only a maze of inter-joining tunnels. Men and possibly some women worked by themselves, singularly mostly, in isolated spaces dotted around the honeycomb of tunnelling.

⁵⁴ See Map on p.4 of this document. Each trip resulted in new insights to the place, and each time I made artwork in some form that responded to both the physical and spiritual encounters.

⁵⁵ Jackson, op. cit., *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape*, p.83

Associated Art Theory - The Field

A conceptual perspective

As my current research is concerned with Installation Art, a major trajectory from the Conceptual Art movement, I believe that a historical perspective is constructive. Conceptual Art was also foundational to my experience as an emerging artist in the 1970's through my involvement with *Inhibodress*⁵⁶, although I ceased practicing art by 1975 and moved into the film industry. Nevertheless, *conceptualism* was of major importance to me and has reoccurred in my creative expression and philosophy since that time. It has been argued that the major paradigm shift in visual culture in the twentieth century was a result of the conceptual art movement. The traditional status of the art object as being unique, saleable or collectable was challenged and instead the *idea* became the prime aim of the work. Above all the nature of art and the function of art were brought into question.⁵⁷

Conceptual artist and theorist Joseph Kosuth argued that Marcel Duchamp first raised the question about the function of art with his readymades, which allowed art 'to speak another language' and in the process changed the nature of art from a question of morphology to a question of function. In Kosuth's opinion, the change from *appearance* to *conception* was the beginning of modern art and the beginning of conceptual art.⁵⁸ His argument continued that artists, in presenting new propositions as to art's nature, questioned the nature of art itself and that all art after Duchamp, could only be *conceptual* because art could only exist conceptually.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Cramer, op. cit., *Inhibodress*, p. 7

⁵⁷ Tony Godfrey, *Conceptual Art*, Phaidon Press, London 1998, p. 4

Godfrey explains that language, photography, film, charts and maps generally characterized seminal Conceptual work. *Readymades*, objects from everyday use, which posed as an artwork, were also incorporated.

⁵⁸ Joseph Kosuth, 'Art After Philosophy, I and II', in G. Battcock, ed, *Idea Art*, E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York, 1973, p.80

⁵⁹ Ibid

Notably the term *conceptual* first appeared in a range of exhibitions, texts and publications during the late 1960s and early 1970s in different parts of the world.⁶⁰ In 1998 a retrospective exhibition entitled *Global Conceptualism* placed the historic annals of Conceptual Art in the context of its geographic and cultural histories of those decades, highlighting the demarcation between the prevailing cultural and socio-political philosophies across political borders.⁶¹ The relevance of this exhibition was that it linked Conceptual Art of the 1960s and 70s with the post and *neo-conceptualism* lineage of today's contemporary art. Art theorist Peter Osborne argues that the original conceptual movement was a division between what he termed *strong* and *weak* conceptualism, the two levels determining the relationships between conceptual art and philosophy, so that:

...the level at which those advocating expansive, empirically diverse and historically inclusive use of the term 'Conceptual Art' confront the champions of narrower, analytically more restricted, and explicitly 'philosophical' definitions⁶²; and the lower-and often more heated – level at which the latter dispute among themselves about the precise character of such definitions and the meaning and implications of their related practices and inquiries.⁶³

Despite the seemingly polemic relationship between Conceptual Art practice and philosophical discourse, it survived as an art movement, which presented a fundamental redefining of art. Lucy Lippard observed at the time that 'the unusual methods and materials of Conceptual Art would bypass the tyranny of commodity status and market orientation'. However not long after this, she repudiated the

⁶⁰ Peter Osborne, 'Conceptual Art and/as Philosophy', in Michael Newman, and Jon Bird, (eds), *Rewriting Conceptual Art*, Reaktion Books, London, 1999, p. 52
Osborne states that the expression 'concept art' has been reported as being first used in the 1950's by Ed Keinholz and by Henry Flynt writing in a Fluxus publication in 1961, however it did not appear in art-world discourse until almost a decade later.

⁶¹ Ibid, Michael Newman, and Jon Bird, p. 3

⁶² Ibid, Osborne, p. 47

Osborne states that 'it is in the intimacy of its relationship with philosophy – an intimacy at times verging on complete identification- that the specificity of Conceptual art resides.

⁶³ Ibid, pp. 48-49

statement and commented that ‘the major conceptualists are selling work for substantial sums through the most prestigious galleries’.⁶⁴

Three decades of art magazines can verify the generic nature of Conceptual Art and its acceptance by the art establishment. Osborne concludes in his essay that strong or exclusive conceptualism, with philosophy as its keystone, was the ‘true’ conceptual argument. However, philosophy became the ‘vanishing mediator in the transition from Sol Le Witt’s ontological ambiguous weak or inclusive conceptualism to the generic conceptuality or post-conceptual status of art since the mid 1970s’.⁶⁵

Neo-conceptualism

Art theorist, Tony Godfrey comments that ‘by offering a thorough critique of art, representations and the way that they are used, Conceptual Art has had a determining effect on the thinking of most artists’.⁶⁶ To cite an example, art writer Stuart Morgan observes that artist Rachel Whiteread ‘was not the only artist’ to have chosen the method of casting a *negative space*.

Bruce Nauman, considered to be a conceptual artist, had made a work entitled ‘*A Cast of Space Under My Chair*’ in 1965 and followed it up with ‘*Shelf Sinking into Wall with Copper-Painted Plaster Casts of Spaces Underneath*’ in 1966, preceding Whiteread’s work by several decades.⁶⁷ Nauman’s idea of casting the space not the object was purely conceptual and original. In the 1990s Whiteread produced a huge body of work, which dealt with casting negative space. Although extending the concept considerably, it could be argued that Whiteread borrowed heavily on Nauman’s concept by returning to the ‘same terrain’.⁶⁸

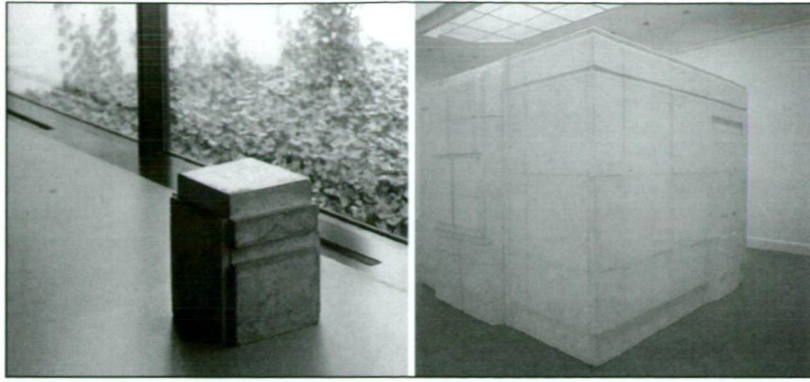
⁶⁴ Ibid, Lucy Lippard in Michael Newman, and Jon Bird, p. 69

⁶⁵ Ibid, Osborne in Michael Newman, and Jon Bird, p. 65

⁶⁶ Godfrey, op. cit., *Conceptual Art*, p. 4

⁶⁷ S. Morgan, *Rachel Whiteread: Shedding Life*, Tate Gallery, London, 1996, p.18

⁶⁸ Ibid, p.74



22 (left): Bruce Nauman, *A Cast of Space Under My Chair*, 1965
23 (right): Rachael Whiteread, *Ghost*, 1990

Joseph Alberro concedes that the legacy of Conceptual Art is wide-ranging and that its influences can be found in ‘almost all ambitious contemporary art practices – from the most obvious direct lineage of *neo-conceptualism* to the more obscure links of contemporary video, performance and public art.’⁶⁹

I would argue that in current contemporary art practice, the *Installation* is a major Conceptual Art hybrid. Artist Bonita Ely contends that Installation Art dominates mainstream art of the late twentieth century and continues to claim this position in the twenty-first century, driven by advances in electronic and digital technologies.⁷⁰ Art theorist Claire Bishop contends that Installation artists are manifestly concerned with the viewer’s presence: to provide a sensory experience within the context of a range of strategies encompassing harmonious interaction or alienation with the space and a range of experiences in between.⁷¹ J. Ronald Green has described Installation Art as a *grand narrative*: a kind of a three-dimensional *collage*.

Historically, the *collage* was perhaps the single most revolutionary formal innovation in artistic representation to occur in the twentieth century. Attaching objects or fragments to the surface of flat paintings

⁶⁹ Newman and Bird, op. cit., p. xxx

⁷⁰ Bonita Ely, <http://home.iprimus.com.au/painless/space/bonita.html> visited, February 3, 2006

⁷¹ Claire Bishop, *But is it Installation Art?* <http://www.tate.org.uk/tateetc/issue3/butisitinstallationart.htm> visited, March 19, 2006

began the long association of combining a number of diverse elements to create alternative visual languages. The use of electrical and digital technologies as mediums to extend the concept of *collage* has created another phenomena: installation as a *collage machine*.⁷²

Installation as a collage machine

As a vehicle of collage, video is a direct descendent of cinema, which in turn, is a direct descendent of photography.⁷³

The term *collage machine* implies an apparatus, which is capable of merging together a number of elements to form a narrative. One of the earliest examples could be considered to be the first continuous strips of photographic film by the Lumière brothers to mark where 'the history of invention stopped and the history of filmmaking began'.⁷⁴

Motions can be slow, very slow if we wish, so that no detail escapes our attention; and then subsequently, we can accelerate it, should we so desire, back to normal speed. We shall then possess absolutely perfect reproduction of real movement.⁷⁵

The Lumière brothers' seminal filmstrips began a revolution that has now evolved into the new age of digital media providing artists with an unsurpassed range of media options, both technologically and culturally. As well as being the transition into moving image from flat imagery (photography and painting), the Lumière brothers' film frames have been described as the birth of documentary. Media theorist Lev Manovich has observed that in the twentieth century, cinema's role as media technology has been to capture and store visible reality. Cinema

⁷² Green, op. cit., in,
http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m2479/15_6_27/ai_63193945

⁷³ Ibid

⁷⁴ Bertrand Tavernier cited in Gary Johnson, *The Lumiere Brother's First Films*, in
<http://www.imagesjournal.com/issue04/reviews/lumiere.html>
visited, February 9, 2005

It has been reported that by 1901 there was 1,299 titles that made up those simple narratives that collectively have become known as the birth of documentary film.

⁷⁵ Louis Lumière cited in Jacques Rittard-Hutinet in,
<http://www.holonet.khm.de/visualalchemy/lumiere-x.html>
visited, February 9, 2005.

proved to be an authentic, valuable document because of the problem of modifying images once they were recorded.⁷⁶



24: Dziga Vertov, *Man with a Movie Camera*, 1928

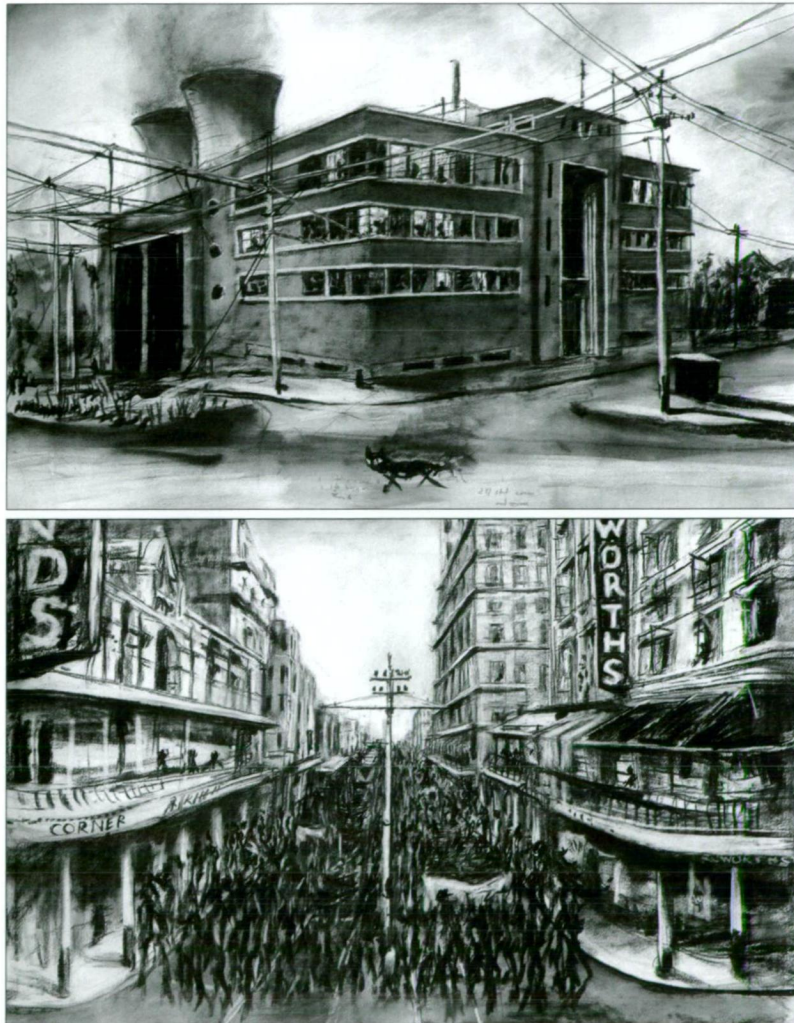
Dziga Vertov was one of the first filmmakers to explore *collage* within the framework of documentary filmmaking. His films captured a distillation of the sense of a modern city and landscape, ‘an avant-garde genre’ of urban film at the time. The *montage* (assembling film clips without regard for formal continuity, logic or time) as a concept was one of the earliest experiments in two-dimensional collage.⁷⁷

Manovich states that editing or montage is the key twentieth century technology for creating fake realities and can be usually divided into two main streams. He describes these as *temporal montage* and *montage within a shot*. Temporal montage creates separate realities that form consecutive moments in time and montage within a shot is where separate realities form contingent parts of a single image.

⁷⁶ Lev Manovich, *Language of New Media*, p. 259, in, www.manovich.com visited, August 22, 2004,

⁷⁷ Jonathan Dawson, *Dziga Vertov: Senses of Cinema*, in, www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/03/vertov.html visited, September 10, 2004

A modern-day, self-confessed proponent of Vertov's film language is artist William Kentridge. The techniques of montage editing, structuring of time, incorporation of virtual camera angles, as well as the use of scale and effects, are all frameworks of reference in Kentridge's animated charcoal and pastel drawings. In common with Vertov's use of mechanical imagery, Kentridge assimilates images of electricity pylons, concrete pipes, highways, wire fences and street lamps, all features that he calls his 'iconography of modernism'.⁷⁸



25 and 26: William Kentridge, Drawings from *Stereoscope*, 1998-1999

⁷⁸ Author unknown, Two Major Case Studies; First case study: William Kentridge's *Drawing for Projection*, with a particular focus on *The History of the Main Complaint*, in, http://www.wits.ac.za/library/ETD_FC/CHAPTER%204.htm visited, January 19, 2007.

Kentridge manipulates one image on a single piece of paper and films each stage of the drawing before erasing some part of it and re-drawing another part to create an organic process.

See also Dan Cameron, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, J. M. Coetzee, (eds), *William Kentridge*, Phaidon Press, London and New York, 1999

It is my contention that similar conceptual ‘techniques’ could apply to a combination of other physical elements to produce emotive and sensory responses. The ‘editing’ as such, takes place in the viewer’s consciousness as they are presented with, for instance, a stationary object, a moving image and a contemplative medium such as drawing. As technologies have changed and developed so too has the ability to extend the narrative. The combination of a number of diverse elements including the moving image and sound are able to open up an extended dialogue with the viewer.

Many artists have applied these same techniques and several are discussed in the Part Three. I would argue that this kind of presentation may be construed as a *documentary* and the combination of elements producing the grand narrative could be called, *a collage machine*. I was interested in investigating the documentary as a *form* that could be transformed to satisfy a contemporary art form, because of my own extensive experience in the documentary film genre.

From the earliest exploration of *documentary film* as a means of expression there was an on-going debate about the true nature of documentary, as being the recording of ‘real’ events. Vertov, generally acknowledged as one of the earliest pioneers of the genre, considered his films to be documentaries, yet they reflected his very personal, at times, poetic views of reality. His use of the montage, fast editing and radical camera angles were conceptual techniques that took events beyond reality into an experimental genre. The passionate debate of documentary film being a subjective or objective vehicle continued up until the 1970s when it evolved into mainstream television. From the 1970s the debate largely dissipated to re-emerge in modern day contemporary art practices.

PART THREE: THE VISUAL CONTEXT

Artists and Themes

In Part Three, I investigate the work of a number of visual and conceptual artists that have influenced my artwork. In referencing a number of artists using a *documentary* form as departure points in their multi-dimensional narrative-based installations, I intend to show how they blur the boundaries of genre and media relating to the subject of landscape and various kinds of human interaction. Other artists I reference play a part in the art/historical discourse. With its integration of diverse media, my research project relates to a field of artists and filmmakers working within the themes of *Cultural Landscape* (Jan Senbergs, Susan Norrie, Jem Cohen), *Museum Strategy/History as Myth* (Mark Dion, Alan McCollum), and *the Grand Narrative* (Joan Jonas, Kutlag Ataman and Bill Viola).

Cultural Landscape

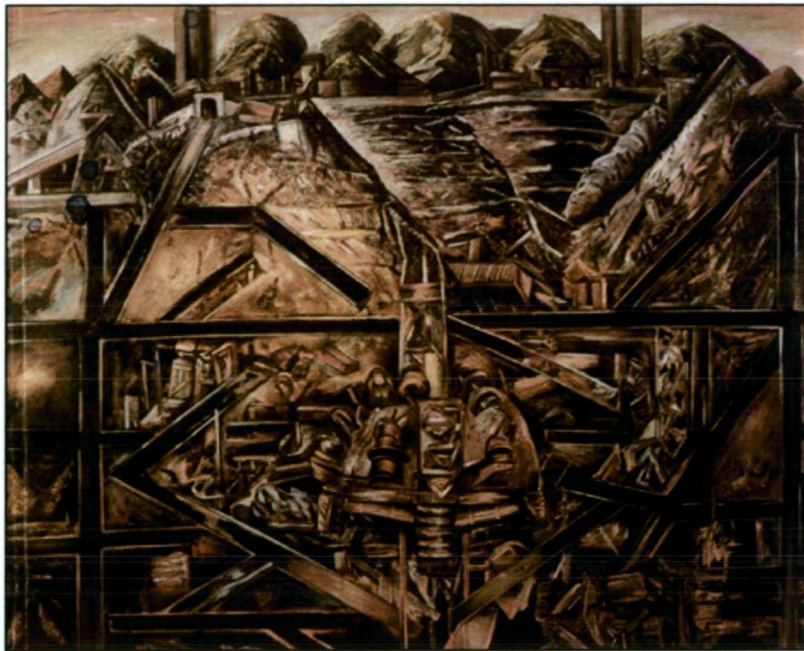
Jan Senbergs

Beginning with Jan Senbergs, who is primarily a painter, might seem at odds with the foundations of my argument that conceptualism and installation are *collage machines*. However, Senbergs seems entirely appropriate to me, as he has produced a series of works based on a particular site and represents industrial landscapes. Inspired by Tasmania's Queenstown landscape, Senbergs well known for his idiosyncratic drawings, prints and paintings, produced a series of expressionistic surrealist pastel drawings and acrylic paintings in 1982-83.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ The Exhibition titled *Jan Senbergs - Mining Landscapes* was held at the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery in 1984.

What stands out in his representation of the Queenstown mine sites is the particular *reading* of the altered landscape. In his own words, described as:

‘...a sort of silent empty stage set where the props have still been left. And you know that some huge drama has been played out over many years... This was a very strange place where you know there had been a huge and terrible tragedy.’⁸⁰



27: Jan Senbergs, *Diagram of the Underground*, 1983

In discussing the impact of technology on landscape, artist Gordon Rintoul suggests that ‘the ecological view of landscape makes it a critical subject for visual artists.’⁸¹ Senbergs was a willing participant in Rintoul’s argument because of his response to a landscape altered by mining, in which the very visible evidence of the interaction of technology, humans and nature remain a tangible episode in the region’s history.

⁸⁰ Jan Senbergs cited in G. J Rintoul, *Large Scale Landscape Painting Responding to the Relationship of Industry and Technology To Environmental Degradation*, University of Newcastle, 2003, p.20

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 13

Artist Gordon Rintoul produced a body of work for his doctorate degree, based on his West Coast experiences, in particular the Queenstown region.

Senbergs' gothic paintings describe a Kafkaesque underground inscribed with intersecting tunnels devoid of humans, but with the very recognisable imprint of technology. They are similar to scenes from *Matrix*, the movie, where the machines and an industrial darkness dominate the landscape. On the surface, the inscription is one of entropy and the evidence of impermanency. Senbergs expressed the aim of his work in an interview about his exhibition:

The show (art exhibition) operates on a few levels. It's part history, part present day. I've painted something I know is there rather than what I see in front of me. I select bits and pieces from the past and present, from on and under the ground, and put them into one landscape'.⁸²

Senbergs' drawings have a lot in common with some of my large-scale drawings although we have completely different approaches.⁸³ He often tends to work-up his conceptions from smaller studies, photographs or even photocopies of historical photographs. Heavy lines slash and intersect at angles dividing up the canvas into distinct sections of push and pull tension. Similar to a cross section through strata, accumulations of surreal machines and industrial detritus are piled high, as both above ground and underground merge in an allegory of hell on earth.

⁸² Jan Senbergs in Hendrik Kolenberg, and Sue Backhouse, (eds), *Jan Senbergs – Mining Landscapes*, Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, Hobart, 1984, p. 11
Senbergs made a preliminary visit of the Queenstown area over several days and carried out background research. On-site sketches and photographs provided the basis to complete the series in his studio away from the site.

⁸³ I began drawing large-scale works in black pastel and charcoal in 2001, which evolved from a meditative process following visits to the West Coast. At no time did I actually refer to photographs or other sources. Rather, I let the intuition be my guide.

Susan Norrie

I reference Australian artist Susan Norrie in light of the fact that she constructs grand narratives of cultural landscapes as installation, a stratagem that I am applying to my own work. Generally known as a painter, Norrie has undergone a significant transformation in her oeuvre since the 1990s embracing a range of media including sculpture, installation, photography and time-based media.⁸⁴

An example of Norrie's new direction in 2003 was in the major exhibition *Notes from the Underground*, which has been described as three distinct parts making up one overall installation, linked by a cohesive sound track. Landscape and human interaction played a key role as projected images screened onto walls and sculptural objects as varied as replicated plutonium screens, a wooden office bench, an old fashioned jam jar and an acrylic fur curtain occupied the gallery space. Paintings and projected text blended to present the viewer with an expanded corporeal experience.

Devoid of sound and slowed down to surreal, distorted effect, the imagery is almost hallucinatory in quality and deeply unnerving. In this work, the artist's preoccupation with the cinematic technique of 'montage' – cutting, splicing, and editing to create new variations of time and narrative – is made explicit.⁸⁵

In 2004 I was able to view *Passenger*, one of the installations from *Notes from the Underground*, at the National Gallery of Victoria.⁸⁶ *Passenger* consisted of three large projections onto adjacent walls creating a psychological space and a kind of *Nonsite* where 'cultural evidence' had been 'transported' from unknown sites into a gallery. Film and video have the effect of transporting a 'window to the world'

⁸⁴ Rachel Kent, 'Susan Norrie: painter of darkness and light', *Susan Norrie: notes from the underground*, Museum of Contemporary Art, Sydney, 2003, p. 6
The major exhibition in 2003 at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney, showcased: *Err* (1999), *Thermostat* (2001) and *Passenger* (2003)

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 7

⁸⁶ *Passenger* was included in the exhibition *Living Together is Easy* at the National Gallery Of Victoria in 2004.

into another space and, our consciousness. The entire space also became an extension of the sensory experience as the highly polished floor of the gallery became a gigantic mirror that reflected the diffused flicker of the images. I, as the spectator, became part of the film as the space transformed into a desolate and estranged place and it felt like I was walking 'in' the films.⁸⁷

On one wall, stark black and white looped images showed a man dressed in safety overalls and a contamination mask walking along a tunnel or passage in an unknown location. An adjacent wall showed a monochrome image of what looked like a theme park ride with a family waving towards the camera. The third image showed swarming insects in a laboratory experiment. The disjointed images prompted an ominous feeling. This dysfunctional element was emphasised by the silence, fraught with confusion, ambiguity and repeated images. The use of looped and digitally altered images also has parallels with my work.

Similarly to the way a Michelangelo Antonioni film creates an abstract narrative, Norrie's fragments of repetition build up dismembered parallel actions that invited the viewer to engage with the images and their relationship to the space. This type of visual language has echoes in modernism, 'a way of expressing a new, fragmented unclear way of life, a chaotic world', and in particular what has been referred to as *Antonioni's Modernist Language*.⁸⁸ Italian film director Antonioni has been credited for inscribing the language of modernism into narrative film in the 1950s, a language based on images not words, a language of silence, communicating alienation and fragmentation of modern life.

⁸⁷ Smithson in Flam, op. cit., *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, p.70
Smithson in his essay on Passaic describes an experience walking across a bridge as being like a metaphor of 'walking on an enormous photograph that was made of wood and steel, and underneath the river existed as an enormous movie film that showed nothing but continuous blank'.

⁸⁸ Sam Rohdie, *Antonioni's Modernist Language*, in
<http://geocities.com/hollywood/3781/modernism.html>
visited, June 12, 2005



28: Susan Norrie, *Passenger*, 2004

Man-made landscapes are foreign, lacking any empathy for the humans who happen to inhabit them; they are spiritually and physically empty.⁸⁹

It is interesting to note that the pioneer Russian film director Serge Eisenstein considered the characteristic of cinema as *cinematicism*, an ‘aesthetic pictorialism with psychological reality’.⁹⁰ Multi-media producer Dr, Helen Grace describes this quality of *cinematicism* as: ‘the kind of immersive experience the most interesting new media art manages to achieve, an experience which does not simply draw upon the visual but attempts to bring all senses into play, demanding a visceral response’.⁹¹

⁸⁹ Ibid

⁹⁰ Dr. Helen Grace, in Kent, op. cit., p. 25

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 25

Jem Cohen



29: Jem Cohen, *Chain Times Three*, 2005

His films tend to skirt the margins of traditional approaches to narrative, documentary and experimental; consequently emerging from a uniquely conceived space of interwoven fragments of documented reality, lyrical narrative and fleeting visual impressions.⁹²

Jem Cohen is of interest to me for his efforts in blurring the boundaries between documentary, narrative and experimental filmmaking. His filmic treatments of urban spaces are interwoven with complex sound-scapes and narration involving literary texts; historical fact and fabrication, often incorporating multi-screens. His *collages* are unequivocally cultural landscapes in a Smithson *Nonspace*, having been described as ‘portraits of places, or people, or times past that each constitute a specific way of seeing that does not pretend to be objective.’⁹³

⁹² Rhys Graham, *Just Hold Still: A Conversation with Jem Cohen: Senses of Cinema*, cited in, <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/00/9/cohen.html> visited, September 30, 2005

In an interview Cohen speaks about the influence of Walter Benjamin, in his words; ‘the *collage*, the standing around on street corners, the notion of losing one’s self in cities, the shock of the crowd...All that made sense to me. And looking closely at the remnants of commerce, and at places like shopping malls.’

⁹³ Ibid

I viewed a major project by Jem Cohen in 2004, *Chain*, one of the works in a curated exhibition *Proof* at ACMI⁹⁴ in Melbourne. Cohen's work was installed towards the back of the gallery in an enclosed dedicated cinematic space. Three large-scale images stretched across the entire end wall in a perfectly joined panoramic triptych, creating a super wide screen. Portraying landscapes sometimes devoid of human beings, *Chain* told the story of corporate culture homogenising regional character with frequent disparate images of urban landscapes. The sound consisted of a voice over narration by two women.⁹⁵

Cohen's fascination with the similarity of corporate homogenised landscapes all over the world drives him to film wherever he is travelling.

I could be anywhere and find some place in a city that could be in any other city. I could have been in Melbourne and it didn't feel any different to Houston. That became the underlying theme of the *Chain* project.⁹⁶

Cohen's images depicted demolished shopping malls and classical European squares, opposing the alienating against the alluring. At other times he focused on high-rise office buildings or retail parks and all the time the personal and global dimensions intersected through the voice over soundtrack. Although they were non-judgmental observations, all the places were strangely inhospitable but hauntingly beautiful in their alienation. Cohen doesn't see himself within the genre of a cinema essay tradition, even though he is sometimes described as making essay films in the trail of Goddard and Marker.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ Acronym for the Australian Centre for Moving Image.

⁹⁵ Explained in an accompanying artists statement in the exhibition: as *one woman being a corporate businesswoman set adrift by her corporation while she researches the international theme park industry and the other is a young drifter, living and working illegally on the fringes of a shopping mall.*

⁹⁶ Jem Cohen, cited in Wendy Mitchell, 'People', *IndieWIRE*, in, http://www.indiewire.com/people/people_030402cohen.html visited, March 12, 2005

⁹⁷ James N. Christley, *Chris Marker: Senses of Cinema*, in, <http://www.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/02/marker.html> visited, March 12, 2005



30: Jem Cohen, *Chain Times Three*, 2005

When reviewing Cohen's work I am reminded again of Antonioni's visual language of alienation, where human constructed landscapes lack any empathy for the humans who inhabit them. Cohen's triptych accentuated alienation and dysfunction, symbols of our modern world and ever-expanding globalisation. He used the three images not only to extend the narrative but also to set up tensions in the editing by showing different environments at the one time, a kind of global parallel action. By describing a key aspect of Antonioni's film narrative, Sam Rohdie, perhaps best sums up *Chain* and Cohen's response to place as:

This place at which the narrative dies, at which the camera becomes distracted, is often a place which another, non-narrative interest develops... These places which are openly non-narrativised, of pictorial and visual interest which suddenly takes hold, causes the narrative to err, to wander, momentarily to dissolve.⁹⁸

Jean Luc Goddard and Chris Marker are considered to be exponents in the essay form of documentary.

⁹⁸ Rohdie, op. cit., <http://geocities.com/hollywood/3781/modernism.html>

Museum Strategy - History as Myth

Mark Dion



31: Mark Dion, *Concrete Jungle (The Birds)*, 1992

Reference to museum strategy and history as myth is another important aspect of my work. Artist Mark Dion also deals with these themes. I am interested in Dion's post-conceptual multi-dimensional role as a 'cultural producer'. However, he differs to my work in the way that he emphasises process as opposed to the product of art making. His frequent mythical approach to location and the site relates to Smithson's theories of *Sites* and *Nonsites* but is not the same. He explains:

Site-specificity today is not that of Bochner, Le Witt, Serra or Buren defined by the formal constraints of a location. Nor is it that of Asher and Haacke, defined as a social space enmeshed in the art culture. It can be these things plus historical issues, contemporary political debates, the popular culture climate, developments in technology, the artist's experience of being mistreated by the hosting institution, even the seasonal migration of birds.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Mark Dion, 'Interview', in Lisa Graziose Corrin, Miwon Kwon, Norman Bryson, (eds), *Mark Dion*, Phaidon Press Limited, London, 1999, p. 26

Dion's main works include conceptual installations, activist public art projects (faux archaeology) and sculpture. By collecting, classifying and exhibiting complex or simple arrangements of both mass-produced and found-objects in museum or archaeological strategies, Dion presents a complex network of questionable agendas hidden beneath the guise of familiarity of objects and materials. His early works were attempts to translate critical strategies from the field of documentary film and photography to an installation or sculptural field.¹⁰⁰ This is a key investigation in my project.

In *History Trash Dig, from unseen Fribourg 1995*, Dion collected and removed natural elements from one context to another (in a way referencing Smithson's *Nonsites*) to underscore the absurdity of a method where the antithesis of the ecosystems under observation invalidates the data that emerges from the process of study. Removing soil from the site and transferring it into a laboratory, he set up trestle tables with artefacts laid out in the process of being classified, tasks such as a geologist or archaeologist may carry out.¹⁰¹

As part of my research I viewed a similar display in an exhibition of an archaeological survey at Melbourne Museum in 2004. The display, although entertaining, seemed to emphasise the absurdity of presenting archaeological evidence as real archaeological practice. It centred on the site of an urban location, Little Lonsdale Street, a project by the archaeological department of Latrobe University, Melbourne.

It encompassed a model of the site and archaeological cabinets with relics and fragments of ceramics listed and tagged. The interpretation panels presented colourful histories, anecdotes and facts about the former place that had been built over and replaced by high-rise buildings.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, Dion cited in Kwon, p.8

¹⁰¹ Ibid, Corrin, p.70

This kind of over-education and ‘dumbing down’ is central to Dion’s critical thinking and is ultimately a feature of his finished works. His opinion is that popularisation and rationalisation in funding has inevitably meant that the museum has become a place where the questions are simplified to the point of the viewer becoming a passive rather than an active participant instead of being a place for the viewer to explore complex questions.¹⁰²



32 - 34: Mark Dion, *Tate Thames Dig*, 1999

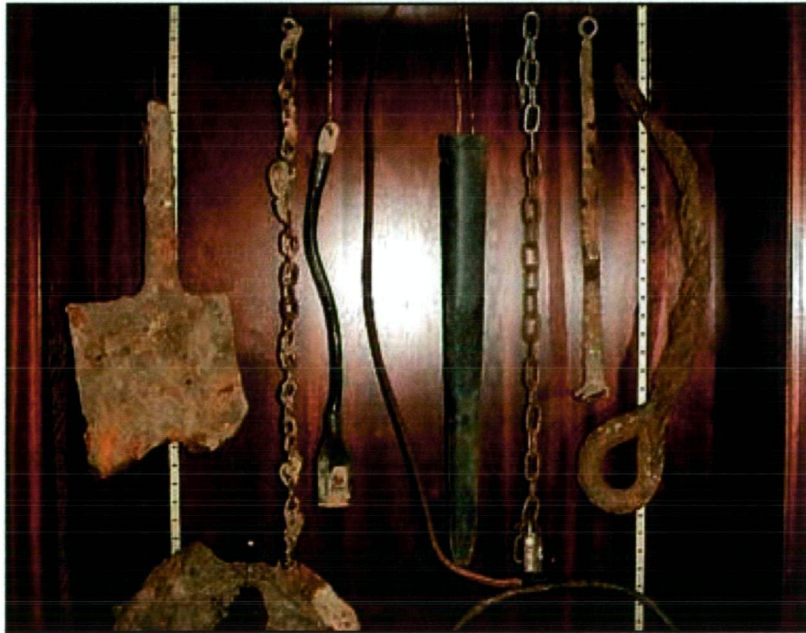
In making the experience of discovery an active experience, as well as being part of an artwork, Dion initiated a number of projects including *Tate Thames Dig 1999*.¹⁰³ The dig was carried out in two locations and aimed at scouring the low tide mark of the river for almost anything that was left on the riverbank after the water had receded. The work replicated a genuine archaeological excavation with trestle tables and tents for cleaning, sorting and classification. The site itself was an *everyday* location, a riverbank, chosen because of the proximity to The Tate Art Gallery, a short trip from site to *Nonsite*. Collection and sorting was strictly non-hierarchical, a key part of Dion’s philosophy, as plastic toys, hypodermic syringes and old shoes lay alongside fragments of Elizabethan ceramics or Dutch porcelain. Dion has described the project as having three distinct stages; the dig, cleaning and preparation and the exhibition in a cabinet, as he expands:

It’s a bit like going to the cinema and being able to see not only the film, but also the production. The whole operation is made public and I’m not interested in distinguishing between the parts that are art and the ones that aren’t. Instead of keeping everything to myself, it’s all acted out in front of the audience, the group of volunteers being the first circle of viewers.

¹⁰² Dion cited in Kwon, op. cit., p.1

This everyday rubbish was also a part of history's detritus as much as artefacts reaching back to the Roman's conquest.¹⁰⁴ Dion was unequivocally dealing with entropy in these kinds of works. By applying non-hierarchical structures to formal scientific methods, in a sometime humorous manner, they became parodies of the ruling elite's systems, something that Smithson would have agreed with.

I see a correlation between my own artwork and Dion's process in the fact that we both gather a kind of evidence of archaeological history. Whereas Dion collected real artefacts from sites and recontextualised them within a gallery or museum I have created imaginary artefacts and recontextualised them in a gallery space.¹⁰⁵ Both of our approaches relate to particular places and their entanglement with artefacts and the notion that without people, artefacts would have no value at all.



35: Mark Dion, *Tate Thames Dig*, 1999

¹⁰⁴ D. Birnbaum, 'Stream of Consciousness', *Artforum*, November 1999, pp. 117-118

¹⁰⁵ My work and concepts are discussed in *Part 4: How the Work was Pursued*.

Allen McCollum



36: Allan McCollum, *Ten Thousand Individual Works*, 1998

Artist Allen McCollum also works at times within the history/myth strategy. Using what economists identify as the ‘serial mode of production’, McCollum takes examples of objects such as collectibles, souvenirs or fossils, and presents them in an art space so that the viewer’s expectations are challenged by perceived ‘qualities’ of rarity and preciousness. Simultaneously confronted by the mass produced objects, viewers are presented with a contradiction between difference and repetition.

Citing the example of consumerism, art theorist Craig Owens argues that the significance of the serial mode of production is that ‘it reintroduces a limited gamut of differences into the mass-produced object’, creating an illusion of choice in consumer products.¹⁰⁶ McCollum presents castings of particular objects and deliberately varies them by colour shading and placement (a common strategy of offering consumer products).

¹⁰⁶ Craig Owens, Allen McCollum: Repetition and Difference, *Art in America*, September, 1983, pp. 130 -132

As McCollum explains:

My work is always about feelings, but I also seem to always design my projects so that they invite wider cultural analyses. I do want to suggest a larger picture of the way we experience culture and participate in it. I like to ask questions about how society creates objects and what those objects mean.¹⁰⁷



37 - 39: Allen McCollum, *Ten Thousand Individual Works*, 1998

Industrial production was the basis for McCollum's installation titled *Ten Thousand Individual Works*, where he produced ten thousand individual pieces. Each piece was small, the moulds taken from 150 household items such as bottle caps, yoghurt containers, cake decorating implements and a host of other everyday objects. The everyday objects were cast in plaster and each was joined with a different shape, creating ten thousand individual pieces. The images remind me of my own works although I have not gone to the extreme measure of producing such a massive number.

McCollum's objects are situated between mechanical and crafted. He adds another duplicitous attribute by representing them in catalogues as individual 'precious' objects, seductively composed in close-up. The contradiction arises as other images convey massed objects as being reminiscent of stock piled weapons. I have also been exploring some of these dualisms in my own work.

¹⁰⁷ Allen McCollum cited in Thomas Lawson, *Allan McCollum*, A.R.T. Press, Los Angeles, 1996, in, http://home.att.net/~allanmcnyc/Lawson_AMc_Interview.html visited, May 12, 2004

McCollum aimed to take the serial object into the arena of fine art to establish a dual identity of the artefact being simultaneously an artwork and a product. While at the same time McCollum has questioned the 'traditional division of artistic labour where the artist is restricted by society to produce hallowed luxury items that serve an elitist class status quo'. According to art theorist Lynne Cooke, the *Individual Works* disrupt this conventional ideology and 'capture industrial techniques into the register of artistic practice'.¹⁰⁸

McCollum's concepts stem from his interest 'in representations, accidentally created by the world itself and not through artistic endeavor'.¹⁰⁹ There are echoes to Smithson, specifically, the use of geological metaphors are used to 'effect a re-siting of art'. Entropy, a key factor of Smithson's philosophy, also plays a role in McCollum's works. Art theorist Rosalind Krauss argues that Smithson had always considered casting as a way of theorising entropy using the analogy of the earth's crust as being a giant cast: 'the testimony to wave after wave of cataclysmic forces compressing and congealing life and all the spatial intervals necessary to sustain it'.¹¹⁰

My work has strong links to a philosophy running through McCollum's work where he uses copies to illustrate absence. In McCollum's words, 'they (copies) carry a sense of mourning, death or loss. This is one way to look at our environment - maybe a particularly psychoanalytic way'.¹¹¹ My mechanical forms are reproduced as copies but with varying surface treatments to emphasise a human involvement at some time in their 'life', a way to emphasise that the dormant 'artefacts' had active lives, entangled in complex networks of meanings.

¹⁰⁸ Lynne Cooke, *Allen McCollum*, Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Holland; 1989, cited in http://home.att.net/~allanmcnyc/Lynne_Cooke_Carnegie.html visited, May, 12 2004

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ Rosalind Krauss, *Formless: A Users Guide to Entropy*, in, http://home.att.net/~allanmcnyc/Rosalind_Krauss.html visited May 12, 2004

¹¹¹ McCollum cited in Lawson, op. cit., http://home.att.net/~allanmcnyc/Lawson_AMc_Interview.html

The Grand Narrative

Joan Jonas

I relate to Joan Jonas's installations because of her unique approach in the use of diverse elements to extend the *grand narrative of collage*, a feature of her work since the late 1960s. Relying on the temporal, Jonas fuses her theatrical performances of invented personas with elements of video (sometimes close-circuit live transmissions), film, music, props, dance, drawing and pre-recorded audiotapes, and presents the work as installation. She explores ongoing constructions of identity by taking references from books, poems, the everyday or her experiences in particular landscapes.¹¹²

Theatrical 'sets' are constructed with a variety of props including mirrors, furniture and sculptural components together with aspects of cultural landscape as background projected images. Predominantly theatre of the absurd, her 'pieces', as she calls them, evoke a surreal lineage.



40: Joan Jonas, *Revolted by the Thought of Known Places - Sweeney Astray*, 1992

¹¹² Joan Simon, 'Scenes and Variations: An Interview with Joan Jonas', in Johann-Karl Schmidt, ed, *Joan Jonas – Performance Video installation 1968-2000*, Galerie der Stadt Stuttgart, 2001 p. 25

In *Revolted by the Thought of Known Places - Sweeney Astray*, Jonas takes a poem praising nature relating to Irish mythology and symbolism. She constructs a *grand narrative of collage*, combining drawing, sculptural elements and projected images of the landscapes of Nova Scotia and Budapest. Actors recite the poem as a *performance* while they are recorded by video. Jonas explains:

This juxtaposition of live action and video details is still what I am interested in. Three actors recite the poem. There are two others who don't speak: a dancer and a young artist who is more or less playing me. I wanted a non-actor. There is also the composer, who is playing on the stage, and the cameraman, who is also an actor, operating the live video.¹¹³

Art critic Douglas Crimp has described Jonas's productions as being informed by a single paradigmatic strategy of 'de-synchronization, usually in conjunction with fragmentation and repetition'.¹¹⁴ Although Jonas's works are intrinsically linked to performance, my interest is in the way she constructs a visual language, especially in the use of multi-dimensional media to extend the pictorial experience. Her notions of fragmentation and repetition also relate to some of the ideas incorporated in my own work.



41: Joan Jonas, *Organic Honey*, 1992

¹¹³ Ibid, p. 33

¹¹⁴ Ibid, p. 25

Kutlag Ataman



42: Kutlag Ataman, *Stills from Perfect Strangers*, 2005

Surprising edits and overlaps appear in the same way that remembrance works, by retrieving and cross-referencing. Within this glimmering array of cinematic art, you find yourself travelling in time, floating in and out of images, blending the artists' vision into the mysterious, stored-up movie of your own existence.¹¹⁵

A major installation I wanted to personally experience was the work of internationally acclaimed Turkish artist Kutlag Ataman, who is also a leading figure in Turkish cinema.¹¹⁶ The reason I was interested in Ataman was to see how his film ideas worked in an art space. The genre of documentary as narrative was something that I was exploring as part of my ideas for my installations.

¹¹⁵ Ross Gibson, 'Remembrance + Realisation', *Remembrance + the Moving Image*, Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne, 2003, p. 7

¹¹⁶ I viewed the exhibition, *Perfect Strangers*, in September 2004 in the Museum of Contemporary Art in Sydney.

Ataman makes narrative-driven and interview-based ‘documentaries’ exploring the margins of conventional society, where reality and fiction collide. Individuals reinvent themselves in front of the artist’s camera as they play out a range of roles and characters, merging real lives with heightened drama and intrigue. The documentary, being purely a subjective experience, is fundamental to Ataman’s philosophy as he explains:

I wanted to engage the whole 60’s discussion of objectivity in documentary and to make the point that it’s impossible to make an objective film.¹¹⁷

In *Perfect Strangers*, Ataman included seven installations of varying complexity, all involving projected images and sound. I reference *Stefan’s Room* as an example. On entering *Stefan’s Room*, I encountered six screens creating a collage of projected images, allowing the viewer to move both inside and outside angled screens spiralling upwards from eye-level. *Stefan’s Room* was in the genre of documentary, profiling a passionate collector of tropical moths.



43: Kutlag Ataman, *Still from Stefan’s Room*, 2005

¹¹⁷ Kutlag Ataman, ‘A Thousand Words: Kutlag Ataman on his Work’, *Artforum*, February, 2003, p. 117

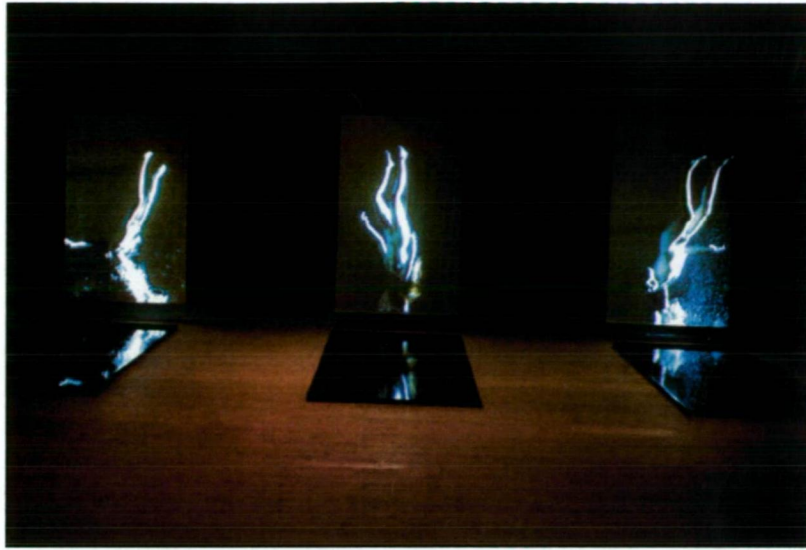
Each projected image on the individual screens was different, as Stefan explained to the camera (the audience) about the life cycle of his moths. Ataman used the techniques of a professional documentary filmmaker, as each image and story replicated the source material usually provided for a film editor to create a linear narrative as a finished product. This entailed different camera angles and focal compositions. However the narrative was never linear because of the fragmentation of the images. While in the exhibition space, my eyes and ears continually switched from one screen to screen. Extreme details of the moths were juxtaposed with the traditional documentary structures of the ‘talent’ (in this case Stefan) speaking to camera. Viewing the installation has been described as like being inside the filmmaker’s brain.

Media artist and writer Ross Gibson discusses the question of human consciousness and the way that we know ourselves through linguistic means, how we ‘make sense of existence by talking our way through the world’s complexities once we have learned how to apply words to the insights we have scooped up from experience’. Another way, he contends is through what psychologists call ‘imagistic cognition’. This describes ‘the phenomena of running image sequences in our heads while trying to make sense of our experiences’. He refers to this process as a form of movies in the mind as the sub-conscious processes memory and experiential images similar to compiling and editing movie clips.¹¹⁸

In a similar way, in *Stefan’s Room*, Ataman compiled mind movies. They consisted of edited mental ‘clips’ of experience, where the viewer was allowed to ‘inter-cut’ with whatever they were seeing or hearing. Each viewer’s individual experience was unique as they could choose to meditate on the images and sounds, or to simply pass through the experience quickly.

¹¹⁸ Gibson, op. cit., *Remembrance + the Moving Image*, pp. 3-4

Bill Viola



44: Bill Viola, *Stations*, 1994

Media theorist Lev Manovich argues that the conceptual ‘key’ of the historical relationship should drive any theoretical analysis of new media language, to cinema history. He asks the question: as new media infiltrates art, does it relate to older cultural forms and languages? Bill Viola is one artist who certainly thinks it does. A pioneer of experimental video in the 1970s, he is increasingly being recognised as one of the most important visual artists working at the present time.

Viola is of interest to me as an artist working with image and sound in experimental and often psychological ways. Whilst his emotive approach is a strong aspect of his themes it is his grasp of the language that I respond to. I have responded in a similar way to more classical filmmakers in the past, such as Antonioni, Fellini and a wide variety of documentary and experimental film and video artists.

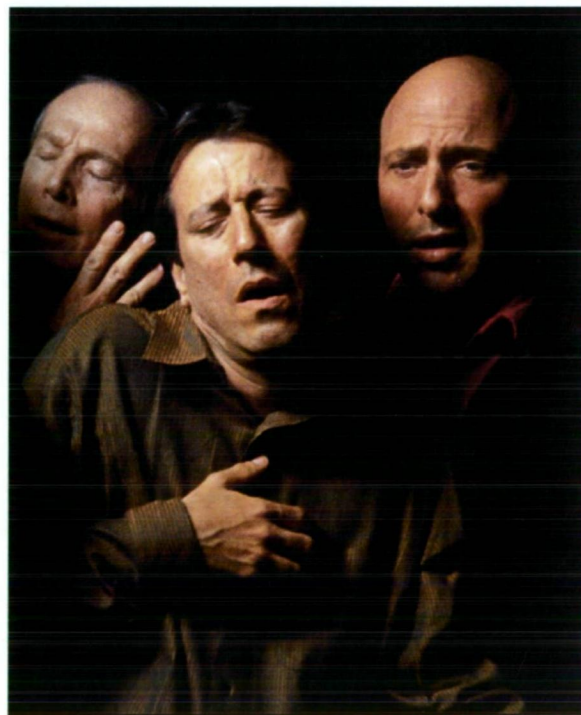
I had the opportunity to view a major exhibition of Viola’s in 2005.¹¹⁹ Moving through his tour de force, *The Passions* was a solitary experience: a meditation rather than a normal gallery experience

¹¹⁹ The exhibition titled *The Passions* and was held in the National Gallery Canberra in 2005.

of art. Entering the first space was an encounter with a seemingly motionless grand composition of five figures on a large plasma screen. I felt I was invited to study the composition in more detail, perhaps because of the clarity of the image. As I became transfixed on the screen, I detected the subtlest of movements, a muscle twitch in the face, an ultra-slow blink of an eye, a hand gesture or a lock of hair shifting.

The work, *Quintet of the Astonished*, was one of the main works in the show, inspired by an old master painting. In this work, five actors had been filmed on high-speed film, which permitted the film to be slowed down dramatically when played back. The scene became an intense tableau of shifting momentary emotions.

Slow motion is thoroughly familiar from movies and sports replays, but not as a means to observe the movements of people's faces and speculate on their feelings. The objects themselves - plasma screens with frames, some hinged, and some on pedestals - suggest the forms and substance of Old Master paintings.¹²⁰



45: Bill Viola, *Quintet of the Astonished*, (Detail) 2005

¹²⁰ John Walsh, cited in, 'Emotions in Extreme Time: Bill Viola's *Passion Project*, *Artonview*, National Gallery of Australia, 2005, pp. 14-15

As I moved through Viola's other exhibitions spaces, the compositions of his works varied in size from large screens to small intimate screens. Although the first set of exhibits were unaccompanied by any sound I detected a distant rushing noise. By the time I had passed through several gallery spaces the sound became more intense. The final large exhibition space in the gallery revealed the source of the sound and, on entering I became totally immersed in the audio-visual experience. Five large-scale projections filled the large gallery space. Titled *Five Angels for the Millennium*, the multiple screens and enveloping sound were initially overwhelming, until the rhythms and aesthetics began their subtle seduction.



46 and 47: Bill Viola, *Five Angels for the Millennium*, 2005

Each projection was linked by a common theme of water and immersion. Again the notion of slow motion was used, but in a much more ethereal way. In one image an ultra slow mass of bubbles turned into a body seemingly levitating up from the bottom and floating out of the water. Another was the opposite action: a body falling into the water.

The wonder is that such banal occurrences – a sort of stunt shot – could be transformed into an experience of such otherworldly beauty and mysterious force.¹²¹

¹²¹ Ibid, p. 15

The actions of the five bodies were never synchronous; a rhythmic pulse of colour and aesthetic became the overriding sensation accompanied by the intense rushing and sonar pings. I was able to immerse myself in the experience for at least one hour as it transformed from a gallery viewing to a spiritual experience.

Conclusion

In the hands of contemporary artists, appropriated variations of *collage machines* continue to be the product of conscious artistic expression. The artists reviewed are a small sample of artist practitioners that extend the visual narrative into a sensual and visceral experience. Their work particularly relates to aspects of my own work. Some have provided experiences as immersive or corporeal sensations while others have relied on conceptual or minimalist approaches. Incorporated in their treatments are diverse philosophical and psychological strategies including, fragmentation of time, historical discourse, memory, recall, entropy and poetic archaeology.

PART FOUR: HOW THE PROJECT WAS PURSUED

Introduction

To begin the research project I decided it was essential for me to have a theoretical and historical foundation from the outset and to read literature relating to cultural landscape theory and the history of the West Coast of Tasmania. Inspired by what I had read, I travelled to the region to gather my initial on-site responses to the landscape in preparation for studio-based research. The first visit was the most important because I responded to the landscape as a 'first sighting'. Everything was new and unknown. The visual impact on my conscious and sub-conscious mind was unadulterated. Subsequent trips enhanced this initial encounter but did not match the seminal experience. Over the course of my research I made six trips to various parts of the region from March 2003 to December 2005. A critical part of my research over the candidacy, was exhibiting my artwork in alternate and gallery exhibition spaces. This enabled me to view it in context, away from a studio environment.¹²²

My research project developed in four stages. The first stage was the developmental phase that included the initial traverses in the Zeehan environment and the first studio outcomes in ceramics and large-scale drawing. The second stage was the experimental phase where I explored different mediums. The third stage was the consolidation phase where I investigated the narrative, specifically with the addition of time-based digital media and the presentation of outcomes in an installation format. The fourth and final stage was the refinement phase that consisted of fine-tuning concepts, mediums and installation presentations that resulted in the final exhibition outcome.

¹²² As much as was possible, I either organised exhibitions or put myself forward for consideration to have my work shown. I felt it was crucial for testing theories and ideas directly with the viewer - away from the studio.

The developmental phase

Ceramic and large scale drawings

My research focused on a region that has historically been linked to an industrial culture. In the process of looking for answers to the research question, in relation to post-industrial spaces, I decided to extend my Honours research and continue exploring the theme of industrial archaeology.¹²³

As a way of exploring history as a metaphor, the first works I produced for the research project were mechanical hybrid forms made from slipcast ceramics, a medium I had been recently working in for my Honours degree. Ceramics offered a medium that was suitable for exploring material and surface transformations. A definition from a publication by the Situationist International became a departure point for the first works. It proposed the idea of *détournement*, the appropriation of previously existing aesthetic artefacts in order to divert their meaning or intent.¹²⁴ This concept was closely allied to the surrealist principal of presenting objects as ‘an indistinction between the real and the imagined’.¹²⁵ My aim was to subvert the notion of the *readymade*¹²⁶ (a Dada object) by transforming the form itself as well as the material, from the original plastic, to ceramic appearing as metal.

I had been told about the practice in the mines of adapting machinery when there was a shortage or difficulty of acquiring new parts. Often, hybrid machinery was the result. In order to exploit the concept of

¹²³ Marilyn Palmer and Peter Neaverson, (eds), ‘The Scope of Industrial Archaeology’, *Industrial Archaeology: Principals and Practice*, Routledge Press, London, 1998, p.1

A general consensus has evolved to define industrial archaeology as ‘the systematic study of structures and artefacts as a means of enlarging our understanding of the industrial past.’

¹²⁴ Michael Archer, ‘Towards Installation’, in Nicolas de Oliveira, Nicola Oxley, Michael Petry, (eds), *Installation Art*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1994, p. 27

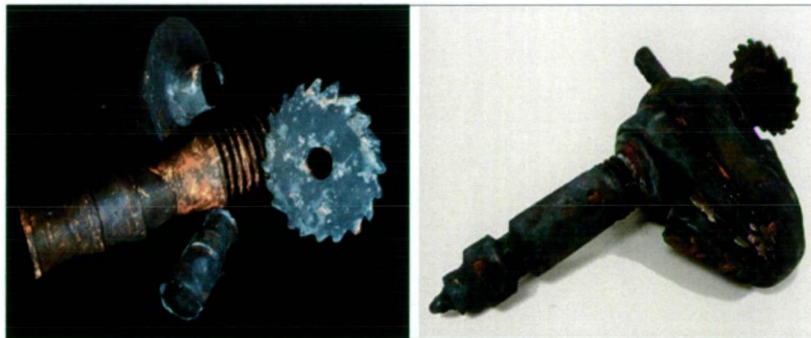
¹²⁵ Hal Foster, ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principal’, *Compulsive Beauty*, MIT Press, London, 1993, p. 7

¹²⁶ Archer, op. cit. p. 27

Archer states that Duchamp introduced the idea of taking mass-produced objects, called readymades and placing them in a gallery. In so doing he ‘challenged the basis upon which we distinguish the world of art and what lies outside of it’.

adaptation I used a number of ‘found’ objects as models for basic forms that were suitable for manipulation. A number of plaster pouring moulds for clay slip were produced over a six-week period. Clay slip forms were cast, and shapes and designs combined to create hybrid machine-like parts.

In the normal process of ceramic production, the clay forms were fired in a kiln. A range of technical procedures, from producing plaster moulds to slip casting and the surface treatments, established the techniques and processes for future works in the research project.¹²⁷



48 (left): Niels Ellmoos, *Entropic Still Life*, 2002

49 (right): Niels Ellmoos, *Cheese Suction Cutter*, 2002

The other main aim of my research was to test the concepts in the context of exhibitions. The first was the *Alumni Exhibition*, the second was *Artline 2000-The Contemporary Portrait*, the third was *Forensics* and the fourth was *Works-in-Process*. I discuss each of these exhibitions in context of my research.

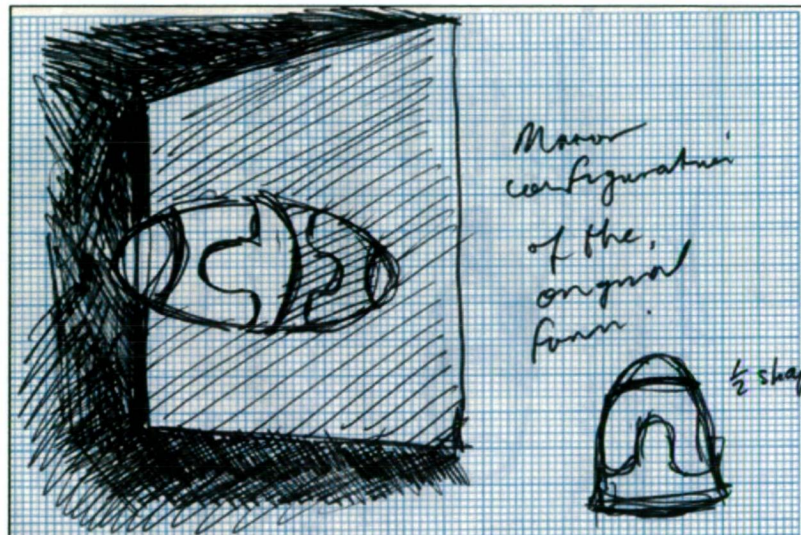
¹²⁷ See Appendix 1

Exhibiting the works: 2002

Alumni Exhibition, Ceramic Installation, 2002

Academy Gallery, School of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Tasmania

The *Alumni* group exhibition provided an opportunity to meet a key objective; to test viewer/ artwork relationships and to gauge the realisation in a gallery space. The first ideas related to the concept of mass production or a group of objects. I wanted to transform an *original* everyday benign object into an object that presented other more ambiguous connotations. Envisaging about twenty artefacts configured either in rows or scattered randomly, I commenced by making a plaster mould from a mass-produced object.¹²⁸



50: Niels Ellmoos, Working Sketch from Visual Diary, 2002

From the basic mould I poured a number of slip-cast forms, re-arranging the original form into a ‘new’ more ambiguous form. A significant part of the technical research related to the surface treatments. It was not only for aesthetic purposes but also because the application of toxic oxides had troubled me.¹²⁹ I began researching for a safer and more practical method of transforming the surface.

¹²⁸ I had seen numerous cylinder shapes and boiler forms in the landscape, with similar design characteristics to the piece I made, except for the scale - my piece being a miniaturised version. It could also be recognised as an armament or simply an unknown industrial shape. Importantly to me it had a link to the region of study.

¹²⁹ The copper carbonate being a highly toxic material required delicate handling and safety precautions using gloves and mask because of the fine dust particles.

I achieved a breakthrough with a copper based acrylic paint resulting in a transformation of the surface treatment, similar to the copper carbonate skin.¹³⁰ The paint was applied and the ceramic was returned to the kiln for a second firing, effectively fusing the paint to the surface. This was 'new knowledge' for me in my ceramic technical research.



51 and 52: Detail of surface treatments, 2002

Initially I buffed the leaden surface. The buffing action polished the surface to an extent, but only succeeded in making it slightly shinier. I then tried a range of smaller drill attachments. A bronze wire brush attachment created an amazing effect. That was the major breakthrough. It was exactly what I had been looking for. With the successful conversion of form, material and surface I evaluated a variety of configurations for the exhibition hanging.



53: Niels Ellmoos, *Imploder*, 2002

¹³⁰ See Appendix 1.

I settled on three vertical lines supporting the ceramic pieces on steel rods (five pieces threaded onto each rod). I was interested in creating sculptural tension and the implication of dysfunction. The conceptualisation was realised by creating a negative space between the downward hanging objects and the stand-alone pieces on the ground. I called the artwork *Production Line* - a reference to mass-produced industrial artefacts.



54 - 56: Niels Ellmoos, *Production Line*, 2002

My conclusion was that the work implied, on one hand the concept of mass-production and on the other, individual forms themselves invoking a variety of responses and diverse readings. The shortcoming of the project related to the exhibiting realisation mainly because of the constrictions of the exhibition space. My original aim of creating a landscape on the floor could not be realised. However, the initial technical research behind the piece proved to be incredibly significant. In the realisation of the work, I had achieved my objective of making seemingly identical industrial forms diverting the meaning and intent of the objects. The forms also demonstrated an entropic nature in their surface texture. As useless and non-functioning objects they also fitted into the manner of Duchamp's readymades whilst simultaneously subverting them. I felt that I had created a work that engaged viewers, provoking a questioning of the form and aesthetics, and 'recognition' of sorts. Somehow, the objects struck a chord in their sub-conscious and this is why I called this type of engagement *memory recognition*.

Artline – the Contemporary Portrait, *Drawing Installation*, 2002
Academy Gallery, School of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Tasmania

Artline -The Contemporary Portrait was a different proposition.

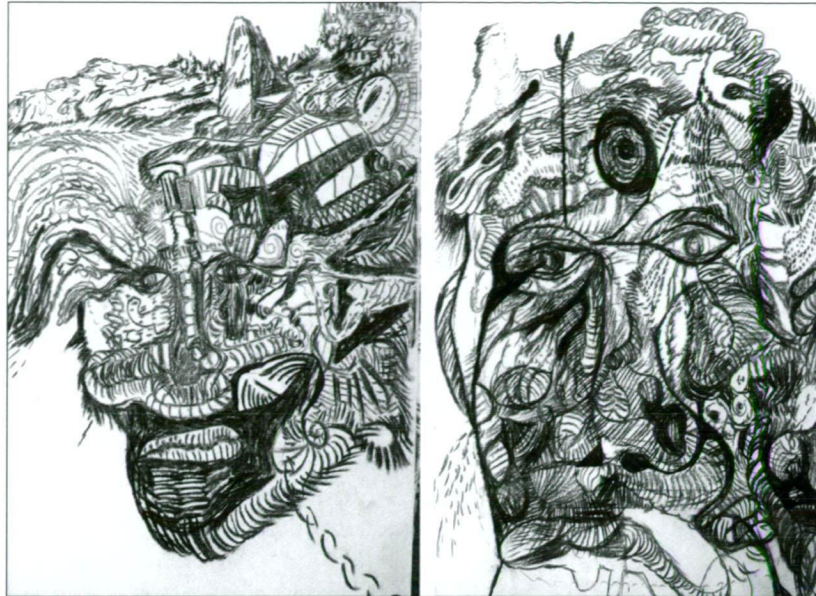
Satisfied with the progress I had achieved with the ceramic objects, I was determined to broaden the dialogue of the narrative by bringing the other part of landscape into the discourse. Nature, either in its presence or absence had always been intensely in my consciousness during my traverses of the Zeehan landscape. My spiritual response to the experience of nature had come through my drawings, not from pre-determined subject matter but rather as a sub-conscious connection to the experience.

Following the traverses I completed numerous A3 charcoal drawings. They resulted in complex landscapes and sometimes, figural compositions. All of the drawings were produced through meditation or ‘automatically’. The method of ‘automatic’ drawing as it has been termed relates to a surrealist way of working. This intuitive response was very important to me and in my mind it was essential for the representation of nature, which was a crucial element in the overall narrative.¹³¹ My objective for the *Artline* exhibition was to increase the scale of the drawings. I initially had no idea of how a ‘portrait’ concept would fit into the practical work of my research argument. Despite this, I produced a series of test drawings meditating on the idea of the figurative and in particular, heads and faces.

A range of responses resulted in dense graphic images that merged figural elements with nature and archaeological motifs. There was no actual conscious effort to direct the drawings in any way as the paper became filled with line, tone and form. The resultant smaller

¹³¹ Jason Sharp, ‘Slow on the Draw’, *ArtReview*, March, 2006, p. 85
Sharp critiques an exhibition titled *Obsessive Drawing* at the American Folk Art Museum. The works were produced by a group of self-taught artist from around the globe. One British Artist, Chris Hipkiss, showed a thirty five foot long post-apocalyptic landscape, ravaged by war. Hipkiss is of interest to me because he debunks the theory that illness or mental instability is required to produce visionary work.

studies (about 20) inspired me to begin the large-scale drawings. I cut a roll of drawing paper into 214 cm by 137 cm sheets¹³² and positioned the sheets of paper vertically (portrait).¹³³



57 (left): Niels Ellmoos, *The Surveyor*, 2002

58 (right): Niels Ellmoos, *The Archaeologist*, 2002

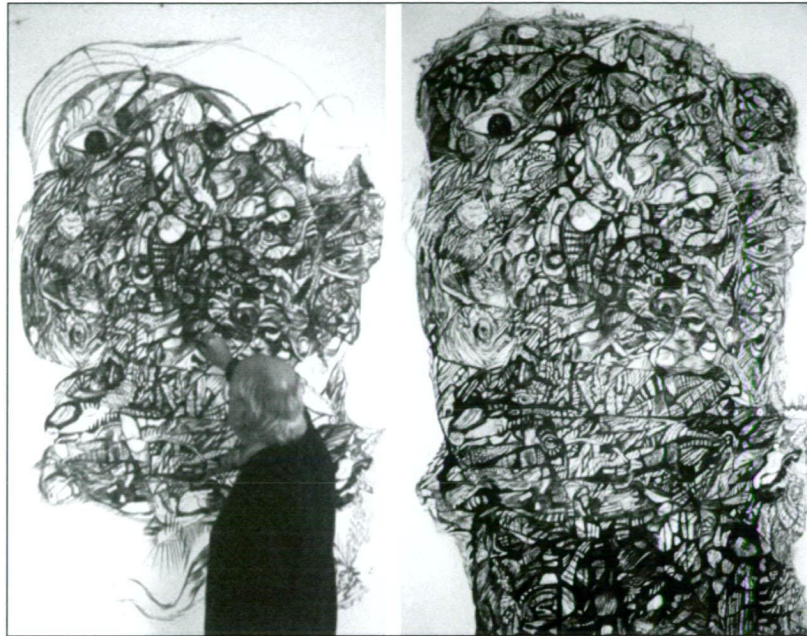
The first lines built the underlying structure of the composition. As the drawing continued the energy became more intense resulting in masses of looping and swirling strokes. The stream of consciousness flowed for several hours as the sub-conscious energy was given free reign, even though the conscious mind remained vigilant and critical until the form of the drawing evolved.

Spiral symbols often appeared and became strong points in the composition before evolving into the figurative, re-emerging as ‘eyes’. The intensity continued until the mass of lines, tone and shading, consolidated into a kind of ‘blue-print’ of a landscape or dissections of landscape contained within the shape of a human-like head. A combination of micro and macro views created distortions.

¹³² See <http://www.ellmoosartworks.com>

¹³³ I began a form of meditation (as I called it), and by facing the paper, eyes closed and arms by my sides. A feeling of a subtle energy pulsed through my arms until they slowly linked above my head in a yoga position. Following several rhythmic stretches my hand rested against the paper in no particular position and the drawing process began.

Three-dimensional perspectives alluded to the detritus swirling around mine sites or cross-sections of rock faces. Although difficult to ascertain by my conscious mind during the process, there seemed to be a negotiation between inspiration and the deliberation of skill, while at other times a more 'poetic energy' surfaced.



59 (left): Niels Ellmoos, *Drawing in progress*, 2002
60 (right): Niels Ellmoos, *The Geologist*, 2002

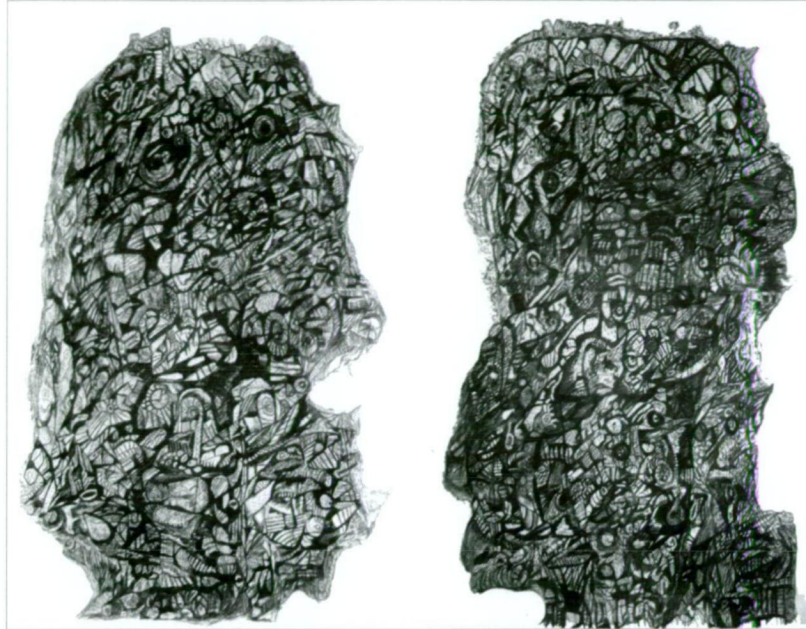
Klee has described a similar process where 'the artist's hand becomes totally an obedient instrument of a remote will' and has described all art as 'a memory of age old things, dark things, whose fragments live on in artists'.¹³⁴ Following the completion of the first drawing after several days, another two were completed in a similar manner.

Bio-morphic forms merge with images of heads overlayed by large swirls of abstraction. Twisted, tortured souls build a dramatic narrative based upon an intuitive and meditative approach to drawing... These portraits are large-scale maps of the mind, juxtaposed against an almost out of control use of the line. Ellmoos carves into the paper; taking us into another realm; his hand charts a place few dare venture.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ John Olsen, 'Part Four', *Drawn From Life*, Duffy and Snellgrove, Sydney, 1997, p. 164

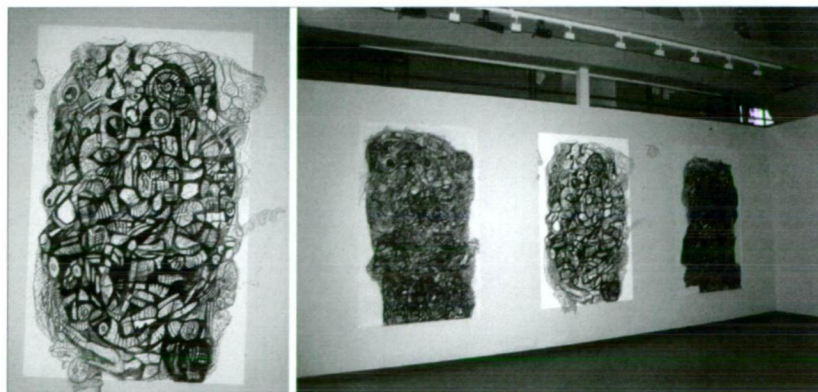
¹³⁵ Malcolm Bywaters, *Artline 2002: The Contemporary Portrait*, Academy Gallery, School of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Tasmania, 2002

For the installation of the work and the final piece of the narrative to sit within a conceptual framework, I painted a large white rectangular faux canvas directly onto the gallery wall. I worked directly onto the wall 'canvas' in a similar way to how I had worked on the paper.



61 (left): Niels Ellmoos, *The Anthropologist*, 2002
62 (right): Niels Ellmoos, *The Prospector*, 2002

The drawing process was also a performance, as students and the general public passed through the public space. Whilst at the time I wondered how I could incorporate the drawings, I subsequently developed them into one of the three mediums to use in the narrative format.



63 (left): Niels Ellmoos, *The Alchemist*, Drawn directly onto the wall, 2002
64 (right): Niels Ellmoos, Drawing Installation, 2002

I perceived through the small drawings, another way of responding to the landscape at a very personal and spiritual level, which opposed the prescriptive methodology of the mass production technique of slip casting. My initial reticence about scaling up had vanished once I had completed the first large drawing. The following drawings flowed relatively easily and by the time the entire installation was in place in the gallery, I felt comfortable that the large-scale drawings created a narrative reading of a *Nonsite*. To me, they formed an abstract mapping of site. And what better mapping than what was stored somewhere in the sub-conscious? It emphasised what I have come to call *pure creativity* - a creativity that is unencumbered by specific thought processes, creative directions or art establishment parameters.

Forensics, Ceramic Installation, 2002
State Library, Launceston, Tasmania

An exhibition in the State library in Launceston, Tasmania in December 2002 provided a place for me to test the strategy of exhibiting ceramic objects as an installation, in a 'museum' context. I was interested in investigating spaces outside a purely art context¹³⁶ and the library offered a 'formal' space of contemplation and education.¹³⁷ The setting of a library as an exhibition space reminded me of historical images I had seen of reading rooms and library /museums in the Age of Enlightenment. Archaeological artefacts and other cultural artefacts exhibited in reading rooms and studies became the forerunner of the museum, as we know it today. Known as *Wunderkammers* or 'wonder cabinets' their influence can be seen in the contemporary art of Mark Dion, an artist previously discussed.

The *Wunderkammer* are also a major influence in the work of David Wilson the creator of The Museum of Jurassic Technology, a storefront

¹³⁶ As stated earlier, the other 'museum' context was in a formal space of a science department at the University, in my Honours presentation.

¹³⁷ The library space is used to hold exhibitions either related to the library itself such as a local histories or photographic exhibitions, or from the general public as members of the local community.

‘museum’ in Los Angeles.¹³⁸ Stocked with eclectic collections and artefacts merging fact with imagination, the museum presents ‘a period snapshot of the idiosyncratic, often plainly irrational but always fiercely propounded ideas that swirl in the wake of widely disseminated “official” scientific findings’.¹³⁹

Visitors are challenged to reconsider the issue of the veracity of public museums. The musty, dim rooms reveal arcane exhibits and interpretations such as African stink ants that inhale spores and emit a screaming sound audible to the human ear, South African bats known as ‘piercing devils’ that pass through solid objects, an almond stone with a carved miniature landscape scene or mice on slices of toast that purport to being a cure for bed wetting. The bewilderment between fact and fiction all contribute to Wilson believing confusion acts ‘as a vehicle to open peoples minds’... and that ‘once the hard shell of certainty is shattered, people are more open to broader influences’.¹⁴⁰

My own intention in mimicking the museum was to facilitate a separation between meaning, origin, time and material, surrounded by the books as permanent fixtures that added a kind of authenticity. This related to Dion’s work in art gallery spaces where he re-interpreted such places as room and storage environments of archaeological departments.¹⁴¹ Employing a similar museum strategy as a departure point, I set up objects that posed as archaeological artefacts to be

¹³⁸ David Wilson, *Museum of Jurassic Technology*, <http://www.mjt.org> visited January 19, 2007

¹³⁹ Michael Wilson, ‘No one may ever have the same knowledge Again; Christine Burgin Gallery, *Artforum*, Jan, 2004, in, http://www.findarticles.com/articles/mi_m0268/is_5_42/ai_112735021 visited January 19, 2007

¹⁴⁰ David Wilson cited in Lawrence Weschler, *Sound Portraits*, in, http://www.soundportraits.org/on-air/museum_of_jurassic_technology/transcript.php3 visited, January 19, 2007

¹⁴¹ Corrin, op. cit., in *Mark Dion*, pp. 79- 81

Dion used conventional museums to re-present several of his concepts. He presented unorthodox taxonomies forcing curators and registrars to relinquish their usual working methods, at times reconstructing history from a display of incongruous curios with little thought of proper organization, to a sequential time line and relevance.

interpreted as factual ‘documents’¹⁴² displayed in a legitimate library space.



65 - 68: Niels Ellmoos, *Forensics*, Launceston Library, 2002

A final strategy was to label each piece of work to set up a fictitious ‘validation’ of the authenticity of the object as an industrial artefact. The titles were gleaned from an engineering dictionary often chosen at random or for the appeal of the terminology and the suitability of the artefact to the title. I felt that the strategy of false names fitted into a dada tradition.



69: Niels Ellmoos, *Miner's Dip Needle*, 2002

¹⁴² My intention was that the artefacts had an authenticity as industrial relics, complemented by several interpretation panels alluding to their scientific origin and philosophy.

Works-in-Process, Mixed Media Installation, 2002

Academy Gallery, School of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Tasmania, 2002

Following *Forensics*, my research into the development of a wider vocabulary between the two and three-dimensional works began. For *Works-in-Process* I assembled a range of two-dimensional media consisting of drawings and paintings as well as ceramic sculptural works that explored an extension of the narrative relating to cultural landscape.

I was investigating the intersection between the different mediums. I had felt overly constricted by a sculptural rationale with the ceramics and wanted to broaden my scope by presenting a more eclectic reading of an altered landscape. The aim was to create a conceptual dialogue between the sculptural elements themselves, extending to the drawings. I was interested in Tony Cragg's installations and began thinking in terms of grouping the sculptural pieces in a 'Cragg-like vocabulary'.¹⁴³

The floor setting worked well but I was concerned for the fragility of the ceramics resting on cement in a public thoroughfare. In the final realisation I used plinths to highlight the sculptural pieces. A vocabulary was achieved by the placement of the plinths with their whiteness framing the pieces in an unexpected way. I was able to see how the seemingly disparate elements played off each other for the first time as the drawings created an abstract mapping of landscape in the background. The drawings provided an unexpected and effective counterpoint to the perceived minimalism of the sculpture.

The implied entropy in *Works in Process* related to the juxtaposition of the elements and the individual readings they elicited. Seen as a whole, there was a semblance of order.

¹⁴³ Celant, op. cit., in *Tony Cragg*, p.142

Cragg places eclectic objects made from a variety of materials in 'conversation' with each other, setting up discourses within the gallery space. This is a common element of his work. He has stated that... 'I want objects to stand just like they should be there, like they have actually earned their place'.



70: Niels Ellmoos, *Works-in-Process*, Academy Gallery, 2002

However, once the senses tried to focus on the individual works a disorder took over. For example, different heights and sizes of plinths and grouped objects versus single objects deliberately set up false hierarchies. In 1971 art theorist Rudolf Arnheim argued that visual arts presented two stylistic trends. Arnheim contended that minimalist artists of that time manifested their works in displays of extreme simplicity while the other tendency, relied on accidental or deliberately produced disorder. He stated:

...in modern painting...we note the more or less controlled splashes and sprays of paint, in sculpture a reliance on chance textures, tears or twists of various materials, and found objects.¹⁴⁴

Dated as this argument is now, I would argue that the notion of disorder is probably more prominent in contemporary art practice.¹⁴⁵ It is my contention that the disorder has also become part of the exhibition

¹⁴⁴ Rudolph Arnheim, *Entropy and Art: an essay on Disorder and Order*, in Prof. Dan Bucsescu, University of California Press <http://www.acnet.pratt.edu/~arch543p> visited March 20, 2006

¹⁴⁵ Sharp, op. cit., pp. 82-83

Sharp discusses the fact that many educated artists pay homage to Naïve and outsider art by attempting 'to mimic its crude look and spirit', often working in a range of mediums, from painting and sculpture to installation, sound, film, video, and internet art.

process, an endorsement of chaos and conversely, a conventional way of exhibiting.

The dialogue between the works questioned time (in their respective surfaces), perceived functions and their relationship with each other. These characteristics of time and entropy were often part of the landscape of mine sites as discarded machinery was either placed randomly or systematically in stacks. A similar questioning took place in my mind when observing scenes of the detritus around the sites: what was it doing there? Was it obsolete? What was its function? On the wall behind the artefacts, a series of expressionistic black and white drawings presented another dialogue. The grid of images expressed the micro and macro views of the interaction between nature, altered landscape and humanity. The artefacts on the plinths looked as though they could have been sucked out off the drawings and the drawings in turn mapped another consciousness. Together they created an entropic landscape of disjuncture and disorder.

In some respect *Works-in-Process* was a fitting conclusion to the previous year's work of thinking, observing, absorbing, sensing and finally, making. The different approaches to art making between the prescriptive and the intuitive resulted in unexpected and diverse works. The overall installation became a dialogue between the inside and the outside, and was a metaphor of the passage between conscious and unconscious: a metaphor of the entropic landscape itself.

The experimental phase

Other mediums and scale

I consider that the experimental phase took place in 2003, following the *Works-in-Process* survey exhibition. This phase consisted of working in new materials in the form of mixed media and paintings that were subsequently shown in several exhibitions. I discuss the research work in context of the exhibitions, *Red Dirt – August Fog* and *Beneath the Surface*. I was also involved in other exhibitions in this year. Mid way through 2003, I was awarded an upgrade from MFA to PhD. This year however turned out to be an unstable year in the process of my research culminating in a transfer from Launceston to Hobart in December 2003.

Exhibiting the works: 2003

Red Dirt- August Fog, Sculpture/Mixed Media, 2003

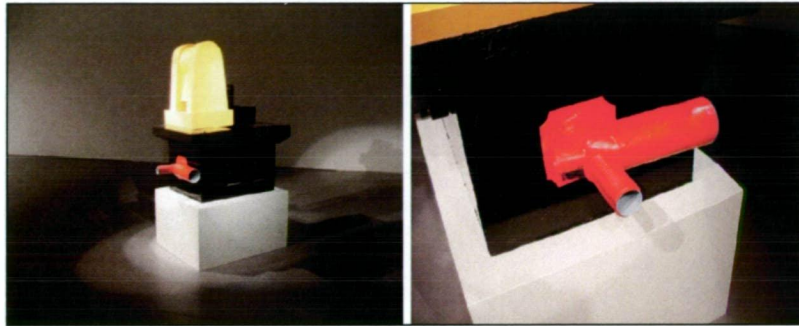
Academy Gallery, School of Visual and Performing Arts, University of Tasmania

The work I made for *Red Dirt – August Fog* was a sculptural piece. The theme of the exhibition was based on a poem about the Tamar Valley in Northern Tasmania. I referenced the industrial heritage of the region and based my initial research on the machinery housed in the 'Blacksmith's Workshop' at the Inveresk Railway yards and museum.¹⁴⁶ I considered that although the theme was not directly related to my research it was useful for testing new materials and a scaling-up of dimensions, which I had wanted to achieve. The workshop machinery became the focus of my research and I made rough sketches of forms that appealed to me.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ The Inveresk Railway Workshop site related to the West Coast of Tasmania because of the connection between the manufacture of rolling stock and locomotives and tracks for the west coast rail system.

¹⁴⁷ The Blacksmith's Workshop had been left intact, following its closure. Machines of all shapes, sizes and designs stood ready, waiting for their human operator. Metal shavings and grease remained where it had fallen. The only intervention from the outside world was a constructed sound-scape designed to heighten the atmosphere.

I decided to make a life-size sculpture based on an example of one of the pieces of workshop machinery. Scaling up was a challenging and thought-provoking experience. Within the metaphorical framework of the re-interpretation of the entropic landscape I was keen to incorporate contrasts in scale of objects, similar to objects I had seen in my traverses of the Zeehan landscape. Perspective and distance played an important part in my conceptualisation.



71 (left): Niels Ellmoos, *Memory Recognition-Industrial Arcadia*, 2003

72 (right): Niels Ellmoos, Detail of *Memory Recognition-Industrial Arcadia*, 2003

The choice of medium to execute the sculptural artwork was the next consideration. After some failed experiments with cardboard, I decided to use foam-core. I also combined other materials such as electrician's plastic reels to shape the form. I began by constructing a box-like shape and adding the modifications, gradually building up the form. The minimalist appearance of the machine aesthetic was the main consideration in the construction: wanting to evoke a sense of the problematic relationship between human and machine, which as Broeckmann has suggested, can be:

...to understand machines in a more conceptual sense as an assemblage of heterogeneous parts, aggregations which transform forces, articulate and propel their elements, and force them into a continuous state of transformation and becoming.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁸ Andreas Broeckmann, *Machine Aesthetics –a conversation*, in, <http://amsterdam.nettime.org/Lists-Archives/nettime-1-9701/msg00069.html> visited, April 24, 2005

The idea of restoring old machinery for no other purpose than for an aesthetic display (such as the machines in the Blacksmith's Workshop demonstrated), I decided to paint the sculpture in high-gloss paint to highlight transformation and re-composition. In this way contrasting primary colours emphasised the heterogeneous parts of the machine that made up the whole.

The construction of the piece was a revelation. I found that my intuition, both in conception and the making, played a major role in the formulation of the aesthetic and the actual structural characteristics. My confidence grew with each stage of the construction and the fact it was made from non-permanent materials provided a continuum to the mythical nature of my previous works. I felt, as Tony Cragg had expressed, 'it was an object, which stood just like it should be there, like it had actually earned its place.'¹⁴⁹ I called the work *Memory Recognition: Industrial Arcadia*, in reference to industrial artefacts that remained in a natural environment. Within a gallery space and dramatically lit, the object emanated absence.

Following the making of *Memory Recognition: Industrial Arcadia* in 2003, I travelled to the West Coast again. However, that traverse was very different to the previous ones. I had arranged an underground trip in a goldmine, which was situated in pristine rainforest about twenty kilometers from Zeehan. The drive down the decline into the mine was in a four-wheel drive. Being underground was a stimulating and completely new experience for me. I had videotaped the entire journey as a record of the event to capture the visual responses to another 'first sighting' of site and to use it as a mental trigger for later work.

The recent trip underground had inspired me to produce a new series of works and I was still investigating how I could extend the narrative. Over a period of several months I completed a body of work based on

¹⁴⁹ Celant, op. cit., *Tony Cragg*, p.142

Cragg has described his sculpture as only working if its form is right and that it is understood that they (the sculptures) are there and they have a particular visual quality.

my recent underground trip. Testing traditional methods and techniques in a range of mediums, my aim at that time was to experiment with the narrative to complement the sculptural and drawing components.

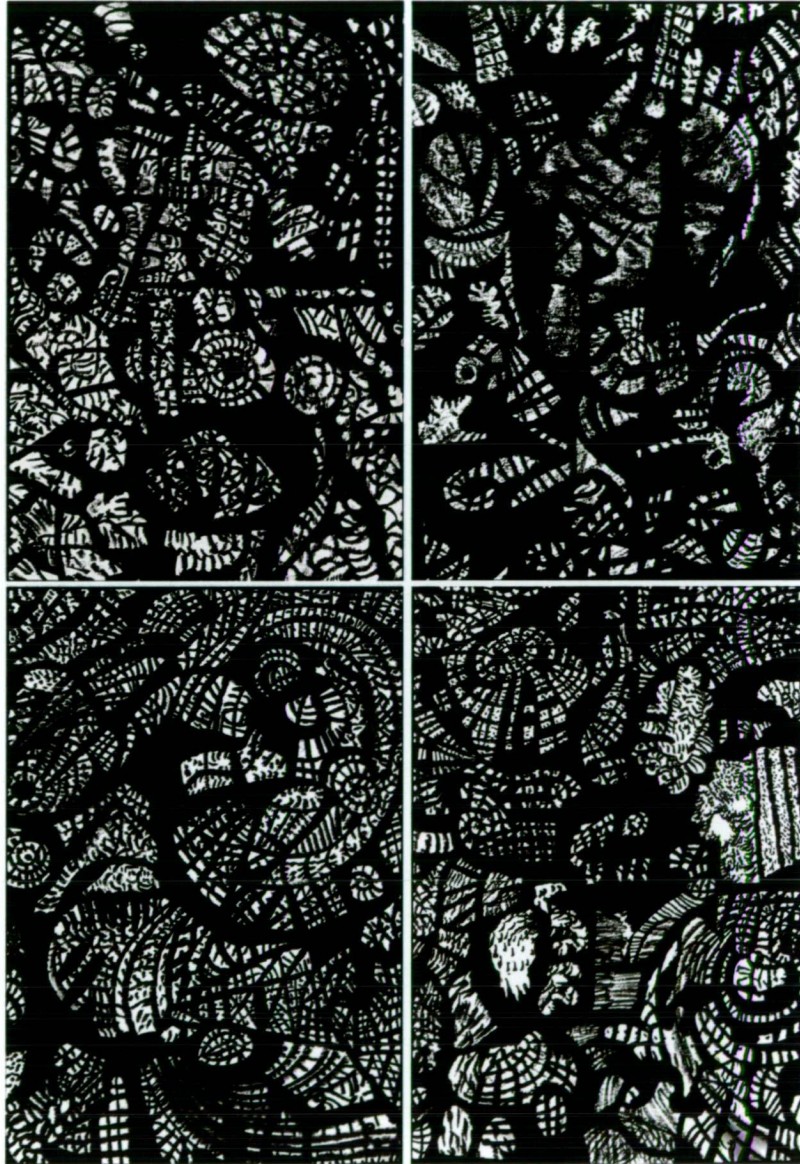


73: Niels Ellmoos, *Beneath the Surface*, 2003

Following a ‘try-out’ of a smaller selection of works in Poimena Gallery in Launceston, I held a larger exhibition in the Burnie Regional Gallery. The mainly two-dimensional works consisting of acrylic, watercolour paintings, pastel and charcoal drawings created a vocabulary, which related to my experiences in the Zeehan landscape. The exhibition was designed so that viewers were able to ‘read’ the landscapes like a ‘story-board’ of a film.

Although, the paintings and drawings did not highlight the visual narrative to the extent that I wanted, the experience provided an impetus to follow other paths of research. Because of my extensive previous commercial experiences in film and video production I was interested in re-examining the video medium in the context of contemporary art.

Inspired by images from Eugènia Balcells' installation, *Exposure Time*¹⁵⁰ and installations by Joan Jonas, I began producing preliminary working sketches of more expansive visual narratives incorporating video imagery. I believed that the sculpture and drawing would be enhanced by the incorporation of the moving image, effectively introducing a form of documentary into the installation.



74 - 77: Niels Ellmoos, *Essence of the Land 1-4*, 2003

¹⁵⁰ John, G. Hanhardt, *Fragments de Memorial-Exposure Time*, Eugenia Balcells, Whitney Museum of Modern Art, 1983, p. 3

Balcells collected an assortment of discarded everyday architectural artefacts from the seashore (from demolished buildings making way for re-development of the Barcelona Olympic Village) and placed them in a diorama of an illuminated space. Moving images and sound of the demolition formed part of the installation.

The Consolidation Phase

The Introduction of Video into the Grand Narrative

I wanted to incorporate the video component into my work because I felt that it was a way of taking an abstracted version of the 'site' and repositioning it into an art space; an extension of Smithson's ideas of *Nonsite*, in essence, an abstract *window* viewing of the site. I was also interested in the psychology of large-scale moving images and sound in an art gallery compared to viewing them in a conventional cinema. Electronic imagery is a step away in our consciousness. It is an ephemeral spirit, created by science but can be engaged with as a human experience. As the theme of cultural landscape and the implied involvement of humans in the alteration of landscape was a key focus of my research, I was able to introduce a human element into the work.

Media theorist Valentina Valentini argues that the human figure, as an integral part of cultural landscape at the beginning of the twentieth century, had been displaced or marginalised in painting, eventually to be inherited and transformed by photography and film. Valentina questions the space of the human figure in the electronic landscape contending that... 'in the context of postmodernism and appropriationism, the human figure must be placed in a meaningful context questioning what characteristics his/her relationship has to the environment, or to one's self and others'.¹⁵¹ The visible human figure had been insignificant in my work up to this point and I felt it was a fundamental omission in any comment on cultural landscape.

I spent several weeks viewing video footage from all my previous traverses, before settling on several key sequences from the underground experience. Rather than displaying edited sequence of cuts to make up the narrative of the film, I was interested in single

¹⁵¹ Valentina Valentini, translated from the original Italian by Thomas Rankin, 'The Human Being in the Electronic Landscape', *The Butterfly Effect* in, www.c3.hu/scca/butterfly/Valentini/synopsis.html visited, September 11, 2005

concepts, so that particular sequences could be shown simultaneously on a number of projectors. Primarily this was referencing a *structuralist or minimal* method of filmmaking. The genre of Structural film was prominent in the late 1960s and 1970s as a trajectory of conceptualism. In the late 1960s film critic P. Adams Sitney used the term to describe a number of avant-garde films. Generally, it described a single concept or a form that was so simple the viewer did not have to spend a lot of energy understanding their place within the work. An example is Andy Warhol's, *Empire State Building* where the camera focussed on the spire of the Empire State Building and did not move. There was no editing except the joining of film reels. The original screened for twelve hours.¹⁵²

The software Final Cut Pro (FCP) allowed me to edit and transfer to DVD for projection. I wasn't familiar with the software so first of all I had to learn how to use it. Fortunately, because it was designed as a film media post production tool, I was familiar with both the terms and program desktop structure. The software was designed as a *virtual* film post-production facility allowing sequences and scenes to be stored as if they were physical pieces of film. Bins represented physical *trim bins* in a film editing suite and the ability to cut and paste electronically replicated the use of film splicers.

My intention with the video clips was to present the notion of documentary, while blurring the boundaries between other modes of filmmaking. For instance, slow speed is generally used for sporting replays, while tinting is used in feature films and commercials. By using these techniques I was able to alter the perceived realism of the images and to question meanings of the documentary genre.

¹⁵² Unknown author, 'Structural Films: Meditation through Simple Forms', in <http://www.waysofseeing.org/struct.html> and Peter Gidal in 'Theory and Definition of Structural/Materialist Film', in, http://www.luxonline.org.uk?reviews/theory_and_definition.html visited, 18 June, 2006.

Video conceptions



78: Niels Ellmoos, *Cathedral*, 2004

The first scene of the video that I had recorded on my trip underground was the entry into the decline of the Henty Mine. All vestiges of a familiar landscape ceased to exist once we passed from the surface to the underground. In some ways it was similar to entering a primitive road or train tunnel but I knew this one had no exit at the other end. It continued eight hundred metres down into the underworld. Real or imagined, I found it difficult to breathe.

After viewing the ‘rushes’ or raw camera footage of the video, I realised there was only a very short sequence I wanted to use to capture the effect of entering the tunnel and the feeling of going from the known to the unknown. The shape of the tunnel’s roof looked like the space of a ‘cathedral’ so I decided to retain an ethereal quality to the sequence. A facility in the menu of video filters of the software FCP provided a speed alteration capability. I used the speed facility to slow down the forward speed of the vehicle because I wanted the sequence to have a mesmerising effect and a sense of never reaching the end of the tunnel. To achieve that effect I had to repeat the short sequence numerous times.

The other interesting aspect of the journey down the tunnel was the radio communication between workers and the radio control operator. I decided to begin *Cathedral* with relative silence and slowly fade the radio babble in and out like a sine wave.



79: Niels Ellmoos, *The Conversation*, 2004

I had videoed another sequence as I walked in several inches of water in the underground tunnel. A miner was ahead of me and I held a point-of-view shot on him as he walked alongside the monstrous machine. Our headlamps directed dancing pools of light in front of us. Water was cascading from the cavern ceiling. The noise was verging on being overwhelming. My experience told me to keep recording. I felt the thrill of the moment as I had so many times before in unknown situations when the unexpected happens and I have caught it on film because I followed my instincts.

As I viewed the rushes for this particular piece of footage my intention for the edited version was to portray the sequence of the two men greeting each other, simultaneously as an intimate and yet detached interaction. The alien environment had transformed a common social

activity into a strange dysfunctional action.¹⁵³ I decided to capitalise on this factor by considerably slowing down the movements. Their body language was an important feature that I wanted to highlight. By slowing the speed to ten percent, the movement became a surreal ritualistic dance. My intention was to produce an enticing image that had its own language, which emphasised the physical occupation of a place and the intervention of the environment.

One of the other peculiar things that struck me on the underground trip was the lighting. In a totally hazardous environment, coloured light underground plays a significant part in the survival of human beings.¹⁵⁴ With that in mind I chose to tint *The Conversation* using the filters in FCP. Electronic colouring is a simple process unlike the meticulous colour and tone matching in painting. Using the video filters I desaturated the image sequence and then applied a yellow/green cast as a direct reference to the green light of the underground refuge chambers.

In another part of the tunnel I videoed a load hauler extracting ore as it burrowed through piles of rock and rubble. The operator was facing forward and silhouetted in the strong backlight of the cavern's floodlights. Emphasised by the dramatic lighting there was a sense of the figure moving strangely in the deep black space as the machine merged with the background of the walls. Rocks and dirt tumbled from the hauler's tray. As I filmed the operator turned towards my direction, his headlamp glowing eerily into the camera lens. It appeared to me that the motion of the hauler going in and out never seemed to achieve anything, other than a useless repetition of either removing or replacing rocks in a never ending cycle.

¹⁵³ The difficulty in communicating because of the excessive noise and the use of earplugs or earmuffs demanded an intimate way of communicating. The result was placing mouths close to ears in order to hear one another. As an observer from a distance I had no inkling of their conversation so in a way it was an abstract conversation.

¹⁵⁴ In an emergency, a refuge bay offered a safe place containing specialised breathing equipment and other emergency supplies until help and assistance arrived. A particular green light showed the location of refuge chambers periodically along the tunnels.



80: Niels Ellmoos, *Truck 70*, 2004

As a result my objective for *Truck 70* was to emphasise the monotonous cyclical practice of the mining industry.¹⁵⁵ The sequence had a surreal quality to it and I wanted to highlight this. Firstly I desaturated the image and slowed it down as I had in the previous sequences.

There seemed to be something missing so I began experimenting with other filters. I achieved the surreal quality that I wanted with a solarising filter, which created a strange rim light around the edges of the machine and the man's hard-hat. The high contrast of the sequence produced a dream-like image of the merging elements of human, landscape and machine.

Another sequence I had recorded underground was of a long tracking shot along the length of a broken down machine ending on two miners attempting to repair it. The men were standing in ankle-deep water. The machine was a 'rock bolter', a crucial piece of equipment that literally bolted the rocks with a wire mesh, to hold back nature by preventing the ceiling of the tunnel from collapsing on them. They

¹⁵⁵ In particular, this relates to gold mining where an enormous amount of effort and industry is required to extract grains of gold dust.

worked with a genuine camaraderie and were almost oblivious to the presence of a stranger with a camera in their 'world'.



81: Niels Ellmoos, *Downtime*, 2004

By slowing the action until the figures were barely moving, the images reminded me of the first images I had seen of humans walking on the moon. I used the solarising filter and high contrast to maximise the effect. The solarising filter produced a negative effect and the sound, slowed down, emitted sonar-like sounds. *Downtime* became a slow unveiling of the strange machine merging and re-emerging from the blackness.

For *Driller*, I videoed an enormous 'machine arm' relentlessly moving, backwards and forwards across the rock walls searching for a spot to drill. As the drill retracted, water poured from the hole. It was a repetitive, timeless action that invited a questioning of the monotonous nature of the work, day in and day out, in an alien environment. As I moved to the other side of the machine I saw a perfect silhouette of a human operator at the controls. With this edited sequence I wanted to again emphasise the repetitive nature of the work in underground mining. I decided to slow down the image to fifty percent and desaturated the colour to black and white.



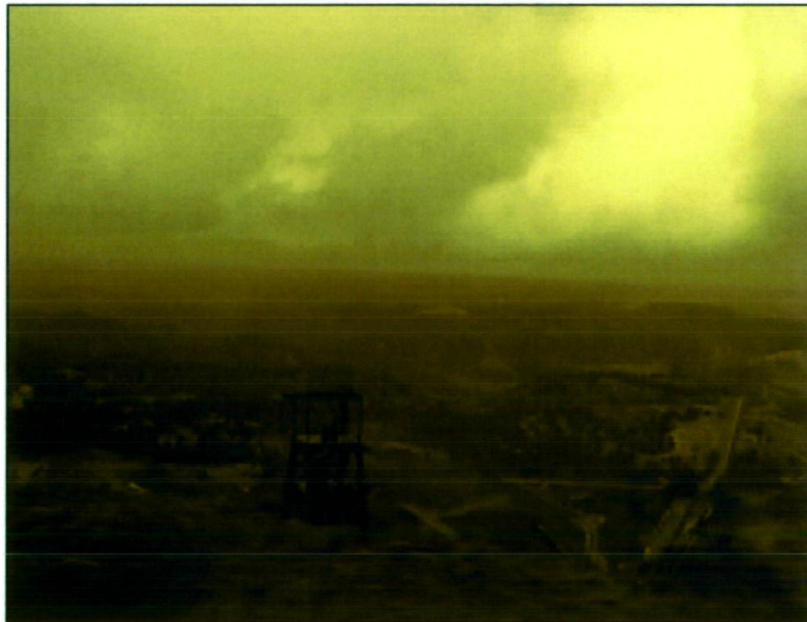
82: Niels Ellmoos, *Driller*, 2004

The black and white image alluded to workplace training films I'd observed in the past. By increasing the gamma function, a graphic contrasting effect was achieved. The human element was important in order to emphasise the scale of the machine in context with the operator. The monotonous and invasive sound was contradictory to the normal instructional narration used in typical training documentary film. As a looped sequence I felt that it would be a successful sound projection in an installation.

I had videoed another sequence through the car window as we were driving up to the old North Mt Lyell open-cut mine.¹⁵⁶ A vista of the industrial sublime opened out in the viewfinder. A poppet head of the mine below came into view and I tried to hold the camera steady on it while keeping it in the middle of the frame. Rather than film the scene passing by the window, I instinctively twisted back as the car was moving forward. At the time it was a spontaneous reaction, a habitual response from years of looking through viewfinders and knowing what was a good shot. I was intuitively responding to the spatial characteristics of distance, close-up and deep perspective.

¹⁵⁶ I had travelled to the west coast in January 2004 with a group of students and lecturers from the Hobart Centre for the Arts.

In the editing process I chose a very short sequence of the poppet head. I slowed the speed of the video to ten percent of the original speed, producing an almost hypnotic effect. By repeating (looping) the sequence there was a sense of an upward movement but because the poppet head did not move, there was an illusion of the landscape moving past the camera frame, rather than the car moving past the landscape.¹⁵⁷ As I repeatedly watched this sequence I felt a strong awareness that the sublime quality of the distant valley and mountains were similar to Turner's sublime landscape paintings. I anticipated that *Mule* when blown up to a larger scale would look like a large painting. I experimented with a number of colour tints after desaturating the image and settled on a yellow 'sulphurous' colour.¹⁵⁸



83: Niels Ellmoos, *Mule*, 2004

My aim in the video work was to blur the boundaries between the real and the imagined, creating ambiguous images and echoes of the past. With this in mind I decided to incorporate the element of time-based media to expand the installation format.

¹⁵⁷ The effect was that the foreground edge of the road gave the illusion of a band of rocks passing through the viewfinder similar to a conveyer belt effectively providing depth to the image from a close-up to a medium and a long distance shot.

¹⁵⁸ There was something ominous about the colour, perhaps a psychological trigger from other sources such as the 'sulphurous' colour of the smelter fumes described by Blainey in '*Peaks Of Lyell*', where men had become lost in the dense fog of sulphur.

Exhibiting the works: 2004

Drawing Conclusions, *Installation*, 2004

Sidespace Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania

My motivation to present an installation, consisting of video, drawing and sculptural elements, stemmed from the fact that I was able to test the intersection of time-based media for the first time. The Sidespace Gallery was situated in a heritage building in Hobart. It consisted of one open space with several upright columns and windows along one side. In setting up the installation, the windows were covered with black plastic to darken the gallery as much as possible. The single room of the gallery was divided into several sections by hanging hydroponics plastic down the centre, between the upright columns to create a kind of tunnel vision so that the projected images could be screened in the centre of the back wall.



84: Niels Ellmoos, *Drawing Conclusions*, 2004

The video concepts of *Cathedral*, *The Conversation*, *Driller*, *Downtime*, *Mule*, and *Truck 70* screened consecutively as an overall loop. A group of my sculptural ceramic artefacts were placed on the floor in front of the screen so that the changing light reflections from the images on the projection played across the surfaces of the sculptures. Without direct light, the ceramic artefacts merged into the darkness as the screen images darkened or re-emerged as the screen images lightened. I was inviting the viewer to engage firstly with the screen image and then to become aware of the objects on the floor.

The other major component in the exhibition was a diptych of new charcoal drawings, which I executed in 2004. These large-scale drawings anchored the installation. Butted together, the drawings formed a 214 x 244 cm mass that approximated the screen size of the video projection. At first glance the drawings appeared chaotic and collage-like. However after viewing for a time, they verged on being meditative: similar to an archaeological rubbish tip, carved into the paper and rubbed back.



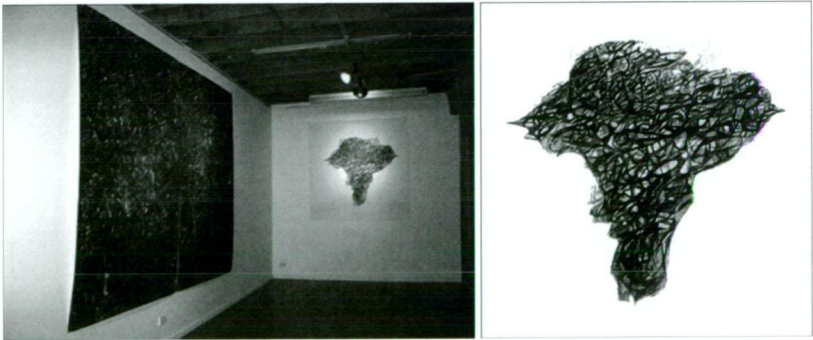
85: Niels Ellmoos, *Mythological Minescape*, 2004

Closer examination of the detail in the drawings revealed machine-like parts and other more classically inspired fragments in an overall pattern. There was no horizon line in these studies, so it was like looking at a vast rubbish dump of culture from a bird's eye view. The overall compositions complemented the projected images and at times, machine shapes in the drawings replicated shapes and forms in the images of the video. I titled the diptych *Mythological Minescape*.

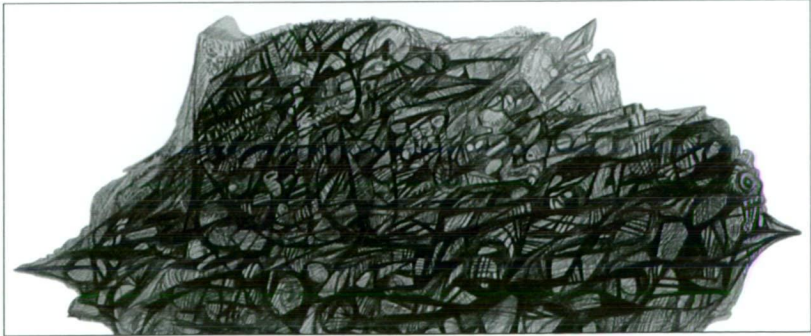


86: Niels Ellmoos, Detail of *Mythological Minescape*, 2004

Another drawing produced in 2004, placed on an adjacent wall to the large drawings was sparser, resembling a bird's head in an outline filled-in with archaeological and fragmented forms. I called this work, '*Specimen*'.

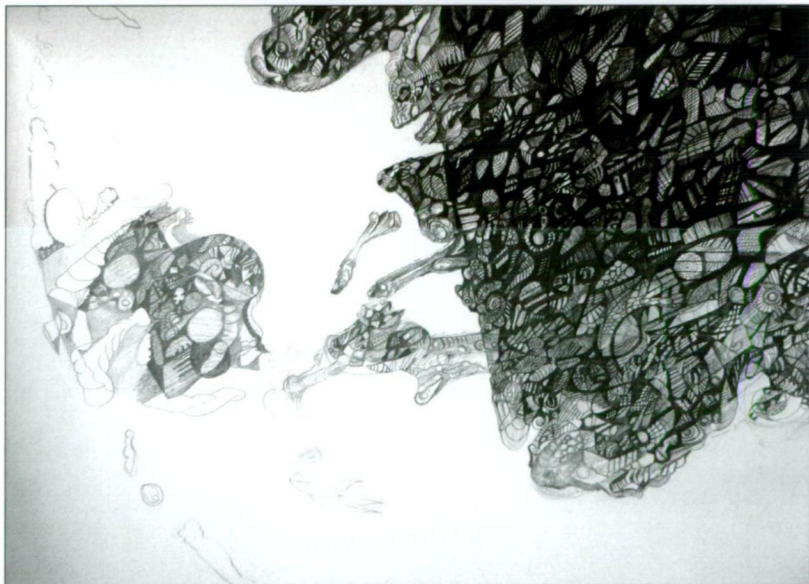


87 and 88: Niels Ellmoos, *Specimen*, 2004



89: Niels Ellmoos, Detail of *Specimen*, 2004

The final drawing, 182 x122cm, resembled a combination of a mythical animal, and a map of continents.



90 and 91: Niels Ellmoos, *Map of the Lost World* and Detail, 2004

The lyrical composition alluded to an archaeological dig with artefacts and bones. I called it *Map of the Lost World*. In the gallery space it

was placed in a 'tunnel' parallel to the projection and lit by ambient spill light. A torch and magnifying glass were placed alongside of it, so that viewers could examine the detail.

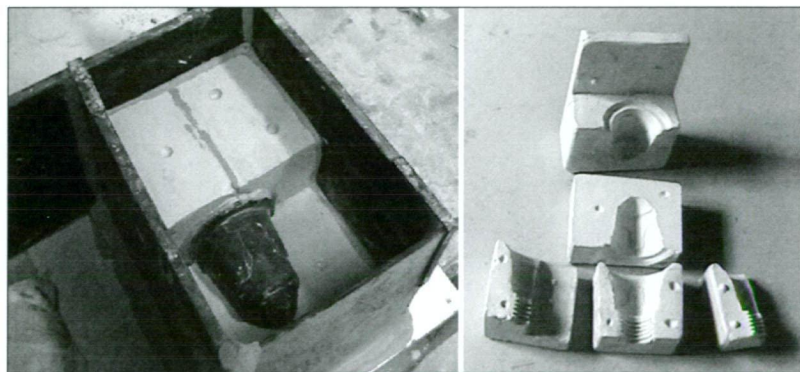
In general, the intersection of the mediums was the main test and proved to be successful because the various elements created bridges of dialogue between each other. Viewers tended to be attracted to the moving images initially and as they became engaged, their attention was drawn to the mysterious ceramic artefacts on the floor lit by the screen reflected light flickering across their surfaces. The projections while having shortcomings because of the ambient spill light on the screen, at times diffusing the image, proved to me that the large-scale screen images were necessary to carry a more expansive narrative.

The concept of screening successive sequences from one projector rather than several projectors was another limitation I had to address.

The Refinement Phase

Refining the Collage Machine

I began 2005 with the aim of refining my concepts and making new sculptural forms and also developing new time-based components for the final installation. Although I anticipated using some of the earlier sculptures in the final presentation, I decided it would be an advantage to include a number of new sculptural pieces. One of the problems was that the earlier forms were fragile and some had already been lost through breakage and cracking caused in transportation. New sculptures required new moulds to be produced, which entailed conceptualising the finished forms and searching for the models from my 'archive' of common and not so common objects. As I envisaged more complex shapes, research centred on the mould-making process.



92 and 93: Five piece mould - production process and completed, 2005

One of the challenges was to simplify the process of making the original bell-shaped design used in *Cluster* and *Production Line*. The process entailed making a mould of the entire piece so I would not have to continue joining the two halves together. The first step to achieve a solution was to produce a wax positive. In overcoming the joining problem there had to be a pouring hole, which meant the form itself had to be adapted. To achieve this I added a screw thread form on the bottom that effectively provided part of a new design and a functioning pouring hole. Because of the complexity of the shape a five-piece mould had to be produced. Over the period of research the mould

making process was one of the main parts of the technical research undertaken and was an intense learning curve through trial and error.

I decided to develop another formula for the clay slip to alleviate the breakage and cracking problems I had encountered with the stoneware slip, previously used. I experimented with a number of formulas before settling on the addition of an insulation-wool product, which provided an effective binding agent to give the slip extra strength and durability. Following experimentation with pouring, drying and firing to bisque temperatures, I began the process of limited mass production.



94: Niels Ellmoos, *Imploder – New Form*, 2005

Further research on surface treatments was carried out on the new batch of forms in order to achieve variations in texture and colour. My aim was to make the new sculptures appear to be in an entropic state while, maintaining a ‘human imprint’ of the manual labour that had created them. I achieved this by applying special effects iron paint and an acid based additive that transformed the paint to a rust finish.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ The iron paint was a Haymes Paint formulated by Jennifer Bennell and designed for special effects in paint finishes for domestic use.

Randomly applied patches of rusted surface were enhanced by an alternative surface made by a mixture of sand and acrylic paint. Encouraged by the effect of the new surfaces and the success of the five-piece mould, I began sourcing more complex shapes and designs to use as masters for other new pieces. For the first time I used actual machine shapes from wooden engineering patterns.

Owing to the complexity of the masters and my lack of experience of making moulds for that particular design it took me several attempts before successfully completing the finished moulds. Once I began to use these new moulds in the process of slip casting, the removal of the clay forms became problematic. The reason for this was that the complexity of the original designs had resulted in many cavities and 'nooks and crannies' in the mould. Periodically there was a weakness in the structure of the clay body resulting in a collapse of the form. One such design was a 'flywheel' shape that was especially difficult to remove without some kind of damage to the complicated design. This resulted in a high loss ratio for the number of slip-casts produced.

When I produced a number of successful casts, I began the process of adaptation and amalgamation of different parts to construct hybrid machines. I worked intuitively, responding to the aesthetic and the dynamics of the new forms as they developed. The use of the fibre-mixed clay slip allowed a much more liberal method of construction and also provided stability and strength. I used a mixture of the liquid slip to join the component pieces. I then fired the new forms to a bisque state in the kiln ready for surface treatments. In the process of creating the new surface treatments I applied acrylic colours mixed with sand to create a gritty surface. This was to emphasis the entropic mechanical trompe l'oeil style that I had previously used. Although this was a time consuming and labour intensive, it avoided a second firing in the kiln and possible damage to the sculptures.



95 - 99: Niels Ellmoos, *Hybrid Machines*, 2005

Following the production of the new sculptural forms in 2005 I travelled to the Sovereign Hill gold mining theme park in Victoria to research the location as a historical site and to get a sense of a former goldfield environment. Although I was aware that the entire park was a theatrical set, I became seduced by the real sense of history. I had not realised the park's potential as a source for images to use in conjunction with my work until I discovered the Battery House, a working museum with restored steam machines from the gold mining days of Ballarat in the mid to late 1800s.¹⁶⁰

I was aware that similar machines had been operating on the West Coast of Tasmania at a similar time.¹⁶¹ Seeing these machines, I was intrigued with the fact that whilst they were still functional, they were useless because they had no other purpose other than to entertain

¹⁶⁰ J. Lennon, 'Goldfields cultural landscapes: Impact of the diggers', *Case Study of the Cultural Landscapes of the Central Victorian Goldfields*, Australia: State of the Environment Technical Paper Series (Natural and Cultural Heritage), Department of the Environment, Canberra, 1997, p. 10

The history of Victoria's goldfields could be cited as an example of the general trend of the forming of cultural landscapes from mining activities in the mid nineteenth century. Often deposits were difficult to extract and required sophisticated financial and mechanical support where deep sinking and tunnelling was required. In the mid to late 1880s in Victorian mineral fields, there were 800 steam engines driving battery stampers to crush and process ores. In Tasmania, although vastly different and smaller than the operations in Victoria, similar procedures of crushing rocks by battery stampers was a common practice.

¹⁶¹ David L. Hopkins, *How the West was Won*, West Coast Heritage Authority, Zeehan, 1991, p. 6



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¹⁶¹ David L. Hopkins, *How the West was Won*, West Coast Heritage Authority, Zeehan, 1991, p. 6

the tourism market.¹⁶² The aesthetic appeal of the working component parts was difficult to overlook and I felt that the video images I recorded would be compatible with my sculptural objects.



100 (left): Detail of steam machines, 2005

101 (right): Detail of battery stampers, 2005

Video conceptions

I began to conceive a new work in time-based media in the form of a multi-channel video installation using the images I had shot in Sovereign Hill. Recalling the 1970s video installations by Nan June Paik and Shigeko Kubota who used multiple television monitors to create large bodies of work ranging from the sculptural to the diaristic, I decided to use a number of small black and white TV monitors for the installation. I wanted the installation to speak about the machine aesthetic as being a landscape.

I had recorded images of functioning machines showing the crushing and filtering methods of minerals processing previously used in the mining industry. Controlled by steam engines operating in the Battery House at Ballarat, the machinery itself was historical and now operated simply as a *machine aesthetic* with no function other than to entertain. It was the framework of the tourist market, which kept the machines operational. While they still had a form, their function had become a myth.

¹⁶² Driven by the steam engines, the 1200 lb steel hammers of the battery stampers, pulverised alluvial ore into fine sandy gravel for extraction of gold, silver and other minerals as a first stage of freeing the precious metals.

In the video editing process, after reviewing the footage, I settled on using close-up details of moving machine components. By showing the details my intention was to create a visual language that highlighted the overall idea of a machine system made up of variable component parts. I also wanted to emphasise the simplicity of form in the machine components. In the post-production stage, again using FCP software, I edited several sequences of the battery stamp hammers, the steam engine and various other sections of the Battery House operations.



102: Niels Ellmoos, *Form and Function*, 2005

I used a structure of short cuts to emphasise the movement and dynamics of the machine components.¹⁶³ These images displayed the precision of the machines while documenting an entropic process.¹⁶⁴ For the installation I envisaged a kind of entropic machine system with form and movement. I implemented the concept by stacking six TV monitors on top of one another and split the sequences into dual

¹⁶³ I remember being seduced by the aesthetics of close-up details in machinery when I filmed technological themes for either documentary or educational film or video. Usually they were used to build up a visual story to complement narration or other forms of communication.

¹⁶⁴ When I filmed the footage the machines had only been re-started after they had been out of commission for several months due to the age of the machinery, the need for specialist parts and a dearth of skilled operators. That particular situation underlined their vulnerability and their obsolescence.

channels from three DVD players so that each sequence was repeated on two monitors creating another kind of mirroring effect. Again I was questioning the notion of documentary as fact, by using the technique of looping sequences, and the simultaneous repetition of two images.

Exhibiting the works: 2005

Object/Subject, Installation, 2005

Sidespace Gallery, Hobart, Tasmania

In mid-2005, I showed my latest work in a gallery space as an installation comprising my most recent sculpture, as well as some of my older sculptures, the new DVD multi-channel installation and one large- scale drawing. I arranged the sculptural pieces on the floor to present viewers with the proposition that there was a dialogue between all these separate pieces as remnants in a landscape. My intention was to depict the presence of absence through the disparate mediums using artistic devices and technical manipulation. To set up a 'dialogue' between the TV installation and the sculptural objects, I arranged the eighteen forms in three lines in front of the set of six monitors. The movement on the screens invited closer inspection because of the size of the monitors.



103 and 104: Niels Ellmoos, *Object/Subject*, 2005

To my mind there were two examples of entropy at play as well as questions about documentary as truth. The aesthetics and design

of the functioning machine components in the images on the monitors belonged to another era while the artefacts on the floor also implied a representation of the real and a reading of history.

There was also a dual obsolescence. The analog technology used to carry the images on the television monitors were already obsolete, replaced by digital technology. The objects were mythical artefacts and conceptually obsolete (they never had a function, so had to be obsolete). A collision between myth and reality was further extended by sound from the small speakers on the monitors providing a strange ambience to the space as the looped sequences repeated the consistent chugging rhythmic steam machine sounds. Opposed to the moving images was a more dominant still image, a large charcoal drawing stretching 600cm along an adjacent wall. The peripheral vision was explored in the densely configured composition of an entropic landscape. In the context of the installation it acted as a foil to the small close-up images on the screens and as a relative topography for the pieces on the ground, laid out like an archaeological discovery from an archeological dig.



105: Niels Ellmoos, *Object/Subject*, 2005

Although my objective in this installation was to test the works outside of the studio, the space was not entirely suitable for the installation. I felt that the separate dialogues of the installation would work better in discreet spaces with better lighting. On the other hand, there was a distinct advantage in seeing the works away from a studio environment. The sculptural elements were successful as stand alone pieces and I envisaged the installation for the final presentation being balanced by the large-scale projections, previously shown. I considered that a narrative, although fragmented, was evident and there was certainly a *collage machine* structure especially with the multi-channel DVD installation. The metaphorical references to the post-industrial site of Zeehan were also becoming clearer to me.

From the tested outcomes of the two exhibitions in the Sidespace Gallery in 2004 and 2005, I proved that the intersection between time-based media, large-scale drawing and sculptural elements was a valid method of presenting a *grand narrative of collage*. In the consideration of how different mediums are used in the process of mediation to recreate a sense of what is real, I came to the conclusion that the *real* is a notion situated and constructed in different ways by different mediums. My ceramic industrial artefacts were presented as real artefacts and they were real as sculptural elements. Their *non-realness* lay in the fact that they were a fragile material posing as a metallic body. However, most viewers accepted the superficial truth of them being an industrial artefact. The projected images were also presented as real images, although the manipulation and context of screening them asked questions of their *realness*. I felt that the question of site and *Nonsite*, which I had set out to investigate, was addressed in my conceptualisation of the works and that the installations in 2004 and 2005 at the Sidespace Gallery were a springboard for the fine tuning of the final presentation.

Conclusion

My background research, conceptual processes and practical artwork have finally reached fruition. My original intention was to produce sculptural objects in the form of industrial artefacts as a way of exploring metaphors of history and place. The theme of cultural landscape, Tasmanian history and the contemporary place of the localised region of Zeehan were the basis of my research. As the research developed a key theme emerged: The *seen* and the *unseen* parts of landscape were intermingled with the *layers* of human intervention over time. Another landscape was revealed: a *hidden* landscape.

Two years into the research I was upgraded to PhD candidature. This required a greater depth of research into the topic. As such, the research question evolved into an investigation of how I could express the visual language of the Zeehan landscape as *a grand narrative of collage*. This concept, a trajectory of *collage* discourse, was that the contemporary installation related to *the grand narrative of collage* where things in the world are treated as units of signification. In the investigation of the installation as a re-presentation of a specific site my intention was to revisit the theory and practice of a *Nonsite* proposed by Robert Smithson. As such, the installation is related to the diverse approaches of a range of artists including Bill Viola, Susan Norrie, Kutlag Ataman, Joan Jonas, Mark Dion and Jem Cohen. These artists provided me with an impetus to explore the narrative represented by the intersection between digital media and the mediums of drawing and sculpture. My challenge was how to integrate these visual mediums to form a cohesive installation in a gallery or exhibition space.

My aim in using digital media was to abstract the notion of time to express the repetitive timeless quality of the contemporary cultural landscape and human action within it. Digital media offered the opportunity to extend the conceptual links beyond being a document

of the site. Imagery of the machine aesthetic was referenced in historical plant machinery that presented a questioning of fact and myth. A similar theme ran through my sculpture. As *faux* objects in the form of industrial *artefacts* they referenced industrial history and through their perceived reality they questioned the notion of historical evidence as being truth. The drawings became the other element in the installation, in context of Kandinsky's conception of the spiritual being fundamental to identifying the search for abstraction in art and producing a *stimmung* or spiritual atmosphere.

The shortcomings of the research related mainly to being an outsider and being disconnected to the place. The difficulty in tying together a practical outcome from a theoretical and observed landscape and its local history became apparent as I researched the topic. It seemed there was a disjuncture between theory and practice. As well, the intersection between the disparate mediums posed problems. Each medium I used has a separate and distinct art history discourse related to it. My challenge was to bring together these disparate elements as a work of art. When disparate elements are combined to form a narrative there can be fracturing rather than cohesion. This however suited my theories of disjuncture, which also applied to the industrial relics in the landscape.

In answering the research question I have reached the following conclusions. *Nonspace* as a term, evolved from spatial concepts in the 1970s and described landscape altered by human beings as a product of post-industrial society and as such were called post-industrial spaces. In the terms Hobbs attributed to post-industrial space then, it could be argued that *Nonspaces* continue to exist as the physical and spiritual places with the undeniable evidence of the human imprint. The identification of post-industrial society (a Marxist model) is now more than three decades behind us, however no new 'clean green' utopia has followed.

Mining still goes on in pristine environments and industrial wastelands continue to provide an alternate aesthetic that some of us respond to. In a world where ecological concerns increase year-by-year, artists have the opportunity to react in dynamic and meaningful ways to these non-traditional landscapes. My research revealed that Zeehan and its environs showed signs of previous industrial intervention although vegetation covered most of the mine-sites in and around the township. The undeniable stamp of the human imprint was on much of the land in some form and the relic in the landscape was a symbol of entropy.

As I understood it, Zeehan, and particularly the more desolate areas, did have a strong sense of the human condition as well as the visible entropy. The town itself was and is affected by wider ramifications linked to its connections to the working mines. Zeehan is also part of the global economy, which was affected by international stock markets as much as its locally driven economy. In the time of my research in 2003, global tin prices fell and the nearby Renison Bell mine, previously the largest tin mine in the southern hemisphere came to the end of its industrial and commercial life.

As it closed, twenty homes in Zeehan were also abandoned. Even in the most desolate of sites the industrial ruins reminded me of antiquity and how we maintain a sense of ourselves through the tenuous links to the past through culture and the arts. Around the abandoned mine sites, the smelters and even the cemetery, there was a strong sense of a human presence. The linking of the historical significance and the contemporary town provided a depth and richness to the otherwise ordinary landscape.

In re-visiting the concept of *Nonspace* in my work, it was also appropriate to explore the concept of *Nonsite*. Although Smithson produced numerous *Nonsites* (abstract metaphors of a site), he questioned his own theory even as he wrote it.

This little theory is tentative and could be abandoned at any time. Theories like things are also abandoned. That theories are eternal is doubtful. Vanished theories compose the strata of many forgotten books.¹⁶⁵

Is the *Nonsite* appropriate to contemporary art today? My strong feeling is that it is appropriate. The inclusion of digital technologies has opened up new areas of investigation and presentation in contemporary installation art practice.

As the parameters of site-specificity have shifted so too have the parameters of *Nonsite* as a metaphorical three-dimensional picture. New media artists have entered the fray thereby expanding Smithson's abstract narratives. Artists such as Eugènia Balcells, Anne Hamilton and Terry Allen approach art discourse and *place* in individual and challenging ways expanding their concepts of presenting expressive environments as *grand narratives of collage*. The *Nonspace* of the cyber-landscape now offers even more complex responses to *Nonsites*.

The other question of the relationship between the seen and the unseen was addressed by my investigation into my above ground and underground experiences during the research. Each time I carried out a traverse, the interconnectedness of the seen and unseen became increasingly apparent.

As I write this conclusion, the relationship between the seen and unseen was played out in a most dramatic way. Two men were trapped in a gold mine tunnel in Beaconsfield in Northern Tasmania and rescuers communicated with them through specially drilled holes and tubes, which were also suitable for transferring food and clothing to them. Both the rescuers and trapped men could communicate with each other, but not see or reach each other physically.

¹⁶⁵ Flam, op. cit., *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, p. 364

As the news footage of the drama played out each night, the Australian public began to have a relationship with the unseen: the trapped men in a cage under tons of rock. The *unseen* trapped miners, appeared only in created graphics, and were not identifiable as real people. On the other hand, the *seen* was the above ground landscape of Beaconsfield: the live, clear images of the exterior of the mine, and various scenes of the local community, which were evidence of the great human drama being played out. Nevertheless there were strong connections between the rescuers, the trapped workers and the millions who viewed the nightly news.

Overall the particular cultural landscape of the Beaconsfield drama not only emphasised the physical aspects of landscape but also the human condition, a consciousness that was a potent reminder of the connection between the seen and unseen in the cultural landscape. With respect to the 'localised' human drama in Northern Tasmania and my own experiences of being underground in the name of art, I would argue that the relevance of art that resides in *home-sites* and *local* themes are important in the discourse of international contemporary art.

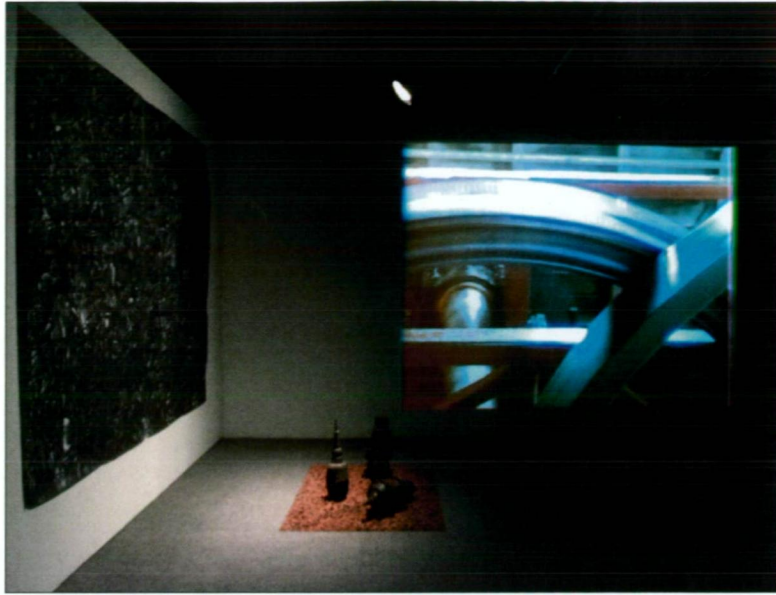
The Examination Exhibition Outcome: 2006

The final outcome resulted in an installation in the Plimsoll Gallery at the Centre for the Arts, Hobart, University of Tasmania, in July 2006. The exhibition contained a range of diverse mediums to form one cohesive installation. I designed the installation so that, as the viewer progressed through the spaces, various parts of the installation became apparent in a slow reveal, much the same as the experience of traversing a landscape.

In terms of the artwork concept my aim was to present the idea of *collage* being more than three-dimensional objects attached to two-dimensional surfaces. In my installation, the viewer could walk into and through the collage, and by their presence become part of the *collage machine*. Different mediums, through their presentation and the characteristics of the mediums themselves, were used to entice the viewer to engage with the elements of the narrative in a variety of ways.¹⁶⁶ In the first part of the installation both the two and three-dimensional images overwhelmingly dealt with the industrial artefact as *Nonsite*.

On entering the darkened space, the viewer was challenged to engage with several competing mediums. My intention was that the viewer would also be attracted by a gentle overall atmosphere of mechanical sounds providing another dimension to the visual mediums. The source of the sound, a 'larger than life' moving image of machinery components projected onto the back wall, presented a strong focal point.

¹⁶⁶ The mediums except for the obvious ones (such as the projections) are never identified specifically thereby providing the viewer with a chance to enter into the experience.

106: Niels Ellmoos, *Entropic Landscape*, 2006

As a counter-point I positioned four glass cabinets in an alcove to the left of the entrance. Replicating museum display cases illuminated by their own light source, they appeared to glow in the darkness. Each cabinet contained several industrial-like artefacts individually titled and classified as if genuine archaeological objects. Encased in the cabinets, the artefacts were untouchable which alluded to them being precious objects. In the context of an art gallery space they could also pose as art objects.

107: Niels Ellmoos, *Entropic Landscape*, 2006

I had used this museum strategy previously. This time, my intention was to create a disjuncture between a range of other corporeal experiences as the viewer moved through the space. In certain positions, glimpsing through the reflective glass of the cabinets revealed surreal sections of the projected moving image intermingling with the stillness of the objects.



108: Niels Ellmoos, *Entropic Landscape*, 2006

Further into the gallery space, positioned close to the wall projection, several forms were placed at ground level on a bed of volcanic pebbles. As hybrid mechanical artefacts, they were similar to the artefacts in the glass cases and although they were hybrids there was a sense of familiarity about them that engaged the viewer. I have called this sensory experience: *memory recognition*.¹⁶⁷ As the viewer's gaze was drawn to the objects there was the invitation to touch the surface and attempt to identify the origin by its form and texture. A large-scale charcoal drawing adjacent to the large projection, above the floor sculptures provided another counter-point.

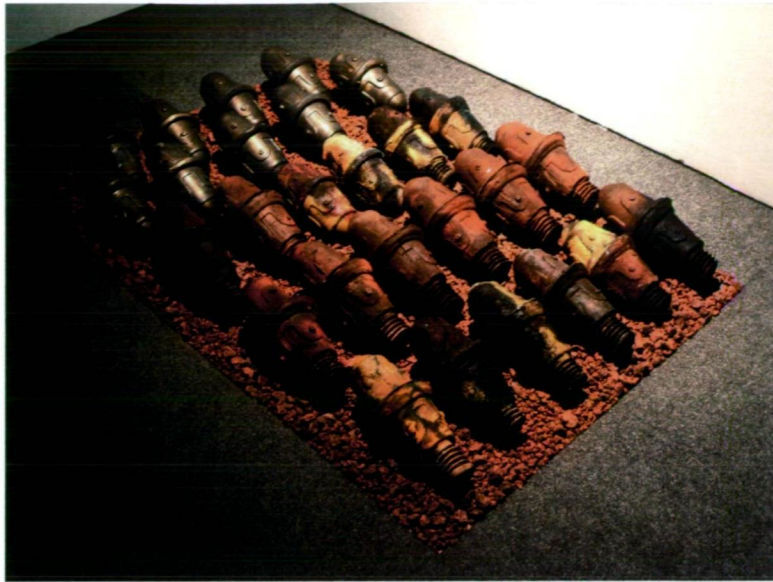
¹⁶⁷ When previously exhibiting I was surprised by many people 'recognising' my artefacts as being genuine mechanical parts (although being faux creations), often gleaned from their personal experience or work history.

The viewer was able to reflect between the competing elements of the installation and I anticipated that, by positioning themselves closer to the drawing or floor sculptures, viewers would become immersed by the large screen image. The monumental scale of the moving images, at such a close distance also produced a feeling of disorientation.



109: Niels Ellmoos, *Entropic Landscape*, 2006

Continuing into the gallery space the viewer encountered a second group of objects at ground level arranged in rows and selectively illuminated from the ceiling by minute flickering lights. In the dim flickering lighting, the forms seemed ambiguous; they appeared either as armaments or simply unknown industrial shapes. Formal methods and techniques of casting resulted in repetitive forms (copies) and new hybrid forms constructed from repeated components. Each work was intended to evoke a recognition or interpretation in the mind of the viewer. I considered that each individual work was an artefact; that the objects or imagery would represent my accumulated experience of the Zeehan landscape, stretching beyond the visible and linking physical and emotional experiences with, at times, unknown histories.

110: Niels Ellmoos, *Entropic Landscape*, 2006

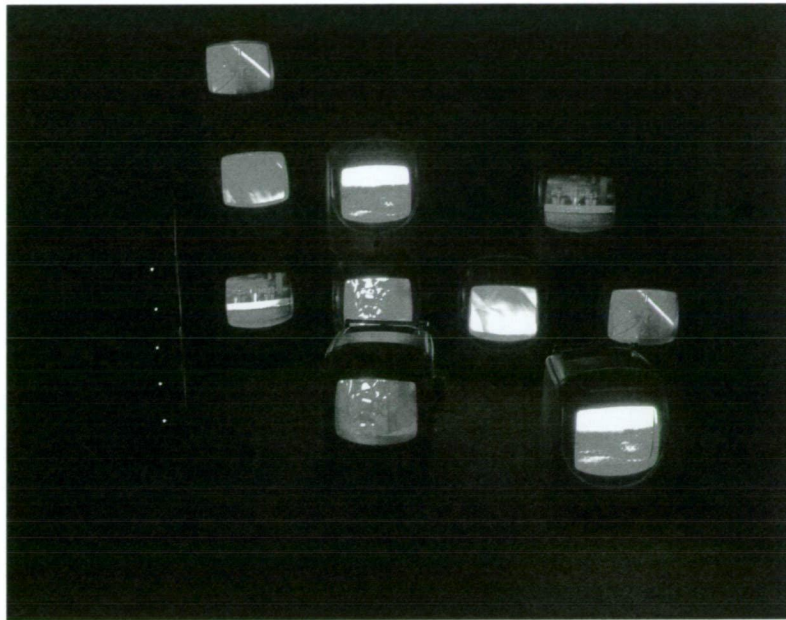
Moving past the first part of the installation the viewer was confronted by another discordant *note*. A single iridescent red scrolling LCD message light provided another dimension and a *key* into the exhibition. Many contemporary artists use text to extend narratives and, from an art historical perspective, Cubists such as Braque and Picasso also used visual devices as *keys* or *codes*, (including text) to allow viewers a way of understanding their perceptions.¹⁶⁸

111: Niels Ellmoos, *Entropic Landscape*, 2006

¹⁶⁸ Tom Ettinger, 'Picasso, Cubism and the Eye of the Beholder: Psychoanalysis and Cognitive Psychology', *American Imago* 53.1, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996, in http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_imago/v053/53.1ettinger.html visited February 17, 2007,

Ettinger states that the translation of the concealed into the visible is performed in Cubism through classic primary process mechanisms of displacement, and symbolization and cites Richard Wollheim (1987), describing the phenomena as *aesthetic communication* where the sender (*the artist*) transmits a coded message (*the artwork or parts of the artwork*) to receivers (*the audience*). In particular Ettinger cites Picasso as 'fueling the development of an ambiguous pictorial style, capable at once to reveal/conceal or express/suppress the covert message.' I contend that my installation works on similar principals and although the LCD is a covert message it is literal in context, and sets up a conflict between the historical and the contemporary.

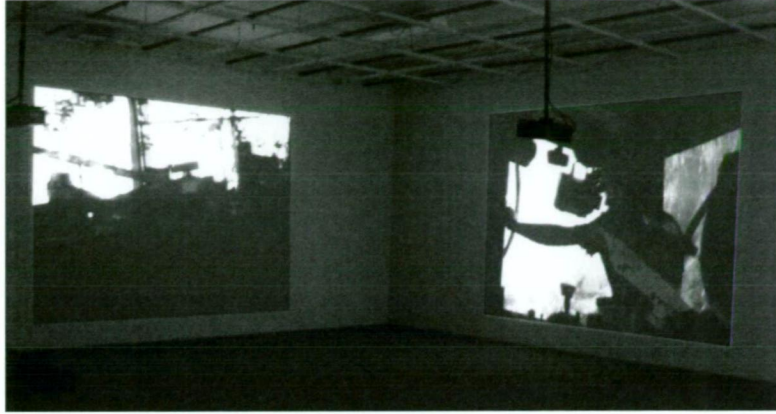
Turning into another space, the viewer now became aware of multi-layered sound and a glowing cluster of flickering small screens in a darkened corner at ground level. The small images were indistinguishable and necessitated closer inspection. Acting as disjointed flickering mirrors in the darkness, the small screens revealed diverse views of industrial 'landscapes'. Sound from the small speakers in the monitors blended into an overall industrial atmospheric sound, a deliberate attempt to create an orchestrated sound landscape.



112: Niels Ellmoos, *Entropic Landscape*, 2006

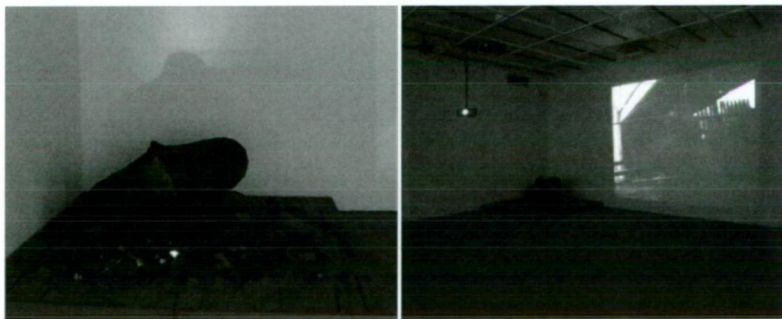
The sound landscape was further enhanced by a relentless industrial hum that had been previously heard in the background. Closer to the sound source the increase in volume now became more invasive as the percussion-like sound of the steam engines became over-ridden by an industrial drone sound. The viewer was encouraged to connect with the source of the sound. Two projected images at right angles to each other illuminated a large empty darkened gallery space. One of the monumental black and white images, showed a looped image of a strange machine moving back and forth across a rock face, searching for a spot to drill. The image was engaging but also slightly menacing due to the scale of the drill and the relentless nature of the sound, obviously the source of the industrial drone.

The other image depicted a high-contrast black and white frame-by-frame tracking shot¹⁶⁹ of a silhouetted industrial complex, a reference to the passing of history.¹⁷⁰ The two works depicted the seen and unseen aspects of landscape; the above ground and the underground.



113: Niels Ellmoos, *Entropic Landscape*, 2006

Once the moving images were taken in and eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, viewers became aware of a larger scale bulbous form sparingly lit by small spots of light and placed on a 'ground' of soil in the corner darkness. On a closer examination the installation was a theatrical set-like construction, the constrained lighting providing a dramatic touch.



114 and 115: Niels Ellmoos, *Entropic Landscape*, 2006

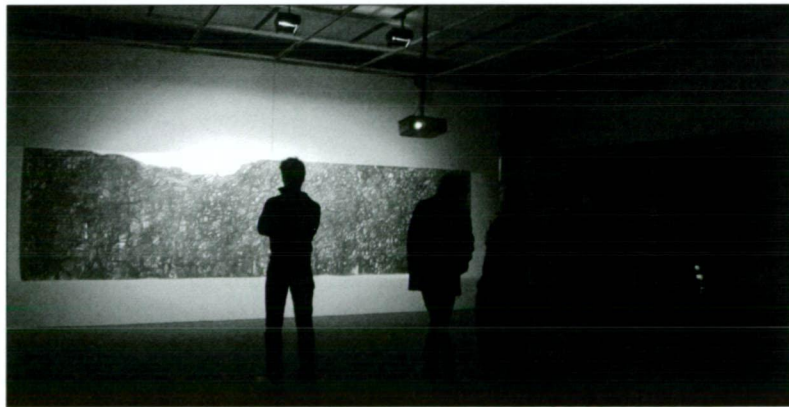
¹⁶⁹ The original video was filmed from a moving vehicle as it passed by the site of Renison Bell, previously one of the biggest tin mines in the southern hemisphere.

¹⁷⁰ Renison Bell was a functioning mine when I videotaped the footage but since has ended operations. During my time of research the mine closed, was then sold, reopened and finally closed again because of flooding and capital expenditure. The image reminded me of the industrial buildings depicted in still photography by the German conceptual artists Bernd and Hilla Becher.

See <http://www.artnet.com/artist/2179/bernd-and-hilla-becher.html>

There was a more immediate recognition of the large-scale artefact as it reflected the shape of the smaller forms in the previous gallery space. I wanted the installation to reflect the atmosphere of being in an underground environment and pose questions in the viewer's minds about the origin and function of the object. My intention also was that viewers had to discern between the object being a sculpture or a real artefact.

On the opposite wall to the image of the industrial buildings, a panoramic charcoal drawing explored the peripheral vision of landscape. The drawing, similar to the pieces on the floor and reflecting the black and white contrast of the moving images, invited a closer scrutiny of the highly detailed composition. The drawing acted as an abstract mapping of consciousness and a spiritual response, to not just the site in question but to a multitude of sites and objects, a state of mind rather than one experience.



116: Niels Ellmoos, *Entropic Landscape*, 2006

Expressive gesture and lyricism in the drawings emphasised a spiritual approach. I anticipated that as the viewer attempted to engage contemplatively, a transcendental experience could be gained. Simultaneously this experience was offset by the invasive noise of the drill machine, creating a disjuncture. The central area of the room was left empty specifically to enable viewers to absorb the atmosphere of the space and the artworks without the need to be mindful of freestanding objects.



117: Niels Ellmoos, *Entropic Landscape*, 2006

The lighting design for the overall installation, essentially consisted of subtle pools of light and illuminated images in dark spaces. It was deliberately planned to evoke a sense of underground and above ground contrasts. My intention was to allow the individual elements to be independent and competitive while simultaneously being a component of the overall installation. Consequently I utilized a variety of unconventional strategies, expressive approaches and installation elements to represent evidence of entropy, chaos and order.

The artist's acuity lies in his ability to raise and to express latent ideas; viewers' perceptions and responses are, in turn, shaped by those ideas. . . . [Their] latent presence is recognized, appeals to, and satisfies an audience.¹⁷¹

From my perspective as a visual artist, I conclude that the representation of altered landscape continues to be a strong symbolic metaphor for the residual and relentless marks created by humanity. My traverses across and beneath the industrial landscape of Zeehan informed my physical and spiritual responses to the *Nonspaces*. The visual evidence of the former industrial mining sites, entwined with their history and the local culture, merged and provided a springboard for my research. The reinterpretation of material evidence encompassed themes consolidating the practical and conceptual ways of exploring the intersection between digital media, large-scale drawing and sculptural components.

¹⁷¹ Marc Bornstein, 'Psychology and Art', *Psychology and Its Allied Disciplines*, Hillsdale, New Jersey, 1984, pp. 1-73

Through this exhibition I showed that technology, human kind and nature co-exist within a tenuous association. This relationship and interaction resulted in an indelibly altered landscape and interrupted space in the Zeehan region. Industrial land use has evolved over the decades, which makes interpreting landscapes such as Zeehan, in order to define their historical and cultural aspects, an area of increasing significance for visual artists in the new millennium. I believe that I achieved the research question in both the exegesis and in the gallery installation. My original contribution to the field extends the presentation of the documentary film/video genre from an ostensibly two-dimensional medium into a *grand narrative of collage*. In common with William Kentridge's imagery of industrialisation, I feel that my presentation portrays an, 'iconography of modernism' where the style and end products align with New Media. To my mind the seemingly incongruent mediums of large-scale drawings, digital media and sculptural elements were able to expand and enhance the experience and engagement of the viewer. Within this context, the resulting narrative created an environment, which both immersed the viewer and provided contemplation, presenting a re-interpretation of the *Nonsite* as a reading of the *Nonspace*.



118: Niels Ellmoos, *Entropic Landscape*, 2006

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Appendix1: Ceramic Techniques

Slip casting and surface treatment

The process of slip casting is a commercial method of mass production for ceramic products including such things as dinnerware, bathroom items or ornaments. Generally a slip cast product is a hollow form of an object either functional or ornamental. The majority of the mechanical forms that I produce have been made using the slip cast process. Transforming an object made from a different material into a ceramic replica requires first of all a mould to be made in plaster. Depending on the specific design of the original object, the mould can be made so that it can be taken-apart in a number of segments. These are called one-piece mould, two piece moulds, etc. A pouring hole must be designed into the mould so that the liquid clay, called *slip*, can be poured into the negative space of the mould. Moulds are strapped to prevent leakage.¹⁷²

The slip mixture is poured into the cavity of the mould until it fills to the brim of the mould's pouring hole. It is then left to stand for between 10-30 minutes. The plaster acts as a sponge, drawing the water from the slip mixture and forming a thin skin of clay slip, which becomes adhered to the walls of the mould. As the clay dries and when a desired thickness is achieved, depending on the dryness of the plaster, the mould is up-ended gently to allow the excess slip to be poured out. If the flow is too fast, the thin skin can be pulled away from the wall, which effectively collapses the internal clay form. When this part of the technique is performed successfully, the clay skin remains intact and adhered to the internal walls of the plaster mould. After all the excess clay has been poured out, the mould is left to sit.

¹⁷² The clay slip can be purchased as a pre-prepared liquid compound ready for pouring or can be mixed by the user using a clay powder and adding the chemicals Displex and Sodium Silicate.

To extract the clay form, the straps are removed and the mould is lightly tapped with a rubber hammer. Inside the mould meanwhile, the clay has continued to dry as the plaster draws out the water. The mould is gently manipulated until one of the sections comes apart and you can gently extract the clay form and leave it to dry. However it is only a thin shell not a solid object. When the clay form is removed from the mould it still contains some water content and is known as being in a *leather-hard* state. It is at this stage that, cutting, joining, transformations and adaptations are created.

As the clay body dries out, it changes to a bone-dry state when the surface can be sanded with a fine sand paper and foam scrubber ready to progress to the next stage, turning the raw clay body into bisque. The bisque stage is known as the first firing and is designed to transform the material structure of the clay to a hardened state. The term *bisque* means that the clay body is fired to a minimum 1,000 degrees centigrade. The main technical research I carried out related to the surface treatments.

Following the bisque firing I applied a coating of copper carbonate or iron oxide paste. In the second firing process they became 'coated' with either an iron or copper 'skin' effectively transforming the ceramic surface into a dull finish. A sculptural technique for adding a patina to bronze is to heat the surface with an oxy flame and apply acids. I experimented with this technique on the metallic surface of the ceramic pieces and found that a similar effect was possible. As the heat was applied a chemical reaction took place and the mineral characteristics of the particular oxide were exposed.¹⁷³ The successful pieces displayed an aged and corroded effect, which resulted in the created surface being indistinguishable from a genuine metallic surface. I wanted the sculptures to be 'read' or interpreted as real objects from a 'believable' industrial history.

¹⁷³ This was a delicate operation as the ceramic 'shell' easily cracked or exploded if heat was applied intensively to one spot. Through trial and error I successfully utilised the method although there was a small loss ratio.

Extending the technical research because of my dissatisfaction with the toxicity problem related to the copper carbonate, I trialed a copper based acrylic paint. After the paint was applied to the surface and fired in the kiln, the surface converted to a dull grey finish, similar to the copper carbonate and smoother to the touch. The test results were successful and subsequently used. The initial sculptures achieved my aim of transforming both the surfaces and the meaning of the artefacts and their contexts.

Appendix 2: The Connection

In personal terms, my own relationship to the land and place was established by being born into pioneering family and growing up in a regional area. The influences of a pioneering European family history, of discovery and settlement of a region at that time (1878), in a remote part of the south coast of New South Wales (NSW), all provided a rich background for my current project. As non-indigenous settlers my descendents were the first Europeans to take up roots on that specific part of the east coast of NSW. Although dissimilar in terms of geographical and climatic features to NSW, parts of the region studied, in particular Macquarie Harbour, had a lot of similarities. In particular the history of Danish pioneering families and boat building are common threads.



119: Guesthouse owned by the Ellmoos family – Sussex Inlet (circa 1890)

Living in a pristine region on the south coast of NSW in the 1950's, provided me with a familiarity to the natural environment and the forces of nature, something the 'west coasters' in Tasmania had, and continue to have, a close affinity with. This was reinforced by a strong sense of place in conjunction with a perception of the space and phenomena around me. From the age of ten, I had to row across a tidal river in a small timber rowboat to attend school. This required

understanding and adapting to changeable weather patterns. It also encompassed a ‘reading of signs’ in nature.

Recognising phenomena, which had the potential to affect the way of life, such as particular cloud formations, wind reactions on the river surface and a sense of climatic change was a necessity not only as a basis for functional activities but also at times, for survival. Indeed the elements were the cause of death of two of my descendents. My ancestral home, known as *Christian’s Minde*, was a memoriam to Christian, my grandfather’s older brother. Christian died from pneumonia after swimming to shore following a boating accident on St Georges Basin. Christian’s brother, Niels, disappeared on a trip to Sydney by sailing boat.



120: Christians Minde – Sussex Inlet (circa 1940)
Guesthouse converted to holiday flats after World War II

The aspect of local and personal history influenced me. Pioneering stories and anecdotes were a fundamental part of fireside yarns and social events. Later in life this aspect of local histories would inspire my interest and passion for social documentary film and inform my current art practice. Observing the landscape early in my life, afforded me a foundation and an ongoing interest in the environment around me where ever I have lived. No doubt the experience of this close observation and involvement with nature nurtured my artistic spirit.

Appendix 3: Foundations of the Research

I had my initial encounter with the West Coast of Tasmanian in September 2000. It was on a small windblown outcrop jutting out of the waters of Macquarie Harbour. From that initial experience I became intertwined with its landscape and colourful history. The historical link between the past and the present had been set in motion when in 1815 a former whaling boat captain, James Kelly, sailed through a perilous opening in the treacherous rocky coastline, discovering and naming Macquarie Harbour. Seven years later, an isolated island in the harbour provided an ideal location for a penal settlement in the expanding colony. It also established the first industrial site in the region. The settlement was named Sarah Island.¹⁷⁴



121: Engraving of Sarah Island, 1829

My connection with the place began as I stepped onto the foreshore.

I noted in my diary at the time:

I realised I knew little of the island's history, except for a vague memory of scenes from the film, 'For The Term of His Natural Life'.¹⁷⁵ The usual interpretation panels and what seemed to be piles of bricks were the only indication of any form of previous human intervention.

¹⁷⁴ Captain J. Kelly cited in Arjan Kok, *A Pictorial History of Strahan, Hindsight*, Hobart, (undated), p.16

Although preceding Port Arthur as a penal settlement, Sarah Island had a short and brutal history of occupation from 1822 to 1833 as a 'place of ultra banishment and punishment' for convicts who had committed further crimes in the colony.

¹⁷⁵ Sarah Island was the setting for Marcus Clarke's Australian novel.

On that visit to the island, the explanation and presentation by our guide, Richard Davey, could be described as a *reading* of landscape; and a *reading* of the seen and the unseen. The *seen*, was the visible part of the island itself, an unremarkable landscape. Thick, deep green moss, overgrown grass and wind-blown scrub gave little indication to the importance of the place in the history of Tasmania. The only evidence of the penitentiary remaining was crumbling ruins and scattered clumps of bricks.

As part of the island tour, a performance along the shoreline by our guide revealed the *unseen*. Davey had removed his bushman's coat, Akubra hat, moleskin trousers and riding boots to reveal a wet-suit underneath. Cautiously wading into the water to his waist, he attempted to fill in some of the missing picture, as he exclaimed:

...You have to imagine another scenario... this should be a beach, the Gordon River punches out massive amounts of gravel but these are protected by the large structures underneath...the massive blue gums I'm walking along are fixed with trunnels or tree-nails...

It was an explanation of what was not visible to us: a *hidden history*, beneath the murky tannin waters of Macquarie Harbour. He was describing the construction of slipways for the large-scale assembly of ships in the early 1800's. The fascination of that experience stayed with me and I began to think in terms of hidden history and landscape as artefact. From the initial experience on Sarah Island I returned to the West Coast regularly, culminating in my present research concerned with the inland mining regions and the notion of *hidden history*.

Appendix 4: Articulating Robert Smithson's *Nonspace* in the New Millennium

I witnessed viewers departing with jugs of pink water and arm loads of the jetty's crusty rocks...Entropy may yet reign due to social causes – vandalism – rather than natural ones.¹⁷⁶

Observing the reappearance of Robert Smithson's monumental earthwork, *Spiral Jetty*, in 2003, Suzaan Boettger describes the phenomena as one of spectacular transformation and endurance. Re-emerging after several decades underwater, one of the most significant and pioneering, earthwork sculptural forms, re-presented itself in a sparkling white display.¹⁷⁷



122: Tom Smart (Photo Credit), *Spiral Jetty* 2004

For several decades it had been a spiral shadow beneath the water, seen only by the rare inquisitive visitor. Constructed on the edge of the Great Salt Lake in Utah it extended 1500 foot into the roseate water

¹⁷⁶ Suzaan Boettger, 'Spiral Jetty on Dry Land', *Art in America*, New York, Vol 92, Jan 2004, p. 19

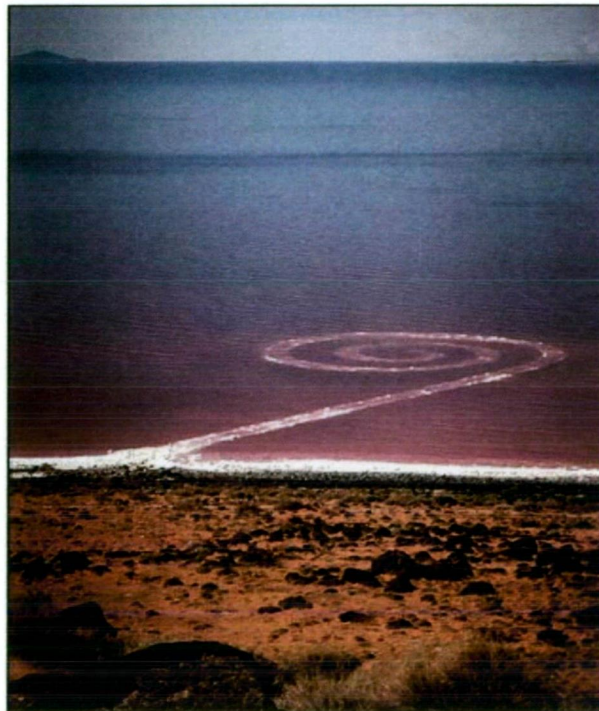
¹⁷⁷ Ibid

Over the decades, the water and salt had colluded by encrusting the entire surface with glistening salt crystals. This may have pleased Smithson enormously as his fascination with crystals has been well documented in his writing and conceived in his artwork. Land art (known as earthworks) from so long ago was thought to be ephemeral or at least part of an entropic process. Smithson's concept of the deterioration of a material structure to ultimately end up in a simpler state had been stalled by nature and perhaps human involvement (climatic change).

(the water is rose red because of algae and brine shrimp), of the shallow bay, as a raised 'jetty' and walkway. Four years after its construction in 1970, the level of the Great Salt Lake rose dramatically submerging the spiral form assembled from 6,650 tons of black basalt boulders and earth. Journalist, Michael Kimmelman has observed that:

The popular allure of 'Jetty' was enhanced by Smithson's writings about it, part poetry, part hokum, and by the 16-millimeter colour movie he shot of its construction: trucks and loaders lumbering like barosaurs across a prehistoric panorama to his narrative.¹⁷⁸

Now after successive droughts the *unseen* had become the *seen*, once again. The *Spiral Jetty* is an autobiographic metaphor signifying art as cultural landscape, comprising the elements of spirituality, abstraction and entropy. It is a modern-day debris of industrial ruin: rusting cars, a decrepit pier on an ancient sea, combining to create what Smithson called the 'evidence of a succession of man-made systems mired in abandoned hopes'.



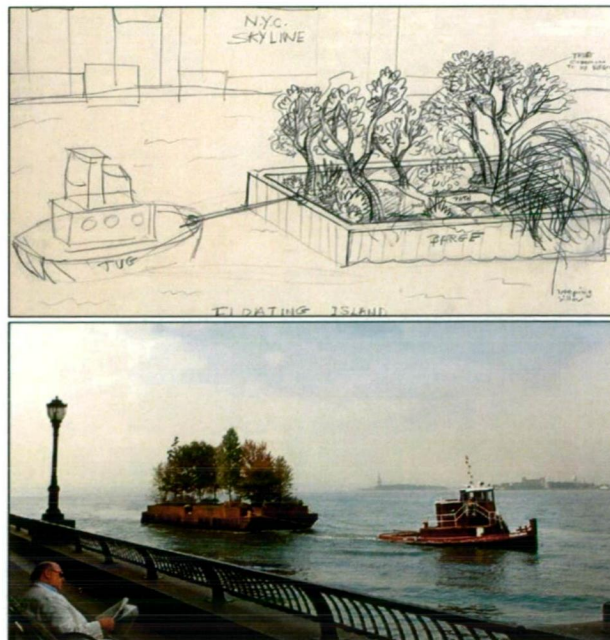
123: Ray Boren, (Photo Credit) *Spiral Jetty* 2003

¹⁷⁸ Michael Kimmelman, 'Sculpture From the Earth, but Never Limited by It', New York Times, June 24, 2005, <http://www.nytimes.com> visited Sept. 16, 2005

Smithson discloses in an interview that 'it's a matter of setting up correspondences where you seemingly have something that's very material but at the same time it somehow is absorbed into abstraction'. Smithson's concepts are fundamental in understanding the interpretive and metaphoric nature of responding to cultural landscape.

Smithson developed a significant body of work that engaged complexity and oppositions: nature/ culture, language as material, space and time, monument and anti-monument and displacement/landmark.¹⁷⁹

Even more recently in 2005 another one of Smithson's concepts came to light, from one of his original drawings in 1973. Smithson's widow Nancy Holt realised the work that Smithson himself was never able to complete. *Floating Island* described as 'a kind of waterborne jewellery box version of Central Park, built on a barge, with live trees and shrubs' was launched and towed around East River in Manhattan. To coincide with the performance of *Floating Island*, a major retrospective of Robert Smithson opened to a new audience and to new acclaim in New York in 2005. Once again the *unseen* became the *seen*.



124: Robert Smithson, Drawing for *Floating Island* 1973

125: Robert Caplin (Photo Credit) *Floating Island*, 2005,
(Realised by Nancy Holt from a Robert Smithson concept)

¹⁷⁹ Author unknown, cited in, <http://www.robertsmithson.com>
visited September, 2005

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EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

2004 - 2006	Art Gallery Attendant
2001	University Tutor (full teaching load), ceramics studio manager
1999 - 2000	Gallery Assistant and retail sales (part-time)
1997 - 99	Sole Prop – Design/Art Business under NESE Scheme
1991 - 97	Freelance video producer/director – <i>Australian Dept. of Defence, NSW Dept of Education, Corporate organizations, University of NSW, Sydney</i>
1981– 91	Owner/Operator (Partnership) Video Production Company
1976 - 81	Film editor/cameraman (TAFE)
1971 - 76	Motion Picture Technician – <i>Colour Grader and printing</i>
1969 - 74	Practicing artist (conceptual art/experimental film)
1966 - 69	Part and full-time student - National Art School
1964 - 66	Retail Advertising Cadet – <i>Preparation of Press and Catalogue Layout/Production</i>

AWARDS

- *Australian Postgraduate Award Scholarship*, University of Tasmania
- *University Medal*, University of Tasmania
- *Commended*, Poimena Art Prize, Launceston
- *Creative Excellence Award- Scientific Documentary*
US Video Festival, Chicago
- *Selected for screening*, Festival International du Film Scientifique,
Glaiseau, France
- *Commendations (Silver Medals- Corporate Video Awards)*,
Sydney and Brisbane

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| • <i>Object/Subject</i> | Sidespace Gallery Hobart |
| • <i>Topographies</i> | Entrepot Gallery
Centre for the Arts Hobart |
| • <i>Drawing Conclusions</i> | Sidespace Gallery Hobart |
| • <i>Beneath the Surface</i> | Burnie Regional Gallery Burnie
(including Artist in Residence) |
| • <i>Above Ground</i> | Poimena Gallery Launceston
(including Artist in Residence) |
| • <i>Works in Process</i> | Academy of the Arts, UTAS
Launceston |
| • <i>Forensics</i> | State Library Launceston |
| • <i>Anecdotal Evidence</i> | Science Building, UTAS, Launceston |
| • <i>From the Sea: To the Sea</i> | Inhibodress Gallery, Sydney |

GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- | | |
|---|--|
| • <i>Hard Rain 10 Days on the Island</i> | CAST - Queenstown |
| • <i>Red Earth 10 Days on the Island,</i> | Academy Gallery,
Academy of the Arts UTAS |
| • <i>Poimena Art Prize</i> | Poimena Gallery Launceston |
| • <i>Autoritratto (Yourself)</i> | Sesto Senso - Bologna Italy |
| • <i>Research 2</i> | Academy Gallery UTAS |
| • <i>Artline 2002</i> | Academy Gallery UTAS |
| • <i>Research</i> | Academy Gallery UTAS |
| • <i>Alumni</i> | Academy Gallery UTAS |
| • <i>Moving On (Honours),</i> | University Gallery A, UTAS |
| • <i>Souvenir</i> | University Gallery A, UTAS |
| • <i>Big Art Road Trip (BFA),</i> | University Gallery A, UTAS |
| • <i>Tools of Trade</i> | University Gallery B, UTAS |
| • <i>Wilderness</i> | University Gallery A, UTAS |
| • <i>Inaugural Group</i> | Inhibodress Gallery, Sydney |

COMMISSIONS AND COLLECTIONS

- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Wall Mural | Launceston General Hospital |
| • Wall Mural | UWU Wholefoods, Launceston |
| • Tile Mural & Sculpture | Private & Commercial - Sydney |
| • Private Collections | Canada, Sydney, Tasmania |

PUBLISHED ARTICLES

- Conference Paper - ACUADS, Hobart School of Art (Online)
- Online Article – Craft Victoria, 'Tabs',
<http://www.craftculture.org/tab/ellmoos.html>
- Ceramics and Perception, Art Network, Encore
- Newspaper articles about my work: Hobart Mercury, Examiner, Advocate, Southern Cross TV

ACADEMIC HISTORY

- Currently Postgraduate Candidate (PhD)
Hobart School of Art, UTAS
- Bachelor of Fine Arts - Honours First Class
SVPA, Launceston, UTAS
- Bachelor of Fine Arts
SVPA, Launceston, UTAS
- Postgraduate Diploma
College of Fine Arts, Sydney