The Collaborative Curator: a methodological enquiry into negotiated mediation and audience participation

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Abstract

This practice-based curatorial investigation comprised a series of four case study exhibitions, which sought to identify curatorial methods for collaborative and relational practices, which further the challenge that these modes of art production pose to mediation conditions. Modes of artistic production that incorporate human relations, participative processes and shared experiences aim to subvert traditional processes of presentation, mediation, legitimisation and distribution of artworks practiced in art institutions.

This exegesis presents the premise of the practical research. With reference to literature that relates to the 1990's artistic challenge to mediation conditions, it argues that despite recent reconfigurations of exhibition practices to accommodate 1990's new modes of production and presentation within the mediating and legitimising apparatus, the conditions in which this apparatus mediates and legitimises the artworks have not been adequately considered.

The aim of this research was to develop a curatorial method for the re-presentation of artistic content that is embodied in shared experiences and takes generative and open-ended forms. In curating the artworks that comprised the research, my aim was to incorporate the artistic challenge made to mediation conditions not only in the context of the original audiences that helped to formulate the works, but as part of the re-presentations of such artworks to secondary audiences.

The investigation of the proposed curatorial method was developed throughout an accumulative process that integrated the findings from the four case study exhibitions that comprised the research. These were designed to observe and test conditions of mediation determined by different modes of address and the audiences they constitute, as well as the kind of content and modes of communication they produce.

The curatorial method produced, re-presents collaborative, generative and open-ended artworks as counter spaces of shared experience in which the communication of the subject of art is determined, not by an authoritative and unilateral communication, but by a collaborative one. The role of the curator is to locate and re-present the

communication nexus generated at the moment of collaborative authorship, which is the engine for the production of generative open-ended content.

The research concluded that the role of the curator is instrumental in the re-presentation of artistic content embodied in shared experiences. A key curatorial function is to specify the nexus of communication in order to make it the basis of a subsequent communication frame to extend the work to a broader audience. This approach to curatorial practice offers an alternative to currently practiced curatorial methods to communicate and legitimise collaborative and relational artworks.

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Introduction

Through a practice-based curatorial investigation that comprised a series of four case study exhibitions, this research project addressed the redefinitions of curatorial practice which were prompted by developments in art practice in the 1990's, and that can be traced to experimental practices dating back to the 1960's.

Modes of artistic production that incorporate human relations, participative processes and shared experiences pose challenges for the traditional processes of presentation, mediation, legitimisation and distribution of artworks practiced in art institutions. The response to these challenges includes the expansion and reconfiguration of the space of mediation of art. Collaborative art poses challenges for the very role of curator, and this research project was an exercise in adapting and extending the curatorial role to recognise and meet those challenges.

Collaborative and relational artistic strategies of the 1990's emerged against a theoretical context of poststructuralist, post-colonial, feminist and political theory and their deconstructions of hegemonic narratives. Artists criticised the role of art institutions in mediating and legitimizing a narrative that dictated the terms in which individuals participate in society and cultural production. Jürgen Habermas's work, *The Structural Transformation Of The Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into A Category Of Bourgeois Society,* was published in English in 1989, twenty-seven years after its original publication in German. His conceptualisation of the public sphere triggered a series of critiques. Some of these introduced the notions of counter public spheres as multiple relational spaces of experience, and counter publics as contingent groups that legitimise alternative modes of participation and public debate and, therefore, alternative modes of cultural production.

In the art context, collaborative and relational artistic practices introduced new modes of art production, new modes of art presentation and strategies for addressing audiences – what I refer to as 'modes of address' (authors, artists and curators all address their audiences in a variety of ways, with differing degrees of intimacy, formality or distance). This new generation of artists invited the audience into the production phase of art-making – into

collaborative authorship, such that the artwork's content would be a shared experience, and take a generative and open-ended form. Curatorial practice has had to become responsive to the changed conditions of art production and authorship. Exhibition formats had to change and, like the role of the artist the curator's role came to be recast as performer, producer and educator. In negotiating change, curators attempted to expand the mediation apparatus and, in many instances, to get close to the art production process.

Recent studies of collaborative artistic practices by Claire Bishop (*Artificial Hells,* 2012), and Grant Kester (*The One and The Many,* 2011) attribute the purpose of their challenge to the artistic critique to the autonomy of the aesthetic experience. This critique, according to both authors, was inherited from the previous generation of neo-avant-garde artists, whose strategies criticised the uses given to the auratic status of the object of art. These strategies included the dematerialisation of the object, the de-sacralisation of the author and the placement of art outside the institutional space of the museum and art gallery.

My thesis proceeded from the premise that despite recent reconfigurations of the space of mediation of art to accommodate 1990's new modes of production and presentation *within* the mediating and legitimising apparatus, the conditions in which this apparatus mediates and legitimises the artworks have not yet been adequately considered. I provide the contextual bases of this premise in the early chapters of this exegesis.

The conditions that determine the process of mediation are an essential aspect of 1990's artistic practices, as they constitute the critical point of their artistic enquiry. In curating the works that comprised the research project, my aim was to incorporate the artistic challenge made to mediation conditions, not only in the context of the original audiences that helped to formulate the works, but as part of the re-presentations of such artworks to secondary audiences.

The recent literature that forms a context for thesis addresses the 1990's artistic challenge to art institutions in their mediation and legitimisation of art – what Tony Bennett (1988) refers to as the 'exhibitionary complex', an apparatus of mediation which, through authoritative and

unilateral communication, constitutes the audience as generalised receptive mass (the concept is fleshed out in chapter one). Key commentators question the efficacy of strategies used by recent generations of artists to challenge the conditions of mediation applied by the 'exhibitionary complex'.

Through the research, several questions prompted the investigation of the modes of address practiced by the exhibitionary complex. In their critique of the appropriation of the mediation space and to the exhibitionary complex's monopolisation of legitimisation, participatory and collaborative art practices break with traditional modes of addressing audiences, yet, as I argue, once put into circulation these artworks and the experiential manner through which participating audiences confirm their content as art tend to be co-opted into the usual consumable-yet-remote mode of address that operates within the exhibitionary complex. My concern as a curator, was to conceive of, and implement strategies that would circumvent the co-option of effective critical works by an institutional system that is not sufficiently attuned to their social content, and which has a strong tendency of 'flattening' the multi-vocal nature of socially based art and drawing it back into an official narrative.

The questions that emerged during the research were:

1. What are the modes of address practiced by the exhibitionary complex? And, what are the viable alternatives?

2. How do modes of addressing the audience impact on the autonomy of the aesthetic experience?

3. Through what sort of means does an individual spectator participate in the construction, communication and legitimisation of the content of the artwork?

4. What modes of address constitute a participatory or collaborative audience?

5. What are the characteristics of an exhibition structure that allows for collaborative and participatory communication by the audience, and legitimisation of the content of collaborative artworks?

6.   What is the role of the curator in such legitimising structure?

Chapter one of this thesis describes the artistic challenges made to the mediation space since the 1960's. Chapter two discusses the emergence of new modes of address that resulted from the earlier critiques, and which would later be adopted and elaborated by 1990's collaborative and artistic practices. Chapter three addresses the 1990's redefinition of the field of curatorial practice that occurred in response to the impact of collaborative process of authorship. These three chapters provide the context for the design of four case study exhibitions that are described and discussed in the following chapters. Chapter four describes the two case studies that form the preliminary research, through which I refined my line of inquiry. It offers observations about how modes of address impact on the autonomy of the aesthetic experience to understand collaborative and relational practices' artistic strategy. Chapter 5 describes Case Study III: *Long Drop Into Water* by Ruben Santiago as an investigation of how a generative content is produced and communicated in a collaborative process of authorship between artist, curator and audience participants. Finally, chapter 6 describes the fourth and final case study, Case Study IV: *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association.* This was an investigation of modes of address practiced specifically in collaborative and relational artworks through an exhibitionary format designed and produced to present and communicate generative and open-ended contents embodied in shared experiences. The investigation produced a curatorial method in which the role of the curator is to locate and re-present the communication nexus generated at the moment of collaborative authorship and which is the engine for the production of generative open-ended content. This method focuses on the representation of the communication nexus that originated and embodies the artwork content.

Chapter 1

1990's Art Practices

and their Challenge to the Conditions of the Mediation of Art

In the 1990's a generation of artists adopted new modes of artistic production and presentation, referred to variously as relational, dialogical, participatory and collaborative art. For the sake of brevity, I will refer to all of these forms as 'collaborative and relational art'. Human relations became a medium for these art forms, constructed as generative and open-ended creations and presented through formats such as celebratory events, workshops, meals, radio broadcasts, civil and business organisations. This chapter discusses Grant Kester's and Claire Bishop's recent studies *The One and The Many* (Kester, 2011) and *Artificial Hells* (Bishop, 2012) as two of the most comprehensive yet on recently established modes of artistic production and presentation. In their respective writings, these authors describe the new artistic strategies that challenge the conditions of mediation, and how they are inflected by artists' introduction of a new mode of addressing the audience, which aims to ensure the autonomy of the aesthetic experience. Bishop and Kester also acknowledge that relational art forms developed out of the critique of the autonomy of the aesthetic experience posed by neo-avant-garde artists from the 1960's: they conceived of a radically changed role for audience members, from that of spectators into that of active participants.

The challenges of the 1960's neo-avant-garde

Bishop's and Kester's analyses build upon significant earlier observations. Benjamin Buchloh suggested in 1990 that the insistence of the neo-avant-garde, particularly conceptual artists, on placing the subject of art outside of the object and into the audience's experience of the object, was an attempt to redefine the conditions of receivership and the role of the spectator. (p. 121) The conditions of the reception of art have been determined by museums since the nineteenth century, or more precisely by what Tony Bennett calls 'the exhibitionary complex'. With this term, and drawing on a Foucaultian conception of knowledge-power relations, Bennett points to the intersecting set of institutional and disciplinary relations that

form an apparatus of mediation which, through authoritative and unilateral communication, constitutes the audience as generalised receptive mass. (Bennett, 1988)

Writing during the following decade, Frazer Ward identified the practices of neo-avant-garde artists as a critical program aimed at restoring the mediation apparatus to its origins as a stage for public debate. (1995: 79) According to Ward, the museum had become a publicity vehicle that legitimised a bourgeois despotic narrative and, as such, the neo-avant-garde targeted it in order to disrupt its hegemony. Ward suggests that some artists' strategies of attack simultaneous play out, and play off, different forms of publicity in the museum. He exemplifies his point with reference to works by Fred Wilson and by Hans Haacke (Ward, 1995: 78). Haacke's works *MetroMobiltan* (1985) and *Les must de Rembrandt* (1986) foreground the ways in which, through sponsorship, benefactor corporations such as Mobil and Rembrandt Group use museums as vehicle of publicity. Simultaneously though, Haacke's work gives publicity to minority groups such as black South Africans under apartheid who are exploited by those corporations for profits.

Ward refers to a number of other developments in the artistic attack on the bourgeoisie's appropriation of the museum to legitimise its own historical dominance. Minimalism, he says, displaced the subject of art from the object to the relationship of object with the viewer, citing the well-known case of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc*, (1981-1989) (fig 1)]. Conceptual Art mounted an attack on institutional and market forces through the dematerialisation of the object and the expansion of the subject of art to include the context of this relationship – and drew attention to how context determines the specific conditions of the reception of the artwork. An example is Vito Acconci's *Following Pieces*, 1969 (fig 2) a work that addresses the conditions whereby the artist's gesture intersects social space.[1] Performance art's contribution to institutional critique was effected through the artist's body being used as a

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[1] For *Following pieces*, Acconci referred to Kurt Lewin's notion of the 'power field' to describe the space originated by the intersection and interaction between the space of the artist and the space of the audience: '[Kurt Lewin talks about]…interaction between regions. The first is locomotion, the second communication, in which an arm of region A extends to region B so that there's an overlap, and the third is power field, in which a circle or oval develops from region A to cover region B. So power field would be the most inclusive. When I refer to power field, I don't mean so much as a way of controlling other people in a space, as to affect them…' (Acconci , 1972: 71-72)

critique of the 'auratic' status of the artist. Chris Burden's work *White Light/White Heat,* 1975 (fig 3) addresses the conditions of authorship.[2] (Ward, 1995: 79).

Fig 1: Serra, Richard. *Tilted Arc*, 1981-1989, New York

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[2] Burden's exhibition invitation announced that throughout the duration of the exhibition, the artist would be lying on a platform that he built into a corner of the gallery. The platform, resembling a minimalist sculpture, was installed as an open shelf, which didn't enclose the artist. However due to the platform's position 10 feet above the floor, the audience could not see if Burden was in fact lying on the platform and present in the space. The exhibition invitation and the platform have legitimised Burden's presence, but because the physical presence of the artist was actually not tangible, the performance of the work was transferred from the physical presence of the artist to the physical presence of the audience in front of the platform.

Fig2: Acconci, Vito. *Following Pieces* 1969, New York
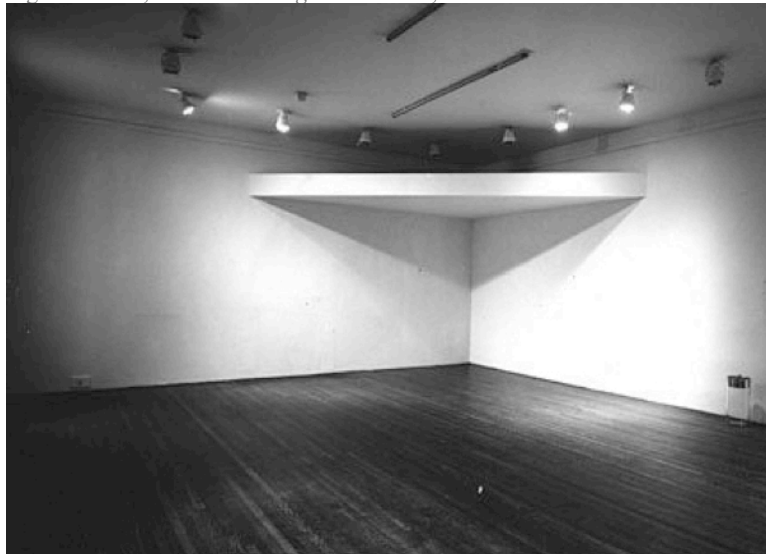
Fig 3: Burden, Chris. *White Light/White Heat*, 1975, New York

These neo-avant-garde gestures were limited in their effects. Conceptual art dismantled the museum as a space of presentation and in it, established a space of communication. Conceptual artists' use of publicity created alternative narratives to the despotic bourgeois narrative. The site of art had been shifted into social space, at least to a degree: Conceptual art opened opportunities for multiple and simultaneous publicities through the reconfiguration of the mediation space from presentation to processes of communication (publicity). However, conceptual art failed to significantly alter the conditions through which the spectator was constituted through that communication: the conditions of receivership and the role of the spectator were not successfully redefined. The role of the spectator, as traditionally constituted by the exhibitionary complex, went largely unchanged, as the spectator was still

being addressed from an authoritative authorial position, as an undifferentiated, receptive collective spectatorship. In an essay from 2007 Okwui Enwezor underlines this point, by saying that while the new mode of artistic production of conceptual art might have opened space for the consideration of shifts in the understanding of spectatorship, it 'still predicated itself on the hinge of the modernist dialectic of the object and the gaze'. (2007: 229) As such, he argued that 'the shift in the role of the traditional spectator within the structures of hegemonic institutions of power such as museums and Western gallery systems were not substantially articulated in the operations of conceptual art'. (p. 229)

In their recent studies Grant Kester (2011) and Claire Bishop (2012) both suggest that a new attempt at shifting the understanding of spectatorship emerged in the 1990's. It entailed the adoption of a new mode of addressing the audience, a new process of constructing the content of the artwork, and new modes of presenting that content. The implication of their viewpoints is that more than conceptual art, the artforms that gained momentum in the 1990's placed additional pressure on curators as mediators within a 'socialised' mode of art production.

Relational modes of production

The 1990's saw the emergence of art practices that would later be christened *Relational Aesthetics* by Nicolas Bourriaud in his 1998 response to the work of artists such as Rirkrit Tiravanija, Philippe Parreno, Pierre Hughe, Felix Gonzalez Torres, Dominique Gonzalez-Foerster and Liam Gillick, among many others. (English version 2002) Bourriaud's framing of the practices of such artists foregrounded the human relations and social networks intrinsic to such works. He expanded on 'Relational Aesthetics' in his subsequent book *Postproduction* (2002) where he discusses the way that human relations are incorporated by artists as 'readymade' material used within the political, social and technological contexts, in economic and virtual relations.

A recurrent example, now considered an iconic relational artwork, is Rirkrit Tiravanija's *Pad Thai* (1990), first performed at the Paula Allen Gallery in New York, in which the artist cooked and offered food to exhibition visitors. Other artists have used the material of human relations in a less convivial and more critical mode, such as Liam Gillick's works which take the form of minimalist platforms and architectonic structures to conjure sites of

communication and exchange of information (fig 1). Another example is Superflex, a Danish collective of artists who devise and operate small businesses structures as counter-models to existing economic relations and production conditions (fig 2).

Fig 4: Gillick, Liam. *One Long Walk... Two Short Piers...* 2010, Installation view Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle, Bonn

Fig 5 and 6: Superflex. *Self-Organise/Guarana Power*, 2004, Installation views, Los Angeles, REDCAT

Fig 7: Superflex. *Self-Organise/Guarana Power*, 2004,
Installation views, Los Angeles, REDCAT

Fig 8: Superflex. *Self-Organise/Guarana Power*, 2003,
Installation view, Venice Biennial 2003

Bourriaud's approach to 1990's artistic practices is discussed and expanded on by Kester and Bishop, each of whom offers a comprehensive historical coverage of the developments of relational art from the 1990's to the present day. In *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* (2004) and *The One and The Many* (2011), Kester describes what he terms dialogical, collaborative and collective art; Bishop, in her book *Artificial Hells* (2012) uses the term participatory art. In their respective studies of collaborative and relational practices, Kester and Bishop address the ways in which these modes of production have contributed to the redefinition of the conditions of the presentation and mediation of art and begun to reshape the institutional nexus in which art making and reception occur. Both authors view these modes of artistic production as developments of the post-studio practices of the 1960's and see them as part of an ongoing critique that challenges the autonomy of the aesthetic field, a line of critical analysis initiated in the early twentieth century by the historical avant-garde and continued by the neo-avant-garde in the 1960's and 1970's.

1990's artistic strategies of critique of the autonomy of the experience

According to Bishop, participatory art defuses the singularity of the authorship of an artist into collective activities such as events, performances, shared meals, workshops and readings. (2012:12). She approaches the criticality of collaborative and relational practice through an analysis of how participatory authorship is used by the artist to produce the content of an artwork which, after its participatory production, is represented through 'modes of dissemination' such as archives, films and publications to other audiences that were not participant in the authorship process. (p. 35)

With a different emphasis, Kester finds that collective practices contribute to the critique of the autonomy of the aesthetic field. Not only do collective practices defuse single authorship, they also blur the boundaries of the artistic field: art interacts with other fields of knowledge production, such as urban planning and political activism. (2011: 14, 37) Kester's analysis differs from Bishop's as he suggests that collaborative practices deviate from what he calls 'textual forms of production' in which the work is presented to an audience or viewer to be consumed fully-formed. Rather, he says, collaborative practices build the meaning of the work through shared knowledge and experiences between the artists, the audience, and between different fields of cultural production. Thus the meaning of the work is not presented fully-formed to a final recipient, and the aesthetic cannot be embodied in a finished work. Instead, it is embodied in the shared experience during which the work's meaning is in continuous formation. (p.10)

In tracing the historical origins of collaborative and participatory practices' critique of artistic autonomy, Bishop and Kester found that despite the Romantics' claim that the aesthetic field was self-contained and removed from means-ends relationships, they also claimed that the aesthetic experience promised a better world. (Bishop, 2012: 27; Kester, 2011: 38) Bishop and Kester agree that this paradox has been considered by generations of artists in the twentieth century, however they suggest that the critical focus of collaborative and participatory practices has turned away from the autonomy of the work of art and onto the autonomy of the experience of the work. The implication of collaborative and relational practice is that it is the active experiencing of art that allows us to reconfigure the world we

know. Bishop refers to Jacques Rancière when she argues that the 'undecidability of aesthetic experience implies a questioning of how the world is organised, and therefore the possibility of changing and redistributing that same world.' (Bishop, 2012: 27)

Kester refers to Friedrich von Schiller's writings, saying that the philosopher passed on to future generations, 'not simply the belief that artistic experience is in some essential way distinct from political experience, but the more extreme proposition that any form of political action is premature until humanity allows itself to be guided by aesthetic principles (…) art has no purpose and possesses an entirely "intrinsic" value, yet art is also the sole experiential, mode capable of reversing the deleterious effects of modernity.' (p. 42) Bishop and Kester studies indicate that collaborative and participatory art practices inherited from previous generations of artists the understanding that space of aesthetic experience is highly political because it is a space of *undecidability*, of possibilities and of reconfigurations.

Kester in particular develops this understanding of the undecidability of aesthetic experience in his description of the processes through which art is produced collaboratively. The participants' shared experience embodies a generative and open-ended kind of content (as opposed to fully-formed content) collapsing the moment of authorship with the moment of mediation. In being both author and receptor of a content that is never fully closed, the audience experiences the aesthetic in a non-mediated and therefore autonomous space. Kester's description of collaborative practices' mode of address – the invitation to the audience to participate in the authorship of the artworks' content – indicates how this mode of address constitutes an artistic strategy that appropriates the moment of mediation and incorporates it with the moment of authorship. Thus, collaborative practice ensures that the autonomy of its aesthetic experience is not compromised by the processes that condition mediation.

The mediating apparatus and the conditions of mediation

A critique of the conditions of mediation is well exemplified in Andrea Fraser's art practice and writing. Her work reflects upon art institutional and discursive frames within a tradition of institutional critique (as outlined by Bishop and Kester). Fraser has defined her own mode

of practice against the context provided by the motivations of the generation of artists preceding the 1990's generation – the neo-avant-garde, in their challenge of artistic autonomy. She states her case this way:

> If the critique of the production and exchange of art objects as commodities – like the critique of the studio and the museum – emerged out of a critique of the autonomy of the artwork, it was not just as a challenge to aestheticism. Rather, it was rooted in a recognition of the partial and ideological character of that autonomy and an attempt to resist the heteronomy to which artists and artworks are subject by the apparatus that supports their legitimacy and through which that legitimacy is appropriated as symbolic and economic profit. The critique of the art objects autonomy in this sense was less a rejection of artistic autonomy (as a specific aesthetic dimension) than a critique of the uses to which artworks are put: the economic and political interests they serve. (Fraser, 2005: 57)

Fraser's insight here pinpoints distinguishes between a critique of the autonomy of the object, and a critique of the *uses* to which the auratic object is put by an apparatus that supports art's legitimacy. According to Fraser, the neo-avant-garde repositioned its critical focus from that of early avant-gardes, and instead of focusing on what constitutes the autonomous aesthetic dimension of the object of art (authorship, artistic medium, etc…) instead it interrogated what constitutes the autonomous experience of that aesthetic dimension (modes of presentation and mediation of the object of art).

Fraser seizes on the importance of the autonomy of the aesthetic experience. Her own emphasis is on the critique of the *uses* given to the objects' autonomous status by an apparatus that supports the legitimacy of that status. Her analysis prompts two questions: What is the apparatus and how does it legitimise the autonomous status of the object? What are the conditions that allow the appropriation of the autonomy of the object of art?

Tony Bennett addresses these same questions in his conceptualisation of the *exhibitionary complex* and how it institutes an audience. (Bennett, 1988) He describes the way the exhibitionary complex encapsulates the necessary strategies for the bourgeoisie to institute its polities of governance – specifically, over a populace that, in principle, exercised critical debate to ensure the separation of the state and private property, and therefore would only respond to governance in a voluntary way. (p. 99) Bennett describes how society and its institutions started to open to public scrutiny in the process of legitimisation and

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spectacularisation of the state's administration. While the public accessed a panoramic view over the state, the World Expositions and museums delivered a panoramic view of the all world, in displays of objects, animals, plants and peoples from all over the planet. At a time when the state came under public surveillance, the exhibitionary complex presented bourgeois society with 'the other', placing the public on the same side as the state and neutralising the tension between the two. Public debate was then conditioned by the reception of a projected image of itself, as a unified mass identity. This hegemonic system of mediation legitimises the autonomous status of object of art through its authoritative presentation and communication to the audience, constituted as part of a generalised, non-debating, homogenous mass.

The institutional critique initiated by the avant-garde – in movements such as Dada and Surrealism, and continued by neo-avant-garde (in practices such as post-minimalism and conceptual art) and by contemporary institutional critique practices such as those of Andrea Fraser, Louise Lawler and Fred Wilson, among others –focused particularly on the exhibitionary complex's physical spaces of the museum and art gallery, its presentation and communication formats such as exhibitions, interpretation materials and publications .

As described by Bruce Ferguson, exhibitions function as systems of representation, 'utterances, in a chain of signification [that] can be the speech act of an institution. [...] When this institution speaks, it speaks exhibitions. It utters a kind of sense that it believes to be true. Exhibitions are its instrument of pitch.' (1995: 183) The pitch is communicated through certain mechanisms such as '...architecture which is always political, its wall colourings which are always psychologically meaningful, labels which are always didactic [...] artistic exclusions which are powerfully ideological [...] lighting which is always dramatic [...] and security systems...'. (p. 118)

Specific examples of artists' strategic interventions in the exhibitionary complex's formats and mechanisms of mediation to expose their ideological appropriation to pitch and legitimise a narrative are Andrea Fraser's *Gallery Talk* (1989) and Fred Wilson's *Metalwork 1793-1880* (1992). In *Gallery Talk* (fig 9) Fraser performed the role of a museum tour guide under the name Jane Castleton and guided museum visitors through some of the rooms of the

Philadelphia Museum of Art. During the visit she pointed to the architecture and the museum collections, referring to education programs, museum trustees and membership while articulating the role of the museum in the constitution of subjectivity and social values, as well as the appropriation of the museum role by economic and political interests. *Gallery Talk* exists in several formats: a live performance in the form of a museum tour, a video recorded introduction to the museum, and a text published in *Museum Highlights* a collection of essays authored by Fraser and published in 2005. Here is an excerpt:

> Jane walks to a window and leans against the piano standing in front of it
>
> [Quoting from the Philadelphia Museum of Art own policy] The Municipal Art Gallery (…) 'gives an opportunity for enjoying the highest privileges of wealth and leisure to all those people who have cultivated tastes but not the means of gratifying them'. And for those who have not yet cultivated taste, the Museum will provide 'a training in taste'. But, above all, the Municipal Art Gallery should be 'generous enough to fitly symbolize the function of art as the expression of all that is noblest in either the achievements or the aspirations of humanity…"where there is no vision the people perish.'"
>
> Jane throws open the curtains covering the window and reveals a perfect vista of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway
>
> And just look at this view! Magnificent!
>
> [Still quoting from the Museum's own policy] 'If we do not possess art in a city, or beautiful spots in the city, we cannot expect to attract visitors to our home town.'
>
> Jane gestures toward group.
>
> 'Because young people in particular are drawn to the area, Philadelphia attracts a huge labour pool of collage-educated and trained technical people. And, due to its old manufacturing traditions, skilled labourers are also plentiful. (…) If you just follow me, please.
>
> (Fraser, 2005: 98,99)

Fig 9: Fraser, Andrea, *Gallery Talk*, 1989, Live performance at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Fred Wilson artworks such as *The Other Museum* (1991) and *Mining the Museum* (1992), intervened directly on existent museum displays, specifically on labels, wall colouring, selection, combination and positioning of objects within the exhibit, to redistribute the meaning and significance of the objects, as well as the overall pitch of the museum exhibits. A notorious display, in one of the cabinets of the *Mining the Museum* installation at Maryland Historical Society, was a category of object with great presence throughout the museum displays, repoussé silver, presented in juxtaposition with some slave shackles that Wilson had brought out of the Museum's storage. The artist identified the display with a label containing the text, *Metalwork 1793-1880* (fig 10). Wilson's installations engaged directly with the display design and content of the Museums collection and resembled an exhibition that could have been produced by the Museum itself. His artistic strategy is the appropriation of the role of the curator in addressing the audience. His manipulations of mechanisms of mediation extended the legitimisation of some objects' autonomous status to other objects, and through this, legitimised an alternative narrative.

Fig 10: Wilson, Fred. *Metalwork 1793-1880*, 1992, Maryland Historical Society, Maryland,
Mining the Museum Installation view.

Fraser's and Wilson's works, produced in the early 1990's, exemplify a critique of the exhibitionary complex's mediation process and how that process legitimises a hegemonic narrative. Their critique is inserted within that system of mediation utilising its own mode of address – museum tours, exhibition display and interpretation material By contrast, 1990's collaborative art practices, however, introduced a new mode of address by inviting the audience into the moment of authorship from whence a narrative is generated, from within a shared unmediated experience that embodies generative open-ended content. This mode of address constitutes a counter space for the experience of the aesthetic; counter, that is, to that of the exhibitionary.

In summary, attempts by the neo-avant-garde of the 1960's to enlarge the role of the spectator fell short of success because the artistic strategies they employed did not adequately address the conditions that determine the process of mediation. Those conditions were determined by the mode of address practiced by the exhibitionary complex, which, since the nineteenth century, has coveted the legitimisation of the autonomous status of the artwork. In the 1990's, collaborative art practices formulated a new attempt to challenge the institutional appropriation of the process of mediation. While other critical strategies were already developing in the beginning of the 1990's, these were still operating from within the exhibitionary complex and through its mode of address. Collaborative practices instigated a

new mode of authorship, a new mode of address, a new mode of production and a new mode of presentation that constituted an alternative to the aesthetic experience offered by the exhibitionary complex, and a countermand to its claim to legitimacy.

Chapter 2

Situating New Modes of Audience Address

Expanding upon the foregoing discussion in chapter one, this chapter traces the development of modes of addressing the audience that resulted from artists' critiques of the presentation of art in the space of the museum and art gallery in the 1960's. With reference to the iconic example of Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* and Roselyn Deutsche's writing on the polemic generated by the decommissioning of that work in 1989, the present chapter describes how the early sitings of artworks in public spaces initially created unmediated encounters with artwork for audiences, by introducing a new mode of address. The new mode of address engendered by site specificity operated to constitute counter-publics and counter-spaces that generated and permitted autonomous aesthetic experiences. However, this mode of address was ultimately neutralised by the extension of exhibitionary complex's mediation mechanisms being applied to the presentation of art in the public space. I conclude by flagging Miwon Kwon's response and assessment of the problem, and her proposed solution in participatory models of communicative practices, and co-ownership of the means of distribution and dissemination of the content of artworks.

Post-minimalist practices effected a change of presentation space into a space of communication, with artwork no longer being reliant on traditional exhibition spaces such as museums and art galleries, heralding the new category of public art that developed in the 1960's and 1970's in the United States, Europe and elsewhere including Australia. Exemplars were the 'Windham College Show' (1968), curated by Seth Siegelaub, and 'Skulptur Projekte Münster' (first presentation in 1977), curated by Klaus Bussmann and Kasper König. The term *Public Art* emerged in late 1960's in the United States at the same time as other terms associated with the presentation of art in the public space such as *Art in Public Places*, *Art in Architecture* and *Percent for Art* (Kester, 2011: 187) However, the discussion and theorisation of the presentation of art in the public space has emerged within a separate discursive frame from that of contemporary art only in the 1980's. According to Roselyn Deutsche, this

differentiation in discursive frames resulted from the new mode of addressing the public generated by Richard Serra's *Tilted Arc* (1981-1989) (Fig. 6).

The sculpture was installed in 1981 at the Federal Plaza in front of the Jacob Javits Federal Building in New York, and removed in 1989 because of its impact on the fluidity of pedestrian traffic in the public space. Deutsche suggests that the dispute over the removal of the artwork was focused on the utilitarian aspects of the work's installation in the public space, when it should have been focused on how the sculpture constituted the public through the confrontation of the physicality of the object with the viewer in the specific context of the plaza – themes that are part of contemporary art discourse. (Deutsche, 1996: 267) Deutsche writes of the discourses that frame *Tilted Arc* dispute over the site chosen for the presentation of the work – the Federal Plaza which fronts the entrance to the building that houses most of the American federal agencies in New York.

Richard Serra's artistic practice was seminal within post-minimalist practices. Central concerns of such practice were the displacement of the subject of art outside the object, and a phenomenological understanding of the embodied encounter of art by a viewer made aware of the space and conditions of that encounter. When presented outside the museum and within the public space, Serra's work had the potential to trigger a reconfiguration of the understanding of the context where the work was sited.

Deutsche suggests that the documentation and discussion of the *Tilted Arc's* polemic in the book *The Destruction of Titled Arc: Documents* (1990) framed the discourse around public art in terms of public usefulness, locking out artists, critics and curators' efforts to cast public art 'as work that helps to create a public space in the sense of a public sphere, an arena of political discourse' (Deutsche, 1996:267). The discursive frame introduced by the publication referred to by Deutsche emerged from the debate generated by the work's direct impact on the audience's experience and not by the mediation mechanisms of the exhibitionary complex. The critical specific siting of *Tilted Arc* introduced a new mode of addressing the audience and generated a counter discourse to that of the exhibitionary complex. Deutsche expands this discussion and addresses the political and economic interests that benefit from its association

of public art with notions of utility, but for the purpose of my argument, the most salient point of her discussion is that a new discourse was generated by the specific siting of the artwork in the plaza. The address of the audience from within the site in which the work was presented, and the unmediated encounter of the work by the audience, momentarily generated an autonomous aesthetic experience and the possibility of multiple understandings of the site.

Reflecting on the kind of audience constituted by the mode of address introduced by *Tilted Arc's* site specificity, Deutsche suggests a radical new kind of audience relation which she calls an *art public*, which is not a pre-existing entity, but one that comes into being only by virtue of its participation in the political realm, which she calls the public sphere. (Deutsche, 1996 288) Deutsche intuited what in 2005 Michael Warner defined as *counter publics:* '"counter" to the extent that they try to supply different ways of imagining stranger sociability and its reflexivity'. (Warner, 2005: 221) Warner's description of counter publics introduces an alternative notion of *public* as described by Habermas – as those who are engaged in the process of accessing information in the performance of public debate. (Habermas, 1989) Warner's critique of Habermas's notion of the public considers that, in the early stages of the bourgeois public sphere, the access to information was limited to white educated males. His proposition of the existence of counter publics rather than only one public, makes it possible to imagine Deutsche's radical suggestion of an art practice that can be legitimised by no pre-established frame unless it is that of public debate. Warner offers an account of the public sphere as a realm in which not only does a single public perform a single debate, but several counter publics perform counter debates to constitute and legitimise themselves as counter publics In this sense *public* is not constituted and legitimised universally but contingently. Also referring to Habermas's work, Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge in 1993 consider the public sphere not as a series of physical spaces as described by Habermas (the coffee house, the museum, etc…) but as a series of experiential spaces in which subjects become public when they interact with each other and share a relational experience. (Negt and Kluge, 1993) This notion of public sphere goes beyond a conception of a single network of spaces that stage public debate, to an idea of the coexistence of multiple micro public spheres, constituted by subjects that through relational experiences imagine, communicate and legitimise themselves as counter publics.

Deutsche's observation, about the debate that emerged from the mode of address introduced by *Tilted Ar's* site specificity revealed that, despite the bourgeois enforcement of hegemonic discursive frames and exhibitionary formats for an authoritative constitution of an audience, artworks that adopt a site-specific mode of address can function as counter spaces of experience. They can constitute counter audiences who legitimise themselves through the debate generated by the artwork's mode of address. While they legitimise themselves as audiences of the artwork, they also legitimise the work itself *as* an artwork.

1990's collective art practices are contemporaneous with the redefinition of the public sphere as a series of contingent, participatory, experiential and relational counter spheres. New modes of address, such as site-specificity, the invitation to the audience to participate in the authorship of the artwork through shared experiences, emerged from artists' displacement of the production and/or presentation of the artwork out of the studio, museum and gallery into the public space. Examples of these practices are those of Jeremy Deller (fig 11), Felix Gonzales Torres and Roman Ondak after a previous generation of artists such as Krzystof Wodiczko (fig 10), Barbara Kruger and Group Material.

Fig 11:   Wodiczko, Krzysztof. "Hirshhorn Museum, Washington, D.C.", 1988, Public projection at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, D.C

Fig 12: Dellar, Jeremy. "Battle of Orgreave", 2001, Street charge detail, Orgreave

The presentation and communication of this type of artworks were, however, quickly co-opted and absorbed by the exhibitionary complex through its extension of its mediation and legitimisation mechanisms. Public art organisations such as Artangel, Situations (UK) and Creative Time (US), public art exhibition series such as *One Day Sculpture* (New Zealand, 2009), as well as other presentations of art in the public space, such as biennales and institutional projects presented outside the gallery space, referred to as 'off-site', were promoted and legitimised by exhibitionary complex's mechanisms of mediation such as signage, promotional material, publications and the recently introduced mediation mechanism, the website. In the publication that accompanied the public art series *One day Sculpture*, Claire Doherty describes how artist Pawel Althamer announced the presentation in the public space of his work *Real Time Movie*, which was presented in the context of Tate's exhibition *The World as a Stage*:: 'Althamer's London *Real Time Movie* self-consciously deploys the systems of viral distribution and promotion through which the Tate brand is sustained.' (Cross and Doherty, 2009: 43)

Miwon Kwon, heading from Frazer Ward's encouragement to consider the function of art as a form of publicity, 'a mode of communication rather than the resulting site of the communication' reviews some paradigmatic public artworks and considers them as 'different models of communicative practices or forms of public address rather than genres of art'. (Kwon, 2002:1) Guided by four modes of communicative practices suggested by Raymond

Williams[3], Kwon progresses through the categories of 'authoritarian', 'paternalistic' and 'commercial' to arrive to the more evolved from of communicative practice - 'democratic'. Kwon describes this mode of communication as–

> a system that maximises individual participation and allows independent groups licensed to use publicly owned means of communication - theatres, broadcast stations, film studios, newspapers, etc. - to determine what is produced. That is, the modes of expression and communication and the means of their distribution or dissemination are owned by the people who use them. And what is produced is decided by those who produce it. (Kwon, 2002: 2).

The democratic mode of communication described by Kwon shows some similarities with the process of collaborative authorship described by Kester, but while in Kester's description the participants build the meaning of the work through shared knowledge and experience, in Kwon's description they also share and own the means of distribution and dissemination of that content.

Despite 1960's art practices' failure in redefining spectatorship, new modes of address were introduced as result of their critical artistic strategies, specifically the placement of the object of art outside the physical spaces of the museum and art gallery. The siting of artworks in specific sites and the address of the audience from that specificity, through unmediated encounters with the artwork, generated a momentarily autonomous aesthetic experience and the possibility of multiple reconfigurations of the understanding of the site. Reflecting on the kind of audience constituted by this new mode of address, Rosalyn Deutsche imagined a new radical kind of art practice that has non pre-existing entity unless through its participation in the political realm, an art that is not legitimised by any pre-established discursive frame unless public debate. Critiques of Habermas's description of public sphere introduced notions that go beyond a conception of a single network of spaces that stage public debate, and to an idea of the coexistence of multiple micro public spheres, constituted by subjects that through relational experiences imagine, communicate and legitimise themselves as counter publics. The introduction of notions of *counter public spheres* and *counter publics* opens up possibilities for realising Deutsche's radical imagining. 1990's collective art practices are contemporaneous with the introduction of these notions. Their adoption of human relations as

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[3] Raymond Williams, 'Communications and Community'. *Resources of Hope*, London: Verso, 1989: 19-31

medium and shared experiences as a mode of production might be seen has a strategy to create counter spaces of experience. However, unmediated encounters with artworks soon became engulfed by the exhibitionary complex's controlled mediation mechanisms that neutralised the new mode of address and the constitution of debating counter publics. But all was not lost. In an essay from 2001, Miwon Kwon reviews some paradigmatic public artworks and considers them as 'different models of communicative practices', introducing the idea of a system that maximises individual participation through shared and co-owned modes of expression and communication and the means of their distribution or dissemination.

Chapter 3

1990's Curatorial Practice: A Review of A Redefined Field

Since the 1990's, in response to the new communicative practices theorised by such commentators as Miwon Kwon, as discussed in chapter two, there has been a paradigm shift in curatorial practice from models introduced in the 1960's.

As an expanded professional role, that of curator has become high profile over the last two to three decades, and a number of curators have gained celebrity status. There has been a corresponding explosion in the number of postgraduate courses, research grants and prizes dedicated to curatorial practice. As the profession has undergone redefinition and the role become increasingly visible, a body literature has emerged which reflects upon the contemporary curator as an artistic producer, and curatorial methodology and techniques of exhibition practice. The role of the curator has been recast as that of performer by Maria Lind, as mediator by Paul O'Neill, and producer by Paul O'Neill and Claire Doherty. This chapter offers a survey of the literature.

During the 2000's, the singular position of the curator of exhibitions was widely discussed in numerous symposia and specialist magazines, mainly distributed from Europe. Discussions appeared in the British *Art Monthly* as feature articles by Alex Farquharson, Dave Beech and Paul O'Neill. In this emergent field of curatorial history and theory O'Neill has become an eminent author. Discourse on the transformation of the curator's role has also been published in edited collections of texts such as *Curating Subjects* (ed. Paul O'Neill, 2007) and *Issues in Curating Contemporary Art and Performance* (eds. Judith Rugg and Michèle Sedgwick, 2007). Three recent monographs signal the consolidation of theorisation and historicisation of contemporary curatorial practice: O'Neill and Doherty's *Locating the Producers: Durational Approaches to Public Art* (2011), Terry Smith's *Thinking Contemporary Curating* and Paul O'Neill's *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Cultures* (both published in 2012).

These followed two comprehensive studies dedicated specifically to the work of two iconic curators: Harald Szeeman (Derieux ed., 2007) and Seth Siegelaub (Alberro, 2003).

From this body of writing, points of discussion that inform my research are the impact of strategies of collaborative art practices on the process of mediation between artwork and audience; curatorial strategies that were adopted to mediate collaborative artworks; how those curatorial strategies determined the communication and re-presentation of such artworks; and how in particular the curatorial role may be developed so as to assist in forging counter publics.

The French institutional context forms the background for Nathalie Heinich and Michael Pollak's discussion in their essay *From Museum Curator to Exhibition Auteur* (1995). Here they describe changes in the curator's role, which they explain as having emerged out of a crisis. Traditionally, curators performed the crucial tasks of safeguarding the heritage, enriching collections, research and display. Heinich and Pollak identify a marked shift that occurred, whereby an authorial position for the curator emerged through exhibition making: thus curators came to occupy a more singular, personalised position of 'curator of exhibitions', performing tasks more focused on 'the presentation to the public'. (1995: 235)

In the 1990's, a group of European curators constituted by Hans Ulrich Obrist led a series of further redefinitions: they interrogated exhibition formats, the role of the curator, and the identity of art institutions. Group members became eminent figures and today occupy leading positions in the field, and are responsible for presenting contemporary art on different fronts: world leading art institutions and art education programs, grand scale exhibitions and publications on curatorial discourse. Obrist was curator of the *Migrateurs* program at the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris (1993) in which most of 1990's emerging generation of artists presented work. He was co-curator of *Utopian Station*, Venice Biennale (2003) and *Cities on the Move* (1997-2000), now considered paradigmatic exhibitions. He has written and edited several publications on art practices and on curatorial practice in particular. Currently Obrist is co-director of Exhibitions and Programs and Director of International Projects at the Serpentine Gallery in London.

Hou Hanrou, Obrist's co-curator for *Cities on the Move* (1997-2000) now specialises in the curatorship of biennials, and his past outputs include Shangai (2000), Gwangju (2002), Tirana (2005) and Istanbul (2007); currently he is working on the 5th Auckland Triennial for May – August, 2013. Maria Lind, another of Obrist's colleagues, was curator at Moderna Museet in Stockholm (from 1997 to 2001) where she experimented with exhibition design and communication techniques such as in the exhibition *What If: Art on the Verge of Architecture and Design,* for which she commissioned artists Liam Gallic to design the exhibition display and lighting and Pae White to design the catalogue. (Farquharson, 2003: 15) As Director of Kunstverein Müenchen (2002-2004), she developed institutional projects that instigated a line of curatorial practice known today as 'New Institutionalism', which is also associated with curators Catherine David and Charles Eche. 'New Institutionalism' reviews the role of art institutions in the production and distribution of culture.

Nicolas Bourriaud curated several exhibitions such as *Traffic* (1996), which included most of the artists whose works Bourriaud were to later refer to as 'Relational Aesthetics' (2002). Bourriaud is currently the Director of the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Art, Paris. Finally, Jens Hoffman is another curator of repute: he was co-curator of the 1st Berlin Biennial (1998), guest curator of the 9th Lyon Biennial (2007), and founder of the leading publication on curatorial practice, *The Exhibitionist: A Journal on Exhibition Making* (2009). Hoffman is now the Deputy Director of the Jewish Museum in New York.

Seminal discourse on the redefinition of curatorial practices has been articulated mainly within European art institutions such as the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris in France, the Kunstverein München in Germany and De Appel Arts Centre in The Netherlands. In the United States, Independent Curators International has played an important role in research, discourse and development of professional networks for curators. In the American context, the role of the contemporary art curator has undergone redefinition primarily through public art presentation. The work of leading American curator Mary Jane Jacob includes influential public art projects such as *Places with a Past* (1991), presented in the context of Spoleto Festival in Charleston, South Carolina, and *Culture in Action* (1991-1993) presented in the

context of Sculpture Chicago. Although Jacob's curatorial methodologies have not been articulated and theorised by the European leading institutional and academic curatorial discourses, her innovative methodology is proving to be a major influence for contemporary curators in the US where notable curators are Nato Thompson and Dan Cameron. Thompson was a student of Jacobs in the 1990's, and he is currently chief curator at Creative Time, the leading US public art commissioning organisation. Cameron is founder and artistic director of U.S. Biennial the organisation that produces *Prospect New Orleans*, the two first editions of which Cameron curated, in 2007–08 and 2011–12.

As well as the museum and gallery context, innovation in contemporary curatorship in the European context also occurred in the realm of public art, most significantly through the work of two UK-based commissioning organisations, *Situations,* led by Claire Doherty, which started in 2002, and *Artangel,* founded in 1985 by Roger Took, which came to prominence at the beginning of 1990's under the directorship of James Lingwood and Michael Morris. In 2011 Claire Doherty and Paul O'Neill published a joint publication focused on public art curatorial methodologies that emerged in Europe during the 2000's. Through their assessment of several European case studies, the authors developed the notion of 'durational' public art curatorial methodologies and the role of the public art curator as 'producer'.

The development of durational public art curatorial methodologies, Doherty and O'Neill recount, occurred in response to previous curatorial methodologies described by Miwon Kwon as 'nomadic' and 'itinerant', and which she criticised for their superficial engagement with the public and their short-term repercussions. To date, Kwon's publication *One place after another: site-specific art and locational identity* (2002) is the most referred to study on site-specific art (art in which the physical, social, political, economic and emotional context of the work's presentation, are intrinsic to the work's conceptual content, medium and presentation mode). (Kwon, 2002)

The discourse around new curatorial methodologies in Europe of the 1990's emerged through symposia and other professional discursive platforms. The emergent enquiry about the field was captured in seminal discussions printed in the pages of yearly 2000's British *Art Monthly*

(Issues 269, 270, 272, 275 and 291). In their respective feature articles Alex Farquharson and Paul O'Neill focused on new experimental exhibition formats, the new role of both curator and artist within these formats, and on specific curatorial methodologies that at that time constituted a new paradigm in exhibition making. Farquharson and O'Neill each recognised the influence of the new group of European curators briefly profiled above, who talked of exhibitions as 'construction sites', 'laboratories', think-thanks' and 'distribution channels'.

O'Neill focused on the redefinition of exhibitions as mediation spaces, through experimentation with display techniques by curators and artists. He suggests that through the process of redefining the exhibition as a mediation space, curators and artists shape it as a space 'where the signification of artwork is constructed, deconstructed and reconstituted with meaning'. (203, Issue 272: 9) He emphasised the necessity to develop a history and new lexicon for exhibition making beyond the discussion of the objects presented, so that exhibitions could be determined as a medium, and curatorship determined as a practice, defined by a discipline's specific language. (p. 9).

Similarly, Farquharson was attentive to new curatorial methodologies that were transforming the exhibition into 'a live medium, rather than simply a spatial exercise.' (Farquharson, 2003, Issue 269: 8) He referred to Maria Lind's term, 'performative curating' which 'may imply an interest in art-as-event rather than art-as-object'. (Farquharson, 2003, Issue 269: 8) Farquharson referred to Hou Hanru who speaks of 'curating in a 'four dimensional way', and Obrist's idea of 'time-based exhibitions' and 'exhibitions on the move' that were 'unstable' and 'self-generating systems'. (Farquharson, 2003, Issue 269: 8) Farquharson observed that the new performative curatorial methodology did not confine itself to exhibition making but also impinged on the identity of the museum as institution. He noted that Maria Lind, who was director of Kunstverein München at the time (2002 –2004), wrote that the words 'showing' and 'exhibiting' would have to be used less frequently as museums' activities were not limited to 'showroom' and 'archive' but included exhibitions produced according to 'performative curating' methodologies that included, talks and discussions in areas of the museum traditionally dedicated to the presentation of artefacts, while art was being presented in areas of the museum traditionally dedicated to meetings, food and leisure (lobby, cafe, book store, etc.). (Farquharson, 2003, Issue 269: 8)

Farquharson and O'Neill both envisaged a mode of curatorship that initiates a self-reflexive discourse. Through exhibition making itself, as a creative practice in its own right, these commentators concurred, curators were developing a vocabulary and set of forms and, in the process, they were redefining the exhibitionary format from within the art institution. Lately another significant contribution to the development of a history of curatorial practice and lexicon for exhibition making has been made by Simon Sheikh (May 2012:19 - 48). Sheikh conceived of exhibitions as events that position the viewer in relation to a conceptual horizon via visual representations, (Sheikh, 2010: 26m.13s). He sees exhibitions as having the potential to be counter-spaces of experience or counter-public spheres. (Sheikh, 2004) Farquharson linked this redefinition and its emphasis on exhibition–as–medium to modes of institutional critique that had emerged in the art practice of the 1990's.

As described in chapter one, the critique posed by 1990's artistic practices was an extension of the neo-avant-garde's critique of the bourgeoisie's appropriation of the autonomy of the aesthetic experience, and a bid to return the museum to its critical origins. The artistic strategies used by both generations of artists are similar: the neo-avant-garde of the 1960's transferred the address of the spectator from the object to the space that mediates the experience of the subject of art; 1990's practitioners transferred the address of the spectator from the mediating space of experience into the space of collective authorship. Their redefinition of the processes of mediation was, at least in part, a critique of the way that arts institutions frame the autonomy of the aesthetic experience. This framing was attacked as a bourgeois ideological construct. This artistic challenge to established exhibiting formats, and the mode by which audiences are addressed via those formats, had the effect of forcing curators to redefine their role as 'mediator'. As the 1990's challenge to the appropriation of the mediation space expanded upon the neo-avant-garde's critique, so too did the redefinition of the institutional mediation of art, in which curatorial practice was implicated.

Responding to the neo-avant-garde's critique of institutional mediation, curators introduced new modes of mediation through which 1990's artistic practices would develop their own critical artistic strategies. In *Conceptual Art And The Politics Of Publicity* (2003), Alexander Alberro traces the emergence of conceptual art through the lens of curator Seth Siegelaub's involvement in this art movement. Alberro found that conceptual art's pursuit for multiple

publicities 'and the emancipation from traditional forms of artistic value were as definitive as the fusion of the artwork with advertising'. (Alberro, 2003:5). One example offered by Alberro to illustrate this fusion is the exhibition *One Month* (1969).[4] The exhibition took the form of calendar of the month of March 1969, in which thirty-one invited artists presented a work for each day of the month. The catalogue of the exhibition collapsed 'primary information' – that of the subject of art contained in the artwork, with 'secondary information' – the subject of art contained in the communication of the artwork. The exhibition and artworks were only available through the calendar catalogue as 'there was no site or gallery to be visited.' (Alberro, 2003: 155). In an interview Siegelaub explained that, the presentation of an artwork that is no longer dependent on its physical presence, can happen equally in books and catalogues. 'When information is *primary*, the catalogue can become the exhibition.'(Alberro, 2003: 155).

Conceptual artists set out to undermine the ideological appropriation of the moment of presentation through the dematerialisation of the object of art. In response, similarly, Siegelaub's curatorial method focused on the *moment of communication* instead of the *moment of presentation*, with the intention of uncoupling the mediation of the artwork from the physical spaces of the museum and art gallery. Conceptual art's challenge to the mediation of the aesthetic experience triggered a curatorial method that made the experience of art available through a telephone call (*Inert Gas* series, Robert Barry, 1969), a telegram (*Confirmation*, On Kawara. Telegram sent to Sol Le Witt, February 1970) and a postcard (*I got up* series, On Kawara, 1969). From then on, the aesthetic experience was freed from the physical space of the art museum and art gallery.

Siegelaub's curatorial methodology, which uncoupled art presentation from the physical space of the gallery, created the right conditions for a new mode of addressing the audience to emerge in the future. But while his methodology reconfigured the moment of presentation into a moment of communication, the audience was still addressed through the exhibitionary complex's authoritative channel, and thus the audience's aesthetic experience was still conditioned by an authoritative and unilateral communication of the content of the artwork.

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[4] Also known as *March 1-31, 1969.*

Potentially, 1990's collaborative artistic practices offer a corrective to this failure, by appropriating the space of communication as configured by Siegelaub. From this space of communication, collaborative artistic practices directly address the audience and extend an invitation to participate collaboratively in producing art content. By collapsing the moment of authorship with the moment of communication, collaborative artistic practices constitute a participatory audience and a participatory modes of producing the artwork's content and, therefore, the audience's aesthetic experience was no longer conditioned by an authoritative and unilateral communication. The audience could access the subject of art by engaging in direct communication with the artist and other members of the audience. These shared experiences would embody the content of the artwork in a contingent, generative and open-ended form, accessible to those who took part in the participatory authorship.

However, Claire Bishop notes, 'Although the logical conclusion of [what she terms] participatory art is to foreclose a secondary audience (everyone is a producer; the audience no longer exists), for these actions to be meaningful, for the stake to be high, there need to be ways of communicating these activities to those who succeed the participants.' (2012: 217) Bishop goes on to discuss what she terms 'delegated performance' as an artistic strategy that successfully exemplifies the presentation of artworks with open-ended content to a secondary audience. Delegated performance, in her terms, is a form of negotiated authorship of the artwork's content, between the artist and the amateur performer/s, whom the artist has employed, to perform the artwork in an exhibition context. (p. 237) Bishop speaks of an exchange of agency by authenticity: while the artist delegates agency to the performer, the performer delegates authenticy to the artwork's content, because the amateur performer provides a link with the 'everyday social reality' from where he/she comes from. (p. 237)

Perhaps Bishop description resonates more with the understanding of the relationship of an artist with his/her artistic media than the understanding of how the generative and open-ended content frustrates an authoritative and unilateral communication. Delegated performance might provide the opportunity for artist to engage in collaborative authorship with the performers who he/she employs, but the presentation of the collaborative artwork's content to secondary audiences, while still embodied in the shared experience between the artist and the performer, is unilaterally communicated to the secondary audience. The shared experiences represented by delegated performance are contained and limited to the experience between artist and paid performer. The collaborative authorship is not open to the participation of

secondary audiences and so, according to collaborative artistic strategies, the autonomy of secondary audience's aesthetic experience cannot be assured.

In fact, in her study of participatory authorship, Bishop emphasises the moment in which the artist accesses material for their works (p. 237) and the communication of those works to 'those who succeed the participants' – the secondary audience (p. 217), through the insertion of participatory artworks into the 'mediation apparatus' (p237). This insertion is made, she says, through 'modes of dissemination', which include archives, films, publications (p. 35) and delegated performance (p. 237). Despite collaborative practices' strategies to instigate a new redefinition of the mediation space, the re-presentation of collaborative artworks is still practiced through the exhibitionary complex's traditional modes of address and legitimisation processes.

Notwithstanding the experiments with exhibitionary formats and curatorial methods that have been conducted in European art institutions since the 1990's, collaborative artworks are generally still re-presented through mediums and modes of presentation that do not adequately communicate the original artistic strategy, medium or artist's mode of production. The 1990's redefinition of curatorial practice saw a number of practical and technical changes to exhibition practice: reconfiguration of physical exhibition spaces, experiments with exhibition duration and with the format of catalogues and other mediation mechanisms – such as audio guided tours and public programs. These constituted direct responses on the part of museum directors and curators – the exhibitionary complex operators – to the challenge posed by 1990's artistic practices. As Ward and Bennett described, however, the sole purpose of the bourgeoisie's appropriation and manipulation of the exhibitionary complex was to legitimise the bourgeois narrative. The exhibitionary complex was engineered to address the audience and constitute it as a uniform, non-debating mass because the bourgeois authoritative legitimisation of its own narrative can only be done through a structure that allows unilateral authoritative communication. The problem that arises in the face of this situation is how to seek legitimacy for activities that fall outside of it, without subjecting them to rigidifying institutional codes. Irit Rogoff expresses the conundrum in this way: *'art* [she writes] is an historically determined meaning, which as been pushed at the edges to expand and contain a greater variety of activities, but never actually allowed to back up on itself, flip over into

something entirely different.' (Rogoff, 2012, 9m 47s – 21m 32s) In her diagnosis of the problem, Rogoff takes a broad approach to the institutional domain of art and culture, and frames the issues in a context that is more encompassing than the conception of 'the exhibitionary complex' as conceived of by Tony Bennett. She describes the problem as an epistemic crisis of art:

> This epistemological disorientation [says Rogoff] – What the hell do they mean when they mean *art* – has to imply a contested ground. (…) Is there an emergent mode of crisis thinking that is coming about, that is not descriptive and reactive, but generative? (…) Instead of discussing the crises itself, these become ways of framing and reframing critical issues such as the ones of insider and outsider, individual and collectives or legitimacies and illegitimacies; of framing and reframing them through a performative process of cultural production.' (Rogoff, 2012, 9m 47s – 21m 32s)

Rogoff widens the boundaries of the discussion beyond the scope of galleries and museums, and refers to what has been coined 'the educational turn' in art, and points to the example of self-organised universities as sites, situations or counter structures for collaboration and the dissemination of art. (Rogoff, 2012, 9m 47s – 21m 32s)

In summary, the 1990's redefinition of curatorial practice expanded the mediation apparatus to include new artistic developments but did not adequately consider the critical stance of those artistic developments. Since, as commentators such as Rogoff identify, new counter structures have been initiated which provide aesthetic experiences through the participation in collaborative authorship, and these may find legitimation from institutions outside of the exhibitionary complex. In the spirit of Rogoff's perspective, this thesis set about investigating a curatorial method for re-presenting collaborative, generative and open-ended artworks as counter spaces of shared experience in which the communication of the subject of art is determined, not by an authoritative and unilateral communication, but by a collaborative one.

Chapter 4

Preliminary Research: Case Studies I & II

Introduction

This research project began with two case studies, and ultimately comprised four in all. The first two case study exhibitions were developed and presented from 2008 to 2009. Their design was informed by preliminary questions that emerged from prior practical and theoretical research: my curatorial practice, which has been focused on the presentation of art in the public space since 2000 and my research on a group of artists who emerged in early 1990's and whose mode of production and presentation was manifested in public space. An influence on my thinking prior to this research project, and which formed a springboard for it, were Rosalyn Deutsche's pronouncements on public art and public space, and particularly (as discussed in chapter two of this exegesis) the new kind of audience relation she identifies, which she calls an *art public*: that is, one has no pre-existent entity unless through its participation in the public sphere, and therefore an art that is not legitimised by any pre-established discursive frame, other than public debate. (Deutsche, 1996)

With reference to Deutsche's notion of an art public, the preliminary research (case studies one and two) was formulated to compare different strategies of legitimating artwork, inside and outside the institutions of art. Over the course of curating these two exhibition case studies, relevant discourse was taking shape, and in fact it was not until I had the benefit of hindsight and reflection, and had read some publications that emerged after the first two case studies were complete, that I could really formulate what I had learnt from them. This chapter therefore presents a post hoc reflection about the logic and outcomes of these two parts of my course of study.

In 2011 and 2012, Grant Kester and Claire Bishop published the two first comprehensive studies about the 1990's artistic practices' strategies and purposes. Both authors had published

influential works before (I have referred to some of these in chapters two and three). In 2004 Grant Kester published the influential book *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art* and Claire Bishop published the paper *Antagonism and Relational Aesthetics* in the art journal October and in 2006 Claire Bishop published *The Social Turn: Collaboration and Its Discontents* in Artforum International and the collection of essays on participatory modes of art production, *Participation.* However, the latest publications by both authors brought to light fundamental information and insights about 1990's modes of art production and presentation that were pivotal to my research, and galvanised the project towards the final two case studies (discussed in chapters five and six).

Preliminary case study exhibitions

The preliminary case studies in the research project were designed as a comparative exercise to observe how art could be legitimised by curatorial framing and public debate, and to test strategies for eliminating a pre-existent audience, and instead constituting an art public – in other words, to put Deutsche's idea into operation. However, in hindsight and with reference to Kester and Bishop's contemporaneous writings, the first case studies pointed towards a more specific question, that is: How do different modes of address impact on the autonomy of the audiences aesthetic experience?

The first two case studies confirmed a problem already raised in the literature, and discussed in the previous chapters: that the legitimisation of art is determined by the exhibitionary complex's established mode of addressing the audience, and that this mode of address impacts on the autonomy of the aesthetic experience, even when it is pursued in the production of collaborative artworks. Case studies one and two each tested different modes of address to see the extent to which the autonomy of the aesthetic experience was compromised, or conversely, the extent to which it could be preserved.

As a comparative pair, the two first exhibitions were designed to enable me to observe the modes of address practiced through different levels of mediation, the dynamics of constituting an audience triggered by these modes of address, and how these dynamics impact on the audience's autonomy during their aesthetic experience.

The first exhibition addressed the audience through the multiple mechanisms of mediation typical to conventional exhibitions produced within the exhibitionary complex, but there was a certain frisson involved in addressing the audience, as contemporary art works were interposed within a heritage museum collection. The mediation mechanisms included the formal exhibition space itself, signage, exhibition design, interpretative labels, a catalogue, and institutional (arts festival) promotional material. My second exhibition case study was designed to address the audience through minimal mediation and most mechanisms of mediation were deliberately excluded. There was an absence of a formal exhibition space, no signage, no celebratory event marking the beginning of the exhibition period, no interpretative labels, no catalogue and no institutional promotional material. A small publication was produced, but it was published five months after the end of the exhibition. The only mechanism of mediation employed was exhibition design.

Case Study I: *Clarendon,* Evandale, Tasmania (2009)

I curated *Clarendon* in collaboration with my primary PhD supervisor, Noel Frankham and it was presented at the National Trust property, Clarendon, in Evandale, Tasmania, as part of *Trust*, a major project within Ten Days on the Island festival, from 15 March to 19 April 2009. *Clarendon* was one of five components of the larger *Trust* project.

The National Trust's museological configuration of Clarendon House tells the story of the Cox family who, like other early land grant settlers, helped to shape a country and a national narrative. The artists Lucy Bleach, Julie Gough, Michael McWilliams and John Vella were commissioned to intervene in the house's museological narrative. Amongst historical artefacts displayed in the house museum, the presentation of contemporary art during a cultural festival offered a context through which to address the audience via the standard means of the exhibitionary complex. The mediation mechanisms were Ten Days on the Island's promotional material, gallery labels placed next to the artworks containing name of the artists and brief description of the works, and a publication available at the exhibition location. Visitors, addressed via these mechanisms were constituted as audience that were invited to question the museological narrative attached to the house, and entertain some alternative ideas

via the introduction of new narratives introduced by contemporary art. Nonetheless, these alternative narratives were introduced via another authoritative communication of the temporary exhibition's narrative.

The site

Clarendon estate is often referred to as the flagship of Tasmania's National Trust. The property lies on the banks of the South Esk River between Evandale and The Nile. The neo-classical mansion was completed in 1838 by James Cox, second son of William Cox of Clarendon NSW, and today it contains a remarkable collection of artefacts reflecting the history of James's life in Clarendon with his second wife, Eliza Eddington-Collins, the daughter of Lt. Gov. David Collins, and their eleven children.

James Cox arrived in Van Diemen's Land in 1814 with his first wife, Mary Connell, to take up a land grant of 700 acres. He brought merino sheep with him from John Macarthur's NSW flock. At a time when wool was becoming the main industry of Van Diemen's Land, it was not difficult to expand the Cox property, and five years later James petitioned for, and was granted, a further 6,000 acres. Mary died delivering their eighth child in 1828. Cox married his second wife, Eliza Collins, in 1829 and soon afterwards commenced construction of the grand house, Clarendon, which became the seat of an extraordinary family enterprise. The estate once covered in excess of 20,000 acres as a celebrated Merino sheep and Hereford cattle stud.

Curatorial concept

Noel Frankham, the head curator of *Trust*, proposed the overarching curatorial concept: to respond to the historical specificity of some of the Tasmania National Trust properties. Within that broader frame the *Clarendon* exhibition had a more specific aim: to reflect on the historical role of land ownership in the shaping of social interactions and the environment through the narrative represented by the house itself, by means of a set of contemporary art interventions. The exhibition was devised to consider different groups of people that lived in

Tasmanian during the 1800's: people convicted to transportation, forced to leave England, Scotland and Ireland; people who were driven to travel in search of new opportunities and wealth; and the indigenous population – the original owners of the land. Together, these distinct groups shaped a new landscape, new industries, communities and society – a new state. Their story, of which Clarendon is a crucial part, is not very different from contemporary stories of communities that define themselves through their struggling relationships with each other and their environments.

Commissions

Lucy Bleach's practice enquires into the sense of belonging to a community and to a culture, seeking what binds these together into an identity and to a place. Bleach looked to the house itself and its contents as the frame through which its inhabitants, masters and servants, see the world. A window on a staircase landing provided the site to reflect on the concept of cultural landscape related to possession of property and its uses. If our interactions change the environment we inhabit, with the installation *Drawn* (2009) Bleach suggested that we are also changed by that interaction. (Fig. 13)

Fig 13: Bleach, Lucy. Drawn, 2009, Evandale, Tasmania, Australia. Silk, litmus, bee's wax, river, water, rainwater, Tasmanian oak.

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John Vella was intrigued by Clarendon house as a statement of culture, class and power – affirmed in the house's design and particularly its imposing portico. The addition of a deceptive structural device to the façade of the house – an unnecessary column added to the portico – emphasised delusions of grandeur so commonly projected onto architecture. *Poleposition* exposed the façade as pretence, recognising it as a statement of how an incoming 'civilised' society established a new order in the wild land. (Fig 14)

Fig 14: Vella, John. *Poleposition*. 2009, Evandale, Tasmania, Australia. Polystyrene, medium density fibreboard, dressed pine and plywood.

Michael McWilliams's paintings ironically portray the tense co-existence between the native and the introduced. In his wood panels, painted furniture and large canvasses, McWilliams presents scenarios in which familiar fauna and flora seem at once at home and out of place. His surreal landscapes are inhabited by animals that stand as if persisting and guarding the ownership of their native land; others comfortably settle in, while yet others appear to fade in the background. Four previous works and a new commission were displayed in different rooms of the house alongside the Cox family's own collection of paintings, which includes family portraits and a landscape by John Glover. (Fig. 15

Fig 15: McWilliams, Michael. *Another Dry Summer,* 2006, Evandale, Tasmania, Australia. Installation view. Acrylic on canvas.

The 'granting' or rather taking of half a million acres of land across the counties of Van Diemen's Land by newcomers between 1808-1832 formed the basis of Julie Gough's negotiation with the place now known as Clarendon. Gough's work relates to the uncovering and re-presentation of historical stories to question and re-evaluate the impact of the past on our present lives. For *Trust* she utilised Colonial Office correspondence and land grant records to create a video work which drew on travels along the South Esk River and roadways of Van Diemen's Land districts. The film was presented in the cellar of the house, from where Gough reminded us of a time when land was bounty and acreage was gifted to some for participating in the Black Line campaign of 1830: a push to remove Aboriginal people from this much sought after pastoral land. Revealing how land was usurped and this island was overrun by river and by road, Gough questioned how and whose heritage has been demarcated on the 'Heritage Highways' and byways of our tourist Tasmania. (Fig. 16)

Fig 16:   Gough, Julie. *Driving Black Home...2*, 2009, Evandale, Tasmania, Hobart. Installation view. DVD loop.

Mode of address and the constituted audience

The first exhibition case study included dominant traditional versions of the following mediation mechanisms: formal exhibition space (house-as-heritage-museum), signage, display design, interpretative labels, publication and institutional promotional material. The processes through which these mechanisms were put in place were also the traditional and dominant ones: display design, interpretative labels and publication content were determined by the curators; signage and promotional material were determined by the institutional structure presenting the exhibition, in this case, the festival, Ten Days on the Island.

The exhibition was installed throughout Clarendon House's several rooms, amongst the Cox family's objects. No plinths were used. Neither was any special lighting installed in the rooms, as we wished to avoid the theatrical presentation of artworks commonly practiced in the museum/gallery settings: instead, we wanted the ideas articulated in the artworks to coexist at the same level as the stories told by the family's objects. One interpretative label was placed next to each artwork. These contained information regarding the artwork (title, year, author and dimensions) with a brief description of the artist's practice and usual concerns and subject matter as well the ideas articulated in the specific artwork described. A publication was made available at the opening and site of the exhibition, as well as at other venues in which Ten Days on the Island events were presented. It comprised texts by the festival director and by

Trust's head curator, which described the overall curatorial concept, as well as texts which introduced each of the specific artworks presented at the five Tasmanian National Trust properties. The publication did not contain any photographic documentation of the commissioned artworks, nonetheless, it aided in the interpretation of the artworks and the overall *Trust* exhibition by introducing its subject matter. (The publication appears as Appendix 1). As *Trust* was part of the Ten Days on the Island festival, all five properties included in it were identified by the Festival's branding material, such as banners, maps and road signs. The publication introduced the exhibition and its five manifestations throughout curatorial texts, and was available at several festival venues, functioning as a promotional tool.

Although set in a museum context *Clarendon* presented artworks outside the traditional spaces of art presentation, to art audiences as well as audiences that wouldn't be necessarily expecting an encounter with art. I prepared a short, simple questionnaire (it appears as appendix 2) with twelve tick box answers, which I presented to the audience that visited *Clarendon* in the last two days of the exhibition.[5] The questionnaire asked visitors about the signage, exhibition design and interpretation material. There were 31 respondents. The answers to the questionnaires indicated that signage labels and catalogue were more often anticipated and utilised by audience members already familiarised with exhibitions and its implied processes. Audience members who did not frequent exhibitions didn't rely as much on these mechanisms of mediation to engage with artworks. The questionnaire revealed that audience encounters with John Vella's artwork *Poleposition* (Fig. 14) were especially indicative of the variance of engagement with the interventionist art and the mediation mechanisms. Vella's addition of a matching column to the façade of the building and its obstructive presence in front of the building's main entrance door might seem like an overt proclamation of artistic intervention – a bold and obvious joke with art allusions that would not be readable for all, but not all members of the audience who saw it distinguished it as an artwork. Comments from some indicated that they had failed to recognise the column as an art intervention because its interpretation label was not visible and too far from the structure, an oversight they would not have even been aware of unless the questionnaire had drawn their attention to the work, albeit belatedly.

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[5] The questionnaire was approved by the University ethics committee.

With the benefit of hindsight my reflections on the audience reception of *Trust* led me to reconsider post-minimalist and interventionist art strategies through the lens of 1990's theory. While these critical artistic strategies opened possibilities for the publicity of alternative narratives, they didn't consider the conditions that determined the address of the audience. Therefore, they did not effectively challenge the exhibitionary complex's domination of the legitimisation of a dominant narrative. As such, the audience's autonomy in their aesthetic experience was still conditioned by an authoritative legitimisation and communication of the artwork's content. The 1990's theoretical deconstructions of art institutions' role in mediating and legitimizing a narrative as well as a new understanding of constitution of counter publics, instigated new artistic strategies, such as collaborative authorship, in which the audience is invited to generate, communicate an legitimise the artwork's content in a counter mediation space to the space offered by the exhibitionary complex. These considerations about the role of the museum and various critiques of the way it serves a hegemonic narrative are taken up in chapter one. Very soon after *Trust,* I began to work on my second case study that was intended to draw more explicitly on post-1990's artistic strategies, and to provide a counterpoint to the relatively prescriptive mediated experience I had orchestrated in *Trust.*

Case Study II: *Expand/Contract*

I curated *Expand/Contract* as a series of exhibition events staged from 24 October to 21 November 2009 in Hobart. In this case study there was little address levelled at the audience, to permit an encounter with the artworks of minimal mediation.

The site

Expand/Contract was presented in the Cat & Fiddle Arcade, a shopping mall located in Hobart's CBD. The arcade connects two of the busiest streets of the area and has commercial and public circulation functions. The chosen location – an empty shop in the Arcade, was a

space that belonged to the everyday landscape, charged with everyday connotations, the use value of which was recognised by the audience. (fig 17)

Fig 17: Shop front at Cat & Fiddle Arcade, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia *Expand/Contract* exhibition location, 2009.

Curatorial concept

Expand/Contract focused on the audience's encounter with unmediated artworks. The artists Judith Abell, Astra Howard, Anthony Johnson and Tristan Stowards were commissioned to occupy a space that was not labelled as an art space and to present evolving artworks that unfolded as each artist occupied the space for a one-week period, thus generating four different unmediated experiences. The exhibition presented the discursive, dispersed, non-unified nature of experience.

Commissions

The appropriation of the shop space started subtly, with Judith Abell's interference with the shopping centre visitors' expectations. Each evening, when shops were closed and corridors were empty, the artist started working. Gradually, she added new elements to a display, which each morning seemed to promise the imminent opening of a shop. Finally, after a full week, as passers by were trying to understand and place this retail space, called *(work) shop*, the shop disappeared, giving way to an arrangement resembling an office. (Fig 18, 19, 20)
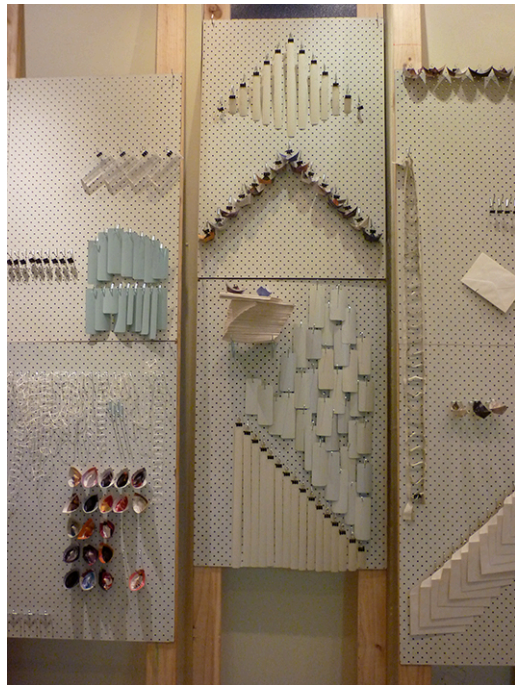
Fig 18 and 19: Abell, Judith. *(work) shop*, 2009,
Cat & Fiddle Arcade, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.
Installation views

Fig 20: Abell, Judith. *(work) shop*, 2009,
Cat & Fiddle Arcade, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.
Installation views

During the subsequent week, this 'office' was Tristan Stowards's work place. He designed *Every Day in Every Way I am Getting Better & Better*, a self-improvement program that he performed in the shop space from 9am to 5pm every day of the week, resembling the TV reality shows that are now are part of the performative spectacle. (Fig 21, 22, 23 and 24)

Fig 21: Stowards, Tristan. *Every Day In Every Way I Am
Getting Better & Better,* 2009, Cat & Fiddle Arcade, Hobart, Tasmania,
Australia. Performance documentation.

Fig 22, 23 and 24: Stowards, Tristan. *Every Day In Every Way I Am Getting Better & Better,* 2009, Cat & Fiddle Arcade, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.Performance documentation.

In the third week another new use was given to the shop space. Inaccessible to the public but viewable through a large window, the space was occupied by a jumble of pieces of furniture, tennis balls, computers and inflatable mattresses. At a first glance, it seemed that the space had become a storage room; a repository of objects that in contrast with the frenzied activity of the shopping centre, resembled a capsule where time had stopped. During the following days it was noticeable, however, that an event was taking place. Some objects had been pushed away, their positions slightly changed, more tennis balls had appeared and the inflatable mattresses were inflating. On the wall, inside, but visible from the outside, a schedule of actions was displayed. *7/56/480/21800,* designed by Anthony Johnson*,* was an apparatus that, when activated, materialized the motion of time, apparently held in an empty shop space. (Fig 25, 26, 27 and 28)

Fig 25: Johnson, Anthony. *7/56/480/21800*, 2009, Cat & Fiddle Arcade, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. Installation views.
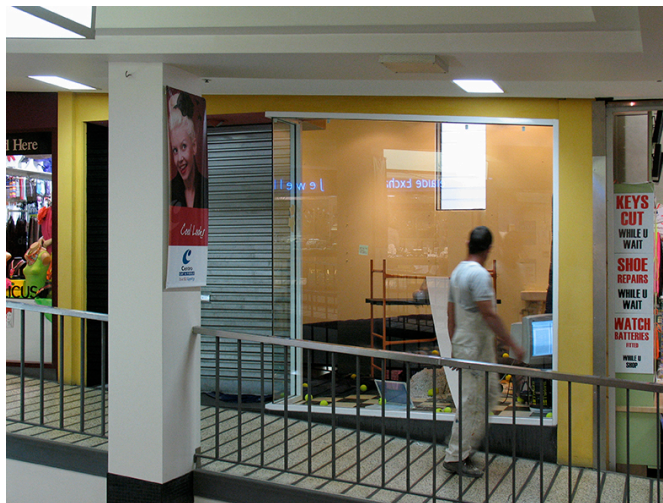
Fig: 26, 27 and 28: Johnson, Anthony. *7/56/480/21800*, 2009, Cat & Fiddle
Arcade, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. Installation views.

During the fourth and final week, *The City Writes It Self*, by Astra Howard, materialised the motion and transmutation of the city and the everyday. During this week the shop became a discursive place. First, Astra printed quotes by famous urban theorists on the walls of the shop. These described the city as a space inhabited and constructed by human action and interaction. Then, gradually, sentences appeared 'floating' against the printed background, short accounts of the encounters the artist had with people in the streets of Hobart , revealing that every individual experience, in becoming part of the city, participates in the writing of the city itself. (Fig 29, 30, 31 and 32)

Fig 29 and 30: Howard, Astra. *The City Writes It Self,* 2009,
Cat & Fiddle Arcade, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.
Action research documentation and installation views.

Fig 31 and 32: Howard, Astra. *The City Writes It Self,* 2009,
Cat & Fiddle Arcade, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.
Action research documentation and installation views.

Mode of address

In the absence of signage, labels or other interpretation material, the audience was addressed
by a series of unlabelled consecutive events and the exhibition design was the only mechanism
of mediation. The events that constituted the exhibition had been constructed to affect the
expectations of the shopping mall visitors.

Traditionally, an art exhibition is conceived of as a spatial construction in which a collection
or selection of artworks is displayed. An artwork is extracted from its original context of

creation and inserted into the context of the exhibition, where physical elements, such as display design and lighting, contract and limit artworks into ascribed aesthetic meanings and values. This process, which relies upon the audience's recognition and preconceptions of institutional infrastructure, frames the artwork as an autonomous entity, preserving it within a commoditised and fetishised form. (Buren, 1975, pp. 124-125) *Expand/Contract* adopted a non-traditional logic, one that took its cues from the innovations of artists such as Daniel Buren and Group Material.

A New York artist collective active between 1979 and 1996, Group Material identified that an exhibition intended to steer away from the established institutional framework needed to be located in an area of the city which is not otherwise impacted by any art connotations, and thus they operated within precincts in which no other galleries existed. Their first exhibitions, *The Inaugural Exhibition* (1980) and *The People's Choice (Arroz con Mango)* (1981) were presented in a shop space without white walls, located in the New York's largely Hispanic East Village, which at the time was not yet one of the established New York's art districts.

In similar fashion to Group Material's experiments, *Expand/Contract* was located in an 'art neutral' area of Hobart, and excluded exhibition identifiers such as banners, labels and signs identifying that signal to potential audience members that a space is a 'container of art'. This absence of signifiers being applied to exhibition space and artworks and limitation of art connotations run counter to that of the 'readymade': artworks and art processes are indistinguishable from the audience's daily life. Any possible familiarity between audiences and what an artwork is expected to look like was avoided. For the duration of the sequence of events, artists and artworks were temporarily placed within daily life alongside everyday activities. The auratic status of the artworks was defused by the minimal use of mechanisms of mediation as well as by the commission of artworks that used several media. The commissioned artists had different practices, ranging from object-based art to performative and relational practices.

Analysis and Findings

The two first exhibition case studies were designed to investigate the mode of address generally used by the exhibitionary complex and how it constitutes an audience. Further, the case studies investigated how the mode of addressing the audience can impact on the autonomy of the aesthetic experience.

In the first case study, the audience met the artworks among the other objects displayed at Clarendon House. The status of these objects was pre-established as artworks by the publication announcing that there was an art exhibition at the Clarendon House as part of a cultural festival program. The auratic status conferred to the objects by the publication was confirmed by the labels displayed next to each object, containing not only information regarding the material qualities of the object but also the subject matter of the art. The subject matter of the particular artworks, as well as that of the overall exhibition as a narrative told through this system of representations, was authoritatively attributed to the objects by the exhibitionary complex's mediation mechanisms.

In the second case study, for four weeks passers by and frequent users of the shopping mall encountered the artworks amongst other events of the everyday and engaged in several levels of debate about the nature of those events. During *Expand/Contract* I was present at the shopping mall everyday, at a distance from the shopfront. I could observe the audience's reaction and engagement with the events happening inside the shop front. I could also engage in conversation with staff from other shops in the mall. As in the first case study, I prepared a brief set of questions, which I presented to 31 people, after they had passed by the shopfront where the events were taking place. (The questionnaire appears as appendix 3)[6]. My observations on site, as well as the artists' observations and conversations we held with passers by and owners of nearby businesses, revealed that some visitors returned several times after understanding that the events happening in the shop space were changing every week. Some visitors took pictures with their mobile phones and told friends that a new event was happening in the shop space. The answers to the questionnaires indicated that in a specific

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[6] The questionnaire was approved by the University ethics committee.

situation where traditional mechanisms of mediation are not in place, the audience was hesitant in naming the events as art. In fact, only few of the people questioned gave a definitive answer. Most of them when asked about the nature of the events happening in the shop, said that they 'didn't know, but it could be art', or that 'it didn't look like anything unless art'.

Three tentative findings emerged from the counter-pointing two first case studies. The first was that different modes of address constitute different audiences. In *Clarendon* the audience, addressed by the exhibitionary complex's mediation mechanisms, was constituted *a priori* as a single entity that materialised in the moment of the reception of a unidirectional communication. Visitors who read the several interpretation materials became part of the preconceived or predetermined audience, to whom the interpretation materials were addressed. For *Expand/Contract,* the absence of most mediation mechanisms called for a debate to ascertain the nature of the events happening in the shop front. The audience, addressed through the presentation of unmediated events *constituted itself* as audience, only by those who participated in the debate.

The second finding was that different processes of constituting an audience determine different processes of legitimising artworks. The mediation mechanisms used in the exhibition *Clarendon* were a form of unilateral communication used not only to address an audience but to legitimise gestures of intervention and interpretation as artworks. By contrast, for *Expand/Contract*, the audience that constituted itself through debate over what was being communicated was also part of the process that legitimised what constituted the artwork. By the end of the four weeks of *Expand/Contract,* independently from taste judgments or levels of interpretation, the events presented in the shop front had been legitimised by interested shopping mall users and business owners as artworks. While in *Clarendon* the artworks were legitimised by the exhibitionary complex through its mediation mechanisms, in *Expand/Contract* the artworks were legitimised through the audience's dynamic of constituting itself while ascertaining what was being communicated.

Finally, the third finding was that the process that legitimises artworks conditions the autonomy of the aesthetic experience. The legitimisation of artworks made through an authoritative and unilateral communication such as that performed by the exhibitionary complex's mediation mechanisms, such as in *Clarendon*, compromises the autonomy of the aesthetic experience. The aesthetic experience risks being monopolised and delimited by the content and the prescribed reception of the communication of the artworks. By contrast, the legitimisation of artworks by an audience that constitutes itself in the process of debating the content of the communication as in *Expand/Contract* ensures the autonomy of the aesthetic experience because it obviates any monopolisation or restriction of the communication of the content of the artwork.

The preliminary research, in which different modes of addressing the audience were adopted, allowed me to confirm through direct observation what I had read and deduced from other's curatorial exploits, and to further refine my line of subsequent enquiry – about the way mediation mechanisms have pivotal functions in the constitution of an audience, in legitimising artworks, and in conditioning the autonomy of the aesthetic experience. This last point became the most pressing.

The first two case study exhibitions demonstrated how the exhibitionary complex addresses and constitutes an audience *a priori* as single entity. The spectators who make up this audience are recipients of a communication that attempts to dictate the terms of the legitimacy of artworks and thus compromises the autonomy of the aesthetic experience. However, the counterpoint of different modes of address also demonstrated that the legitimisation of artworks is not dependent on the exhibitionary complex's mediation mechanisms. It supported the idea that legitimacy can be conferred when fewer mediation mechanisms are in place, through active debate by an audience that constitutes itself in the process of ascertaining the content of what is being communicated by the artwork. The debating audience is made of individual spectators whose participation in the debate obviates monopolisation of the legitimisation of the artwork, ensuring, therefore, the autonomy of the aesthetic experience.

The two case studies in the preliminary research rehearsed some ideas about modes of address and how they constitute an audience: the third case study set out to investigate the role of individual spectators in the collective legitimisation of the artwork in a more deliberate fashion, and this is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 5

Case Study III: *Long Drop Into Water* by Ruben Santiago

The third case study expanded the preliminary research findings by investigating the role of the individual spectator within a multifaceted and debating audience, and how he/she participates in the construction of the content of the artwork. The case study was framed by the question: through which means does an individual spectator participate in the construction of the content of the artwork?

The third case study was *Long Drop Into Water* by Spanish artist Ruben Santiago, one of thirteen works presented in the context of *Iteration Again*, a public art series presented in Hobart in 2012 by Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania (CAST). *Iteration Again* was directed by head curator David Cross, from Litmus Research Initiative, Massey University, New Zealand. Cross's curatorial frame determined the duration and mode of presentations of the commissioned public artworks: they would transform over the four weeks of their presentation, evolving across four chapters or episodes – *iterations* – to incorporate the temporary, evolving and fleeting aspects of the sites selected by each artist. The frame also determined that the presentation of such artworks should be mediated as little as possible, so that the encounter between the public and the work could be as directly experienced as everyday events.

As described in chapter four, the second case study Expand/Contract had been designed to evolve over four weeks, with a similar intention in terms of minimal mediation. The findings from that case study had suggested that the address of the audience through minimal mediation triggered a debate about the content of the work, and that the participants in that debate constituted themselves as the work's audience: audience and artwork were mutually constituted. Based on those findings, the third case study was designed not only to comply with Cross's curatorial frame, but as a collaboration between Ruben Santiago and myself. As artist and curator we made joint decisions from the commission's concept stage, over

mediation and communication strategies. While in Expand/Contract I assumed a position of facilitator of a situation where the artists could explore an unmediated encounter between their artworks and the audience, in Long Drop into Water I collaborated with the artist as a co-author during the commission's concept stage in devising the mode of communication.

Ruben Santiago's artistic practice scrutinises the mechanisms used for the construction of collective memory and the consensual granting of its symbolic value. His mode of production includes interactions with the context of his interventions (physical and cultural) leading to infiltration and activation of some aspects of those contexts. He presents his work using different media, such as installation, online platforms, video, objects or publications.

In considering the invitation to produce a public artwork in Tasmania, Santiago recognised that his position would be that of a foreigner. As a visitor, he considered that he could assume a panoramic viewpoint with respect to Tasmania's dominant narratives, which are mechanisms for the construction of Tasmania's collective memory. Accordingly, Santiago accepted the invitation to participate in 'Iteration Again' from his non-negotiable position of outsider.

Competing economic interests have framed Tasmania's dominant narratives: on one hand Tasmania is an island with viable extraction resources industries such as forestry and mining; on the other, it has been portrayed as Australia's pristine State. Longstanding struggles over the exploitation of the island's natural resources have culminated in contradictory government positions on their commercialisation. Governments support extracting industries and the exportation of these materials, while also perpetuating a tourism strategy and marketing campaign to present Tasmania as a world-class wilderness tourist destination. Long Drop Into Water activated multifaceted narratives of Tasmania's collective memory.

Santiago chose to stage his work at the Taroona Shot Tower, a Tasmanian heritage site and tourist attraction. Built in the late 1800's, this 25-meter tall sandstone building is one of the many architectonic structures that were built around the world to replace superseded techniques of casting shot in moulds: it allowed for serial, faster and more economical

production of lead ammunitions. The 25-metre height allowed for molten lead to be dropped through a copper sieve from the top and to travel down the tower's shaft, solidifying as it fell. The surface tension with the air formed small round balls that were caught at the floor of the tower in a water-filled container. Technical developments like this – and related activities such as resource extraction, trade and armaments industry, impacted unprecedentedly since the nineteenth century, on the economy, politics, society, and the environment. This is also the case for Tasmanian communities such as Rosebery, one of the mining towns that encroach on the much-publicised 'pristine' forests of the Tasmanian West Coast.

In preparation for his visit to Tasmania, from his Internet connection in Madrid, Santiago accessed the Tasmanian government's tourism marketing material and public information about Rosebery, the Tasmanian mining town which has recently been the subject of media attention due to a community disagreement over the causes of some of the residents' chronic illnesses. The public information that Santiago accessed included radio interviews by Rosebery residents, community groups' Facebook pages and newspaper articles. Santiago learned that recent community struggles started when two resident families complained of heavy metal poisoning: lead and arsenic contamination of water and soil. These two families were part of a group of families who had bought their houses from the mining company operating in Rosebery, for a very affordable price, some years before. Mining is Rosebery's main economic activity. It is in fact the activity that brought Rosebery into being in 1893, and so, although serious health and other problems are well known among the Rosebery community, public manifestations of dissent from the main narrative are not welcomed. The complaining residents have been enduring both, ostracism by the community and a court dispute with the mining operation in Rosebery, as well as a legal dispute with the Tasmanian government over allegedly fraudulent soil and water testing.

The artwork: a collaboration between artist and curator

In response to the overall curatorial frame of *Iteration Again*, *Long Drop Into Water* was structured in four iterations, through which the artist staged the process of casting lead that was once performed at the shot tower. The progressive enactment performed in the tower's shaft, consisted of the artist's exploration of tensions between elements of different densities

such as lead, air and water, to achieve the production of perfect spheres. Each stage of the enactment was accompanied by an infiltration of interpretation material into the existing historical display, located between the gift shop and the tower's shaft. The site's existing interpretation materials tell visitors the story of the building and of Joseph Moier, the businessman who built the shot tower and operated the business of producing and selling lead shot. In each of the four iterations, the artist added framed pamphlet-like panels to the original interpretation material. Each panel displayed a different text, headed 'Notice To Visitors'. (Fig. 33)

Fig 33 and 34: Santiago, Ruben. *Long Drop Into Water*. 2011, Shot Tower, Taroona, Tasmania, Australia. Installation Views. Iteration 2.

In the first iteration of *Long Drop Into Water*, the poisonous raw materials extracted by mining activity in Rosebery were presented at the bottom of the tower's shaft. The text added to the original interpretation material was 'Please Ask No Questions'. (Fig. 34) In the second iteration, the artist broadcast – allegedly live, from the tower's shaft, which was closed to the public that day, the enactment of the casting of small led shot onto a monitor placed outside the shaft and in the interpretation area. (Fig. 35) The text added was 'You Are Free To Do As We Tell You'.

Fig 35: Santiago, Ruben. *Long Drop Into Water*. 2011, Shot Tower, Taroona, Tasmania, Australia. Installation View. Iteration 2.

In the third iteration, visitors were invited to climb the 300 and more steps of the tower's internal structure to arrive at the top, to be met with the panoramic view. There they found a completely enclosed and bolted steel sphere resembling an armillary sphere, which they could rotate to select one of the little spheres they could hear (but not see) tumbling inside. (Fig. 36) The text added was 'I made it to the top'.

Fig 36: Santiago, Ruben. *Long Drop Into Water*. 2011, Shot Tower, Taroona, Tasmania, Australia. Installation View. Iteration 3.

For the fourth and last iteration, the work returned to the bottom of the tower's shaft, presenting a perfect rounded lead cannonball, cooled and stabilised at the bottom of the water basin. (Fig. 38) The text added to the tower's original interpretation material was 'Explore The Possibilities' (the Tasmanian government's official tourism motto is 'Tasmania: Explore The Possibilities').

Fig 37:   Santiago, Ruben. *Long Drop Into Water*. 2011, Shot Tower, Taroona, Tasmania, Australia. Video still. Iteration 4.
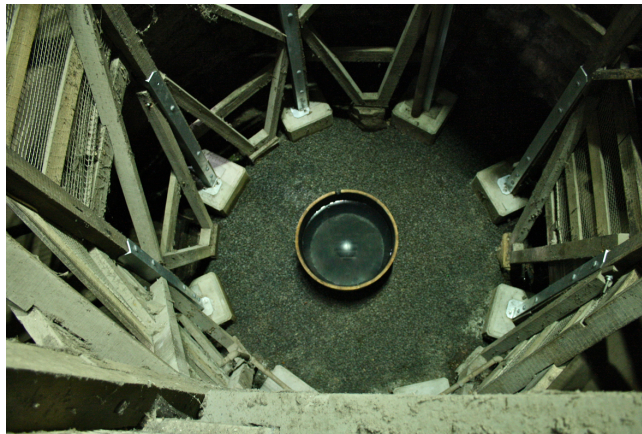

Fig 38:   Santiago, Ruben. *Long Drop Into Water*. 2011, Shot Tower, Taroona, Tasmania, Australia. Installation view. Iteration 4.

The tower's original interpretation material includes a 15 minutes video. Part documentary, part advertisement, it enumerates the services offered by the tower's business operator, and shows images of the tower's surrounding landscape, its original timber interior structure, and a historical reconstruction of the 'long drop into water' process of casting lead that was once preformed at the tower. It also shows images of the gift shop and coffee house that operate at the base of the tower. Having been granted access to the video's original copy by the shot tower's business operator, Santiago spliced in his own documentary and advertising material for each iteration of the work. (Fig. 37)

The final video was presented in the same monitor format, image quality and style as the original video. (Fig. 39) The new footage spliced in by Santiago included a map of Tasmania's mining operations and contaminated areas – introduced in the first iteration, accompanied by the notice panel 'Please Ask No Questions'. (Fig. 40) The voiceover was spoken by a notorious Tasmanian whistle-blower who communicated research findings and reported on the Tasmanian government's omissions and contradictions. The footage included images of the

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mining town of Rosebery and the particularly imposing physical presence of the minerals processing plant in the middle of the town, with its main entrance onto the only existing public square; it showed images of the devastated landscape, and visible signs of illness in some of the residents' bodies. Together with this documentary material, Santiago spliced in portions of footage of the enactments performed in each previous iterations. (Fig. 37) In this way, visitors to the shot tower who encountered the work in its advanced iterations could gather something of its earlier stages through the accumulation of information in the video.

Fig. 39 and 40: Santiago, Ruben. *Long Drop Into Water*. 2011, Shot Tower, Taroona, Tasmania, Australia. Video stills. Images credit: Ruben Santiago

The head curator David Cross, allocated one writer to each of the thirteen public artworks presented in 'Iteration Again'. The writers were asked to respond weekly to the iterations of their allocated artwork. Santiago's purpose in infiltrating the shot tower's narrative was to create a multifaceted narrative where a multiplicity of voices could coexist. This multiplicity of voices was introduced in the narrative of the shot tower by the enactment of the lead casting process in association with the reference to the extraction of minerals in Rosebery and the metaphors that this association instigated. Santiago's multifaceted narrative was constructed and communicated in collaboration with the whistleblowers, me as curator, and the writer invited by David Cross to respond to each iteration of the Santiago's artwork – Tasmanian philosophy professor, Jeff Malpas. Malpas was spurred by his inquisitive philosophical instincts to become increasingly involved in the progressive development of the work. He visited the shot tower several times for the development of each iteration, discussed the work with Santiago, me, the whistle-blowers, and the shot tower business operators. Malpas's texts published on the *Iteration Again* website at the end of each weekly iteration of the artwork functioned as much as a contribution to the next iteration as a response to the previous one. Through Malpas's texts, his collaboration in the authorship of *Long Drop Into Water* was extended to the collaboration in the communication of that content. The communication of the content of the artwork could have been conditioned to a passive reception, neutralising the

multifaceted and critical potential of the artwork had not Malpas's collaborated in both the construction and the communication of the artwork's content. The secondary audience that had access to the artwork's content through Malpas's texts at the end of each iteration in fact had access to collaborative, generative and open-ended content.

As Kester and the preliminary research seemed to confirm, the autonomy of the aesthetic experience is ensured by participation of the audience in the construction of the content of the artwork. In *Long Drop Into Water* both the content and the communication of the work were collaborative, and so, while the collaborative authorship ensured the autonomy of the aesthetic experience of the primary audience, the collaborative communication ensured an autonomous aesthetic experience for members of the secondary audience.

There was a significant moment in the third case study that indicated a second aspect of the answer to the question that framed the study.

The protagonists were a group of people made of the tower's business operator and the government representative that supervised the use of the heritage site. At the end of the first iteration, when the edited copy of the video was showed for the first time, the business operator became very concerned with the content of the video. He was concerned mainly with the descriptions and claims made by the whistleblower. The government representative communicated these concerns to the artist and associate curator and requested that the artist's version of the video was replaced by the original version. During this conversation it became clear that the business operator's concerns didn't rest so much on the claims made in the artist's version of the video, but more on the fact that the version of the video containing these claims was not clearly identified as an artwork. The business operator and government representative had instinctively understood that the lack of art specific interpretation material (the mode of address determined by Cross's curatorial frame) would possibly lead the visitors to consider it as the real version produced by the business operator himself. After consultation with the head curator the impasse was resolved by an agreement to display a short information panel about *Iteration Again* and the content of Santiago's work. This small panel was enough to separate the artwork from other events of the everyday. The tower's business operator and the government representative, although facilitating access to the tower, had been until that

point members of an audience constituted by the exhibitionary complex's mode of address - mediation mechanism such as the tower's interpretation material and the video. However, their position as members of this audience changed radically when they actively intervene to alter the conditions of the communication of the work, in fact determining the mode of address.

Jeff Malpas's contribution indicated that collaborative authorship of the artwork's content can only ensure autonomy of aesthetic experience if that content is also communicated collaboratively; the contribution of the tower's business operator and government representative indicates that for a communication to be collaborative and autonomous, the mode of address also has to be determined collaboratively. These findings not only informed the next case study, but form the very basis of the curatorial logic of it.

Chapter 6

Case Study IV:

CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association

The fourth and final case study drew on findings from the previous three, and in particular it developed on the third. A problem raised in the literature was underlined by the first three case studies, that is that the autonomy of the aesthetic experience, pursued in the production of collaborative artworks, is compromised by the way the work is presented and communicated through the exhibitionary complex's current mode of addressing audiences. The three case studies each tested different modes of address to see the extent to which the autonomy of the aesthetic experience was compromised, or conversely the extent to which it could be preserved.

The first case study demonstrated that the autonomy of the aesthetic experience was compromised by the mode of addressing the audience if that address constituted a general mass audience. Such an audience functioned as a receiver of a unilateral communication, which legitimised the content of the work. In the first case study this process of constituting an audience was associated with the mode of address practiced by the exhibitionary complex through its mediation mechanisms. The second and third case studies, however, showed that the autonomy of the aesthetic experience was supported if the mode of address allowed the audience to constitute its self in a debate to ascertain, communicate and legitimise the content of the artwork. Further, the third case study suggested that while the collaborative authorship ensured the autonomy of the aesthetic experience of the primary audience, collaborative communication also promoted an autonomous aesthetic experience for members of the secondary audience. The third case study suggested that the collaborative authorship of the artwork's content could ensure autonomy of the aesthetic experience if that content was also communicated collaboratively through a mode of address that was also determined collaboratively.

The first three case studies confirmed an aporia or communicative disjunctions in current practices in exhibition making, specifically exhibition formats for the presentation and communication of collaborative artworks. As Bruce Ferguson described, exhibitions function as systems of representation, 'utterances in a chain of signification [that] can be the speech act of an institution.' 1995: 183) Referring to the institution of the exhibitionary complex he writes, 'When this institution speaks, it speaks exhibitions. It utters a kind of sense that it believes to be true. Exhibitions are its instrument of pitch.' (Ferguson, 1995: 183) Sharing the perspective of other commentators referred to here in earlier chapters, Ferguson argues that through museums, galleries, biennales and art fairs a hegemonic narrative is legitimised.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the third case study showed that for the autonomy of the aesthetic experience to be assured, both the production and communication of the content of the artwork had to be collaborative, as well as the mode of address has to be decided by the collaborators; that is, if the construction and the communication of the content of the work were legitimised by the audience, that audience would have an aesthetic experience largely independent of broader institutionalised interpretation: an experience constituted during the process of constructing, negotiating and communicating the content.

If the autonomy of the aesthetic experience is ensured by the collaborative production of the work's content, as practiced by collaborative art practices, then that same autonomy of experience should be ensured at the moment of the artwork's communication; that is, ideally the secondary audience – i.e. those who did not take part first hand in the collaborative production of the work, should experience the work through an autonomous communication from the primary audience of collaborators.

For the fourth and final case study, I drew on Simon Sheikh's proposition of exhibition as 'counter space of experience' to guide my reasoning for developing a curatorial method to produce an exhibition format that would allow collaboration in both the construction and communication of the content of artworks. (Sheikh, 2004: 3) Sheikh described 'artworks' and

'art spaces' as 'spaces of experience'. (Sheikh, 2004: 1) In his description, artworks' significations and communication are dependent on context, space and audiences. In Sheikh's conception of the operations of much contemporary art, artworks are not autonomous in a modernist way, and neither can the audience be viewed as a generalised audience in a modernist way. Sheikh suggests that 'different notions of communicative possibilities' should be entertained, and different 'methods for the artwork, where neither its form, context or spectator are fixed' should be undertaken. (Sheikh, 2004: 1)

Sheikh described artworks as micro public spheres in which signification and communication are in constant negotiation by a contingent audience. He characterises artworks as 'spaces of experience' formed by notions of spectatorship and the establishment of communicative platforms and networks around them. As 'spaces of experience' they offer alternative arenas to the generalised public sphere. As an alternative to the generalised hegemonic public sphere, Sheikh proposes exhibitions as having the potential to constitute a continuous 'counter-public stream'. To maintain its position as 'counter spaces of experience' the exhibition as alternative public sphere must be itself constituted by artworks that function as multiple micro public spheres. (Sheikh, 2004: 3)

Considering Sheikh's proposition of exhibition as alternative spaces of experience and sites for alternative public spheres, the final exhibition case study was designed according the format of a civil organisation – The Country Women's Association (CWA). The *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association* was the result of a project launched in July 2011 and continuing indefinitely – beyond the timeframe for this research. Within the context of this research, the *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association* staged three projects: *The Beauty Pageant* by Liz Woods, *Stop. Rest. Play* Bec Stevens and *Mayday* by Narelle Jubelin.

The CWA manifests as independent branches that share the foundational values of the organisation but which are free to question, discuss and materialise those values through their own activity as semi-autonomous branches. This specific participatory constituency itself was considered as the social "site" specific to the production and presentation of three commissioned artworks. In sitting the exhibition in the space of participation, itself the space

of the audience's engagement with the mode of address, the final case study addressed exhibition as a narrative. As such, it is in constant transformation and thus challenges the traditional structure of the exhibition as a relatively fixed pre-figured system of representations. Further, by presenting a narrative that was being formed and legitimised while being performed by an audience that legitimised itself counter audience, the case study addressed exhibition as a system of self-representations.

As curator, I invited the artists to form a new branch of the Country Women's Association – the CBD Branch - and from within that branch to engage with the specificity of the organisation's structure, history, constitution, mission and participatory constituency, and deliver artworks in the format of branch's activities or events. The CWA organisation, although mainly recognised by younger Australian generations for its shop fronts selling jams, cakes and home-made textiles, has been a worldwide activist organisation operating at grass-roots level since the 1920's. Part of its important work was carried out during and after the Second World War, when women often had to leave the private space of the home and work together to ensure the sustainability of their communities. When prosperous times finally arrived, civil organisations such as the CWA, while constrained by hegemonic political narratives, provided one of the few platforms for women to actively participate alongside men in building the modern project, particularly in structuring a civic ethics that is so fundamental to a humanist world.

The ongoing *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association,* while operating as an official branch of this iconic Australian women's organisation, was launched in July 2011 (Fig. 41) primarily as a site for art production and distribution. It appropriated an already existing platform for the interests of women and particularly reviewed the role played by women in promoting change and reshaping established cultural values. *The CBD Branch* does not have a physical location. Instead, it manifests itself as an alternative public sphere through works of art presented within the hegemonic public sphere. Complementary to its activities, the Branch manages a blog, itself a participatory interface, where images and text are uploaded before and after each Branch activity. Through the *CBD Branch* blog, participants in the Branch's activities and blog visitors are invited to expand their previous engagement or engage for the first time with the Branch. (Figs. 42 and 43)

At the inception of the *CBD Branch,* the role of the curator was devised as the initiator of communication between all the collaborators in each artwork: the artists, the founding body, the artworks' participants, members from other CWA branches, officers from the Tasmanian CWA head office and other local organisations. The curator's role was positioned not between the artwork and the audience, but instead beside the artist and among the audience. Whilst the audience collaborated with the artist to construct the content of the artwork, the audience also collaborated with the artist and curator to determine how to communicate that content. The artworks that are described below offer several examples of simultaneous participatory construction and communication of the content of the artwork. Together, the artworks manifested a contingent exhibition format in which the exhibiting moment was determined by active communication rather than passive display.

Fig 41: Launching of CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association,
July 2011. CWA Hobart headquarters, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.
Founding members Judith Abell, Paula Silva, Lucia Usmiani, Bec Stevens
and Liz Woods. Guests Narelle Jubelin, Nelson Corrales Jubelin and Nola Johnson
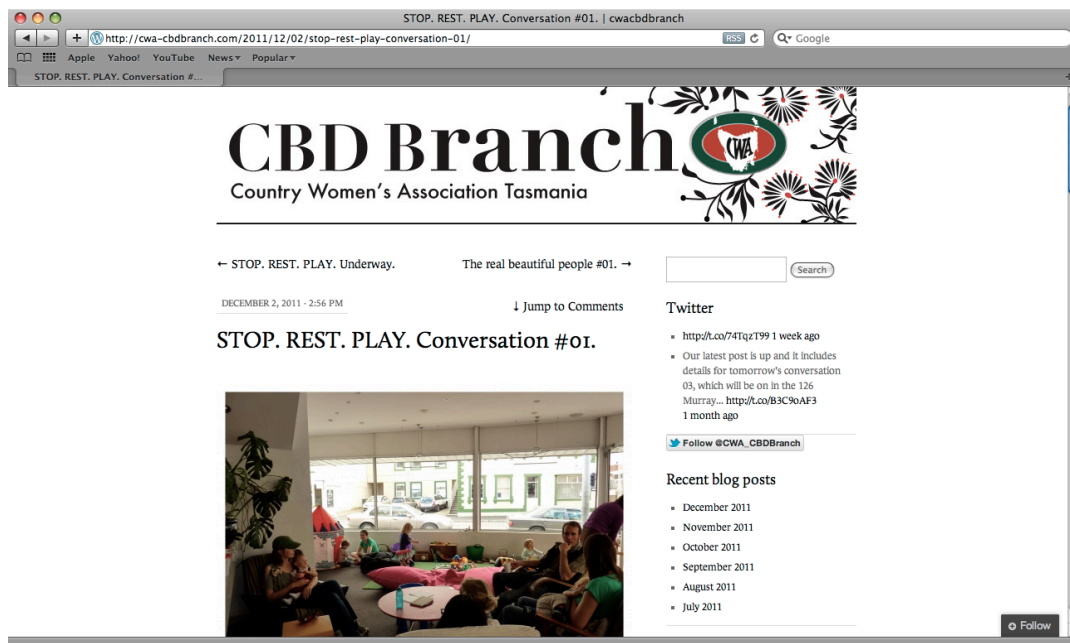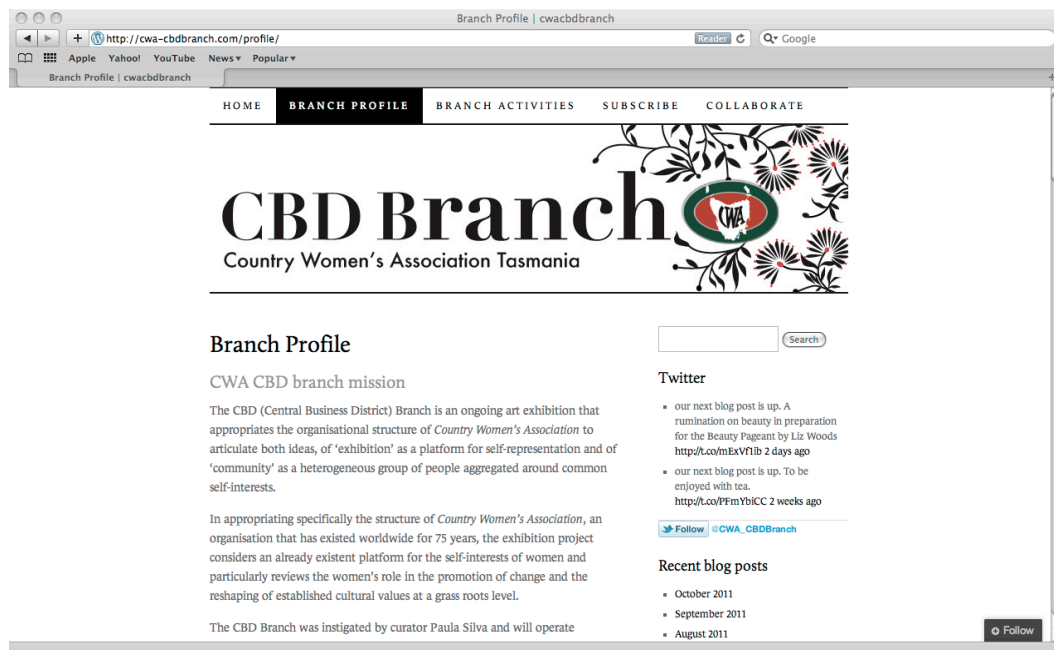
Fig 42 and 43: Page of blog from CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association. Photographs of computer screen. 2013

The Beauty Pageant (2011)

The first work/activity of the *CBD Branch* was *The Beauty Pageant*, by Liz Woods. It was presented at the Hobart Town Hall on the 12 November 2011. Woods appropriated the ceremonial format of the beauty pageant, itself an established system of representations, to stage a multifaceted narrative about beauty. During the several months lead up to the work's presentation the artist invited Hobart's general community to be contestants in *The Beauty Pageant*. The invitation was extended using different strategies of communication such as newspaper ads, posters and word of mouth.

Potential contestants were invited to describe, in five-minute presentations, what they thought beauty to be. The representation of beauty, commonly associated with women's bodies and commodified in the beauty pageant would be constructed in Woods' work by each participant's own understanding of beauty. A final group of eighteen contestants, who after several months of preparation and rehearsal found themselves willing and ready to step on stage, shared something that was very personal and dear to them with a room filled with 150 spectators. Their concept of beauty learned from their personal experience of the everyday was expressed. A grandfather spoke of his relationship with his grandson; a six year old girl spoke of the love she has for her pet; a woman spoke of how mothering two girls made her look for beauty in herself so she could find a vocabulary to show beauty to her daughters. (Figs. 44 to 48)

Fig 44: Woods, Liz. CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's *The Beauty Pageant*, November 2011, Town hall, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. Event documentation.

Fig 45 and 46: Woods, Liz. *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's The Beauty Pageant*, November 2011, Town Hall, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. Event documentation.

Fig 47 and 48: Woods, Liz. *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's The Beauty Pageant*, November, 2011, Town Hall, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. Event documentation.

The Beauty Pageant also celebrated the role of the CWA as a platform for the performance and publicity of the private domain and the family within the public realm. In a clear reference to the domestic aesthetic of CWA events, the Hobart Town Hall, a space that represents the administration of participation par excellence, was colourfully decorated with flowers. At the entrance, plants were sold for a token amount of money as part of a fundraising effort that also included a raffle, which was drawn during the intermission. Lamingtons and tea were served while the jury and the audience deliberated on the winners. Two winners were announced – one chosen by the jury and the other chosen by audience.

As the first work commissioned by *The CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association*, *The Beauty Pageant* activated different modes of address simultaneously, and constituted different audiences with different levels of collaborative involvement. The primary audience was constituted by the people who responded to the artist invitation, and who delivered their definition of beauty on stage. Through communicating their own definition of beauty, the contestants collaborated in the formation of the content of the artwork. Their performance was not communicated through the artist or curator mode of address, but by their own staging, performance and legitimisation of their self-representation.

The Beauty Pageant event was widely publicised through the traditional invitation format that was distributed throughout several networks including Hobart's art network and the CWA network. (Fig. 49) This mode of address commonly practiced by the exhibitionary complex constituted the group of people who attended the event – the secondary audience. (Fig. 50)

Fig 49 and 50: Woods, Liz. CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's The Beauty Pageant, November 2011, Town Hall, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. Event poster and event documentation

Through the event's publicity, the secondary audience was initially constituted as a predetermined generalised audience. However, once in the Town Hall they became spectators of an unfolding multifaceted communication, co-authored and co-performed by the several

competitors in the pageant. While the primary audience collaborated in the construction and performance of the content of the work, the secondary audience was invited to debate the content of each definition of beauty performed, as they were expected to deliberate on a winner. (Figs. 51, 52 and 53) The members of the secondary audience, who participated in the debate and determined the best definition of beauty, become part of the primary audience as they offered their opinions as part of the authorship of the artwork.[7]

Fig 51: Woods, Liz. CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's
The Beauty Pageant, November 2011, Town Hall, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.
Event documentation

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[7] The form of the artwork was the beauty pageant format, which Woods appropriated as a readymade. As characteristic of collaborative (and conceptual) artworks and seminal in Duchamp's readymades, the art subject is not in the form of the artwork but in the relationship of the spectator with the content of that artwork (which in turn is conditioned by context).

Fig 52 and 53: Woods, Liz. CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's *The Beauty Pageant*, November 2011, Town Hall, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. Event documentation

In *The Beauty Pageant* the constitution of primary and secondary audiences did not occur according to an antecedent moment of production and a subsequent moment of communication. Rather, the audience was constituted according to simultaneous but different modes of engagement with the content of the artwork: authorship and legitimisation. Both the collaborative authorship of the content of the artwork and its assertion and legitimisation were integral to the artwork and, therefore, *The Beauty Pageant* effectively functioned as a micro public sphere in which a counter public was constituted in the performance and debate to ascertain and legitimise an alternative concept of beauty to that which has been established by the more general public.

Stop. Rest. Play (2011)

The second work/activity of the *CBD Branch* was *Stop. Rest. Play.* by Bec Stevens, presented in a shopfront, at the corner of Bathurst and Murray streets in Hobart from 28 November to 17 December 2011. The idea for the work was prompted by the lack of spaces for children and families in the Hobart CBD, and a lack of visibility children and families due to the

domination of the area by cars and retail outlets. This reality had been experienced by the artist herself since she had recently became a mother.

The work recuperated the format and visibility of two platforms instigated by the CWA in the past – the Rest Stops and the long established CWA shopfront in Elizabeth Street, Hobart. The first offered a warm and safe space to care for children, for country women who travelled to Hobart for reasons such as shopping or a medical appointments. The latter, beyond selling cakes and jams, still promotes in the present day, an inclusion of women within the city, and gives a public outlet for private, often domestically-based activities and provides older women an access point for interaction and participation within the community.

The physical site for the works was a temporarily leased shopfront located on a street corner at ground level, in one of the busiest intersections of Hobart CBD. Stevens installed a comfortable, welcoming space, completely visible to the street through big glass windows. There, parents and children could find toys, books, drawing tables, comfortable chairs and pillows, coffee and tea. There was also an area with information about inspirational examples of similar initiatives and spaces that had appeared in other locations in the world. From the outside, parents could read that this was a space offered by the *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association* and that all were welcome to stop, rest and play with their children. Once inside, the parents were informed that they had in fact entered an artwork. More than a space, Stevens offered a platform to intervene in the fabric of the city, inviting to its collective ownership by giving visible presence to groups of the community as well to life rhythms usually absent from Hobart CBD. (Figs. 54 and 55)

Fig 54 and 55: Bec, Stevens. CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's *Stop. Rest. Play*, November/December 2011, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. Project documentation.

The work evolved through a program of activities including conversations, interviews and games that invited the participants to re-imagine Hobart CBD as a child-friendly space. Prior to and during the three weeks of *Stop.Rest.Play.*, the *CBD Branch* circulated a small flyer with information about the program of activities and conversations. This flyer was distributed throughout the city and through the branch's blog. The program included several activities for the children and while they were safe playing, the parents were invited to participate in informal and more formal conversations. (Fig 56) (The flyer appears in Appendix 4)

Fig. 56: Bec, Stevens. CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's *Stop. Rest. Play*, November/December 2011, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.

The informal conversations happened spontaneously between parents who entered the space and when they felt that their children were safe and happily playing, found a coup of tea and a chair. Invariably, the topic of these informal and unmediated conversations was the lack of family friendly spaces and visibility of children in Hobart CBD. Some registered their thoughts and comments in a book that was available on the coffee table. (Fig. 57) The artist would later transcribe some excerpts of these conversations and comments onto the glass windows so it could be read from the outside. Progressively the window displayed a multifaceted narrative of the city through the ways in which people talked about their use of spaces and their wishes for a better city. (Figs. 58 and 59)

Fig 57, 58 and 59: Bec, Stevens. CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's
Stop. Rest. Play, November/December 2011, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia.
Project documentation.

More formal conversations took place in three occasions. One conversation was organised for each of the three weeks duration of the artwork. Though these were less spontaneous

conversations, they were still performed within a very open format. Each week the artist invited a group of people with expertise in fields such as education, architecture, landscape design, early childhood development, urban planning, health, public art, and economic development. The invitations to speakers targeted parents, so they could participate in the conversations from both the perspective as experts in their field and as part of the constituency that *Stop. Rest. Play* primarily addressed. They were invited to bring their children, sit with a cup of tea and engage in conversations that posed questions such as: *What do children think when they think of a better city?; What do parents think when they think of a better city for children?* And, *How do we put our ideas into action?* These questions have been proposed by the artist, who was herself a resident of Hobart and was experiencing the city from the perspective of being the mother of a young child. These questions were a mode of addressing the audience and inviting them into a collaborative production of content. (Fig. 60)

Fig 60: Bec, Stevens. CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's *Stop. Rest. Play*, November/December 2011, Hobart, Tasmania, Australia. Project documentation.

The original intention in facilitating these conversations was to activate a platform for self-representation by activating families' participation in the urban environment. The conversations instigated further action from parents and official entities. A group of five mothers visited the space regularly during the three weeks of *Stop. Rest. Play*. The five met on the final day of the project to discuss the possibility of continuing the existence of the space beyond the artwork' temporary existence. The last conversation, with the topic *How do we put our ideas into action?,* involved the participation of several Hobart City Council officers, and

from this it was resolved to open a permanent space operated by parents that participated in the *Stop. Rest. Play.* This opened in Hobart in December 2012. The operation and style of this new space, called The Haven, which offers activities for children and a comfortable environment, closely resembles the image of such a facility offered by *Stop. Rest. Play.* (Fig. 61)

Fig 61:   Publicity material for The Haven, a pace initiated and managed by parents after their participation in *Stop. Rest. Play*

Stop. Rest. Play. activated several modes of address simultaneously which, in turn, constituted different audiences. *Stop. Rest. Play.* was publicised in several ways: through the *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association* blog, social media and distribution of a flyer which announced the program and the location of the artwork. A sandwich board was placed outside the entrance to the shopfront, announcing that that was an initiative of the *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association*, invoking the specificity of the CWA as a grass roots organisation dedicated to support women and their families. Finally, through the highly visible activity in the shopfront itself, the artwork announced itself and projected and transcribed an image of behaviours and conviviality into the city through the big windows.

These modes of address seemed to constitute the same generalised audience that is constituted by the exhibitionary complex. However, what was being exhibited was not the image or product of participation, but a model of participation itself. The simultaneous modes of address constituted an audience not as a generalised receptor of an idea, but made of potential

participants. *Stop. Rest. Play* didn't address the audience from an authoritative position, telling the children and parents how the city should or would become more children friendly. Instead, it addressed them with the invitation to collaborate in the production of the content and communication of how the city could become more children friendly, and they could choose to engage or not.

The Beauty Pageant addressed the audience through a collaborative process of constructing and legitimising a concept, specifically, an idea of beauty. *Stop.Rest.Play* addressed the audience from a collaborative communication of ideas: the unscripted collective participation by parents and children and the transcription of those informal conversations and comments onto the windows, as well as the formal conversations in the shopfront open to everyone that decided to enter the space. As with *The Beauty Pageant*, in Steven's work the constitution of primary and secondary audiences was not related to the audience's moment of engagement with the content of the work, but to their mode of engagement. Some passersby decided to enter the space and engage with activities; some decided to enter after reading the transcriptions that had been written on the windows. Inside the shopfront there were individual spectators who exercise their collaboration in the conversations, becoming primary audience and others who didn't, instead preferring just to sit and enjoy the space, have a cup of tea or play with their child. Arguably the latter constituted the secondary audience. *Sop.Rest.Play.* offered more than a space of collaboration: it offered the possibility to choose when and how to collaborate. It demonstrated that the content of the artwork was legitimised even when the audience was contingent and that legitimisation didn't have to be universal.

Mayday (2012)

The third and last work presented by the CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association was *Mayday* by Narelle Jubelin in collaboration with Tasmanian artist Lucy Bleach was performed in

Taroona and Fort Nelson, Hobart, on the 1st May 2012. Jubelin was not a member of the CBD Branch. Woods and Stevens are Tasmanian artists very familiar with the local context. Jubelin was invited to produce a work that extended the exhibition project's embedded local position to a translocal narrative. Throughout her artistic practice Jubelin has articulated ideas of

identity intersected by cultural and economic history, and within this, the role of women through women's activities. The commission to Jubelin was an opportunity to explore in the exhibition project the role of grass roots movements, such as CWA within a modern overarching cultural and economic history. The idea of commissioning Narelle Jubelin was suggested by curator Mary Jane Jacob, with whom I had discussed the curatorial concept for *The CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association,* during a meeting in New York in 2010, at a curatorial intensive program organised by Independent Curators International.

Mayday was staged between and within two iconic Tasmanian modernist buildings designed by the Tasmanian architect Esmond Dorney (1906-1991). The St Pius X Catholic Church (Fig 62) in Taroona was built in 1957, in a bushland setting. Esmond Dorney's own family house, a modernist glass structure, was built in the late 1970's at Fort Nelson on a hill overlooking the city of Hobart. (Fig. 63) Both buildings are included in the Australian Heritage Register, with St Pius X Church identified as Australia's first modernist Catholic church.

Fig 62: Dorney, Esmond, *St Pius X Catholic Church*, 1957, Taroona, Tasmania, Australia.

Fig 63: Dorney, Esmond, *Dorney's Family House,* 1978, Fort Nelson, Tasmania, Australia.

Like so many other suburbs around Australia, the seaside suburb of Taroona, near Hobart, forms part of the material history of post war prosperity. The St Pius X Church building was commissioned and paid for with funds raised by the congregation, who, ten years later, saved the building from destruction in the devastating bush fires that beset Tasmania in 1967. The humble single-vaulted glass and corrugated iron building, set on a small native bush block, originally among gum trees, manifests itself as a place of worship but above all gives material form to a confluence of past and present stories, personal and communal: the congregational commitment of men and women, a new child that is presented to the community, a floral tribute left on the church pew marking the death of a friend. It envelops a congregation that exists in its relationship to each other, to their God and to the land.

Narelle Jubelin and Tasmania-based artist Lucy Bleach entered this space of relationships together with Esmond Dorney's son, Paddy Dorney, himself an architect. Other collaborators were botanist Kris Shaffer and myself as curator. We were to work with the congregation to plant a stand of five gum trees to replace those that previously grown around the building. The trees, which were integral to the architect's original design, help to situate the church and provide a specific quality of dappled-light for the building. Reinstating the eucalypts would restore that original quality of light. (Fig 64 and 65)

Fig 64: Jubelin, Narelle. *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's Mayday*, May 2010, Taroona and Fort Nelson, Tasmania, Australia. Event documentation.

Fig 65: Jubelin, Narelle. *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's Mayday*, May 2010, Taroona and Fort Nelson, Tasmania, Australia. Event documentation.

Jubelin proposed *Mayday* as a celebration of this collective, enlightened work, performed by local men and women who willingly and deliberately carry the responsibility of cultivating their communities with an inherited sense of civic ethics. After the trees had been planted with the promise of reinstating the light, precisely the idea of celebration the collective work took us, the *Mayday* congregation, into the building that was once the architect's own family home.

Today, the Esmond Dorney family house at Fort Nelson house rests empty above the city, waiting for the City Council to find the appropriate use for it as a heritage building. On that May Day of May, the architectural object, part of an overarching narrative of progress, was inhabited once again by bodies recounting their stories, their memories and their aspirations.

On the arrival at the house, Paddy Dorney, who had lived in the building until recently and for the most part of his life, guided the group through the ruins of an earlier version of the existing house. (Fig. 66) Until late 70's when it burned down, the house had been the stage of long, impassioned conversations, between Tasmanian and visiting artists, intellectuals, environmentalists, scientists, architects and future politicians. Paddy's telling of his personal experience and habitation of these spaces introduced the conversation that took place inside the existing house, an exemplary modernist design now empty of people and furniture. The small group of people who gathered in the house inhabited the space with stories of their personal experiences of the modern, translating in the recounting of events their own aspirations, disappointments, will and prosperity, symbolically introducing their own personal narratives into the modernist narrative represented by that iconic modernist space. (Fig. 67 and 68)

Fig: 66: Jubelin, Narelle. *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's Mayday*, May 2010, Taroona and Fort Nelson, Tasmania, Australia. Event documentation.

Fig: 67 and 68: Jubelin, Narelle. *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association's Mayday*, May 2010, Taroona and Fort Nelson, Tasmania, Australia. Event documentation.

While the conversation developed, Jubelin transcribed excerpts from the seminal essay *Space as Praxis* (1975) onto the glass walls facing the panoramic view of the city, which includes the church located somewhere in the cityscape. In this essay, the author Roselee Goldberg weaves together ideas about performed space. The excerpts Jubelin transcribed include references to a radio broadcast of an interview between Seth Siegelaub and conceptual artists Lawrence Weiner and Robert Barry in which they discuss the relation of art to space. They refer to Yvonne Rainer's 'weight[ing] the quality of the human body towards that of objects', and Trisha Brown's exploration of the internal body movement and how it 'dislocates' space. The words imprinted on the glass floated against the cityscape and became a 'third space' – one that emerges from all that is lost (or gained) in the translation of movement into space, just as the congregation emerged from its members' relationship to the church, and just as a conversation pit is made of people performing a conversation. (Fig. 69)

The germinal idea for *Mayday* was the role of grass roots movements in modern cultural and economic history, and the role of alternative sub-narratives within an overarching translocal narrative. This idea determined the mode of address.

Mayday was not the result of the artists' invitation to participants to create a collective narrative, as with *The Beauty Pageant* and *Stop. Rest. Play.* Rather, *Mayday* was constructed from the congregation's own existing narrative and means of communication. The project was exclusively publicised by the church congregation themselves at Sunday mass, through the congregation's newsletter (the newsletter appears in Appendix 5), published by Tasmanian Catholic Diocesan Centre (The publication appears in Appendix 6) and via word of mouth.

Mayday's primary audience collaborated with the artists and the curator in the authorship of a communication frame, which publicised their own narrative. While in Woods' and Steven's works the audiences were addressed and constituted in different ways –collaborating in authorship or collaborating in the communication or both, in *Mayday* the address was determined by the congregation itself. The congregation, as the primary audience, engaged directly in the creation of the communication frame at the same level as the artists and the curator. The work of art was a collaborative frame for publicising the congregation's self-representation through their relationship with the work of Esmond Dorney. In relationship to his built objects, the congregation could frame its self-representation, and publicise the role of grass roots movements in the Modern movement.

Conclusion

This research makes a contribution to the development of curatorial approaches to artistic content that is embodied in shared experiences and takes open-ended forms. This emergent mode of artistic production characterises collaborative and relational art. In particular, this research project came to be focused on the conditions whereby an artwork's content is communicated to the audience. Those conditions determine the audiences' autonomy in their aesthetic experience. Following Jacques Rancière, Claire Bishop wrote that this autonomy is fundamental for the reconfiguration of the organisation of the world. (Bishop, 212: 27)

The early chapters (1–3) of this exegesis explain that the autonomy of aesthetic experience is difficult to ensure, and is prone to being compromised by the very institutions and professionals who are charged with delivering art to the public. The central question to emerge, is that of how to re-present collaborative artworks to subsequent (secondary) audiences, without simply reinstating the original set of problems of the exhibitionary complex.

One condition of the research is simply the germinal stage of the field of contemporary curatorial practice itself, and the fact that it its discourse uses disputed vocabularies. When I began my research there was a lack of literature analysing and historicising collaborative and relational practices, and little discourse specifically about artistic strategies to challenge the mediation and legitimisation of relational and collaborative art forms. In 2011 and 2012, when this research was in a developed stage, a flurry of monographs dedicated to the analysis of 1990's artistic practices and curatorial developments were published: Paul O'Neill's *Locating the Producers: Durational Approaches to Public Art* (2011) and *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(S)* (2012); Terry Smith's *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (2012); Grant Kester's *The One And The Many* (2011) and *Claire Bishop's Artificial Hells* (2012).

Although these publications appeared at a relatively stage of the research, some of their propositions have played an important role in the consolidation of the findings that emerged from the earlier research case studies, specifically the analysis of participatory and collaborative practice's artistic aims and strategies and their attempt to redefine the conditions in which the autonomy of the aesthetic experience is assured. Bishop's and Kester's ideas about the way participatory and collaborative works function within the mediating and discursive apparatus informed the latter case studies, despite the fact that neither authors has dedicated much attention to current curatorial methods dedicated to the mediation and legitimisation of such works.

The publications that came out in parallel to my candidature helped to locate and define a problem in the way collaborative artworks are relayed 'post-production' and, as my research project developed, this was variously addressed, most forcibly in the final case study, *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association.* In naming the stakes for successful collaboration, in both the construction and communication of the content of artworks, I drew on Simon Sheikh's proposition of exhibitions as 'counter spaces of experience' and 'sites for alternative public spheres', ideas he has been elaborating recently (2012), but first in 2004.

In order to for exhibitions or any creative work to function as counter spaces or to produce 'art publics' (Rosalyn Deutsche's term), curatorial methods have to be responsive to the conditions that determine and maintain the contingency and generative nature of collaborative production. The role of the curator, as I have come to understand it, entails the research and study of the media, techniques and strategies chosen by the artist to convey the subject of art. Such research of the artists' propositions should inform and determine curatorial decisions regarding the re-presentation and communication of artworks, and permit a close and sympathetic working relationship. To be effective, the curator has to be a guarantor for collaborative production and co-communication of generative and open-ended content, to constitute a counter space of experience. Some precepts can be applied for the role. The curator needs to work with the artists and amongst the audience, in a co-authored process, to locate and maintain the communication nexus through which the artwork's content is generated. In the *re*-presentation of collaborative and relational artworks, the role of the

curator must go further than documenting, exhibiting, labelling or interpreting the artwork. Rather than being situated between the moment of authorship and the moment of communication (through mediation mechanisms determined by the curator), the curator's function is to locate the point in proceedings at which the multifaceted authorship of the work forms a nexus and, in collaboration with the artist and the audience, to formulate this nexus into a communicative instrument or culminating event that can present itself to a wider audience.

A curatorial approach developed through the implementation and trial of strategies intended to allow audiences to engage with the frame of communication and mediation mechanisms, and through questioning and reflecting with participants. In concluding on the research, I note that conducting the case studies was constrained by the limited public funding available for postgraduate research in the visual arts, and perhaps particularly in the field of curatorial *practice*. The exhibitions developed during research were dependent upon the resources available and on the generosity of artists and other professionals involved: artist fees and production expenses were minimal.

In the artworks *Long Drop Into Water, The Beauty Pagean*t and *Stop.Rest.Play,* demonstrate curatorial collaboration with artists in the design and implementation of the artwork's communication strategies prior to the artwork's occurrence, rather than the determination of a communication strategy to be implemented post production. In *Mayday*, collaborative design and implementation of a communication frame was extended to the participation of the primary audience, who themselves determine the mode in which the communication of the artwork was to be made. The collaborative work between the artist, the curator and the audience originated a shared and co-owned contingent space of communication, the frame of which can be replicated in future re-presentations of each collaborative artwork, while still ensuring the secondary audience's autonomy in their aesthetic experience.

The re-presentation of the collaborative and relational artworks presented as activities of the *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association,* were made by the iteration of the

communication frame and the mechanisms of mediation originally devised by the collaboration between artist, curator and audience. For example, the re-presentation of *The Beauty Pageant* and *Stop. Rest.Play.,* would entail the iteration of two activities of the *CBD Branch* and their communication strategies: mode of participants' recruitment, announcement and structure of the events and dissemination of information through networks specific to the context of each re-presentation. An alternative public sphere would be constituted in each re-presentation of the artworks through the iterations of the collective definition of beauty and the collective image of a children friendly city – not the same definition of beauty or the same image of a child-friendly city established in the first iterations of *The Beauty Pageant and Stop. Rest.Play.,* but alternative counter definitions and images.

Mayday, the last activity and artwork presented to date by the *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association,* and last artwork produced in the context of this research, consolidated my curatorial method. While in the previous artworks the construction of a communication frame that allowed the collaborative production of the work was devised by the artist in collaboration with the curator, in *Mayday* the narrative was already in existence – the narrative of the congregation and their relationship with Esmond Dorney.

Jubelin's artistic strategy was to create publicity, not only for the congregation's and Paddy Dorney's narratives, but also to the self-representation of its interlocutors, and reveal the multifaceted and contingent nature of any collective narrative, such as the modern one. At the time of the submission of this thesis, a re-presentation of *Mayday* is in its first development stages. The nexus formed by artist, curator, Paddy Dorney and the congregation will extend their collaboration into a new communication frame – a publication will be produced by all previous participants and newly invited collaborators. The format of the publication is not yet determined and will offer an opportunity for further development of this curatorial method.

The collaborative and relational artworks produced and presented in the context of the final case study offered the opportunity to investigate specifically collaborative and relational

modes of address and how they constitute a shared experience in which the artwork is produced, communicated and legitimised collaboratively.

In *The Beauty Pageant* both the collaborative authorship of the content of the artwork and its assertion and legitimisation were integral to the artwork, which effectively functioned as a micro public sphere, in which a counter public was constituted in the performance and debate to ascertain and legitimise an alternative concept of beauty. *Stop. Rest. Play.* confirmed the same dynamic for public constitution and content's production, communication and legitimisation. Further, it demonstrated that the content of the artwork was legitimised even when the audience was contingent and that legitimisation didn't have to be universal.

While in the two first artworks of the final case study, the generative and open-ended content emerged within a communication frame devised by the artist in collaboration with the curator, in *Mayday* the congregation, as the primary audience, engaged directly in the creation of the communication frame at the same level as the artists and the curator. The work of art was the collaborative frame to publicise the congregation's self-representation through their relationship with the work of Esmond Dorney. In relationship to his built objects the congregation could frame its self-representation, and publicise the role of grass roots movements in the Modern movement. *Mayday's* primary audience collaborated with the artists and the curator in the authorship of a communication frame, which publicised their own narrative.

The curatorial method that culminated in the final case study of this research, placed the curator, not between the moment of authorship and the moment of communication (through mediation mechanisms determined by the curator). Instead, the curator worked with the artist and the audience to collaboratively determine the conditions of future communications of the artwork. The collaborative work between the artist, the curator and the audience originated a shared and co-owned contingent space of communication, which frame can be replicated in future re-presentations of each collaborative artwork, while still ensuring the secondary audience's autonomy in their aesthetic experience.

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CuriculumVitae

Paula Silva
Curator

Born in Porto, Portugal, 1975
Lives in Hobart, Australia
psilva@utas.edu.au

Education:

2008 – 13	PhD, Tasmania School of Art, University of Tasmania.
2006 - 07	Diploma, Photography and Digital Imaging, TAFE.
1994 - 98	Licenciature Fine Arts (Sculpture), University of Fine Arts, Porto, Portugal.
1998 - 99	Erasmus Program, University of Fine Arts, Bilbao, Basque Country.

Professional Development:

2010	Curatorial Intensive (Art in the Public Realm), Independent Curators International, New York, USA.
2012	Fellowship with Independent Curators International, Public Programs, New York, USA.

Selected curatorial work:

Up coming:	Curator. *Mayday,* publication. In collaboration with Narelle Jubelin, Paddy Dorney and the St. Pius X Catholic church congregation. Taroona, Tasmania.
	Co-Curated with Trent Jansen.
2011 (on going)	Curator. *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association.* Elizabeth Woods, Bec Stevens, Narelle Jubelin and Lucy Bleach, and Judith Abell. Ongoing independent curatorial project.
2011	Associate Curator. Ruben Santiago, *Long Drop Into Water,* Taroona Shot Tower, Tasmania. *Iteration: Again*, Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania. Head curator Dr. David Cross, Litmus Research Initiative, Massey University, NZ. http://www.iterationagain.com/archives/1404
2009	Curator. *Expand/Contract*. Judith Abell, Tristan Stowards, Anthony Johnson and Astra Howard. Contemporary Art Spaces Tasmania off-site, Cat & Fiddle Arcade, Hobart.
2009	Curator. James Newitt, *Stories of Celebration and Dissent*, Rosalux Gallery, Berlin. Part of Inflight Art International Exchanges.
2009	Associate Curator. *Clarendon.* John Vella, Lucy Bleach, Julie Gough and Michael Mac Williams. Evandale, Tasmania. *Trust*, Ten Days on The Island.
	Head Curator Prof. Noel Frankham, Tasmania School of Art, University of Tasmania.
2007	Curator. *Made Public*, James Newitt, Kevin Leong, Judith Abell and John Vella, Carnegie Gallery Hobart. Independent curatorial project.

| 2005 | Curator. *Transhabits*, Wohnraumatelier off-site exhibition/artist talks/music event/ food event by Portuguese artists, Hannover, Germany. |
| 2001 | Co-Curator**.** *Espaços Interactivos* (Interactive Spaces). European Cultural Capital Program. Produced by curatorial collective AICART, Porto, Portugal. |

Collaborations:

2010	*Our Traditional Culture***,** Moonah Arts Centre, Moonah, Tasmania. Exhibition Coordination. International Refugee Week. Exhibition produced by Migrant Resource Centre, Hobart.
2009	*Commonplace*, Moonah Arts Centre Moonah, Tasmania. Exhibition produced in collaboration with Dr. Rowland Atkinson, Housing and Community Research Unit, University of Tasmania.
2008	*Australian Value,* Mountain Festival Sculpture Trail, Hobart, Tasmania. Event produced in collaboration with The Multicultural Council of Tasmania, Tasmanian Ethiopian Association, The Sierra Leonean-Liberian Union and The Friends of Sri Lanka.
2000 - 04	*Os Artistas do Bairro do Aleixo* (*Artists of Aleixo Neighbourhood*). Workshops and book produced in collaboration with the residents and staff and students of Aleixo neighbourhood primary school, Porto.

Awards/Grants/Commissions:

2010	International Conference Fund**,** University of Tasmania.
2010	ACUADS Conference Scholarship.
2008	Presentation & Promotion**,** Australia Council for the Arts. Project produced for A.R.I. Inflight Art.
2008	Tasmanian University Postgraduate Scholarship.
2007	Commission**,** Housing & Community Research Unit, University of Tasmania.
2006 & 08	Support to Individuals, Arts Tasmania.
2006	Exhibition Development Fund**,** Contemporary Art Spaces, Tasmania.
2003	Commssion, *Os Artistas do Bairro do Aleixo* (*Artists of Aleixo Neighbourhood*), Lordelo do Ouro Council, Porto.

Publications:

SILVA, P. (2012) Mayday and The Third Space. IN JUBELIN, N. (Ed.) *Plants & Plans.* Lisbon, Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian.

SILVA, P. (2010) Expand/Contract: A case study. ACUADS. Launceston, Tasmania, ACUADS.

> http://www.acuads.com.au/conf2010/papers/silva_paper.pdf

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SILVA, P. (2007) *Made Public,* Hobart, self published.

SILVA, P. (2005) *Os Artistas do Bairro do Aleixo,* Porto, Campo das Letras.

Boards/Committees:

2010 - 2011   Inflight Art A.R.I. Co Chair and Treasurer, Hobart.

2007 - 2011   Inflight Art A.R.I. International Exchanges Coordinator, Hobart.

1999 - 2001   AICART Curatorial Collective, Porto.

Appendix 1

Publication.

TEN DAYS ON THE ISLAND (2009) *Trust.* Evandale, Tasmania, Ten Days on The Island, University of Tasmania and National Trust Tasmania, 4 - 5.

Case Study I: *Clarendon*

Appendix 2

Questionnaire.

Case Study I: *Clarendon*

Trust Exhibition - Clarendon House, National Trust, Tasmania

QUESTIONNAIRE

Thank you for agreeing to complete this questionnaire. It should take approximately five minutes of your time to complete. This audience survey is sponsored by the Tasmanian Art School, University of Tasmania.

The information collected will be used within my PhD research project (Fine Arts). I'm investigating Public Art curatorial strategies, specifically the mediation between artworks and audiences, when artworks are presented outside the traditional Art Museum and Art Gallery. With this investigation project and specifically with this questionnaire, I aim to understand how the public uses the interpretation material available, because this is the main component of the mediation process generally practiced by curators.

All answers in this questionnaire are anonymous. The written responses will not provide investigators with personal, identifiable information. All data collected will be kept in a secure locked cabinet at the Tasmanian Art School until the 28th February 2016, at which time they will be shredded. Your completion of the questionnaire will signify your consent to participate in this study.

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee. If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study you should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote [*HREC project number: H10580*].

Please answer the questions and mark √ where appropriate.

1. Where is your home? (Please give city and state and/or country)

_____

2. What was the main purpose of your visit to Clarendon House?

_____

3. How much time did you spend in Clarendon House?

_____

4. Did you know that the TRUST exhibition was on display prior to your visit?

  a. Yes ☐

  b. No ☐

5. If you answer yes to the previous question, how did you learn about Trust exhibition?

_____

6. Do you visit exhibitions frequently?

  a. Yes ☐

  b. No ☐

7. Did you easily identify all artworks among the house furniture and other objects?

  a. Yes ☐

  b. No. Which ones did you identify?

  _____

8. How did you indentify which objects were in fact artworks?

  a. There is a considerable difference between artworks and the other objects in the house

                ☐

  b. I used the labels available throughout the house ☐

  c. The guides leaded me throughout the house and pointed me

    the artworks   ☐

  d. I read the Ten days on the Island brochure ☐

  e. I read the exhibition catalogue ☐

  f. Other _____

9. Did you pick up a catalogue?

  a. Yes   ☐

  b. No   ☐

10. To what extent did the exhibition catalogue assist your appreciation of the art works?

  a. A lot   ☐

  b. Moderate   ☐

  c. A little   ☐

  d. Not at all   ☐

11. To what extent did the exhibition labels assist your appreciation of the art works?

    e.   A lot   ☐

    f.   Moderate   ☐

    g.   A little   ☐

    h.   Not at all   ☐

12. How old are you?

    a.   13 years of age or younger   ☐

    b.   14 to 17 years of age   ☐

    c.   18 to 35 years of age   ☐

    d.   36 to 59 years of age   ☐

    e.   60 years of age or older   ☐

13. What is your level of education?

    a.   Less than a school certificate   ☐

    b.   School certificate (Y10)   ☐

    c.   Higher school certificate/matriculation (Y12)   ☐

    d.   VET/Tafe certificate or diploma   ☐

    e.   Bachelor's degree   ☐

    f.   Postgraduate award (Grad Diploma, Masters, PhD, etc)   ☐

Thank you for answering this questionnaire. Your participation is very important for the success of this study.

Appendix 3

Questionnaire.

Case Study II: *Expand/Contract*

ORAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Could you tell me very briefly what was happening or what you saw in that shop?

Is this what you expected to see in a shop?

What is your response to being told that it is an artwork and an exhibition in the shop?

Female ☐   Male ☐

Less then 12 years old ☐

Between 12 and 17 years old ☐

Between 17 and 25 years old ☐

Between 25 and 35 years old ☐

Between 35 and 50 years old ☐

More than 50 years old ☐

Passed the shop/exhibition every day in the past 4 weeks ☐

Passed the shop/exhibition regularly in the past 4 weeks ☐

Passed the shop/exhibition only occasionally in the past 4 weeks ☐

Passed the shop/exhibition only today in the past four weeks ☐

Appendix 4

Flyer (front and back)

Case Study IV: *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association.*

PARENTS & CHILDREN!
Please come and participate

STOP. REST. PLAY.

The Country Women's Association CBD Branch is pleased to announce our temporary public art project, STOP. REST. PLAY.

For three weeks STOP. REST. PLAY. will provide a place of comfort for parents and children in Hobart's CBD. We invite parents and their children to come and make themselves at home.

While you are there we would love you to contribute to our research space and join us in the search for ideas on how our city could become a more child friendly place.

Parents at any stage of parenting are most welcome, grandparents too, along with all who have an interest in generating a better city space. Parents groups are most welcome.

Toys from the Playgroup's Toy Library, 'Rock and Rhyme' sessions and Playgroup's 'Playspace' will be some of the activities for children also running in the space. Please see overleaf for activity details.

STOP. REST. PLAY. will run from 126 Murray St
(Diagonally opposite the State Library)
from November 28 to December 17

Opening hours:
Mornings : 10–12 Monday to Wednesday + Saturday
Afternoons : 2–4 Wednesday to Friday

For further information see cwa-cbdbranch.com.au

HOBART CITY COUNCIL

THE RECOVERY SHOP
The smart way to shop

Windmill

STOP. REST. PLAY.

What will be happening and how you can be involved.

MORNINGS
10 AM– 12 PM – Free entry
Monday to Wednesday & Saturday

CHILDREN'S GARDEN

Please help us to create a garden of seedlings. Children are invited to plants seeds into small pots and to decorate a label with their name. The pots will be put in planter boxes on the footpath and taken home by the children on the 17th December.

DRAWING A BETTER CITY

A space for children and adults to draw and write about imagined or experienced spaces. Drawings will be part of an evolving display.

OTHER PLACES

A notice board with a collection of articles and images from all places in the world. Feel free to bring photos, pictures and articles that you think can inspire the use of urban areas for children's services and playgrounds.

AFTERNOONS
2–4 PM – Free entry
Wednesday to Friday

IMAGINING TENT

Come and join us to record your thoughts on inspiring places and parks you have experienced and imagine how these spaces could be built in to Hobart's CBD.

'Children's Garden', 'Drawing a better city' and 'Other places' will also run.

SPECIAL EVENTS
All welcome – Free entry
28 November – Monday

10.30–11.30 AM
'Playspace' run by Cindy from Playgroup.

3 December – Saturday
10.30–11.30 AM

Conversation I – What do children think when they think of a better city?
While the conversation runs Heidi will do a 'Story with touch and sense' session.

6 December – Tuesday
10.30–11.30 AM

'Playspace' run by Cindy from Playgroup.

9 December – Friday
2.30–3.30 PM

Conversation II – What do parents think when they think of a better city for children? While the conversation runs there will be a children's activity session.

10 December – Saturday
10.00–11.00 AM

Rock & Rhyme with Heidi

14 December – Wednesday
2.30–3.30 PM

Conversation III – How do we put our ideas into action? While the conversation runs there will be a children's activity session.

17 December – Saturday
10.00–11.00 AM

Rock & Rhyme with Heidi

Appendix 5

Newsletter.

Published and distributed by the catholic parish of Sandy Bay and Taroona.

Case Study IV: *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association.*

The Parish Newsletter

Catholic Parish of Sandy Bay and Taroona

Sunday 29 April 2012   **4th Sunday of Easter, Year B**

From Fr Michael Tate,

As some of you will know, there are two churches in our parish, Holy Spirit at Sandy Bay and St Pius X at Taroona. Both are a departure from traditional church design, but the church at Taroona is especially notable. It is said to be the first Catholic Church in Australia to depart from the Italian or Irish model. It was designed by Esmond Dorney, featuring his very distinctive curved corrugated iron roof and with plenty of light streaming in to the body of the church.

Apparently, he also had in mind a particular way of surrounding the building with trees and bushes in harmony with the natural environment of that area sloping down to the river. On Tuesday 1st May, there will be a special planting ceremony and picnic lunch. Five eucalyptus trees will be planted in key positions to eventually allow filtered light to enter the building. Various planter beds will be also filled with plants which will not only be attractive but provide food sources for wildlife with their various berries and seeds.
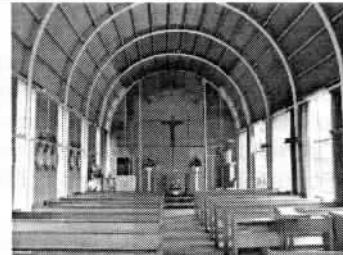
You are cordially invited to attend around midday on Tuesday at the site, which is just past bus stop 36 on the left hand side going down the Channel Highway. This would be a good opportunity for members of our Holy Spirit congregation to enjoy the company of the Pius X congregation in the context of a wonderful project and, of course, a tasty picnic. (There will be some food provided, but perhaps you could bring something to share.)

I am very grateful to Paul O'Brien and Paul Picone and Danny Reardon for taking the lead in following up this suggestion from Paddy Dorney (son of the architect), Narelle Jubelin and Lucy Bleach (the artists involved), Paula Silva (curator of the art project) and Kris Schaffer (the horticulturist).

Appendix 6

Publication.

THE TASMANIAN CATHOLIC (2012) 8:3, 4 - 5.

Case Study IV: *CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association.*

Planting ceremony and picnic at Pius X

Taroona's distinctive Pius X Church was originally designed by architect Esmond Dorney to be encircled by Eucalyptus trees. The quality of light provided by these trees was a critical part of the architectural charm of the building, but over the years the trees have been removed as dropping limbs became a hazard.

On May 1, 2012, parishioners, together with members of the CBD Branch of the Country Women's Association Tasmania (CWA) and horticulturalist Kris Shaffer and Paddy Dorney (Esmond's son) held a planting ceremony to symbolically reinstate the original eucalypts and initiate the church's community garden. The original trees have been replaced with a safer eucalypt species (with common names Ghost Gum or Weeping Gum) that has a similar leaf to the original.

Parish priest Fr Michael Tate blessed each of the five new trees as they were being planted. As the eucalypts grow into their locations it will provide a canopy screen which will benefit parishioners during both summer and winter months.

The existing car park will not be affected by the growing garden.

A picnic lunch using donated fruit and vegetables harvested from the gardens of the congregation was baked by participating artist Lucy Bleach and was shared amongst the group following the ceremony.

The planting program as well as weeding sessions will continue during the following months guided by Lucy .

Let's hope the seeds of their efforts will bear much fruit for the future!