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An examination of creative performative labour as a tactics of resistance to controlled pedestrian passage through public urban space

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ABSTRACT

This research within this exegesis has developed out of the idea that pedestrian passage through public urban space is characterised by slippages in the perception of time and the senses. This concept is theoretically framed by Marc Augé's notion of "non-place" (1995) and Michel de Certeau's (1984) unconscious phenomenology of walking the city street. This exegesis examines the development of a reflexive unconscious language within a visual arts practice, as a tactics of resistance to controlled pedestrian passage.

This theoretical framework, along with Alex Villar's "Temporary Occupations", forms part of a reflexive praxis that examines the progression of my creative practice towards my culminating honours exhibition *Be on Time*, which opened at Spectrum Project Space, Perth WA in June 2012. The creative performative labour employed in the processes of making the artworks "Twenty-five degrees two hundred and fifty-two minutes and twenty-four seconds", "A plied way", "Clearing" and "6000 steps", is shown to be central to the development of this tactics of resistance, which manifests as a tension between tongue-in-cheek humour and homage. Concluding with a reflexive analysis of *Be on time*, I decide that these slippages in perception provide space for a resistant creation of a sense of place in the urban everyday, through the memory and reverie of pedestrian passage.

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Introduction

This body of research comprises video works and textiles that have developed from researching ways in which we consume public urban space, amid competing values of time, work and place making. I have investigated slippages in the perception of time and one's surroundings, from the viewpoint of a pedestrian passing routinely along city pavements from a place of origin to a destination. Within my creative practice I have developed a reflexive unconscious language through visual figures of speech that manifests as a precarious balance between tongue-in-cheek humour and a kind of homage to this experience.¹ In the context of this research, tongue-in-cheek humour is a playful device used to assert a political agenda; it is part of a tactics of resistance.

Marc Augé's *Non-places*, Michel de Certeau's "Walking in the city", and Alex Villar's video "Temporary Occupations", have all been pivotal in understanding, developing and extending my research through a reflexive praxis. I've situated my creative practice within this nexus of thinkers to contextualise my research and the theoretical and conceptual ideas underpinning it. Following the developments in my research that have occurred via this reflexive praxis, the exegesis examines how performative labour² can operate within the creative process as a tactics of resistance. This resistance aims to subvert the planning and function of city pavements which privilege and control passage from a place of origin to a destination. The exegesis in dialogue with the exhibition *Be on time*, progressively demonstrates a reflexive praxis that is central to the development of this overarching thesis.

¹ I would like to note here that although I have used tongue-in-cheek humour, it was not my intention to patronise the viewer.

² The term "performative labour" refers here and throughout this exegesis to the making process of an artwork. The various processes of making are central to my reflexive praxis and the development of a tactics of resistance.

This research is connected to a broader interest in social ordering and organisation of urban space, and originates from a fixation on personal space and boundaries. In public urban space, this fixation becomes amplified with the multitude of other pedestrians that crowd the space, pedestrians I perceive as intent on reaching their destination above all else. Whilst an undergraduate student in Fashion and Textiles at Curtin University, Perth, I commenced exploration of this area through an initial interest in functions of cloth as a protective layer or membrane between public and private spaces.

At the commencement of this research project, the forms and materials that would be utilised in the creative work were yet to be determined. My engagement with the theory has without question been a starting point for the creative work, but in turn that creative work has further developed the central thesis and it is this model of praxis that has been influential for my research. Throughout this project I have trialed and discarded many ideas in the creative process that are beyond the scope of this exegesis. I have, however, included the developments that have been most significant to this praxis.

The creative work has been informed by an interest in the various levels of self-control a pedestrian exercises in order to move through public urban space with the desired level of speed, efficiency and orderliness (perhaps even invisibility to others). O'Beirne describes Marc Augé's non-place as, "those urban, peri-urban, and interurban spaces associated with transit and communication, designed to be passed through rather than appropriated, and retaining little or no trace of our passage as we

negotiate them” (2006, p. 38).

The dulling of perception or selective perception that I interpret as characteristic of Augé’s non-place (1995, p. 86), is reached through his claim that individuals enter into a “solitary contractuality” (1995, p. 94) with non-places, by way of a silent dialogue with texts. He defines such relationships as that between the cardholder and the ATM screen, the driver and road signage, or the pedestrian and building signage, where “individuals are supposed to interact only with texts, whose proponents are not individuals, but ‘moral entities’ or institutions” (1995, p. 96).³

The everyday process of being locked into a futile cycle of continual catch-up is fuelled by a desire to be in the right place at the right time, is a contemporary, Western (or Supermodern) condition (1995). Non-place is experienced as a kind of selective perceptual disengagement as we travel from place to place (1995). This experience extends from a privileging of the relationship between places of origin and destination in everyday travel, which negates the places that are passed through (1984).

My creative practice deals with the experience of passing through the city streets on foot from a point of origin to a destination; an experience in this instance that is specifically theorised through Augé’s “non-place” (1995). These creative works aim to deny non-place its function of being a detached passage-state that the pedestrian

³ This research coincides with the occupy movements that began in September 2011 in New York City and spread quickly to other parts of the world. Individual movements respective of their locations have specific agendas that are divergent, but protesters share an interest in critiquing current economic systems where capitalist concerns undercut democracy (“OccupyWallSt.org: About us,” n.d.). Public urban space is planned for those who are able to consume in a particular way. Those at the fringes of cultural society are not always included in this vision and it is all too easy to treat public urban spaces simply as a zone of transit that we pass through with minimal engagement and maximum efficiency (O’Beirne, 2006, p. 38), on our way to work or shop. Public urban spaces are not often areas where one feels they can comfortably dwell. The people who even attempt to do so are more often than not drinking coffee, looking at a screen or talking to somebody with a clipboard. How do these spaces encourage any form of alternative activity that isn’t driven by commerce or controlled in some way by city planners? These are certainly not spaces for spontaneity, introspection and contemplation of one’s surroundings.

passes through with maximum efficiency and minimal engagement (O'Beirne, 2006, p. 38). On one level it is evidencing the humorous futility of attempting to make meaning from within the unconscious experience of non-place, but on another it is a symbolic act, a tactics of resistance that seeks to subvert the utilitarianism of public urban space.

The creative works aim to activate non-place through the subject's engagement with it, and via a reflexive unconscious language of resistance (de Certeau, 1984, p. 18). The subject in this case is the pedestrian, who is both the maker (myself) and the viewer. This activation is evident both in my processes of making, and also in the decisions I have made in installing each of the works for the exhibition *Be on time*. Following de Certeau's claim that "space is practiced place" (1984, p. 118), I argue that art can play a role in critiquing modes of pedestrian passage through public urban space. As it stands, pedestrian practices that are indicative of non-place constitute a negation of the places that they occur alongside, places that could instead be afforded cultural significance, in tandem with their ordinary everyday function. This research seeks to validate these forgotten places that are situated within the experience of non-place, where perception is momentarily and selectively disengaged.

Methodology

The research has been undertaken via the methodology of reflexive praxis. I have reached a state of *knowing* through my creative practice and exegesis (Bolt, 2009, p. 30). Within this research, my creative practice forms part of a dialogue which consists of artists, pedestrians, viewers (spectators / voyeurs), non-place and place; this is where the methodology of reflexive praxis is critical:

The creative process demands reflexive action. When the creative practitioner adopts praxis, it encourages the act of reflecting upon, and reconstructing the constructed world. Adopting praxis assumes a process of meaning making, and that meaning and its processes are contingent upon a cultural and social environment. (Crouch, 2007, ¶ 13)

Reflexivity requires both the individual and institutions within a society to actively reflect on the way their knowledge has been generated, and this has consequences for their subsequent actions in the world:

The self is not a passive entity, determined by external influences; in forging their self-identities, no matter how local their specific contexts of action, individuals contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications. (Giddens, 1991, p. 2)

Following Giddens' notion of the reflexive self (1991, p. 2), I have chosen to carry out a significant part of my research in the public realm. To enter into a meaningful dialogue with institutions and other individuals through my creative practice, the products of this practice will be made available through the exegesis and exhibition. The meaning that I make from this process, which will feed into the creative work and exegesis, is contingent on the pedestrians, viewers, my theoretical perspective, and the artists and writers whose work helps to contextualise my practice.

Barbara Bolt (2009) discusses reflexive praxis in relation to a particular kind of

“material productivity” (p. 30), or thinking through the handling of ideas, material and tools of creative production. Bolt’s material thinking arises from an epistemology informed by Bruno Latour’s argument that everyday objects have agency akin to humans in everyday social relations (1988, p. 308). Latour does not privilege the human or the inhuman in his analysis, but sees “...only actors – some human, some nonhuman, some skilled, some unskilled – that exchange their properties” (p. 303). The assertion that objects are actors leads to a revision of the notion that an artist attains mastery over a technique or a material (Bolt, 2007, p.3). Material thinking requires a recasting of the relationship between the artist, their tools and materials of production; which is informed by Edward Sampson’s notion of the “acting ensemble” (cited in Bolt, 2007, p. 2), whereby humans (or artists) are:

‘Woven together with context’. He speaks of ‘embodied interactive emergence’, arguing that the acting ensemble is characterized by its emergent property. This removes the focus from the acting individual and places it in the relations between actors. ...actors can include paint, the canvas, type of support, the weather, the wind and gravity as well as discursive knowledges. (p. 3)

Bolt stresses that the focus shifts away from the artist to the acting ensemble as producer of the work of art and in this way, the outcome of the process cannot be predetermined. The relation between actors is different with each situation, where a “...different constellation of forces and speeds” (p. 3) is manifest in the tools, materials and the energies of the artist. In material thinking:

Our relation to technical things is inevitably characterized by a play between the understandings that we bring to the situation and the intelligence of our tools and materials. This relation is not a relation of mastery but one of co-emergence. (p. 3)

The significance of material thinking in Bolt’s reflexive praxis is that the praxiological status of each actor in the ensemble is the same. Tools, materials, processes, the

artist, the site, and any other part of the ensemble each come together and contribute to the work of art in ways which are unique to the ensemble (p. 3). Further to the reasoning that with material thinking, the outcome of the research cannot be known a priori (because of the nature of the acting ensemble); it is argued by Bolt that this is also an integral component of reflexive praxis. These "...shocks to thought..." (Bolt, 2009, p. 33) are central to the emergent nature of artistic enquiry and material handling. This is developed into a new way of knowing through reflexivity and praxis, culminating in the exegesis and the work of art:

Praxical knowledge involves a reflexive knowing that imbricates and follows on from handling. Further I would argue that this reflexivity forms the locus of practice-led research's radical potential to effect movement. The task of the creative exegesis is to extend on existing domains of knowledge through its reflection on those shocking realisations that occur in practice...the exegesis plays a critical and complimentary role in the work of art. (p. 34)

The exegesis is structured to demonstrate the development of my reflexive praxis towards the exhibition *Be on time*. In Chapter One, I establish how it is that city pavements function as a tool to order passage from an origin to a destination, through Augé's notion of "non-place" (1995) and de Certeau's (1984) unconscious phenomenology of walking the city street. Once I've outlined the mechanisms that are involved in this experience, I discuss the potential subversion of this function, through de Certeau's conception of tactical resistance (1984). I propose that instead of walking (as de Certeau argues), the creative practice may take the form of this resistance. In chapter two, I discuss Villar's artwork "Temporary Occupations". I focus on his allusions to mechanisms of non-place, where a perceived suspension of time and the senses is set up in conflict with the idea of controlled passage. With reference to de Certeau's notion that walking is a kind of speech act and space is a kind of language; I analyse Villar's creative decisions in making this work, showing

how his practice employs a tactics of resistance to controlled pedestrian passage through public urban space. Chapter three charts the development of my creative practice throughout my honours candidature, through reflexive analysis of works in the exhibitions *The City of Swan Art Award*, *Crash* and *Engaging non-place: works-in-progress*. Following this, I reflexively engage with the making process and test installation of “Twenty-five degrees two hundred and fifty-two minutes and twenty-four seconds”,⁴ “A plied way”, “Clearing” and “6000 steps” for *Be on time*. In conclusion, I undertake a reflexive analysis of these works during the short period preceding *Be on time*⁵, which is assisted by an essay responding to the work, written by Paige Luff and Ben Waters⁶.

⁴ From this point onwards I refer to the work as “Twenty-five degrees”

⁵ The exhibition opened on June 7th, three weeks prior to the submission of this exegesis.

⁶ The essay can be read on my website at:
http://daniandree.com/artwork/2678787_Be_on_time_catalogue_pages_2_and_3_essay.html

Chapter One: Augé and de Certeau

This chapter is split into two sections. Section one develops the idea that pedestrian passage through the city is experienced unconsciously as a form of non-place. Public urban space is shown through Augé's text to be a means by which to control and privilege the act of passage (1995). Section two explores de Certeau's proposed relationship between the unconscious, language and pedestrian practices, in developing a tactics of resistance to controlled passage (1984). Performative labour is suggested here as an alternative to walking, as it addresses the issue of intent.

Section 1

Walking the city street: How public urban spaces privilege and control pedestrian passage through the unconscious experience of non-place

Non-place is a term used by the anthropologist Marc Augé, and is defined as:

Specific kinds of spaces, chiefly architectural and technological, designed to be passed through or consumed rather than appropriated, and retaining little or no trace of our engagement with them. These spaces, principally associated with transit and communication, are for Augé the defining characteristics of the contemporary period he calls 'supermodernity,' the product and agent of a contemporary crisis in social relations and consequently in the construction of individual identities through such relations. (O'Beirne, 2006, p. 38)

O'Beirne describes non-place as a by-product of supermodernity, which is defined by Augé as the stage of late-capitalism in which the Western world is currently situated, characterised by excesses of time, information and the ego (1995, p. 29). It is my understanding through de Certeau's writings on walking, that non-place may refer to the experiential space one is in whilst travelling between two points of significance: an origin and a destination (1984, pp. 102-103). It's my opinion that the psyche

experiences an overriding focus on one of these points of significance, which subsequently cancels out all the insignificant places one passes through in getting from the origin to the destination. Augé himself alludes to this in his discussion of tourist space, where there is “a break or discontinuity between the spectator-traveller and the space of the landscape he is contemplating or rushing through. This prevents him from perceiving it as a place, from being fully present in it” (1995, p. 68).

Regarding non-place, Marc Augé refers not to a specific anthropological place, but to an experience that manifests as a selective perceptual disengagement from one's surroundings. This may be experienced anywhere, albeit most often occurring in spaces of transit where the temporary presence of the body is most apparent, as Augé posits:

While we use the word space to describe the frequentation of *places* which specifically defines the journey, we should still remember that there are spaces in which the individual feels himself to be a spectator without paying much attention to the spectacle. As if the position of spectator were the essence of the spectacle, as if basically the spectator in the position of a spectator were his own spectacle. (1995, p. 86)

Here Augé is specifically referring to tourist space, but it resonates beyond that to the space of everyday travel that is pedestrian non-place in public urban space.

Importantly, Augé makes the distinction between places and spaces, emphasising that it is the place that gives meaning to experience. He suggests that as we travel from one place to another, the significance of those places in relation to one another cancels out the unimportant places we pass through on the way. Where exactly are we whilst in transit between places? It seems that as we travel we are experiencing some vague notion of space, but not place, and this is non-place. The perceptual

disengagement that I argue is experienced whilst one travels through or in non-place, is understood through Augé's claim that the spectator (or pedestrian) can fulfill their role as spectator "...without paying much attention to the spectacle" (p. 86). The term spectacle is understood in the context of this research through Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*, specifically, "the spectacle is the stage at which the commodity has succeeded in *totally* colonizing social life. Commodification is not only visible, we no longer see anything else; the world we see is the world of the commodity" (2002, p. 12). Henri Lefebvre presents the street as having an almost holy level of commitment to commodified spectacle (2003, p. 92). He notes that "the street is spectacle, almost solely spectacle, but not quite, because we are there, we walk, we stand still, we participate. The person in a hurry does not see the spectacle, but is part of it nevertheless" (p. 91).

Augé's conception of non-place is heavily influenced by the French anthropologist Michel de Certeau's phenomenology of the everyday, particularly de Certeau's positioning of the City as a dense network of absences. De Certeau writes about the experience of walking in the city as constituting a placelessness that eludes representation by its very act in time and space (1984). Walking is described as a transitory, interstitial absence between places of presence. When this is practiced en-masse as is the case in the City, walking produces a network of absences or non-place:

To walk is to lack a place. It is the indefinite process of being absent and in search of a proper. The moving about that the city multiplies and concentrates makes the city itself an immense social experience of lacking a place—an experience that is, to be sure, broken up into countless tiny deportations (displacements and walks), compensated for by the relationships and intersections of these exoduses that intertwine and create an urban fabric, and placed under the sign of what ought to be, ultimately, the place but is only a name, the City.

The identity furnished by this place is all the more symbolic (named) because, in spite of the inequality of its citizens' positions and profits, there is only a pullulation of passer-by, a network of residences temporarily appropriated by pedestrian traffic, a shuffling among pretences of the proper, a universe of rented spaces haunted by a nowhere or by dreamed-of places. (1984, p. 103)

Augé's non-place should be understood in the context of this research through de Certeau's notion of "lacking a place" (p. 103) experienced during the act of passage along city pavements. While de Certeau argues that the largely unconscious modes of walking elude systems of control by their very nature, I argue that public urban space is constructed with this in mind as a means of controlling and sustaining this passage (O'Beirne, 2006, p. 38). De Certeau himself says that the disintegration of memories and meanings through the technocratic structure that is the city manifests as a "...suspended symbolic order. The habitable city is thereby annulled" (1984, p. 106).

In his text, de Certeau links three modes of expression: the unconscious, discourse and walking. These are three modes of expression that develop according to "a relation between the place from which it proceeds (an origin) and the nowhere it produces (a way of 'going by')" (p. 103). The mutual method of constructing a point of origin in relation to a way of going by provides a means of exploring the correlations between the three areas. My understanding of controlled passage lies in the relation between a point of origin and "the nowhere it produces" (p. 103). This manifests as a selectively disengaged perception or "a way of 'going by'" (p. 103) experienced by the pedestrian passing through public urban space.

Section 2

From walking to performative labour: A reflexive unconscious language as a tactics of resistance to controlled passage

I identify non-place not as a physical place, but as a way of being that is characterised by a selective perceptual disengagement in relation to one's surroundings, experienced by pedestrians in transit through public urban space. This may be better understood through de Certeau's "enunciative" practices (1984, p. 24), where everyday procedures such as walking are described as a symbolic articulation akin to language, specifically, "...the act of walking is to the urban system what the speech act is to language or the statements uttered" (p. 97). In this way, De Certeau considered walking the streets to be a potentially resistant practice (Meagher, 2007, ¶ 32). Resistant to the concept of the city as planned by urbanists and architects, and also to the forces of culture, politics and commerce (Clark cited in de Certeau, 1995). The street that is planned first and foremost as a space to be travelled through with maximum efficiency (O'Beirne, 2006, p. 38) generates the experience of non-place, and contradicts any desire to forge connections or make the space of the city habitable. Through a proliferation of constant movement, the city literally produces the mass experience of lacking a place (de Certeau, 1984, p. 103). De Certeau, however; stresses that pedestrians through the act of walking, employ unreadable and mostly unconscious tactics that subvert the planned consumption of the city (p. xviii).

To explore the potentially resistant tactics of walkers, de Certeau linked the unconscious, discourse and pedestrian practices as three modes of expression that develop according to "a relation between the place from which it proceeds (an origin) and the nowhere it produces (a way of 'going by')" (p. 103). The three modes of

expression are heavily intertwined, in several ways. Firstly, there is an element of the unconscious present in pedestrian practices, which means that they elude systems of control and representation (p. 93). Hence walking cannot be planned or predetermined and is therefore inherently resistant to the “concept city” (p. 95) as it is supposed to be moved through. Further to this, the practice of walking is referred to by de Certeau as a “pedestrian speech act” (p. 98), existing as part of a discourse in space. Pedestrians make selections in paths and have different gaits or styles of walking that when practiced en masse exist as space in a similar way that speech when practiced exists as language (1984).

The significance of this for an understanding of non-place in relation to place and controlled passage is that for de Certeau, the enunciative (symbolic articulation) is seen to be a “tactic” (p. 98) of resistance available to the individual as a means of reclaiming autonomy from the omnipresent forces of culture, politics and commerce (1984). As Meagher (2007) notes:

For de Certeau, resistance is always grounded in the streets, where our wandering is never fully comprehensible or pre-planned nor can it be fully captured or mapped after the fact. De Certeau’s urban pedestrian has limited vision, but those limits are what make resistance possible, as the walker cannot be contained by a totalizing vision that he does not share/hold. The walker does not have a panoptic vision and can thus resist panopticism through his or her everyday practices. (¶ 32)

De Certeau’s text is a call to the individual to employ a language of resistance through everyday practices such as walking, in order that the weak or the unheard may tactically reclaim the city at the level of the street (2007, ¶ 32). However, “while Certeau eloquently demonstrates how everyday walking can indeed be ‘resistant’ it does not automatically follow that we should read into his work a claim that all

walking practices are somehow intrinsically resistant” (Morris, 2004, ¶12). The pedestrian who is perceptually disengaged from their surroundings, I argue, cannot resist the desire to continue their line of transit, uninterrupted. They in fact may not even be aware of this surrendering of control, being in a sort of autopilot state. Here, walking is in fact not an act of resistance because the forces directing it (indeed unconsciously) could be attributed to work and capitalist consumption (Augé, 1995). In this case some external form of *physical* resistance is needed, to bring about a level of conscious action on the part of the pedestrian. For me, this physical resistance took the form of the video camera on my mobile phone. The additional process of recording my everyday passage through the city brought about a level of engagement quite different to what I would experience if I were only walking. My resistant engagement at this point constituted an activation of non-place. Showing these videos in *Be on time* allowed me to communicate this to the viewer, and to invite them to engage with this particular experience of passage in a reflexive manner also.

Chapter Two: Alex Villar's "Temporary Occupations"

This chapter analyses Alex Villar's video work "Temporary Occupations" (2001)⁷ in two sections. In section one I discuss controlled passage and the perceived suspension of time and the senses in "Temporary Occupations". Section two investigates Villar's tactics of resistance to controlled passage. I argue that he employs a reflexive unconscious language through performative labour to communicate this resistance.

Section 1

The act of passing by: Controlled passage and the perceived suspension of time and the senses in Villar's "Temporary Occupations"

Alex Villar is an artist working across performance, video, installation and photography. Villar was born in 1962 in Brazil and currently lives and works in New York. His work often investigates "potential [zones] of dissent" ("Bio: de-tour," [n.d.]) within public urban space. "Temporary Occupations"⁸ is a silent video performance piece, comprising several vignettes of the artist walking or running along city pavements. Villar navigates a series of architectural 'obstacles', composing these paths in an attempt to question urban planners' construction of the street as a space to be moved through rather than inhabited.

Villar occupies the various negative spaces created by the architecture itself in ways that are at times playful, skilled, energetic or routine. The occupations are presented as a necessary part of a path chosen in actively moving through the space, however,

⁷ "Temporary Occupations" can be viewed at <http://vimeo.com/1062093>

⁸ See Appendix A, figures 1.1-6.4

there are other more obvious and efficient paths clearly available to Villar, which he ignores. This behaviour, through irrational, tongue-in-cheek humour⁹, constitutes a subversive resistance to the everyday codes that control passage through public urban space.

Each vignette in the artwork is set up quite purposefully to document what has passed by. The camera is stationary and positioned perpendicular to Villar's movements, amplifying the fact that we see only fragments of his trajectories.¹⁰ Although de Certeau writes about walking in terms of enunciation (1984), he asserts that the practices of pedestrians in fact sit outside of representation, and hence outside of control and panoptic power (p. 95). If we were to try and chart the movements of pedestrians, de Certeau states that the "thick or thin curves only refer, like words, to the absence of what has passed by. Surveys of routes miss what was: the act itself of passing by" (p. 97). It is important that the viewer is not really experiencing what Villar experiences as a pedestrian; he passes the viewer by, time and time again. Our view of him is fleeting and constantly shifting. It is this notion of absence through time and movement, that is set up in the artwork through a relationship between the walker and viewer, and then between walkers, which is critical to understanding how non-place operates differently to place. De Certeau says that "the networks of these moving, intersecting writings...in relation to representations... [remain] daily and indefinitely other" (p. 93).

The artist draws on the importance of the unconscious in pedestrian practices to further develop these slippages between time and perception in the passage

⁹ This is a method that I employ in my practice and is discussed in Chapter Three.

¹⁰ See Appendix A, figures 6.1-6.4

between places of significance. Villar presents the portion of the day where one lives between places and work-related activities as a kind of 'dead' space where presence, perception and time are suspended. In "Temporary Occupations", all we are allowed to see through the static camera positions and tight cropping is the perfectly still architecture, where virtually the only movement is that of Villar running through a silent city. The fast-paced city is implicated in this apparent freezing of time for an instant. Occasionally at the edges of the frame we catch a glimpse of a taxi,¹¹ or another pedestrian far off in the distance or in a reflective façade set low to the ground, but these details are minor, as though they are at the edges of perception.

I have developed this idea through my work "Twenty-five degrees" where the positioning of the camera downwards towards the pavement cuts a clear path through space, catching only brief glimpses of surrounding elements at the edges of the frame.¹² In addition to this, the videos record many elements that I did not perceive at the time of passage along these pavements, revealing in action these momentary slippages in the perception of time and the senses.¹³ The work "6000 steps" manifested as a sort of living surface in the optical illusion created by reflections moving across the undulating form of the woven cloth.¹⁴ However, the installation of the work in *Be on time* seemed to overwhelmingly project "6000 steps" as a sort of dead or suspended object almost, perhaps a suspension of space and time.¹⁵ Each work installed in *Be on time* was spaced and lit specifically to present as

¹¹ See Appendix A, figure 5.4

¹² See Appendix C, figures 1.4, 1.7, 1.8, 1.10

¹³ See Appendix C, figures 1.7 and 1.11

¹⁴ See Appendix D, figures 3.3-3.5

¹⁵ See Appendix D, figure 3.1

memorials of time and experience passed, or amplified vignettes of suspended moments in time.¹⁶

Importantly, the specific location of Villar's occupations is never shown. The absence of a location or any places of significance in "Temporary Occupations" emphasises the controlling influence of the street. This develops into the realisation that we do not know what is specifically controlling Villar's movements through the space. The viewer lacks the information that could give them a sense of control.

Section 2

The reflexive unconscious language of Villar's performative labour: a tactics of resistance to controlled passage

Villar's reflexive unconscious language

Throughout the video, each transition is a fade in of the proceeding vignette as the previous vignette fades out.¹⁷ This dissolve is a common film technique used to indicate the passage of time. Here, it is noticeably slowed down and drawn out so that the overlap of the two vignettes is quite obvious, as though for a couple of seconds the viewer is in two places at once. De Certeau alludes to forces competing for the conscious attention of the pedestrian, when he tells us that "perspective vision and prospective vision constitute the twofold projection of an opaque past and an uncertain future onto a surface that can be dealt with" (1984, p. 93). The dissolve here can potentially be understood as a reference to non-place, where thoughts surrounding the significant place one is either coming from or moving towards, bleed

¹⁶ See Appendix D, figures 1.1-1.3, 5.1

¹⁷ See Appendix A, figure 4.1

together in the psyche of the pedestrian. The construction and editing of the video as a series of vignettes that overlap at points explores de Certeau's definition of a place:

Demonstratives indicate the in-visible identities of the visible: it is the very definition of a place, in fact, that it is composed by these series of displacements and effects among the fragmented strata that form it and that it plays on these moving layers. (p. 108)

Further to this, the editing and structure make the video appear almost dreamlike, highlighting the dissonance between the way we remember a dream and the dream as our unconscious experiences it. Our memory attempts to reconstruct the unconscious experience as fragments that seem to overlap and seep into one another.

Allusions to the impact of the unconscious on perception are evident in formal elements of Villar's artwork, particularly with respect to light, colour and the quality of the filming. The low light shifts and changes between vignettes, and the viewer associates this with buildings that stand outside of the frame, towering above the walker and what the viewer is allowed to see. This reference to the forces of the street that one can't see but feels may be understood through De Certeau's tone of paranoia, where the meaningless desert-city seems to be a by-product of the city as an Other that "keeps us under its gaze" (1984, pp. 103-104).

In addition to this activation of the unconscious, de Certeau indicates that in the city there is a saturation of signification, and a reduction of elements to this signification (p. 106). Villar builds on this in subtle ways that question what is representable in relation to unconscious practices. Many of the vignettes are quite high in contrast, producing some areas of highly saturated colour and other areas that have a

bleached-out quality. The fields of beiges, browns and greys that are the built facades do in fact create a sort of urban “‘desert’ in which the meaningless, indeed the terrifying, no longer [take] the form of shadows but [become], as in Genet's plays, an implacable light that produces this urban text without obscurities” (de Certeau, p.102). At times these dominant fields are interrupted by a clear primary colour, be it a witch's hat or door or railing. This is used by Villar as a way of focusing our attention on the obstacles he negotiates, as signifiers of the ordering of urban space. The considered use of high contrast and saturated colour, and the pixilation and visual noise of the digital filming, enables Villar to engage in a dialogue with de Certeau on the point that walkers “make some parts of the city disappear and exaggerate others, distorting it, fragmenting it, and diverting it from its immobile order” (p. 102).

De Certeau presents city space as fragmented and only partially visible, through the wanderings of its pedestrians (p. 102). Likewise, Villar's footage has been selectively cut and assembled, drawing attention to the information that is missing between the vignettes. This is a very engaging aspect of Villar's work; what happens in the time between takes, shots or cuts? The viewer does not see where Villar travels to outside of the frame. In relation to the creative process, could non-place metaphorically be that experience (which is unseen via its omission) in the time between takes or still shots?

Villar's tactics of resistance to controlled passage

The city is planned and organised largely as a space to be moved through and is not a place for dwelling (O'Beirne, 2006, p. 38). Villar challenges this through his

prolonged engagements with these spaces. The unnecessary navigations of apparent obstacles in “Temporary Occupations” are indicative of this. There is tension between conforming to the idea of the city as it is supposed to be consumed and performing an almost covert tactics of resistance. De Certeau argues that pedestrians make use of a tactics of resistance, manipulating everyday practices such as walking to their own interests (1984). Their chosen paths and walking styles cannot be fully contained by the dominant cultural economy (1984), asking what is a conscious and resistant practice of walking and where it occurs. De Certeau asserts that:

One can try another path: one can analyze the microbe-like, singular and plural practices which an urbanistic system was supposed to administer or suppress, but which have outlived its decay; one can follow the swarming activity of these procedures that, far from being regulated or eliminated by panoptic administration, have reinforced themselves in a proliferating illegitimacy, developed and insinuated themselves into the networks of surveillance, and combined in accord with unreadable but stable tactics to the point of constituting everyday regulations and surreptitious creativities that are merely concealed by the frantic mechanisms and discourses of the observational organization. (p. 96)

The above passage appeals to the subjectivity of the pedestrian and puts them in a position of power. Rather than being oppressed by the mechanisms put in place to regulate their actions, pedestrian movements are shown to be so multitudinous and so much a part of those systems that they are actually concealed by them. This helps to explain why Villar quite strongly references surveillance footage, whilst putting the viewer in the position of voyeur, and a fellow pedestrian who is also being observed. Furthermore, this way of filming conceals a great deal by its nature, in that it employs a static camera position.

The visual relationships set up between the artist, viewer and the obstacles are quite deliberate and are constructed by Villar as part of a resistance to controlled passage. During the beginning and the end vignettes,¹⁸ the artist runs in from the side of the frame, through the obstacle and out through the other side. We (through the camera) are viewing him from a distance as a voyeur that the artist isn't necessarily aware of. Conversely, the vignettes around the middle of the video involve Villar entering the frame from behind the viewer, moving through the obstacle and then away from the viewer.¹⁹ There is a sense that the viewer is being brought into the work and is part of it. The viewer virtually inhabits the space of the street. Here, Villar must negotiate the viewer as obstacle before he negotiates the obstacle we see. The camera position and the point at which he enters the screen, ensures that the spectator in a way becomes another author, when they become aware of themselves 'in the video'. This small detail privileges the idea that although the street may be shaped by pedestrian practices, it is also "a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 93). In this way, he argues that pedestrian passage eludes systems of control. Villar switches the positioning of artist in relation to viewer in relation to obstacle as a way of eluding observational means of control.

In "Temporary Occupations" it is clear that the artist is engaging in tactics of resistance not only through his performing of pedestrian practices, but also through his construction of the relationships between other elements in the artwork. Villar's performative tactics of resistance are manifest in his particular style of movement, his chosen paths and the obstacles he negotiates, which form part of a language that redistributes the space of the street. De Certeau (1984) compares city space to

¹⁸ See Appendix A, figures 1, 2.1, 2.2, 6.1-6.4

¹⁹ See Appendix A, figures 3.1, 3.2, 4.1-4.4, 5.1-5.4

language, and the practice of walking with the speech act. The pedestrian makes selections in walking, they compose a path (p. 97) incorporating turns and detours similar to the way we use “turns of phrase” (p. 99). Villar’s performing of pedestrian practices may be thought of as a kind of language, where “style and use...intersect to form a style of use, a way of being and a way of operating” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 100). As stated previously, Villar’s movement through the frame in “Temporary Occupations” depicts the navigation of architectural obstacles that in fact do not need to be navigated. The ridiculous paths he chooses are normalised in their apparent necessity and the practiced incorporation of the obstacle into his stride. The artist’s movements through the urban space are expert and deliberate and it is as though this is a kind of obstacle course that he knows well.

Villar’s performative labour: alterations within the act of passage as a resistant production of meaning

Villar pushes his body very hard physically, which for me highlights important connections between time, labour and place making in the context of my own research and particularly the making process of “6000 steps”.²⁰ These obstacles barely break his stride, but there is also an urgency and intent to that stride. Villar’s movements question the “relationship between procedures and the space that they redistribute in order to make an ‘operator’ out of it” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 96). It is clear that his aim is to move through the space as quickly and efficiently as possible, either in moving towards or away from a place or activity of some significance. This privileging of efficiency contradicts the irrational nature of Villar’s pathways. Beyond a tactics of resistance to the ordering of city space as determined by urban planning,

²⁰ See video of my weaving process in the accompanying dvd

these pathways are also a consideration of the attention one pays to the nature of the obstacles navigated on a daily basis whilst travelling between places.

The artist subverts the concept of the street-as-passage, displacing its function as such. Further to this, I assert that Villar is attempting to reconstruct place from within the experience of non-place. Through the logic of spatial practices, the act of composing a path is part of the production of the space that path traverses, or as de Certeau says, “spatial practices in fact secretly structure the determining conditions of social life” (1984, p. 96). Dwelling in superfluous, negative spaces of the built environment, the artist inserts his body into these forgotten, ridiculous, useless spaces that are the result of urban planning. Often these are small, narrow, irregular, fenced off or bordered spaces that are essentially without function.

A particularly strong example of this is the triangular section of unused pavement created by the black barred fence in the fourth vignette.²¹ The carefully placed witches hat makes clear to users of the street that this fenced off area is not to be used. Throughout “Temporary Occupations”, Villar is visually hemmed-in or clothed by the harsh, ordered architecture, but at the same time it is as though he is invading these inconspicuous, almost private spaces. There’s a sense that the artist is trapped by the order of the urban environment. However, his occupations demonstrate that he is operating outside of their intended function. Villar clearly demonstrates a tactics of resistance, but those actions come across as futile and irrational.

²¹ See Appendix A, figures 4.1-4.4

Villar's particular way of composing paths and negotiating obstacles in moving through the space operates as a form of resistance to these "proper meanings of urbanism" (De Certeau, 1984, p. 102). His displacement of the function of walls, railings and fences occurs "through the use he makes of them. He condemns certain places to inertia or disappearance" (pp. 98-99). These occupations are indicative of the body deviating relative to a constructed order, evident in the architecture.

According to de Certeau:

It is assumed that practices of space also correspond to manipulations of the basic elements of a constructed order...it is assumed that they are, like the tropes in rhetoric, deviations relative to a sort of 'literal meaning' defined by the urbanistic system. (1984, p. 100)

Villar's occupations form specific ways of operating as a means of subverting the planning and function of the street-as-passage. In particular, the attention to entry and exit points throughout the video, are clearly attempts at place making, and therefore form a tactics of resistance to non-place. According to de Certeau:

local legends (legenda: what is to be read, but also what can be read) permit exits, ways of going out and coming back in, and thus habitable spaces. Certainly walking about and traveling substitute for exits, for going away and coming back, which were formerly made available by a body of legends that places nowadays lack. (1984, p. 106)

In the above passage, the act of going away and coming back is discussed as a means of making the city street into a place where one can dwell. Villar's occupations are alterations of the function of the entry and exit points of dwellings. Villar either ignores these points completely, or uses them in a way that is not intended within their everyday usage. Every vignette involves the entry and exit of the artist's body into a negative space. The entry and then the exit is performed purely as a physical necessity because the object that creates the negative space is

approached directly by Villar as an obstacle in the path he composes through the space. In the first vignette,²² Villar invents an entry and an exit that clearly doesn't exist, but in a sense is brought into being by the existence of the wall itself:

First, if it is true that a spatial order organises an ensemble of possibilities (e.g., by a place in which one can move) and interdictions (e.g., by a wall that prevents one from going further), then the walker actualizes some of these possibilities. In that way, he makes exist as well as emerge. But he also moves them about and he invents others. (De Certeau, p. 98, 1984)

Summation of Villar's key ideas for my praxis

The artists' occupations are an attempt to generate place, on his terms. The assertion of his own form of order is undertaken as a means of resisting the non-place generated by the planned city. Villar rearranges the existing entry and exit points within the city through the act of going away and coming back, subverting non-place through a tactics of resistance to the planned consumption or use of the city.

Analysing Villar's "Temporary Occupations" through de Certeau's linking of the unconscious, language and pedestrian passage, has demonstrated that the artist employs a reflexive unconscious language through performative labour as a tactics of resistance to controlled passage. With the help of de Certeau's text, I have argued that the artist has treated signifiers of entry and exit points as obstacles in pathways purposefully selected by the artist in an attempt to displace the function of the city street-as-passage. Villar has demonstrated a tactics of resistance to the controlled passage that is generated by the planned city, by imposing his own form of order within this experience.

²² See Appendix A, figure 1

Chapter Three: My creative practice

In this chapter, I chart the progression of my creative practice towards my culminating honours exhibition *Be on time* at Spectrum Project Space²³ in Perth, WA. In three sections, I demonstrate how my reflexive praxis has developed through the shifts in understanding generated by the feedback loop between my creative practice, Augé and de Certeau's texts, Villar's artwork, my peers and the viewers. I begin with a reflexive analysis of two works produced during my candidature "Nineteen degrees and forty-seven minutes", "Reflections (on Wellington St)" and one work-in-progress; all exhibited in December 2011 for *The City of Swan Art Award*, *Crash* and *Engaging non-place: works-in-progress* respectively. These were pivotal points within the making process in relation to shifts in my understanding through praxis and therefore have been foregrounded. Following this, I provide descriptions of the works "Twenty-five degrees two hundred and fifty-two minutes and twenty-four seconds", "A plied way", "Clearing" and "6000 steps"; all made for *Be on time*. This leads into a reflexive analysis of my processes of making each of the works in *Be on time*, in terms of the theoretical ideas pursued through Augé, de Certeau and Villar. Finally, I discuss the test installation of these works, which was undertaken to the exact specifications of Spectrum Project Space where *Be on time* was exhibited.

²³ From this point onwards I refer to Spectrum Project Space as Spectrum.

**Reflexive analysis of “Nineteen degrees and forty-seven minutes”,
“Reflections (on Wellington St)” and works-in-progress; exhibited at *City of Swan Art Award, Crash* and *Engaging non-place: works-in-progress*
respectively**

“Nineteen degrees and forty-seven minutes”

This work developed out of an interest in the tension between an experience that has passed by and an experience that is continually present. I was attempting to present elements of both of these within the one object.²⁴ The work “Nineteen degrees and forty-seven minutes” developed as I was working towards the completion of “Twenty-five degrees”. This work took the form of a hand cast polished concrete slab with openings that contained five video screens placed at regular intervals along its width.²⁵ The sculpture was placed on the floor so that the viewer had to look down onto the videos of my various states of passage through city streets, recorded on a smart-phone.

“Reflections (on Wellington St)”

The second work exploring this was “Reflections (on Wellington St)”, made for the exhibition *Crash* at Free Range Gallery in December 2011.²⁶ This work incorporated a video of the reflections of passing traffic outside the gallery, recorded at dusk several days before the opening of the show and played as a loop. The reflections were captured on a weaving of silver foil curling ribbon, and bright rapid flashes of light broke up the gradual progress towards darkness as the sun disappeared. The video was shown on a digital photo frame covered with the same woven foil material.

²⁴ This interest was possibly influenced by seeing James Newitt’s installation of *Saturday Nights* (2007) in Primavera 2010 at the Fremantle Arts Centre, WA.

²⁵ See Appendix B, figure 1. Also see the video in the accompanying dvd.

²⁶ See Appendix B, figure 2. Also see the video in the accompanying dvd.

This work positioned the recording of the woven textile as a kind of living surface, whilst the actual woven textile seemed static and dead.

At this point I recognised these two works as needing much more conceptual, material and process-based development which would only be possible over a longer period of time. I thought that these objects were compelling in their format and contained material for additional research but were beyond the scope of my understanding at the time.²⁷

Engaging non-place: works-in-progress

This exhibition was purely undertaken to get critical feedback from my peers and gave me a chance to test the relationship of these works-in-progress to an architectural space – which in this instance was Spectrum Window Space.²⁸ I chose this exhibition space because it is located looking out onto a paved passageway between two buildings. With the knowledge that I would be exhibiting the final body of work at Spectrum Project Space, this also gave me an opportunity to test this particular part of the gallery as a potential exhibition space. The works exhibited here were two photographic series documenting handmade pavers placed on top of stretches of pre-existing pavement,²⁹ and a projected strip of 10 looped videos of my recorded passage along the pavements of Perth city.³⁰

²⁷ I would like to follow up the use of portable screens and the incorporation of them into sculptural forms in future research, concentrating on the relationship between materials alluding to passage, and recorded experiences of passage. I think there is potential also to explore the insertion of sculptural forms into these recorded experiences of passage. I'd like to construct an introspective 'universe' of references and meaning around the experience of pedestrian passage through manipulations of time.

²⁸ Spectrum Window Space is part of Spectrum Project Space.

²⁹ See Appendix B, figures 3.1-3.14, 4.1-4.5.

³⁰ See Appendix B, figure 5.

The first photographic series consisted of a long strip of 14 digital colour inkjet prints on rag paper, each approximately 40cm x 60cm. This series depicts the passage of the pedestrian / photographer around a stack of 17 foam pavers covered in builder's silverwrap and aluminium tape. This stack of handmade pavers was arranged differently at various points in time during the process, implicating the hand of the pedestrian / photographer. The intention with this series was to document the navigation of a passage of pavement that had been interrupted or altered through the placement of an obstacle, and for this alteration to be conspicuously pointless - irrational. I intended to research visual relationships that could be set up between the walker, the obstacle and the viewer, and potential narratives or meaning developing out of this.

Reflecting on this series with my peers, it was clear that the photographs did do this, but it became apparent that they were also doing something else. There was the overwhelming sense of time being suspended and drawn out, and these images seemed to form part of a meditation on the act of passage. Although this work-in-progress turned out to be a key step in my research, I realised that I wasn't satisfied with the objects I had made simply becoming props for photographic work. These objects were far more interesting in their own right. The more I looked at the reflective foam pavers, the more I realised how well the material itself engaged and extended the ideas I was working with, and this was something that could not be replicated in a photograph or a video. The physical memory of the foam and the clean stiffness of the silverwrap worked together to provide a direct, prolonged experience tempered by the visual, movement, sound and time.

The accumulation of all this over time was held in the pavers themselves as footprints - a visual trace, a kind of memory of what had passed by and a potential for further activation.³¹ This was the point at which I committed myself to developing large-scale installation work for *Be on time*. I realised that it was necessary to move beyond video and photography to fully explore my unconscious experience of pedestrian passage in relation to time. To make communicable meaning from this I needed to construct a direct experience in the gallery for the viewer that referred to this passage but extended it.

Reflexive engagement with the processes of making the works in *Be on time*

“Twenty-five degrees two hundred and fifty-two minutes and twenty-four seconds”

The videos in “Twenty-five degrees”³² were recorded over a period of 12 months on a smart-phone aimed at the pavement as I was walking through the cities of Perth and Melbourne on my way to work, to shop, to go out to a cafe, restaurant or bar, etc. A long horizontal strip of 35 of these small videos were projected at a total width of 6 metres onto the gallery wall. The videos were of varying durations and spaced unevenly, dropping in and out of the black background during a continuous loop of 27 minutes and 21 seconds.

The significance of non-place to my praxis started to shift as soon as I began reflecting on the smart-phone films of my walks through Perth’s city streets.

Analysing the performative labour of this process and then the recordings; I began to understand the relationship of time to the experience of non-place. This shift

³¹ See Appendix C, figure 3.3

³² The work can be viewed on the accompanying dvd

continued to develop to the point where the term non-place was no longer necessary in the communication of my central thesis; however, it continued to be an influential reference point for my praxis. The active term *passage* eventually replaced this, and was developed by focusing on slippages in the perception of time and the senses relative to the walker's immediate surroundings. These slippages were understood as contingent on whilst at the same time controlling pedestrian passage through public urban space.

According to De Certeau, "space is a practiced place" (1984, p. 117), where urban planners conceptualise a place, which actualises or comes into being as space. De Certeau claims that "the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers." (p. 117). It is my opinion that de Certeau is alluding to the possibility that the concept of place arises out of the desire to stabilise the everyday experience of space; and that place does not really exist except in planned form. When the planned place is lived, it becomes space. In addition to this, we often think in terms of place, but practice in terms of space. In this way space is overwhelmed by place; i.e.: (conscious) thoughts around a concrete place cancel out the direct (unconscious) experience of the space one moves through.

Place is proper, stable, has rules and laws. Space incorporates "vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 117). Through this it follows that space cannot exist without the fluidity and autonomy of time. Place is transformed into space through movement, which is only possible temporally (relative to time). Following the idea in the previous

paragraph that 'thoughts around a concrete place cancel out the direct experience of the space one moves through', the experience of time is also overwhelmed by thoughts about a place, made possible through "the world of the memory" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 84). Time rolls on, but we are not present to it. According to de Certeau:

1) A difference between space and time yields the paradigmatic sequence: in the composition of the initial place (I), the world of the memory (II) intervenes at the "right moment" (III) and produces modifications of the space (IV). According to this kind of difference, the series has a spatial organization as its beginning and its end; time is the inter-mediary, an oddity proceeding from the outside and producing the transition from one state of the places to the next. In short, between two "equilibria" comes a temporal irruption. (p. 84)

In reflecting on this phenomenon of lost time, we could refer to it as a slippage. To clarify, I consider these slippages to be the consciously reflective realisation that one appears to have lost time when moving through space, through the partially unconscious practice of walking that results in the walker literally lacking a place. Following this, non-place should be considered alongside and as informed by the relationship of space to place, and not as part of that relationship (Augé, 1997, p. 64). However, it is important to note that the city as planned by urbanists, is in part what produces the absent experience (de Certeau, 1984, p. 103) I have shown as being characteristic of pedestrian passage. The modifications of the space de Certeau mentions in the above paragraph are the tactics the walker employs in moving through space.

The videos in "Twenty-five degrees" privilege the act of passage in several ways, the first of which being that the location of the walks is never revealed. The intention here is that this contributes to an overriding sense of placelessness. In addition to the

unrevealed location, there are no clear points of origin or destination,³³ instead giving primacy to all the points in-between that are passed through. These videos are presented as loops, further developing the idea that the walker is caught between places of significance. Further to this, there's the sense of lost time in the continual re-living of an unconscious mode of walking that constitutes pedestrian passage through public urban space.

In reflexively engaging with "Twenty-five degrees", I realised that the camera picked up and stored elements in the environment that I did not perceive whilst walking.³⁴ This is indicative of the idea that whilst walking I am somewhat absent, I "make use of spaces that cannot be seen; [my] knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms... it is as though the practices organizing a bustling city were characterized by their blindness" (de Certeau, 1984, p. 93). This raised questions for my praxis, regarding the degree to which a focus on filming a walk through the street could contribute to this absence. The shifting of focus to an activity of some significance (for me) that took place during the time that one is between places of significance, demonstrated an activation of or engagement with non-place. This however, didn't enable me to become any more present in my shifting environment, and I aimed to communicate this to the viewer in the development of the final work.

During the filmed walks, my focus shifted from pure passage, to the act of attempting to capture/represent my presence to/during the act of passage. Instead of enabling me to become more aware within my experience of passage, this was the very means that revealed my absence, amplified it. This raised questions of whether an

³³ See Appendix C, figures 1.3 and 1.6.

³⁴ See Appendix C, figures 1.7 and 1.11.

overriding focus on the activity of filming negated the experience of non-place. Did what was left out of the videos constitute my authentic experience of non-place? Through the act of filming I came to the realisation that I could allude to a shifting non-place, which could be communicated to the viewer through the editing and installation of the videos in the completed work.

In “Twenty-five degrees” I allowed the viewer to either position themselves in place of the walker and filming subject, or as voyeur to my passage.³⁵ In this way they themselves were embodied in the video, present in that act of passage. However, in doing so, they were no longer present in real time. The viewer was transported to another place, a place that did not authentically exist in that moment. The length of each individual video varied, focusing on the point that the state of being in passage between places of significance is time-based. It highlighted not only that the state of being absent to one’s surroundings affects the perception of time, but also that the state of being absent is time-based itself, the body comes in and out of this state over time. This reiterated to me the importance of time not only to passage, but incidentally as a means of employing a tactics of resistance.

This link is qualified by de Certeau, who discusses tactics as being a “clever utilization of time” (1984, pp. 38-39), a tool of the marginalised other. According to de Certeau:

Strategies pin their hopes on the resistance that the establishment of a place offers to the erosion of time; tactics on a clever utilization of time, of the opportunities it presents and also of the play that it introduces into the foundations of power...the two ways of acting can be distinguished according to whether they bet on place or on time (pp. 38 – 39).

³⁵See Appendix C, figure 1.10.

Tactics are likened to by de Certeau to sleight of hand and wit, and can only “use, manipulate, and divert...spaces” (1984, p. 30). According to de Certeau:

Power is bound by its very visibility. In contrast, trickery is possible for the weak, and often it is his only possibility, as a ‘last resort’: ‘The weaker the forces at the disposition of the strategist, the more the strategist will be able to use deception’. I translate: the more the strategy is transformed into tactics. (p. 37)

In the videos of “Twenty-five degrees”, the lines made by the laid pavers moving beneath my feet shift in orientation, indicating the navigation of obstacles often unseen. The viewer sees the path taken, and no other possible paths. This draws on de Certeau’s claim that the walker is composing a path by making a selection, causing the other possibilities to cease to exist (1984, p. 99). The viewer is literally only allowed to see the path selected by the walker. At the time of the walk, the pedestrian is privy to a greater scope of information. This information may not be fully legible to the walker, but their immediate experience is tempered by it to some degree. The subsequent representation of the walks in video format condensed this experience down, solely to the path chosen through the streets. This path that had been composed by the walker directly imposes its order on how the walk is read by the viewer. Knowing this, it began to influence the way I composed my recorded walks in subtle ways. I was no longer just passing by in the most efficient manner, I began to veer off course so that I could capture in the frame elements that I saw up ahead of me. De Certeau argues that “if it is true that a spatial order organizes an ensemble of possibilities...then the walker actualises some of these possibilities. In that way, he makes them exist as well as emerge. But he also moves them about and he invents others” (p. 98).

It became very clear that the videos were only “fragments of trajectories” (de Certeau, 1984, p. 93), which had time before and after that was absent for the viewer. Viewing the pavement through the screen of the mobile phone did mediate my level of direct visual and active engagement with the surrounding environment and it also mediated my movement through it. The activity of filming subsumed the immediate perceiving of the places I was passing through. I realised that either the task itself or the replication of the environment by digital means in real time counteracted direct experience.

To understand the tongue-in-cheek humour present in this work it is important to note that the idea of engaging non-place is a kind of paradox; the very circumstances that generate this experience make such an engagement impossible. Interacting with or activating non-place would require a denial of its primary function and hence its’ existence; it requires a shifting of focus. The humour of attempting to make meaning and create a sense of place from within the experience of non-place lies in the recognition that place and passage are contradictory with respect to time. Within the context of everyday life, such an attempt to subvert the function of non-place is irrational. How would one function if they were receptive to everything and continually present? The demands of everyday life preclude this desire, it’s idealistic.

“A plied way”

The work “A plied way”³⁶ was constructed from 13 panels of plywood cut to the form of an area of pavement viewed in perspective. Each plywood paver was primed and then wrapped in knitted or felted wool. The form and arrangement of the pavers was

³⁶ See Appendix D, figure 5.1

sourced from one of the film stills in “Twenty-five degrees”. “A plied way” was lit with a single led light from above, casting a strong shadow intensifying the visual texture of the woolen surfaces. The final construction of “A plied way” was reached only through intensive reflexive engagement with my praxis.

Made over a period of almost 12 months, “A plied way” was the second work I started after “Twenty-five degrees”. I chose to use wool in the ways I have initially as a reference to an interior surface such as carpet or some other soft furnishing devised as a comfortable or protective layer. I was interested in using this reference to the interior of a place as a way of disrupting location relative to public urban space. I experimented with fulling the wool I had knitted using an Aran trinity stitch to mimic the appearance and texture of carpet.³⁷ However the knitted pieces prior to being fullled had such incredible handle, weight and big rippling movement.³⁸ The ability of this surface to stretch and compress on a large scale seemed to me to speak of manipulation and movements of networks as each stitch or cluster of stitches was visually apparent in this un-fulled state. I had experimented in the studio with projecting one of the videos from “Twenty-five degrees” onto the knitted surface, the shifting colours and image becoming warped by the raised texture of the knitting. There was potential here for quite interesting visual manipulation of pedestrian passage through a constructed surface. After testing this further in the studio with real-time video projections of my movement around the studio, I realised that the knitted surface simply became a screen for something else.³⁹ Its power as an object in its own right was completely lost.

³⁷ Fulling refers to a type of felting. See Appendix C, figure 2.1.

³⁸ See Appendix C, figure 2.3

³⁹ See Appendix C, figure 2.5

Leaving this and continuing on with the development of these knitted surfaces, I tried to make the knitted and felted wool resemble pavers as closely as I possibly could. I experimented with knitting strips of silk into the wool in patches, and also with increasing the size of the raised bumps in clusters to interrupt the regularity of the pattern and blur the boundaries between a furnished surface and something perhaps more bodily or organic⁴⁰. I dyed the wool varying tones of grey, and used chicken wire in the felting of wool batts to achieve a textured surface in a raised honeycomb pattern,⁴¹ linking more closely to the pattern used for the knitted, felted forms. From these wool pieces I constructed a group of small pavers modeled on Unipave interlocking pavers.⁴² I took photographs of these woolen pavers placed on top of existing pavement, thinking they would become part of that environment optically, sort of camouflaged in a way. I realised through doing this that the objects and their surroundings cancelled each other out both conceptually and aesthetically; they were doing something quite different to what I had intended. This proved interesting as something to follow up at another time, but was not worth pursuing and resolving as part of this body of research. My focus had to come back to the actual experience of passage, whereas this work seemed to be more about intervening in the urban landscape to reveal an appreciation for the potential of the everyday.

I kept knitting though not entirely certain why or how it was going to be formed into a resolved work. I knew that the soft, warm, rippled texture seemed to envelop the viewer through memory, and this work was something I couldn't quite let go of even though I was having trouble with it. As I knitted and accumulated individual pieces, I realised I wanted to work with multiple units that would come together into a work as

⁴⁰ See Appendix B, figure 4.5

⁴¹ See Appendix C, figure 2.2

⁴² See Appendix B, figures 4.1-4.5

a kind of large wall that intervened in the gallery space and had an undeniable presence. As the reflexive process continued, I realised it was the walking, the act of passage that I really needed to come back to. I drew a view of the pavement in perspective onto my studio wall and started to stretch and compress the knitted pieces to fit each drawn paver.⁴³ In this way the materials were made to conform to a planned-out construct devised by me; in a sense I was producing my own system of control through the allusion to passage.

Initially I thought I would cover the entire surface of a 2m x 3m freestanding wall in the gallery. I placed felted pieces alongside knitted pieces to break up the image and reference the shifts in or distorted focus of the video still from which the construction was sourced. This detail also brought the work back to the visual experience of being in motion through space, where elements of one's surroundings come in and out of focus and consciousness.

I realised several things after installing the work-in-progress on a larger wall in a studio similar to the dimensions of the gallery. Firstly, I did not need to make as many pavers as I initially thought. The work would be far more successful in terms of my ideas if I “paved” only part of the wall. By reducing the number of units used to 13, and arranging them a certain way⁴⁴ the work began to read as if it were part of pathway composed through space. Removing the paver I had positioned closest to the ground, and adding a couple at the top of the arrangement created the sense that this pathway was hovering or suspended in space – between the grounded locative *here* and an unreachable *there*.

⁴³ See Appendix C, figure 2.4

⁴⁴ See Appendix C, figures 2.6 and 2.7

I realised at this point that whilst the drawn lines of pavement on my studio wall were intended as a starting point for a tongue-in-cheek crossover between urban planning and my own process, it was too literal a reference and unnecessary for the viewer to make the connection. The re-arrangement of re-constructed elements of the built environment in the gallery context already alluded to the planning out of these spaces, particularly as they were installed to reveal the processes of arrangement, doing it in a more interesting and open manner.

At one point I was attempting to come to terms with how far I should push the materials in their mimicry of another surface to achieve just the right degree of deception in this illusion. I experimented with painting parts of the knitted surfaces with white paint so that they would blend visually into the wall on which they were placed, and become hard and solid more like pavement. From a process perspective, I was interested in treating the material harshly, irrationally, as though it wasn't even there. I also knitted a wide strip of grey across the piece, which came through underneath the paint as a type of trace or tyre mark of some sort.⁴⁵ I thought that this resulted in quite an interesting surface, something that I was both attracted to and repelled by. However, I decided that I was trying either to do the same thing in several different ways or levels within the one work, or do too many things at once. All of these elements were working against one another or cancelling each other out. I did however at this point make the reflexive decision to cut the pavers out of plywood panels and wrap them in the wool pieces. This communicated the hardness and precision I was after, but in a more sophisticated manner. Through this

⁴⁵ See Appendix C, figure 2.4.

refinement and unapologetic acknowledgment of process and materials I consider that I successfully highlighted the tension between an object we associate with being industrially produced, and the reality of its actual handmade nature.

I decided not to full the knitted pieces, as when full some of the life somehow left this surface; it became too processed, too tight visually, too literal in its reference. The movement of the surface was lost. At the same time I realised that I didn't need to knit clusters of larger sized bobbles into the pieces, the ripples created by compressing the knitting to fit the pavers did the same thing but far more effectively.⁴⁶ It brought a bodily, organic presence to the work, and created the illusion of some unseen force exerting its will on the materials.

For a while, I'd conceived of these knitted pieces as one side of a freestanding double-sided wall, the other side being "6000 steps". I had intended to project videos onto both sides of the wall, the textiles acting as screens. The videos were to show what was going on in the gallery on the other side of the wall, as if it weren't even there. I'd been thinking about the use of these live feeds, and the potential of showing recordings of the gallery from previous periods of time, throughout the course of the exhibition.

Again, I realised several things. Firstly, I was overcomplicating things, forcing too many visual devices into the one work meant that I was asking too much of the viewer and perhaps contradicting myself. In effect the meaning was lost. Secondly, the projection of video onto these surfaces meant that what I had made became a

⁴⁶ See Appendix D, figure 5.1 and also Appendix C figure 2.3

vehicle for something else; the textile became secondary to the projected image.⁴⁷ My processes of making which were so central to the communication of meaning were now invisible. Thirdly, this introduced into my work the idea of a virtual image versus an authentic image or reality. Lastly, due to the installation of this work being located in a gallery space, it also was delving into institutional critique and the politics of gallery display, which was not my intention. My intention had been that the projected images would point back to ideas of slippages in the perception of time, but in fact it spoke more about the virtual and the real and the function of galleries. Of course the augmentation of our experience of passage in relation to digital portable technologies is somewhat of a subtext within this research, but I had already addressed this far more effectively through the making and presentation of “Twenty-five degrees two hundred and fifty-two minutes and twenty-four seconds”.

At this point I made the decision to separate “A plied way” and “6000 steps”, and to hang them on the existing walls of the gallery. I thought that this was a more critically sound decision, as this way the works would be in dialogue with a place, specifically that of the gallery. After much deliberation I realised I would need to position “A plied way” on the largest, highest wall to acknowledge and amplify the relationship of that work to the wall it was on; a wall integral to the structure of that building. During the final installation at Spectrum Project Space I installed this work first, and gave it the space visually to ensure that the illusion, the deception, would operate the way I had intended.⁴⁸

“Clearing”

⁴⁷ See Appendix C, figure 2.5

⁴⁸ See Appendix D, figure 1.2

“Clearing”⁴⁹ was constructed from 199 soft foam pavers of dimensions 50cm x 25cm x 5cm, covered in builders’ silverwrap and aluminium tape. The pavers were laid out one high in a herringbone pattern on the floor of the gallery. Where the pavers met the wall of the gallery, they were balanced haphazardly upwards to mimic the supposed effect of the pavement smashing into the wall. Pavers not balanced in this manner were cut to meet the wall and the pillar in Spectrum Project Space so as to give the impression that the pavement was laid specifically for that space. “Clearing” was lit with one halogen spotlight covered with a sky blue coloured gel.

“Clearing” critiqued the planning out and organisation of public urban space by displacing the function of everyday materials used in the building industry through tongue in cheek humour. This work was a construction of elements reminiscent of the urban environment but was constructed using the tools and methods readily available to and specifically chosen by the artist.

The decision to cut some of the pavers to the specifications of the wall and the pillar in Spectrum Project Space was noted at the time of making; it was crucial that the work communicate the specificity of the location where it was laid both spatially and contextually. I was interested in building tension between the work itself and the place where it was located and viewed. The work needed to transcend the “place” of the gallery. It was my intention for the work to evoke, allude to and invite a very physical or bodily kind of movement in relation to time passed and the accumulation of time/s.

⁴⁹ See Appendix D, figure 1.2

I chose not to fix the pavers to the gallery floor because I felt that doing so would contradict my central thesis and what I was attempting through the act of creative labour. I was challenging the conception of stable, fixed meanings (de Certeau, 1984, p.98) and the utilitarianism of the planned city; of which pavement is a tool used to direct and organise pedestrian passage through public urban space.

“6000 steps”

“6000 steps”⁵⁰ was constructed from 5mm silver foil curling ribbon and aluminium tape, hand-woven on a handmade loom, and measuring 3m x 2m. This cloth was attached to a 10cm deep shelf mounted on the gallery wall so that it appeared to be suspended just above the ground and away from the wall. This suspension allowed a virtually imperceptible movement. “6000 steps” was lit with one halogen spotlight covered with several sky blue coloured gels.

“6000 steps” took approximately five months to make. Before this, I made several smaller versions of the cloth as flat works, covered objects and more sculptural, hanging works. Initially I wove the cloth entirely by hand with a makeshift frame, a needle and the ribbon. As I started working on a larger scale I could not continue in this way. The monotony of the repetitive acts within it and the excruciatingly slow progress were more than I could bear. I found that I could not work more than a few hours without stopping to do something else. I started to think about industrial manufacturing processes such as assembly lines in relation to my research. The ideals of work and commerce in support of consumer capitalism are privileged in public urban space (1984). This may be contested, but I aim to show that it is a valid

⁵⁰ See Appendix D, figure 3.1

point by alluding to the ways in which the pavements that line city streets privilege above all else efficient and continuous pedestrian passage. At this point I began to realise the significance of my creative practice in relation to the research as a whole. I started to look at the creative process of making by hand more as a kind of intentionally anachronistic performative labour made possible by an obsessive privileging of this work over other everyday demands. It became an exercise in productivity, where the repetitive monotony of the work required both physical and mental endurance and discipline to fight the irrational nature of the work. With each session I would eventually reach a point where the process became meditative, and I would concede a kind of reverence for the material being produced.

To weave “6000 steps”, I constructed and tested a couple of different simple looms such as the peg loom, eventually deciding to build a hand operated floor loom with shed and heddle sticks.⁵¹ I had no idea how to do this, being relatively new to the process of weaving. I had to research the mechanical development of hand-operated looms following the invention of the flying shuttle by John Kay in 1733 (Hill, 1990).⁵² I ended up constructing a loom that for me was not necessarily the most efficient or easiest to use, but one that I felt contained strong links back to my research through the processes I would develop to weave the cloth. The frame was built to the dimensions and scale of the cloth I would produce, with an extra 50cm at the far end to allow for operation of the loom to produce one single piece of cloth measuring 3m x 2m. It was set up as a floor loom so that I could engage bodily with the ground at every point of the making process, and the cloth itself would be integrated physically

⁵¹ See a video of the weaving process on the accompanying dvd.

⁵² Textile manufacturing was one of the main drivers of the Industrial Revolution in England between 1750 and 1850 (Odihi, 2007, p. 42). The development of the flying shuttle increased the width of the cloth and the speed at which it could be produced by a single weaver on a loom. At the time there was much resistance to the ever-increasing mechanisation of processes such as weaving with the perceived threat to jobs sitting in tension to increasing demand for the supply of cloth (Hill, 1990, pp. 821-822).

and visually with the act of walking back and forth around and at times through the loom.⁵³

The frame of the loom was so wide that I needed to devise a travelling system for passing the weft ribbons through the alternating sheds. I considered several options such as pulleys, pushing or pulling sticks, etc. but none were suitable for the loom to be efficient enough to even use. The solution was so obvious in the end. The ribbons I was using to weave this cloth were sold on solid plastic spools with enough weight and just small enough that they could be rolled through the alternating sheds between each edge of the loom.⁵⁴ This required practice but was a great solution that resulted in a process, which started me thinking about the transit path of the ribbon itself in the construction of “6000 steps”. The transit of each weft ribbon from edge to edge became for me an allusion to travel from a point of origin to a destination. This transit path would periodically negotiate obstacles in the form of warp ribbons depending on how diligent or efficient I was in my process of ensuring that the warp ribbons were where they were supposed to be each time the spool for the weft was passed from edge to edge. This process of negotiating obstacles is visible in the woven cloth through apparent faults such as warp ribbons crossing over one another, loose ribbons which are eventually re-integrated into the network, broken ribbons which have been re-joined, twisted ribbons, skipped or missed crossings, etc.⁵⁵

There are recurring elements that have been central to my process, and that I believe have helped to link the four works in the show. In all of the works there was

⁵³ See a video of the weaving process on the accompanying dvd

⁵⁴ See the video of the weaving process on the accompanying dvd.

⁵⁵ See Appendix D, figures 3.2-3.5

the presence of a repetitive motion or a repetitive act that manifests as a pattern. Each work was formed through a mass of a singular unit, replicated many times over in the utilisation of multiples. Performative labour was employed in the making of all the works, and drew on varying levels of tongue in cheek humour (walking through the city viewing the pavement through a mobile phone, walking on silver foam pavers, etc.). There was a focus on the idea of accumulative time, where each work was the manifestation of many segmented hours, minutes, seconds over a sustained period of time. The works all contained traces of an absent body or object that once travelled through or over it. There was a focus on movement either through presence of movement, illusion of movement, allusion to movement or virtual movement. All of the works exploited and played with a linear construction; variously knitting, weaving, walking or paving.

Test installation of works for *Be on time*

Two weeks prior to commencing the installation of *Be on time*, I organised a test installation in the painting studio at Edith Cowan University.⁵⁶ I set up the four works here as the walls and layout were almost exactly to the specifications of the back gallery at Spectrum Project Space. The first work I started setting up was “Clearing”, as this would be taking up the most space, and the manner in which it was installed in the gallery would be critical to the reading of it.

I had decided during my planning for this work that I would lay the pavers across the floor of the gallery, extending from one wall to the other, dividing the space, a kind of

⁵⁶ See Appendix C, figures 3.1-3.3

barrier to be crossed. During the making of “Clearing” I had been trying to decide whether to leave an opening to walk through, or to force the viewer to walk across the work in order to view “Twenty-five degrees”. Following critical feedback, I came to the conclusion that I did not wish to force the viewer to walk across “Clearing” as originally intended. There was the risk that I would be contradicting myself by controlling viewer movement in this way, and that the work would start to deal with the politics of the gallery space, which was not the focus of my work.

At the point of the test install I was still indecisive about whether or not it really mattered if the viewers would actually walk across “Clearing” or not, but I felt that this should be left open to maintain the integrity of the work. It seemed too contrived and again, contradictory, to dictate either way if an interaction should occur, and if so what type of interaction. It was always the intention to ask a couple of my friends to walk across “Clearing” before the opening so that traces of their passage would be evident to the viewer.⁵⁷ At this stage the knowledge that these pavers had been walked on and the viewers’ bodily desire to do so was more important than an actual interaction.

When I began laying the pavers from wall to wall during this test install, I decided to end “Clearing” about a metre and a half away from one wall, but continue it all the way up to the other. At this time, and then again during the final install in Spectrum Project Space, I realised that this wall became a physical and logistical obstacle that I had to navigate somehow. I decided that I really wanted to foreground this, to acknowledge the architecture of the building I was installing “Clearing” in. It was

⁵⁷ See Appendix C, figure 3.3

important that I did this in a way that was appropriate to the relationship of the ground-as-concept to the wall-as-concept; that is *any* wall of a designated place, an interior, and not *gallery* wall.

The carefully balanced pavers were placed against the wall in such a way as to emphasise the trajectory of the pavers towards the wall.⁵⁸ This was a trajectory that had such force as to appear to be slamming into the wall itself. The work in this way took on a kind of presence; it became an entity with a force all of its own. I had been thinking all along that I would probably need to cut some of these pavers to fit the specifications of their final location, knowing that I wanted to work with the architecture of the gallery space – which contained a large pillar. The test installation of this work confirmed this, as the cutting of the pavers which would meet the wall that “Clearing” was to spread from, would emphasise the tension between the precise laying out of this work and its apparent movement towards that wall.

It was apparent that “Clearing” was playing with notions of what is precious, through a tension set up between the ephemeral nature of the installation, and the methodical and precise manner in which it was carefully laid out. The temporary formation was fragile and only held intact with the agreed communal obedience of viewers and their acceptance of it as something to revere. Through this work I was attempting to question the hierarchy of values and perception of what is precious in the everyday routine of work versus time versus place. By presenting a removal of the everyday function of pavement, I hoped it would be possible for some to reflect on their own

⁵⁸ See Appendix C, figure 3.2

level of engagement with and recognition of controlled spaces of pedestrian passage.

The next work that I installed was “A plied way”. This was fairly straightforward, as I had already carefully planned my process of positioning and attaching the individual units to the wall.⁵⁹ I had planned for it to go on the highest and longest stretch of wall space, but seeing “Clearing” set up first, and considering what “A plied way” actually did on any of the other walls confirmed this planning. Up until this point I had been uncertain as to how the separate works would communicate with one another spatially, and how this would affect the reading of them individually and as a cohesive body of work. The relationship set up between the two works was amplified by my resolution of “Clearing” in the space.⁶⁰ The laying out of “Clearing” on a diagonal, in the herringbone pattern and stacked up against the far wall set up a really interesting visual tension with “A plied way” that could be pushed further still in the final installation at Spectrum. I had placed “A plied way” centrally in the painting studio, but realised that I could afford to push this along, further away from the wall that “Clearing” spread out from, to really describe the perimeter of the gallery space and envelop the viewer.

Setting up “6000 steps” in this space allowed me to consider the dissonance between production on an industrial scale and the production of an object by hand. The large cloth was clearly hand-woven but the material used for this was an industrially produced ribbon. Visually this was reinforced by the use of the industrially produced silverwrap in “Clearing”. This work invited the viewers to consider their own

⁵⁹ See Appendix C, figure 2.8

⁶⁰ See Appendix C, figure 3.1

position as a worker and a consumer; a celebration of labour that again, was tongue in cheek. What do we labour for? What is the point? We work more to consume more, and we consume more to counteract the stress of working so much, but we must work more as we keep consuming.

Conclusion

I have conducted the following reflexive analysis from the install and exhibition of *Be on time*. The analysis has developed from the dialogue between *Be on time* and the theoretical examinations I have conducted with Marc Augé's *Non-places*, Michel de Certeau's "Walking in the city", and Alex Villar's "Temporary Occupations". This dialogue has been extended by critical feedback sessions, viewer feedback during the exhibition and the essay written by Luff and Waters (2012), which in turn has fed into the following concluding analysis.

It is these praxical relationships and the material thinking within that, which has led to the conclusion that this research is not a critique of the momentary absences signaled by slippages in the perception of time and the senses. These slippages are markers that point to a kind of suspended or dead space and time that has already passed by for the viewer and the pedestrian. This is a site of great communicative potential that is accessed reflexively through the unconscious language of my creative practice. Specifically, it was my intention that viewers engage with the works both aesthetically and conceptually; this has occurred.

"A plied way" elevated the act of walking from the passive position of the ground to the privileged position of the wall, thus bringing the act of passage to the attention of the viewer as something to actively engage with over a sustained period of time.⁶¹

This also revealed a reverence for the act of pedestrian passage as a potential site of meaning making. The work used perspective and optical illusion to visually subvert

⁶¹ See Appendix D, figures 1.1, 1.2, 5.1-5.3

the signified function of the wall as a barrier that divides space and stops forward motion. The visual relationship of “A plied way” to “Twenty-five degrees” allowed a reflexive connection between the two works where “A plied way” operated as an extrapolated view (both aesthetically and conceptually) of the act of composing a path through space.

“Clearing” became an obstacle that rearranged the way in which the viewer could navigate the gallery space.⁶² The interactivity of “Clearing” proved to be essential to the making of the work. The pavers in “Clearing” appeared to the viewer to be solid, hard unyielding objects that were static. At the point that the viewer decided to traverse this surface, they realised this was not the case. The experience of sinking into something thought to be stable was surreal and unexpected. These pavers were in fact not stable, and the walker had to consciously pick their path to the other side slowly and with caution, almost as though walking for the first time. Through the act of walking across “Clearing”, the viewer transitioned to performer, directly contributing to the extended making or functioning of the work. Further to this, the walker was empowered through their decision to engage with the act of walking as the material responded to their presence visually, audibly and physically, literally drawing out the experience of passage.

It was my aim to subvert the idea that the city street is first and foremost something passed through with minimal engagement and maximum efficiency (O’Beirne, 2006, p. 38). In fact, the work has done much more than simply critique or subvert the ways in which mechanisms of public urban space contribute to experiences of controlled

⁶² See Appendix D, figures 1.1-1.3, 4.1, 4.2.

passage from a point of origin to a destination. It was suggested by Luff and Waters (2012, ¶ 4) that the works have evolved through a playful approach to making meaning and signification; this is evident in the textuality between the work of de Certeau, Augé, Villar and my own research. On reflection, it is clear that the works in *Be on time* have created a sense of place in the urban everyday, by drawing attention to and subverting notions of stable, fixed signification and context. Of the act of passage we are reminded:

One thing is certain: although historical moments in the life of a city can be isolated, the urban process never stops. Unlike works of art – and even certain buildings, which have a more determinate existence – streets are as mutable as life itself and are subject to constant alterations through design or use that foil the historian's desire to give them categorical finitude. (Çelik, Favro & Ingersoll, cited in Luff & Waters 2012, ¶ 1)

The work in fact celebrates this act of passage and amplifies it beyond the everyday to something that is precious and wondrous, but that has already passed by.

Reminiscing about an act of passage whilst not in passage cancels out the direct experience of the place the viewer is in (the gallery in this case), and the foregrounding of this is self-referential and ironic. This construct set up in the gallery is indicative of the tongue-in-cheek humour employed as a tactics of resistance to controlled passage. The work I attest plays with the futility of chasing physical markers with which to measure our own existence.

Through this critical analysis, I have come to the conclusion that I have used performative labour as a reflexive, unconscious language that can create a sense of place in the urban everyday, through the memory and reverie of pedestrian passage. Luff and Waters support this in their claim that it is the slippages within the process of moving from place to place that contain meaning, where the work is a “homage...[to]

often forgotten arterials of everyday life and to the people that walk these surfaces” (2012, ¶ 2).

These homages point to another place, another time, an experience that has passed even as it is happening in the gallery and will happen in the future. It re-imagines the city street as a place of wonder, of losing oneself, of reverie. It suggests an unconscious, a bodily, and a sensory reconnection with the act of pedestrian passage. In this way, the development of a reflexive unconscious language can provide space for this homage, and the resistant creation of a sense of place therein.

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Appendix A

Images from Alex Villar's "Temporary Occupations"



Figure 1: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.
 Yl Wdhjcb'gg' (\$ž%' 7

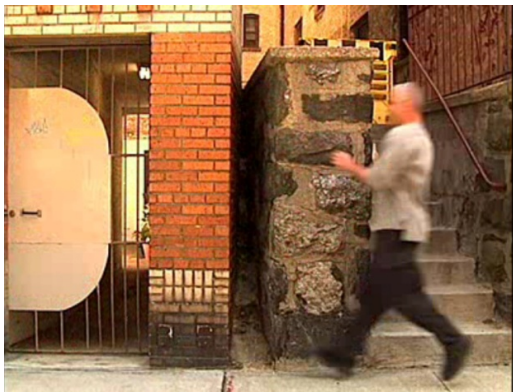


Figure 2.1: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.
 Yl Wdhjcb'gg' (\$ž%' 7



Figure 2.2: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.
 Yl Wdhjcb'gg' (\$ž%' 7



Figure 3.1: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.
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Figure 3.2: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.
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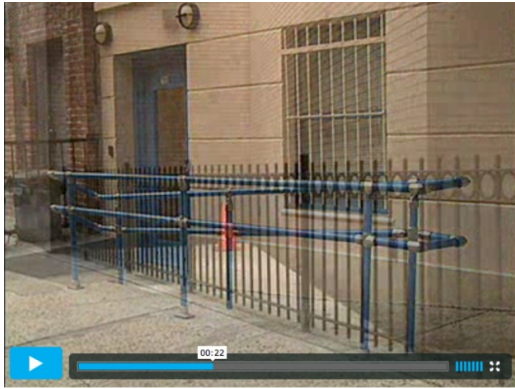


Figure 4.1: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.



Figure 4.2: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.



Figure 5.1: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.



Figure 5.2: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.



Figure 6.1: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.

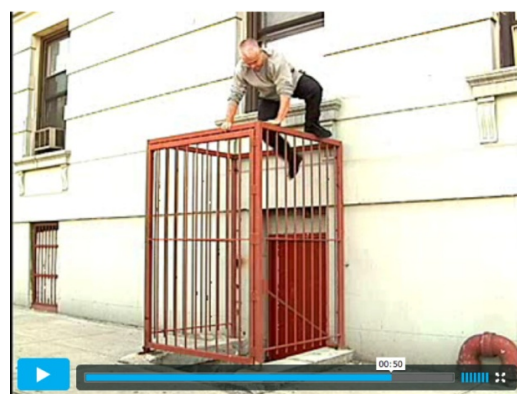


Figure 6.2: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.



Figure 4.3: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.

exception ss 40, 103C

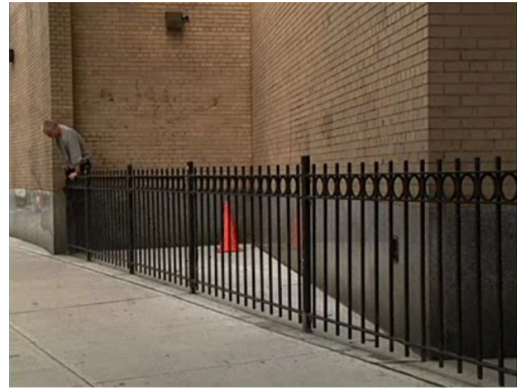


Figure 4.4: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.

exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 5.3: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.

exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 5.4: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations" Still from video.

exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 6.3: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.

exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 6.4: Villar, A. (2001). "Temporary Occupations". Still from video.

exception ss 40, 103C

Appendix B

*Images from the City of Swan Art Award, Crash and Engaging non-place:
Works-in-progress*

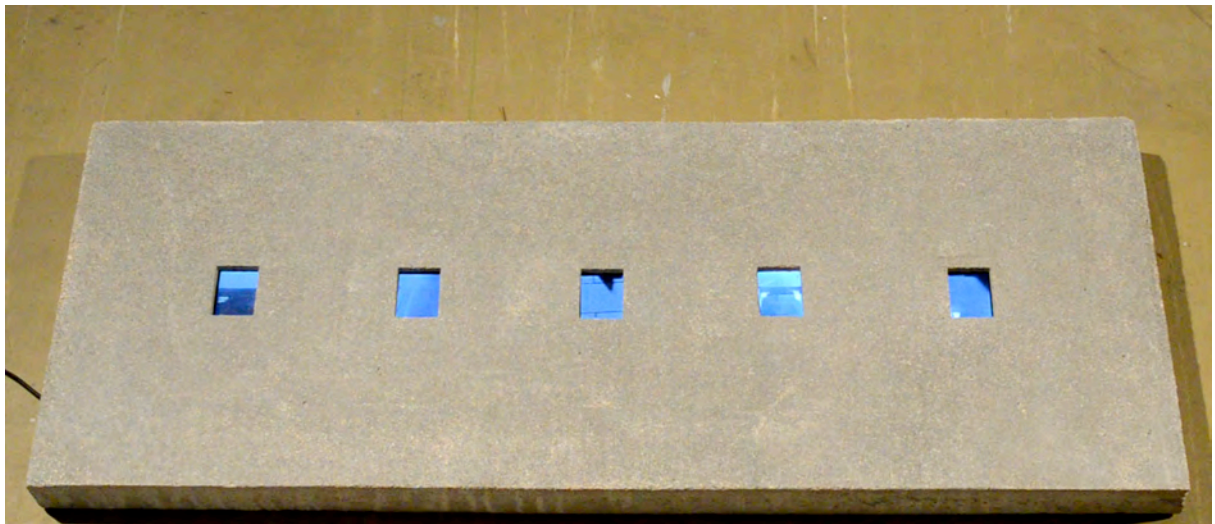


Figure 1: Andrée, D. (2011). "Nineteen degrees and forty-seven minutes". Still from video. Polished concrete and 5 x mp3 players. 60 minutes, looped. 390mm x 360mm x 50mm.

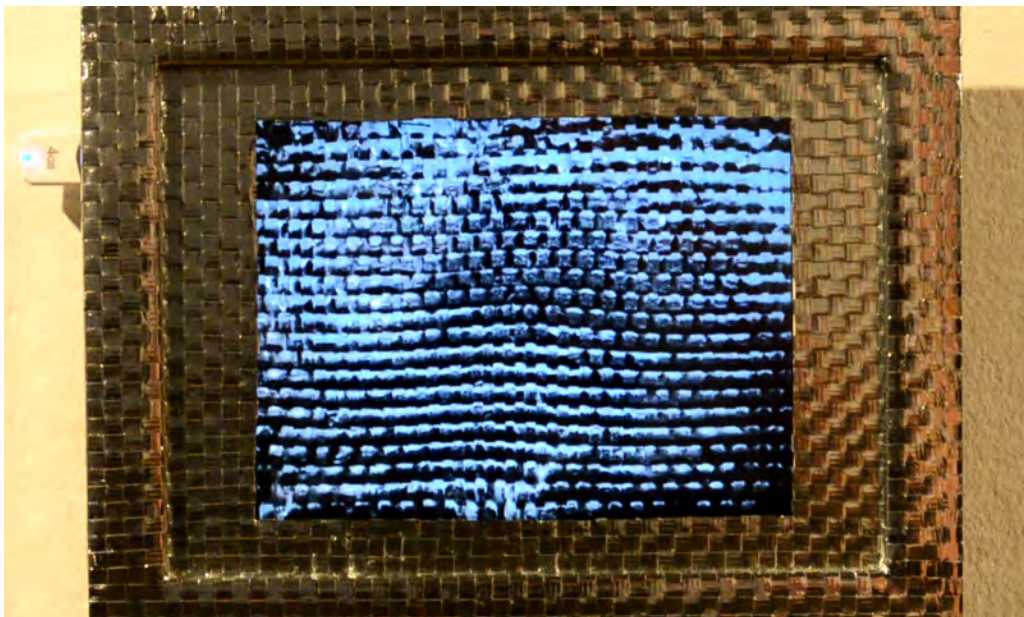
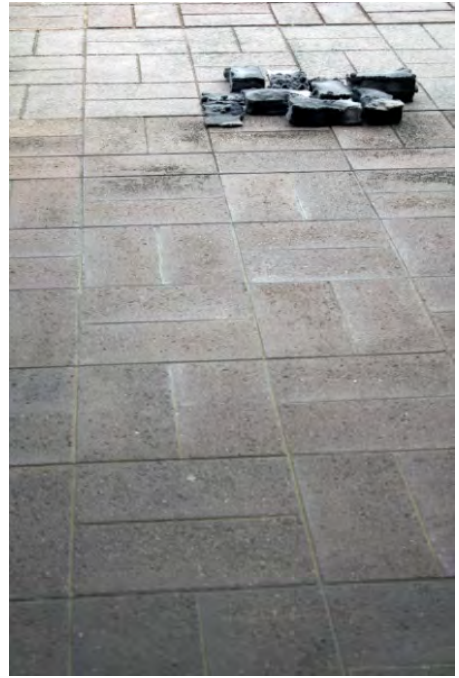


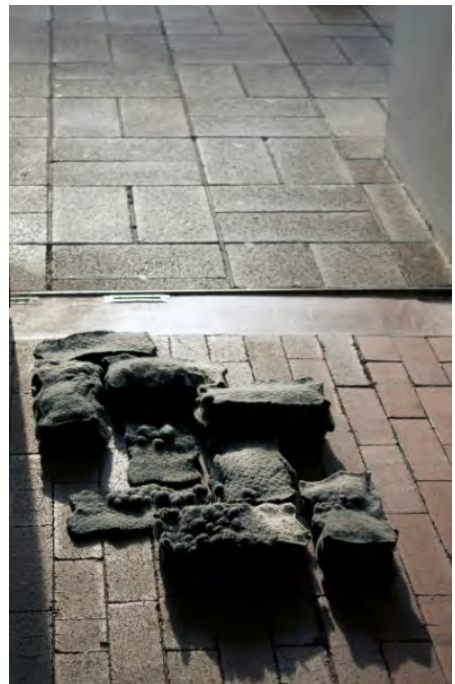
Figure 2: Andrée, D. (2011). "Reflections (on Wellington St)". Still from video. Silver foil curling ribbon, digital photo frame and USB. 20 minutes, looped. 320mm x 227mm x 100mm



Figures 3.1-3.14: Andrée, D. (2011). From work-in-progress. 14 x digital inkjet photographic prints on rag paper. Dimensions variable.







Figures 4.1-4.5: Andrée, D. (2011).
From work-in-progress. Digital inkjet
prints on rag paper (collaged /
composite image).

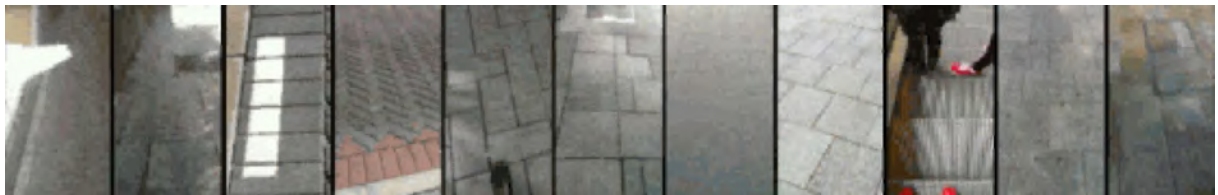
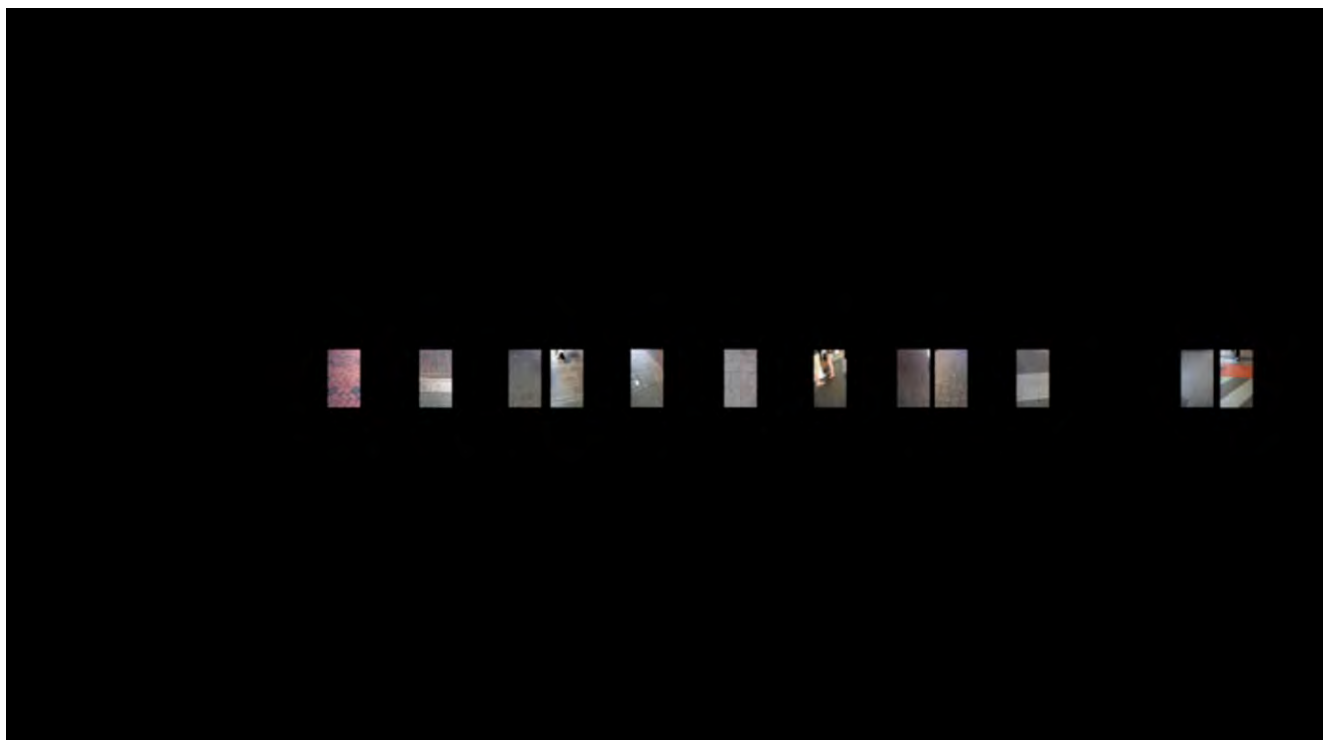


Figure 5: Andrée, D. (2011). From untitled work-in-progress. Still from video (on screen). 11 channel digital video projection. 60 minutes, looped. Dimensions variable.

Appendix C

Process images from works in Be on time



Figures 1.1-1.2: Andrée, D. (2011-2012). "Twenty-five degrees two hundred and fifty-two minutes and twenty-four seconds". Stills from videos (on screen).





Figure 1.3: Andrée, D. (2011). Detail still from video.
"Twenty-five degrees".

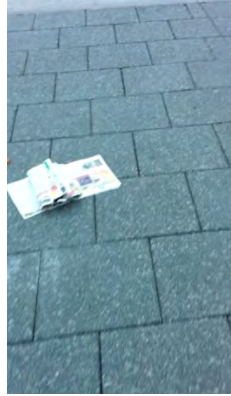


Figure 1.4: Andrée, D. (2011). Detail still from video.
"Twenty-five degrees".



Figure 1.5: Andrée, D. (2011) Detail still from video.
"Twenty-five degrees".

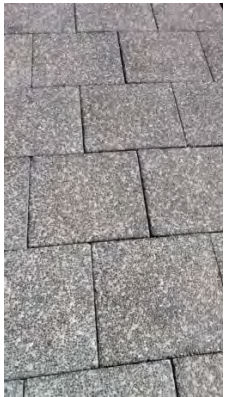


Figure 1.6: Andrée, D. (2011). Detail still from video.
"Twenty-five degrees".



Figure 1.7: Andrée, D. (2011). Detail still from video.
"Twenty-five degrees".



Figure 1.8: Andrée, D. (2011). Detail still from video.
"Twenty-five degrees".

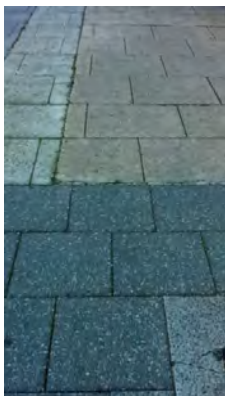


Figure 1.9: Andrée, D. (2011). Detail still from video.
"Twenty-five degrees".

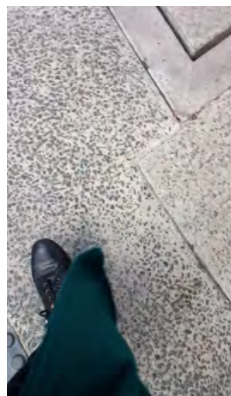


Figure 1.10: Andrée, D. (2011). Detail still from video.
"Twenty-five degrees".

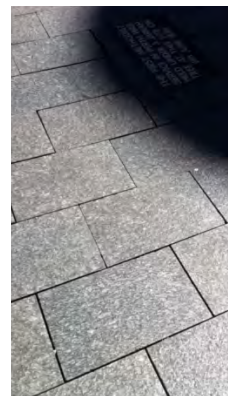


Figure 1.11: Andrée, D. (2011). Detail still from video.
"Twenty-five degrees".



Figure 2.1: Andrée, D. (2011). Detail from studio. Hand knitted and fulled wool.



Figure 2.2: Andrée, D. (2011). Detail from studio. Wool felted and steamed with chicken wire.



Figure 2.3: Andrée, D. (2012). Detail from studio. Hand knitted wool.

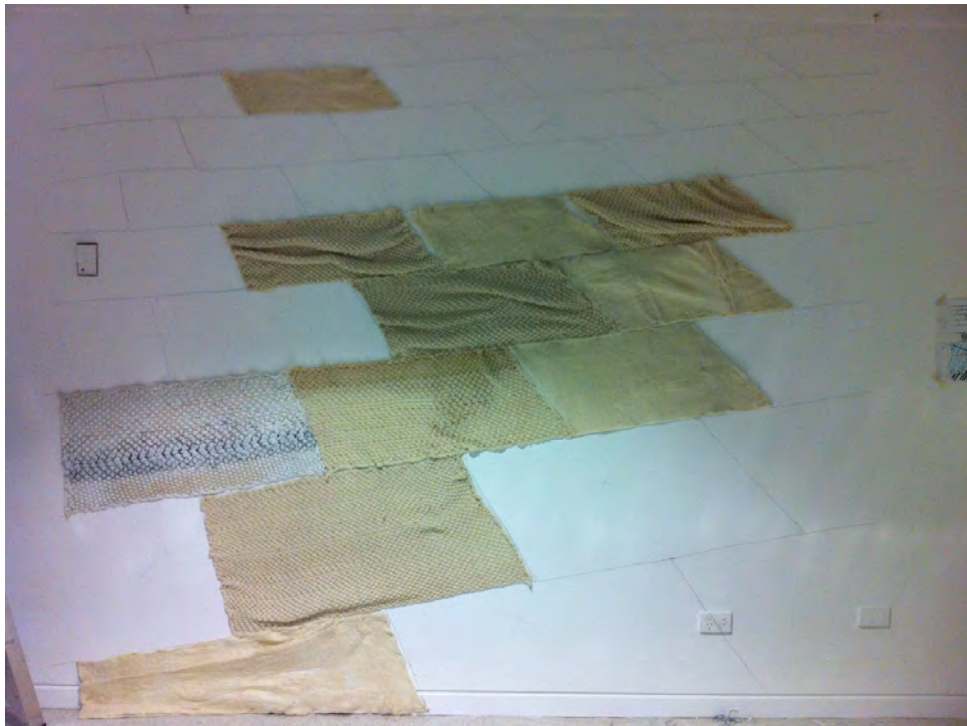


Figure 2.4: Andrée, D. (2012). Studio image.



Figure 2.5: Andrée, D. (2012). Still from video in studio.



Figure 2.6: Andrée, D. (2012). Image from painting studio.



Figure: 2.7: Andrée, D. (2012) Image from painting studio.

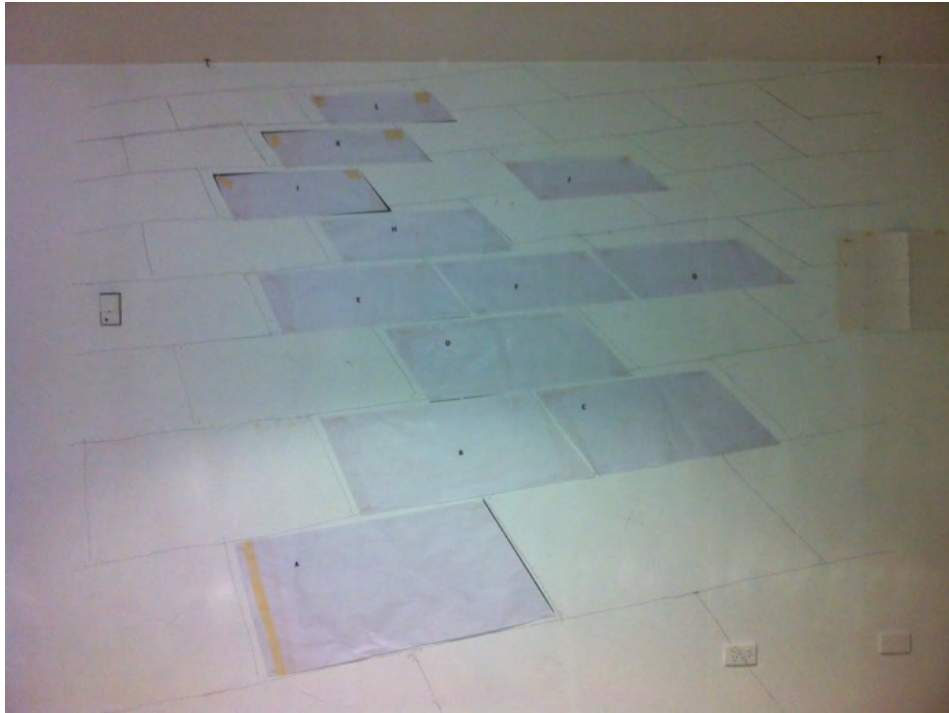


Figure 2.8: Andrée, D. (2012). Studio image.



Figure 3.1: Andrée, D. (2012). Image from test installation for *Be on time* showing “A plied way” and “Clearing”

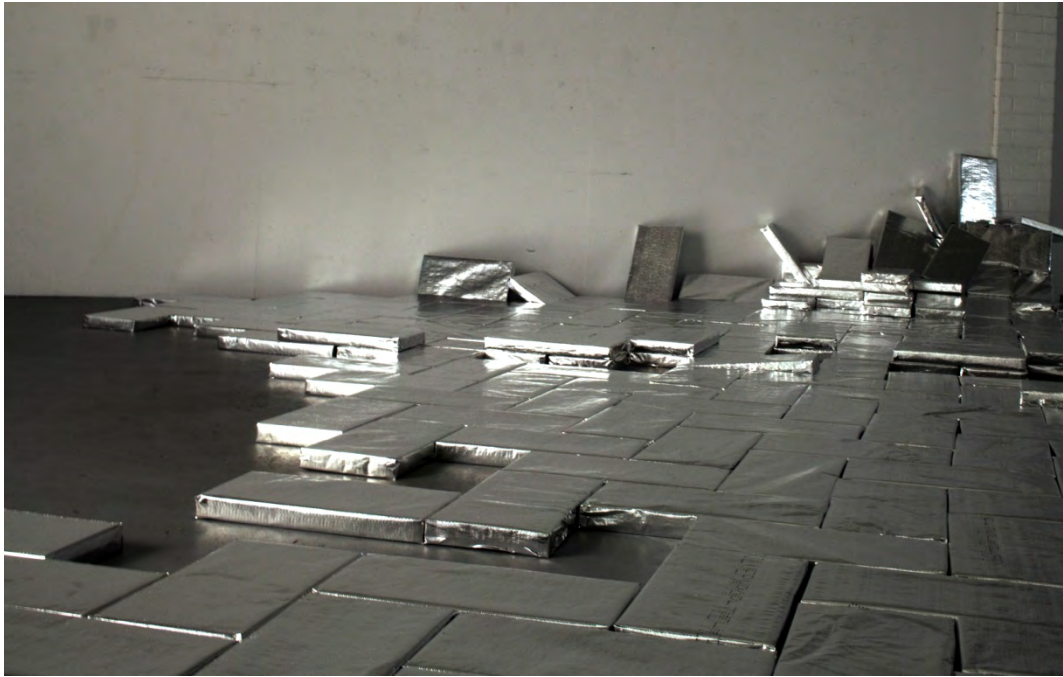


Figure 3.2: Andrée, D. (2012). Image from test installation for *Be on time* showing detail of “Clearing”.



Figure 3.3: Andrée, D. (2012). Image from test installation for *Be on time* showing detail of “Clearing”.

Appendix D

Images from Be on time at Spectrum Project Space



Figure 1.1: Andrée, D. (2012). Opening night shot of “Clearing” and “A plied way”.
Photographed by Mike Gray.
exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 1.2: Andrée, D. (2012). Opening night shot of “Clearing” and “A plied way”.
Photographed by Mike Gray
exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 1.3: Andrée, D. (2012). Opening night shot of “Clearing”, “6000 steps” and “Twenty-five degrees two hundred and fifty-two minutes and twenty-four seconds”. Photographed by Mike Gray.
exception ss 40, 103C

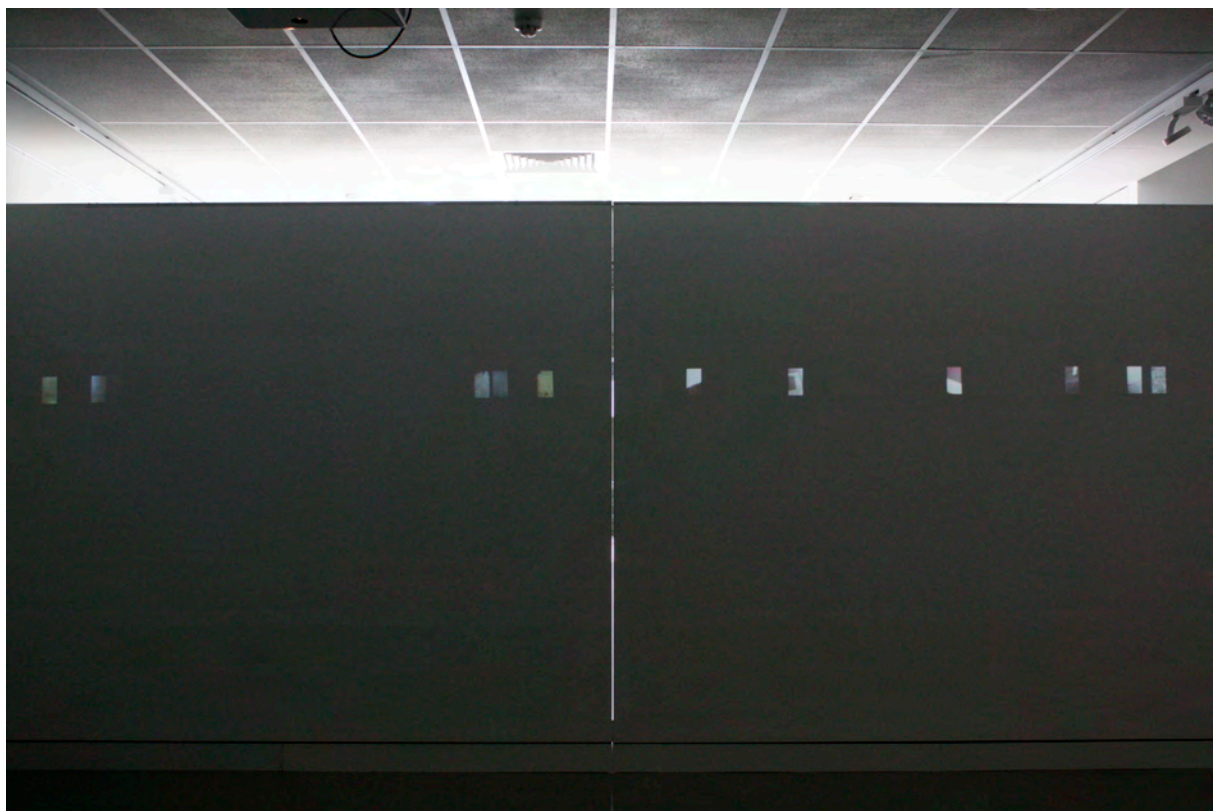


Figure 2.1: Andrée, D. (2012). "Twenty-five degrees two hundred and fifty-two minutes and twenty-four seconds". 35 channel digital video projection. 27 minutes and 21 seconds, looped



Figure 2.2: Andrée, D. (2012). Detail of “Twenty-five degrees two hundred and fifty-two minutes and twenty-four seconds”. 35 channel digital video projection. 27 minutes and 21 seconds, looped
Photographed by Kelsey Diamond
exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 2.2: Andrée, D. (2012). Detail of "Twenty-five degrees two hundred and fifty-two minutes and twenty-four seconds". 35 channel digital video projection. 27 minutes and 21 seconds, looped
Photographed by Kelsey Diamond
exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 3.1: Andrée, D. (2012). "6000 steps". Silver foil curling ribbon, aluminium tape, aluminium, pine, acrylic paint. 3m x 2m x 0.1m.
Photographed by Ben Waters
exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 3.2: Andrée, D. (2012). Detail of “6000 steps”. Silver foil curling ribbon, aluminium tape, aluminium, pine, acrylic paint. 3m x 2m x 0.1m.

Photographed by Ben Waters

exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 3.3: Andrée, D. (2012). Detail of “6000 steps”. Silver foil curling ribbon, aluminium tape, aluminium, pine, acrylic paint. 3m x 2m x 0.1m.

Photographed by Ben Waters

exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 3.4: Andrée, D. (2012). Detail of “6000 steps”. Silver foil curling ribbon, aluminium tape, aluminium, pine, acrylic paint. 3m x 2m x 0.1m.
Photographed by Ben Waters
exception ss 40, 103C

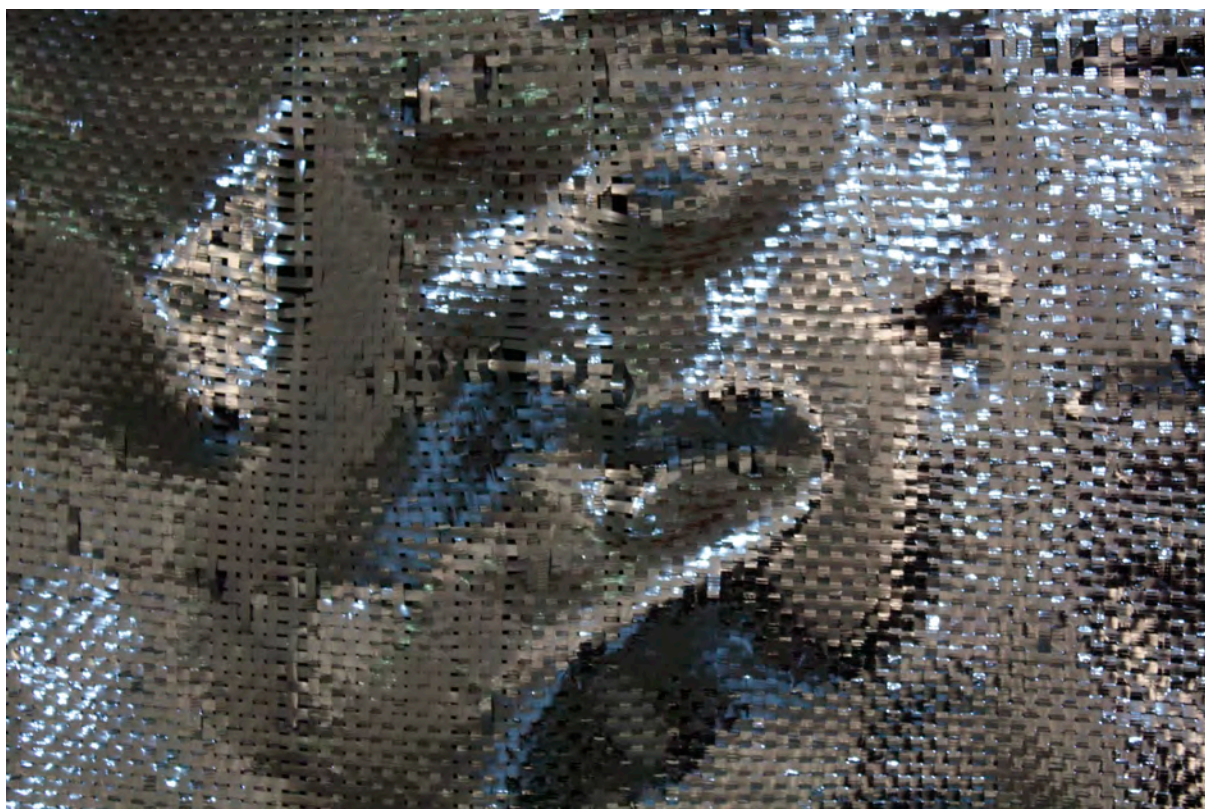


Figure 3.5: Andrée, D. (2012). Detail of “6000 steps”. Silver foil curling ribbon, aluminium tape, aluminium, pine, acrylic paint. 3m x 2m x 0.1m.

Photographed by Ben Waters

exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 4.1: Andrée, D. (2012). "Clearing". Builder's silverwrap, aluminium tape, 199 memory foam pavers each 50cm x 25cm x 5cm. Installation dimensions variable. Photographed by Kelsey Diamond
exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 4.2: Andrée, D. (2012). "Clearing". Builder's silverwrap, aluminium tape, 199 memory foam pavers each 50cm x 25cm x 5cm. Installation dimensions variable. Photographed by Kelsey Diamond exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 5.1: Andrée, D. (2011-2012). "A plied way". plywood, gesso, wool. 13 units, total dimensions approx. 2m x 2.5m.
Photographed by Mike Gray
exception ss 40, 103C

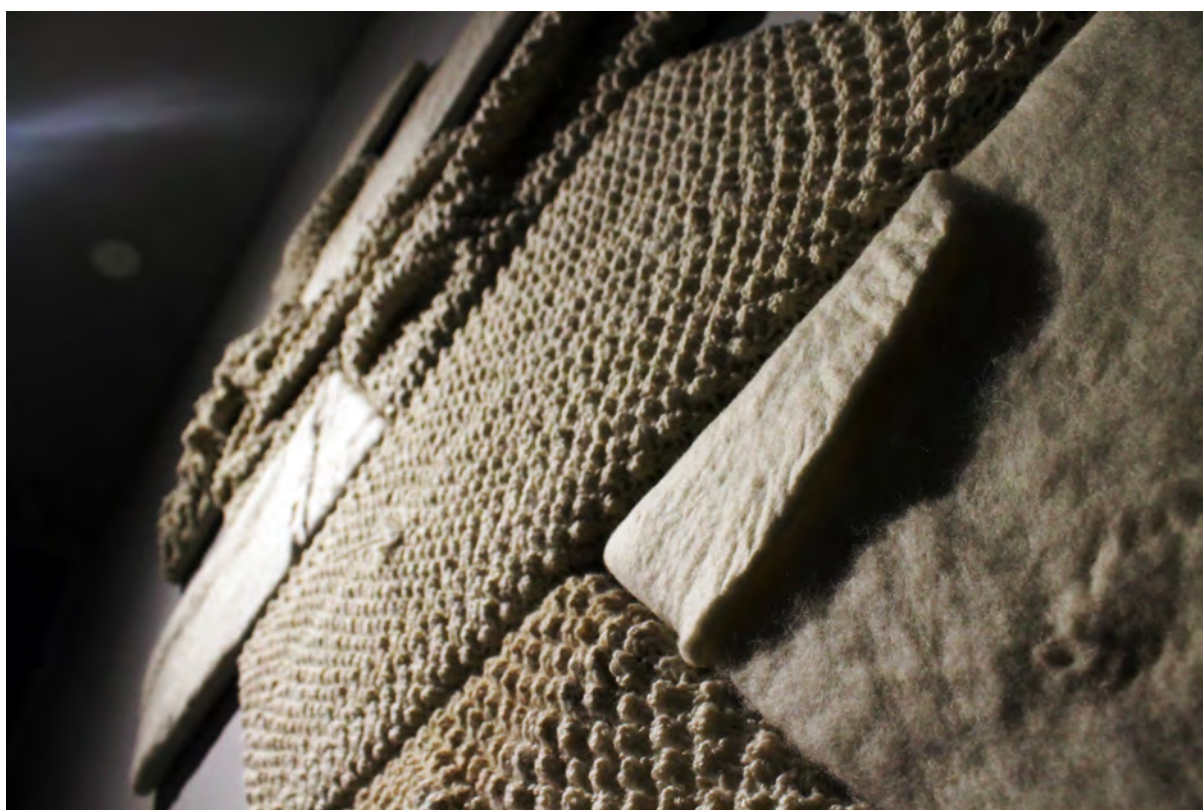


Figure 5.2: Andrée, D. (2011-2012). Detail of "A plied way". plywood, gesso, wool. 13 units, total dimensions approx. 2m x 2.5m.
Photographed by Kelsey Diamond
exception ss 40, 103C



Figure 5.3: Andrée, D. (2011-2012). Detail of “A plied way”. plywood, gesso, wool. 13 units, total dimensions approx. 2m x 2.5m. Photographed by Kelsey Diamond
exception ss 40, 103C