In/sight:
The art of creating
self-reflexive spaces

An investigation of transdisciplinary practitioner/practice

A project submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the author alone; the work has not been submitted previously, in whole or part, to qualify for any other academic award; the content of the thesis is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date of the approved research program; any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged; and ethics procedures and guidelines have been followed.

Natalie McDonagh
Abstract

At a time when, arguably more than ever before in human history, the human mind needs to become more adaptive, and adapting, to meet the increasingly complex, ambiguous, uncertain conditions of the world in which we live, any practices that can effect lasting expansion of our ways of seeing, thinking and acting in relation to self, others, and the world may be considered a useful and valuable contribution to human knowledge and practices.

This practice-led research conducted over a span of eight years demonstrates the capacity of an arts-based system of knowing and knowledge production to give rise to just such effects.

Creative contemplation® is a methodology of material meditation originated and evolved within an experimental, transdisciplinary, commercial design practice – a methodology that proves able to generate self-reflexive spaces for myself, and for others who are neither trained nor practised in creative arts, and it is able to do so within the context of everyday practices. The order of self-reflexive, emergent spaces that is created proves able to generate profound insight into philosophical and pragmatic frameworks and workings of eye-mind-hand that, in turn, enables new, other ways of seeing and thinking that, in its turn, gives rise to sustained change in behaviour and applied practices in a diverse range of endeavours.

This bricolage system of knowing and knowledge production primarily derives from the arts but also variously derives from Australian Indigenous cultural practices as well as psychology, somatic therapy, Western and Eastern philosophy, and traditions of meditation – most particularly Japanese forms of Zen. As such, the transdisciplinary nature of Creative contemplation® accesses and activates a continuum of somatic and intellectual ways of knowing that at once both transcend and extend habitual ontological and epistemological frameworks.

This investigation draws on the experience and knowledge gained in a highly successful, five year collaboration with a courageous organisation that risks engaging me to create and conduct extensive learning fora in which Creative contemplation® is used to increase individual and collective capacity of environmental scientists, and other staff, grappling with the complex matter of sustainability, and the uncertain future of the natural environment and humanity’s prospect inextricably interwoven within it.

In situating my work in relation to the orthodoxy of investigating and cultivating mind in the area of business known as organisational learning and development, and in relation to the emerging field of arts in business, its significant contribution to knowledge and practices in this arena come clearly into view, but, by its very nature, such transdisciplinary practice-research transcends boundaries of any single field allowing contributions to knowledge and practices to be far more broadly inferred. The organisational collaboration featured gives rise to further projects in which the ways of Creative contemplation®, and its associated tangible tools, are consistently seen to be accessible and beneficial to people whose capacities vary greatly from the typical homogeneity of professional organisations including, for example, children of primary and secondary school age, and those with physical and/or intellectual disabilities.

Through studio inquiry, and practice-led and literature-based research the philosophical, theoretical, methodological and practical frameworks are created that support, and make explicit, the ontology and operations of Creative contemplation® methodology, the learning fora with others that I conceive as a species of performative installation, and my agency and role as practitioner within these fora that I cast as being (an) Attendant – a specialised model and mode of facilitation commensurate with the potency of arts-based knowing to investigate and cultivate workings of mind and heart.
Acknowledgements

In the eight years duration of this doctoral research many people have given encouragement, assistance, wisdom, advice and cups of tea, all of which has contributed to the richness of my experience. I am indebted to those in my family (biological and chosen) who have given love and support over many years. I especially want to acknowledge Angela Burroughs, Susan McDonagh and Jules Taylor. I thank Lisa Ceruto, Trish Reid, Jo Daniels, Sam Whiteman, and my wider circle of friends and colleagues for their sustained interest and belief in my practice and research as it has been unfolding over the years. Amongst these I also thank Nicole van Dijk for providing technical multimedia support.

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During the research journey I have had the direct, enjoyable and enriching company of a research cohort, Peter Burrows, Daria Loi, and Louise Mahler who have all successfully completed their doctorates, and Karen Vella who is still on the journey. And I have had the indirect, enjoyable and enriching (literary) company of myriad philosophers, theoreticians, practitioners, artists, poets, spiritual teachers and wise others whose work has given me lenses through which to examine, refashion and augment my thinking and practice.

I offer gracious thanks to the supervisors who have been with me along the way. I thank Elizabeth Grierson for making the membrane into the School of Art permeable at such a crucial point, and for encouraging me so strongly to persevere. I thank Sophia Errey for her continuity of support across academic schools, bearing witness to the greatest part of the endeavour, and presenting insightful provocations along the way at times when they were most needed. I thank Nita Cherry for encouraging me into the academy and setting me on my way eight years ago.

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F. Department of Primary Industries permission to cite the Creative futures project and its evaluation.

G. RMIT Ethics approval.

A Zen master is invited to visit a great Catholic monastery

Prologue detachable booklet

The space of being (an) Attendant: An experiential component on campus
Quirks and clarifications

In a paradoxical sleight of hand, everything that has come to be in the consumption of this research is present in what exists in the beginning. Present and yet to be more realised. The movements of practice and research endeavour beget and become transdisciplinary, transphilosophical, transpraxical, emergent space bringing what may be into being, as I become able to discern it. And, over time, becoming more able to discern it, brings it more into being. Picture, perhaps, Martin Heidegger encountering Lao-tzu and the Tao.

Then picture this encounter taking place on and, very importantly, becoming shaped by what I come to realise is peculiarly Australian philosophical ground; a philosophy and poetics Paul Carter depicts: ‘founded on uneven ground that shifts or which already, by virtue of its natural obliquity, furnishes an infinity of positions, poses, points of rest to anyone prepared to traverse the ground in different directions’ (1996:3). Carter speculates the writing of such philosophical ground has its peculiar requirements: ‘To write that in-between ground, where stability is a function of measured motion, might be the province of the poet rather than the philosopher’ (1996:3).

In my attempts to write such an order of emergent space, informed by such an order of philosophical ground – to remaining open to its logic and ways in the intellectualising of it – clearly defined directions of thought, locations of meanings, grammatical conventions become disrupted, dislocated, set in motion, always opening to more than – opening to more than the immediately seen, perceived, apprehended, felt, understood, noticed.

..language is movement … words are fleet-footed things and when run right, escape us at the place where we think we have wrestled them flat. (Winterson, 1996:166)

To aid orientation and understanding, in the following pages I offer you some clarification of terms and explanation of linguistic devices activated in this text-making.
Terms and definitions

Creative arts
There are some general and commonly used terms in use in this text that in and of themselves, like their referents, are especially capacious, enfolded spaces. Worthy of particular mention are creative arts or arts, and practice and research.

This practice–led research endeavour begets, and itself becomes, emergent space generated by a methodology of inquiry developed and refined in the course of this study that now goes under the registered trademark Creative contemplation®. This methodology of material meditation does derive from the creative arts but it is a bricolage system of knowing and knowledge production variously deriving from creative arts and Australian Indigenous cultural practices as well as psychology, somatic therapy, Western and Eastern philosophy, and traditions of meditation, particularly Japanese forms of Zen. As my primary lineage as a practitioner is visual art and design I describe Creative contemplation® as an arts-based methodology of inquiry. For simplicity I will continue to do this here but I ask you to remain aware of the broader transdisciplinary references enfolded in its meaning in the context of my practice-led research.

Practice and research
If the terms practice and research show their full referents in this particular context rather than an entity called practice producing material works, and an entity called research investigating the making, cultural, praxical, philosophical context (and, perhaps, meaning) of the made works, practice and research are both aspects of an entanglement of material investigations.

My study investigates a dimension of my practice that is applied in the field of organisational learning and development - Creative contemplation® - a methodology of inquiry that participants activate to investigate their ways of seeing, thinking, doing. My art making practice then is a methodology of inquiry, a way of mind investigating itself (rather than a mode of producing artworks). This methodology, emerging and evolving in the span of doctoral study, is used within the doctoral research, to investigate itself and its constituent organs.

Trademarked commercial services and products
Some aspects of my professional practice and their inherent intellectual property are now trademarked. In the text these terms appear without the registered trademark symbol but they are still to be understood as such:

Inspiration by design® - appears on 3D works such as Story box, an object-based system of self-inquiry.

Oblique inspirations® - appears on card and book based devices such as Open mind, open heart, a visual and verbal system of self-inquiry.

Creative contemplation® - my methodology of material meditation, enacted within experiential learning fora conceived as a species of performative installation, that is activated through my agency as practitioner in being (an) Attendant.

It is this that now constitutes my form of making. When commissioned by an organisation to create and conduct learning and development I make this species of experiential fora. In my business practice I simply use the term Creative contemplation and describe it as an art–based methodology of inquiry requiring my agency as facilitator.

1. Inspiration by design
Registered Trademark No. 814158.
Oblique inspirations
Registered Trademark No. 814163.
Creative contemplation
Registered Trademark No. 1121822.
Making
Although for me making is now the slippery, risky business of creating emergent spaces for organisational learning and development, I am limiting the use of the term making to refer to activities giving rise to more recognisable material and non-material manifestations be they visual, tactile, linguistic, gestural, such as two- and three-dimensional visual artworks, written and spoken poetry, written and spoken stories, and so on.

Mind
... Dogen, the great Zen master: "Whoever told people that 'Mind' means thoughts, opinions, ideas and concepts? Mind means trees, fence posts, tiles and grasses." (Gooding, 2002:9)

By the close of the research I come to consider mind as a dynamic distribution of intelligence(s) throughout both human (corporeal and ontological) and non-human being. This augments Barbara Bolt’s logic of performative art practice in which reciprocal relationships take ‘into account the space of the studio and the body of labour engaged in the material practice of making’ (2004:6). And it amplifies Margaret Somerville’s work-in-progress on new, radical methodology for pedagogical research that she provisionally calls postmodern emergence having ‘an ontology founded in the bodies of things’ in which ‘... bodies of things are dynamic, existing in relation to each other, and it is in the dynamic that subjectivities are formed and transformed’ (2007:234).²

It is a view of mind drawing from the work of numerous other artists, teachers, and philosophers influencing this research (e.g. Batchelor, 1998; Bohm, 2005, 2007; Carter, 1996, 2004; Claxton, 2005; de vries (in Gooding, 2006); Dewey, 1934; Eisner, 2002; Hamilton (in Simon, 2002); Kaprow, 2003; Mathews, 2005; Murphy, 2004; Sullivan, 2005; Watts, 2003, 2006).

I hold tangible and non-tangible sites and spaces – that is sites and spaces that may be physical (of human construction or natural occurrence), philosophical, conceptual, ontological, somatic, epistemological – and materials to be responsive, transmissive entities participating in dialogic exchange with human agency, whether or not human agents are attuned to or aware of these emanations, that is, having mind.

So where does the ‘mind’ stop? Not only are its operations essentially unconscious, but they cannot even be corralled within the biological envelope of the brain and skin. (Claxton, 2005:335)

² Margaret Somerville continues to describe this as a work-in-progress ‘in that it does not seem to ever have closure’. (2009, August 18). Personal communication.
The “self” which our postmodern society has enshrined at the centre of reality, is essentially a social construction – a collection of categories, names, descriptions, masks, events, and experiences – a complex ever-changing series of abstractions. By entering the chaos of those abstractions, we touch the magical place where the self is also the “not-self,” or, if you like, the larger chaotic self of the world. (Briggs and Peat, 1999:29)

**Self**

*Self* is used to convey the sense of an inner entity experienced as ‘I’ that is distinct from other, from you; the sense that there is subject and object – a knower and the known.

Returning to Somerville’s theory of postmodern emergence, she observes ‘that all students enter this space of becoming-other for emergence to happen but the intensity of the liminal varies and does not continue evenly throughout the research. It is about entering a particular space of creation. There are times of transformation and times of stability in the research, as in life’ (2007:232). The emergent spaces and conditions that become in enacting my own research always become through some material or non-material practice of art making, and are such spaces of becoming-other.

Here, I reiterate, ‘other’ is not fixed, not set, not static, this is not changing from one stable condition to another, from this to that. In these spaces the sense of self as an entity with boundaries, and within boundaries, becomes destabilised into continua of fluid states of unbecoming and becoming. This continua encompasses a whole gamut: the sense of self as a distinct ‘I’ with boundaries who intentionally manipulates materials in the world beyond membrane of skin; a permeable, fluid entity permeating and being permeated by materials and world – a permeable, fluid entity with intermittent awareness of self; a state of being where the ‘I’ that is this practitioner and researcher dissolves altogether (Murphy, 2004; Suzuki, 1970; Watts, 2006) – becoming the Formless self (Stambaugh, 1999).

With regard to the question in what sense a Formless self can be a self, we would in conclusion be able to reply that if selfhood is not to be conceived egotistically as a separate self opposed and hostile to everything other than itself, formlessness offers an eminent possibility of rethinking selfhood. Overcoming and abandoning its anxious sense of itself as an encapsulated separate “I”, the self gains the wondrous freedom and openness to emerge in joyous compassion from the shackles of its self-imposed boundaries. (Stambaugh, 1999:165)

To the best of my ability, working with the structure of subject and object inherent in English, and its unidirectional implications, I attempt to suggest something of the ambiguous, shifting status of selfhood and objecthood in the research and practice through more considered use, and non-use, of the personal pronoun ‘I’.

In my attempts there is also something of the thinking of Martin Heidegger and Jeanette Winterson weaving in and out: here, the saying of my thinking bringing the unspoken word of Being to language (Heidegger, 1947:239) is at the same time remaining mindful that ‘words are the part of silence that can be spoken’ (Winterson, 2008:151), and there remains much of the Being of practice and practitioner, and this research, in the silence between and beyond words.
Participants as accomplices

The story of applied practice told in the body of the text tells of my first experiment inviting participants to move beyond individual making that is conducted while seated at a table, into working collectively in the making of an artwork whose scale necessitates standing and moving about. This development in practice - extending the individual into the social, and activating the whole body into performance, gives rise to significant amplification of performative agency, affect and effect within the operations of Creative contemplation.

To recognise and acknowledge this magnification in the learning fora in the story I am using the term accomplices, whose etymological roots are Latin com- ‘together’ + the root of plicare ‘to fold’. Metaphorically, the term’s modern connotation (of criminal activity) is apt for what, I suggest, is healthy (and necessary) transgressive activity challenging fixed frameworks of ontology and epistemology within organisational mind in general, and within organisational learning and development in particular.

This distinction does not in any way diminish the agency, affect and effect of Creative contemplation activated in making as an individual, seated activity. It is simply to acknowledge the amplification arising from expanded, collective performative agencies.

Performative installation

... the Hindu model of the universe is a drama. Here the world is not made, it is acted. (Watts, 1963–1965:69)

I am engaging the term performative (rather than performed) installation to be congruent with my understanding and definition of mind in which I hold installation to be a responsive, transmissive entity participating in dialogic exchange with human agency. This is a deliberate positioning beyond the term performed that implicates practitioner more as subject with sole agency in an instrumental relation with installation more as mute/inert object.


Praxis

Expanding on Estelle Barrett’s (2007) definition I take praxis to be purposeful, cyclical movements in practice and research between what practitioner knows (directly or indirectly) and what may yet become known.

For (Donna) Haraway, acknowledging the agency of the world is central for revisioning the world and refiguring a different politics of practice. Here the world is no longer conceived representationally as an object for subiectum, nor is it a resource for use by humans as a means to an end. The world becomes an actor in the drama of existence. (Bolt, 2004:76–77)
It took me a long time, and suddenly one day I realized that the difference I saw between things was the same thing as their unity, because differences, borders, lines, surfaces, boundaries do not really divide things from each other at all, they join them together, and all boundaries are held in common. (Watts, 1965-1967a:149-150)

Rather than the conventional use of the solidus to indicate alternatives I am using the soldius very specifically as a joining device to convey the notion of alternative and cumulative meanings of 'either', 'or' and 'and', co-existing and co-operating all together at once.

The term un/en/folding, for example, intends to convey the complex of collective meanings: folding and or enfolding and or unfolding.

The function of (more)

The device (more) is being used to convey the relative nature of traits, characteristics, experiences realised in the course of this research and the practice it is investigating. Each aspect is always an inseparable aspect of something else, is always in a state of becoming more and/or less in any given context; captured and conveyed in the term un/becoming peppering the text. I do not begin my practice/research with didactic and teleological qualities of eye/mind/hand that at some point in the research leave off and an alternative set of dialogic and pōietic qualities takes over. What happens in enacting this practice-led research is membranes of mind experienced as impermeable, separating didactic from dialogic become permeable. Each quality revealing itself as an aspect of the other. Here, (more) didactic and (more) dialogic qualities of eye/mind/hand come to exist as a non-oppositional, dynamic binary unit of reality (Salk, 1983); a notion that has a significant place and role in this research/practice. There are no fixed conditions and/or oppositional positions of this or that within (and without) this binary, only multidimensional continua of this/that, that/this.

This device also intends to circumvent attribution of positive and negative values to any particular quality. Didactic/teleological qualities of eye/mind/hand are not more highly or less highly prized than dialogic and pōietic qualities and vice versa. I hold that the characteristic agency of any qualities of eye/mind/hand is only more or less suited to the particular context of circumstances and conditions in which we are located at that time and place. Any characteristic of agency is only (more) helpful or (more) a hindrance and which is which, is an improvisational, moment to moment proposition in emergent conditions where ontological, epistemological, philosophical, praxical ground is in flux (Bolt, 2004; Carter, 1996, 2004; Irigaray, 1985; Somerville, 2007).

3. In this monograph on hermann de vries Mel Gooding maintains the artist’s ‘own convention of using no capital letters, adopted early in his career to signify his rejection of conventional hierarchies in written language and by extension in life itself’ (Gooding, 2006:7).
Present tense

The temporal character of the flux of (individual and collective) experiences in this practice/research is very distinct. The perception of (apparently separate) people, events, places, stories (actually) all co-existing in the present moment is a powerful dimension of reality revealed by the adapted creative arts modes of knowing that emerge/converge; modes that are beyond usual modes of perceptual intelligence (my own and that of others). This is the logic of the ever un/en/folding where, at any moment we might be returned to places we have yet to be.

How can I speak to you? You remain in flux, never congealing or solidifying. What will make that current flow into words? It is multiple, devoid of causes, meaning, simple qualities. Yet it cannot be decomposed. The movements cannot be described as the passage from a beginning to an end. These rivers flow into no single definitive sea. These streams are without fixed banks. This body without fixed boundaries. This unceasing mobility ... All this remains very strange to anyone claiming to stand on solid ground. (Irigaray, 1985:215)

In such state of 'never congealing or solidifying' where 'movements cannot be described as the passage from a beginning to an end' (Irigaray, 1985:215) there is only the present and, therefore, the present tense.
Words used playfully and paradoxically come closer to oneness than those hard-crafted by intellect’s exacting efforts. But intellect has its place. It can shape what is possible to say to make evident what cannot be said. Its sharp and cutting edge can slowly carve away everything that is separate, and thereby create a sense of the round and boundless form of oneness. The process is negative but necessary. (Grigg, 1994:223)
Within Creative contemplation methodology, material making is engaged as a way of mind revealing and investigating itself. It is activated as a performative process (capable of) producing ontological effects (Bolt, 2004). The material works arising in the component of inquiry conducted in my studio (and related sites) are not considered as art works for exhibition or assessment. These made works are evidence of my self-inquiry where the attention and emphasis is (more) on the experience of practitioner and the knowledge emerging from dialogic exchanges of mind, materials, (in/tangible) manifestations of/in/from making (Bolt, 2004; Carter, 2004; Gooding, 2006; Simon, 2002; Somerville, 2007; Sullivan, 2005).

This book, cast as Bookwork, is the major element of the submission for examination. The experiential component on campus to follow is a supplement to contextualise particular aspects of the work presented in the book.

Form of the submission for examination

Bookwork and an experiential component on campus

When I let myself be affected by a book, I let myself into new customs and new desires. The book does not reproduce me, it re-defines me, pushes at my boundaries, shatters the palings that guard my heart. (Winterson 1996:26)

For in a very real sense, the achievement of these paintings was in their making, and the finished canvas at one level is only an incidental relic, a fossil of that original process of discovery: not only do you have to be present before these paintings in order to experience them, it may be that you have to made them as well. (Weschler, 1982:77)

Within Creative contemplation methodology, material making is engaged as a way of mind revealing and investigating itself. It is activated as a performative process (capable of) producing ontological effects (Bolt, 2004). The material works arising in the component of inquiry conducted in my studio (and related sites) are not considered as art works for exhibition or assessment. These made works are evidence of my self-inquiry where the attention and emphasis is (more) on the experience of practitioner and the knowledge emerging from dialogic exchanges of mind, materials, (in/tangible) manifestations of/in/from making (Bolt, 2004; Carter, 2004; Gooding, 2006; Simon, 2002; Somerville, 2007; Sullivan, 2005).

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Bookwork

There are a number of intentions in casting this form you are handling as Bookwork. One is to situate and identify the standing it has come to assume, becoming more and more the main body of the submission. Another makes a respectful bow to the Zen tradition that holds that the (made) work embodies and transmits the mind of the maker reflecting the dual meaning of work, at once noun and verb. This dual notion is also dual directional in Bookwork in that it is acknowledging the degree of work it may be asking of the reader in handling its rhizome of epistemological systems and forms which are outlined in the following pages.

... the work as work creates a spacious opening. ... the work opens up Being to the possibility of possibility. (Bolt, 2004:113)
A present tense rhizome

This Bookwork embodies a rhizomic complex of epistemological systems. Some have (more) apparent correspondence with the ways of experiential knowing and knowledge production of my professional practice, some have (more) oblique correspondence; all inextricably interrelated in a fluid temporality. This is a present tense rhizome of practice-led research in which movements of critical reflection retrospectively recast earlier movements of practice, often many times over, over the eight year span of research.

For examples, when we enter the story of applied practice (p.65) in which I am being (an) Attendant we are mid-way through the research in early 2005. The visual counterpart corresponding with the text emanates from my studio inquiry taking place in late 2006 - a spontaneous photographic survey of garments I wear in practice situations in this role - a movement of inquiry retrospectively revealing (more) the peculiar agency of being (an) Attendant at that time and place in the story.

And, Joan Simon’s (2002) monograph on Ann Hamilton comes to me in 2004 offering me a compelling lens through which to re/consider my work. In rereading passages of her text in 2009 movements made in my professional practice in 2001 adopt more/other attitudes. Spa for the mind, the practice movement in question (p.51), and references to Hamilton’s work are placed in correspondence with each other reflecting their current alignment in my thinking, but/and belying the many other speculative comparisons and compositions to this point and those yet to come (and/or come again), beyond this moment in time. This is the logic of the perpetually un/en/folding that at any moment may return us to places we have yet to be.

If I experience time as merely flying by, I posit myself as something stationary; time is flying away. The main error here is that I conceive time as something separate from me, as something “in which” I somehow am. ... Most people are preoccupied with time’s rolling away into the past. They are less aware of the fact that it unfailingly arrives in the present again and again. (Stambaugh, 1999:35)

... the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature ... it is composed not of units but of dimensions, or rather directions in motion. It has neither beginning nor end, but always a middle (milieu) from which it grows and which it overspills ... unlike a structure, which is defined by a set of points and positions ... the rhizome is made only of lines ... an antigenealogy ... the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entryways and exits and its own lines of flights. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987:21)

If you think; yesterday I was, tomorrow I shall be, you are thinking; I have died a little. Be what you are becoming, without clinging to what you might have been, what you might yet be. Never settle. Let’s leave definitiveness to the undecided; we don’t need it. (Irigaray, 1985:214)
Visual

The photographs all emerge in the latter half of the research from 2006 when I begin using a digital camera for the first time. I soon find that I am not simply making the customary visual record of process required by guidelines for research by project, instead the camera becomes an attentive eye to the thingness of the thing (Heidegger, 1936).

The exact composition is precisely found/framed in the viewfinder. I often have to make several attempts, making fine adjustments of hand and eye and demeanour and immediately delete images that I feel to be not true (to the thingness of the thing). For this reason the photos are presented precisely the same size as the viewfinder of the digital camera. What is, is as is; what calls (my) attention in the moments of research/practice.

Here, I trust, the transmission is beyond the sign of the image, being (more) transmission of the ontology of eye/mind/hand of practitioner embodied in the presence (rather than appearance) of the image.

Ultimately, Heidegger concedes, the most difficult task (at least for modernity) is to let a thing be as it is, let it rest upon itself in its very own essence. (Bolt, 2004:101)

My realisation of camera as attentive, allowing, caring eye, rather than technological instrument to merely record, induces me to revisit works made earlier in the research before this transmutation of eye/mind/hand, and attend to them in a similar fashion, hence earlier works (pre 2006) become (more) revealed, (more) revealing.

At the same time this move reveals (more) it also conceals: the being, the presence of the contemporaneous photographs, testament to practitioner eye/mind/hand at that time and place, becomes displaced/re-placed.

In unconcealment there is an opposing movement. In unconcealment there is also concealment. (Bolt, 2004:114)

The acts of attention embodied in the photographs presented here are a highly selective, fragmentary tracing drawn from several thousands of such moments.

de vries has himself used photography extensively, but, characteristically, for purposes that differ radically from those of an aestheticising record or artistic documentation. His photographs emphasise, rather, their factual existence as object-traces of unique moments in time, whose significance is inseparable from that moment-of-being in the world. (Gooding, 2006:9-10)

Deleuze shares with Spinoza his assertion that rather than affirming or denying something of a thing, it is in fact the thing itself that would affirm or deny something of itself in us, overcoming in this process the limitations of narrow subject-centered knowledge. (Semetsky, 2006:7)
Spaces of the still point

As already stated Creative contemplation methodology is permeated by contemplative practices emanating from Eastern traditions of meditation, particularly Japanese Zen. Whether in my studio or applied practice situations with clients there are purposeful endeavours to still the mind (Fontana, 2001; Murphy, 2004; Suzuki, 1970; Trungpa, 1996, 2001; Watts, 2003, 2006).

The whiteness of the book’s pages is an image of the silence out of which sound – that of music or speech – may emerge but without which they could not exist: it is an image of origins ... whiteness is the image of potential, an image of the void from which all things, with their complexities of structure and relation emanate. White is without expression, it is like a mirror into which you may look and see nothing reflected. (Gooding, 2006:24-25)

At intervals the Bookwork will offer you blank pages, breathing spaces: a space and invitation to rest, to still the mind actively at work handling this material (knowledge and form), to become (more) attendant to qualities of (your) eye/mind/hand. Perhaps you notice impatience for (more) orthodox transmission? Perhaps you are distracted by thoughts of tasks demanding attention? Perhaps you are pleasantly lost within the rhizome?
Mathematics / Geometry
Geometrical and numerical systems are a part of my clothing and textile design lineage that incorporates mathematically precise pattern-making, constructing a two dimensional (2D) template for a three dimensional (3D) garment - a space to be articulated by the body.

This language and logic lives on today in my material practices and manifests in the careful calculations involved in the proportions of page layouts, exact positions and size of images, text and its spacing and their spatial relationships; paying close attention to the ways the content and non-content occupies 2D and 3D spaces of the book. It is important to emphasise that this arises from an emergent design process rather than one where a prescribed schema is devised and content fitted into that template. It is the knowledge’s way of becoming materially embodied.

And when writing the exegesis, I was not attempting to translate from sounds and images, but to correspond in another mode. Nevertheless, the requirement to present the exegesis using typeface and paper raised some troublesome issues … Ultimately, I decided to integrate elements of the exegesis into the practice, and elements of the practice into the exegesis. (Goddard, 2007:120)

A framing device speaking of framings
You will meet an (occasional) opening in the fabric of the page, a fixed viewfinder that frames/reframes in the movements of your handling. Alluding to frames of mind - frames of reference, framing questions, frameworks that select for attention and disregard - this may implicitly invite contemplation of your own ways of framing.

These frames allude, more obliquely, to Heidegger’s (1953) contemplations in The question concerning technology, in which he frames an ‘enframing’ mode of human mind prevailing in the modern technological era. This is a mode that reveals through reduction; reducing nature, humankind and other beings to resources in service to, and on call for, technological purposes, the implications of which threaten the survival of the human species and the planet we inhabit (Krell, 1978).

The thermometer, which speaks one kind of limited language, knows nothing of weight. If only temperature matters and weight does not, what the thermometer “says” is adequate. But, if weight or color, or odor, or factors other than temperature matter, then those factors that the thermometer cannot speak about are the teeth of the trap. Every language, like the language of the thermometer, leaves work undone for other languages to do. (Hiyakawa, 1944:8)
And whilst the requirement to also present a substantial written component can initially appear as a burdensome or daunting prospect for those unfamiliar with the process of critical reflection - to those who recognise its reflexive possibilities - the exegesis in parallel with the creative work of the project can provide another arena of creative practice. In this respect, the outcomes of both a creative arts-based project and its exegesis can be presented as significant contribution to knowledge in the field. Moreover, a third creative space opens. By interchanging and integrating the practice with the exegesis, it may be possible to generate a combined and reflexive research praxis. (Goddard, 2007:113)
The space of being (an) Attendant: An experiential component on campus

As already stated this Bookwork constitutes the main body of work being submitted for examination. The experiential component on campus in the following weeks is a supplementary component to contextualise a specific, significant aspect of practice/research – being (an) Attendant.

I must reiterate, and emphasise, that this component is not standing in for an exhibition or a performance made as a work to be assessed and examined as in a more conventional submission of research by art project. Neither is it a presentation about, nor an attempt to replicate Creative contemplation/performative installation as enacted in my applied practice. It is a supplementary component contextualising being (an) Attendant through more/other ways of knowing.

Heron and Reason’s continuum of ways of knowing describes:

Experiential knowing is through direct face-to-face encounter with person, place or thing; it is knowing through the immediacy of perceiving, through empathy and resonance. Presentational knowing emerges from experiential knowing, and provides the first form of expressing meaning and significance through drawing on expressive forms of imagery through movement, dance, sound, music, drawing, painting, sculpture, poetry, story, drama, and so on. Propositional knowing ‘about’ something, is knowing through ideas and theories, expressed in informative statements. Practical knowing is knowing ‘how to’ do something and is expressed in a skill, knack or a competence. (Taylor & Hansen, 2005:1213)

My actual practice/research activates any and all of these, sometimes as more or less discrete modes, sometimes moving back and forth and amongst all of them, more or less at once. To capture and communicate this in the Bookwork is obviously to translate my primary experience and knowledge into a secondary form. This may, for the reader/examiner, activate and engage three modes: experiential (direct encounter with the book); presentational (the use of imagery, story, sculpture of sorts) and propositional knowing (through ideas, theories, philosophy, explication and explanation presented in words).

Given the context here, of intellectual endeavour within the academy, the last is likely to prevail. The intention of the experiential component is to augment and extend this encounter in offering you an opportunity for (more) direct, sensory, aesthetic knowing (Taylor & Hansen, 2005).

There is a cluster of five dimensions of being (an) Attendant in the experiential component corresponding with aspects of practice/research presented in the Bookwork.
Awakening site / Spirit of care

One dimension is the aspect of my role being (an) Attendant, in fora of organisational learning and development, that concerns preparations and dialogue with physical space – preparing the site for the (collective) work of self-inquiry.

The room on the RMIT campus chosen for this component of the submission is fairly typical of the spaces in which I usually find myself working in applied practice, a multipurpose meeting room. Here, before you arrive, I will enact my same rituals of dialogic exchange with site that are concerned with the space being (more) purposefully awakened and activated as the container (and a participant) in Creative contemplation/performative installation. And, very importantly, that serve to imbue the site with a spirit of care, usually noticeably lacking in such spaces.

The presence and effect of this ritual dialogue may, or may not, be consciously discernible to those entering the space, as is the case in my applied practice, but/and in the course of practice/research I have come to know this aspect is a vital factor in (potentially) creating self-reflexive spaces for myself and for others.

Enacting the rituals does not guarantee such a space will emerge but I do know that not enacting them evidences such an order of space will not manifest.

Attending to the breath

Another dimension extending from this, and incorporated into the experiential component, is caring for and attending to others in applied practice situations: greeting and welcoming, serving drinks, making sure people are comfortably seated and, in due course, further assisting their physical and psychic arrival into the space through a short guided meditation, attending to the breath.

This invites you to contemplate the ways this may (may not) coax mind to open (more) to the (more) poietic, to assume Wordsworth’s ‘wise passiveness’ (1798/1984:130).

The eye it cannot chuse but see,
We cannot bid the ear be still;
Our bodies feel, where’er they be,
Again, or with our will.

Nor less I deem that there are powers
Which of themselves our minds impress,
That we can feed this mind of ours,
In a wise passiveness.

Think you, ’mid all this mighty sum
Of things for ever speaking,
That nothing of itself will come,
But must be seeking?

(Wordsworth, 1798/1984:130)
Oblique inspirations
Open mind, open heart

The final aspect corresponding (more) directly with applied practice is a material system of meditation embodying the Creative contemplation methodology called Oblique inspirations / Open mind, open heart, which you are invited to explore and experience for yourself.

The gradual emergence of this tangible tool threads through the period establishing my experimental professional practice dedicating itself to this work (1999), the beginning of this research (2002), and a major movement of studio inquiry, Making female felt (2004), that brings forth the completion and commercial production of this device very soon afterwards.

In its own way, it maps movements of practice/practitioner mind taking place over this time and, as a system of visual thinking, it proves welcome and useful to many hundreds of others in the years that follow.

Shifting shadows:
An act of attention in 184 moments

The source of this visual/aural meditation is practitioner/researcher simply spontaneously, unintentionally, completely, solely being (an) Attendant. Not ‘doing’ being (an) Attendant in applied practice, not thinking about being (an) Attendant in researching being (an) Attendant but just being (an) Attendant.

Considered an irrelevant distraction at the time of its emergence, and almost discarded, this digital work reveals itself as the culminating movement in/of the research’s studio inquiry – the ground of the Formless self (Stambaugh, 1999).

You are invited metaphorically (and literally, if you wish) to stand in the Attendant’s shoes, being (an) Attendant, to open Being to being (an) Attendant to oneself – to wait and watch and see what may arise within, to attend to (just) what is.

Dialogue with (an) Attendant / practitioner / researcher

The final dimension of the experiential component is an opportunity for a dialogue with me, should you wish.

Prologue / detachable booklet

At the back of the Bookwork you will find a detachable booklet outlining the sequence of the experiential component for you to bring with you on the day – a vade mecum, of sorts.
Within our own practices, and in the spaces between the practice and the exegesis, it is possible for a reflective practitioner engaged in a reflexive practice to generate a dialogue and to address this discourse towards a community of peers. (Goddard, 2007:120–121)
Secreted vessels

In January 2004, in a pivotal conversation (that can be heard in the background of this submission, at different volumes in different places) my supervisor very wisely asks me, if your ideas could secrete their own container what would it be? 

4

This receives much contemplation over the years as I examine the quality and character of eye/mind/hand at work in my handling, as I probe my preoccupation with boxes, books and cards, bags and pouches. Ultimately the answer to this comes to be, me. I am the secreted vessel – I now know the way of approaching and entering and conducting a practice situation empty handed; a way in which the ontological and epistemological transmissions and practices of being (an) Attendant (may) be enough to create self-reflexive spaces.

In the context at hand – the research secreting forms for its submission for examination – the Bookwork and The space of being (an) Attendant, its accompanying experiential component on campus, are the vessels that form. As such, the overall form of the submission, hand in hand with what is contained within, and transmitted by, the Bookwork’s text, images and formation, and what is contained and felt within the experience on campus yet to come, is, in its entirety, responding to the questions focusing the research.

Questions focusing the research

In what ways can my work act to create self-reflexive spaces for my self and others?

In what ways can I capture the creative process of both constructing and attending to self-reflexive spaces?

What constitutes a philosophical, theoretical and methodological framework supporting these practices?

4. Sophia Errey
“Kindly let me help you or you will drown,” said the monkey, putting the fish safely up a tree.
(Watts, 1965-1967b:112)
Introduction

In my first fifteen years as a professional design practitioner, consultant and lecturer I have the opportunity to work with a broad and assorted range of organisations in the United Kingdom, Europe, the Far East and Australia. In the course of these years and associations I repeatedly witness machinations of individual and organisational ‘monkey mind’ at work where the effects of an unquestioned, uniform frame of mind/s come as a surprise.

These may range from the unhelpful, such as repeated failure of projects and low staff morale, to the outright destructive, such as putting small companies out of business causing loss of livelihood to people already in vulnerable economic circumstances. To my ways of thinking, cultivated through high order art and design education, such effects may be foreseen. It seems to me that the arts have much to offer organisations in extending repertoires of mind.

My four years of undergraduate education in the United Kingdom is a very particular collage of fine art, design and continuous study of the history and theory of art and design. A year of compulsory foundation studies – drawing, painting, sculpture, print making and so on – precedes three years of study in design of textiles and clothing. For forty hours a week in the company of nineteen other students, under the constant guidance of skilled staff, fine art practices – life drawing, illustration, photography and printmaking – continue alongside learning the ways of garments and accessories – shoes, hats, jewellery, gloves – attuning my eye/mind/hand to working with diverse materials beyond clothing fabrics. This suite of theoretical and practical study is augmented at regular intervals by instruction in French and Italian.

We are actively encouraged to collaborate in multidisciplinary work across schools in our own and other faculties – architecture, fine art, graphics, interiors, products, music, performing arts, and so on – where familiar and unfamiliar ways of looking at and thinking about the world are shared and exchanged, and can merge and mutate cultivating the mind/s of all concerned.

This milieu of individual and collective mind/s is highly influential in forming my view of these exchanges being important as much for the ways of knowing at play and the effect on the mind/s of those in the mélange, as for the tangible works that result. This notion of ensemble cast thinking continues as a consistent, clear informing influence throughout my international professional design and teaching practice in the years ahead (bringing me to base myself permanently in Australia in 1990). It provides the model of collaboration when I come to refashioning my professional practice in 1999:

Q: What do you get when you cross two frock designers with a Buddhist counsellor and a bunch of people in architecture, design, art, education, psychology, law, marketing, media and social policy?

A: Inspiration by design

More than anything else, intelligence is socially distributed. If I need my reference books, how much more do I need my colleagues, my sounding boards, my sparring partners, my role models? In a creative discussion, mind becomes communal. No one has all the information and no one is in control, but by listening, contributing and thinking aloud, we can go places where none of us could have gone alone. We kick ideas around, we build on each other’s flights of fancy, veer off at tangents and feed back in our experience sometimes slowly and delicately, and sometimes so fast that we have the vertiginous feeling of being way out beyond the safety net, keeping each other airborne like a virtuoso troupe of acrobats. Our minds are so intricately woven together that it may even take a while for each of us to ‘find ourselves’ again when the creative caper stops. (Claxton, 2005:335)

With much trepidation, minimal financial resources and serious concerns about whether anyone will take a self-reconstructing frock designer seriously in these matters, I set to work to adapt and transpose modes of knowledge production from the arts into organisational learning and development, intending to make these methods and tools accessible to those neither trained nor practised in creative arts, and useful to them in their workplace to activate and cultivate other, more modes of mind.

Happily this audacity is soon rewarded with interest from a number of (for profit and not-for profit) organisations that very gradually become paying clients, contributing to the slow, steady development of my practice into what is today a viable and self-sustaining business entity, incorporating services and products beyond the scope of this study.7

7. Clients to date include: Australian Federal Police; AXA Insurance; Castlemaine Primary and Secondary Schools; Centre for Innovation (South Australia); de Bono Institute; International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI); National Australia Bank; National Employment Services Association; St James Ethics Centre; SKM Consulting Engineers; Tynte Flowers; QBE Insurance; Women’s Golf Network (Victoria); numerous management consultants and organisational learning and development practitioners.

Services and products beyond the scope of this research include: the design and production to commission of tangible thinking tools and other tangible forms of corporate learning and development materials; consultancy in strategic business development linking to strategies for visual communication and design of tangible materials; acting as visiting/occasional thought provocateur/thought leader; coaching/mentoring.
Beginning the research

In the early phases of refashioning my professional practice I begin this doctoral research to investigate the becoming of practice, practitioner and productions, and create its philosophical, theoretical, methodological and practical frameworks. The research goes on to span eight years, moving across faculties and schools in the academy, starting out in Business in the School of Management, then moving to Design and Social Context into the School of Art. In so doing it draws from traditions of knowledge production and forms of presentation associated with these domains, and others beyond, and it takes place across dual sets of practice sites: those of the creative arts where I am undertaking solo self-inquiry – studio, exhibition and performance spaces – and sites of organisational learning and development of my applied practice with others (refer Fig. 1).

When my research begins in 2002, housed in the School of Management, I am expecting to investigate the benefits of my work to a small group of organisational learning and development consultants (already known to me) who will apply my methods and tools in their applied practice with their clients. My own applied practice, however, soon presents me with an unexpected opportunity to work directly with, and within, an organisation.

In 2003, the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) invites me to tender for a long-term program of personal and professional development for its staff which I will design and personally conduct. I am successful in my bid and from the initial program of staff development, called Creative futures: Developing capabilities for a complex world, my work with the organisation goes on to span five years and is subjected to extensive internal evaluation. Although the opportunity with DPI progresses too quickly for me to seek ethics approval to collect data from participants, I have DPI’s permission to cite the project and its published evaluation documents which are in the public domain.8 The Creative futures program gives rise to several other projects within DPI, most notably, a piece of work with LandLearn, the organisation’s education program for schools which features in the central story of applied practice.

When I begin the collaboration with DPI my experience of facilitating group learning is primarily in the context of creative arts higher education. In the few instances outside of this, working with clients in the very early stages of my reconfiguring professional practice, I am approaching facilitation in the same (more) didactic manner. I have no experience facilitating adult learning in an organisational context, in the physical sites used for such work. In the work with DPI being a facilitator of other people’s use and experience of my methods and tools draws my attention to these dual aspects: my agency and the effect of the physical environments in which the work is being conducted.

What am I doing that is helping and/or hindering matters and what conditions of physical environment are helping or hindering? The intensive and extensive program with DPI gradually directs the focus of my research towards the created and circumstantial conditions of experiential learning fora I am creating and conducting, bringing my role and agency as an arts practitioner into the foreground.

In 2005, midway through the research, I relocate my study to the School of Art to investigate this ontology of practitioner and its associated practices that are becoming in the context of organisational learning and development.

8. See Appendix F.
I’m in the School of Management.
I’m trying to understand research methodologies ... without success.
I make a work asking, what is research?
A methodological matrix emerges: a framework contained in a box; a grid of coordinates aligning 7 bodies of knowledge with 7 stages of research action.
When I contemplate it I am none the wiser. It just doesn’t seem right to me.
I show it to the panel members at my second research progress review. There is some quite excited exploration of its organising principle and the forms manifesting at each of the 49 sets of coordinates. The chair of the panel asks me: Is this your methodology chapter?
It is some time later that I realise that this is (for me), what research is not.
Dual directional transpositions

Whilst in the School of Management, I become familiar with research conventions being used in this domain, particularly phenomenological and heuristic methodologies, and I conduct some early inquiry in collaboration with other PhD candidates also trying to bring modes of knowing from the creative arts - opera, visual arts, design and architecture - into the fields of Business, and Management Education.

In a dual directional transposition, when I move to the School of Art I bring with me such knowledge of research methodologies as I have acquired. I carry over and continue established research activities, such as sessions of reflective practice with my cohort of practitioner/researchers and, at the same time, redefine my research process in keeping with conventions of doctoral research by art project. The three concurrent knowledge systems at work in the investigation are emulated in the form and format of this book: the dual practices of material thinking in my studio-based inquiry and investigating through writing, and surveying literature and practices.

The content of the Bookwork

The content of the Bookwork presents research concentrating on selected, significant aspects of my refashioned professional practice emerging since its inception. One is the methodology of self-inquiry I call Creative contemplation - a bricolage variously deriving from the arts, Australian Indigenous cultural practices, as well as psychology, somatic therapy, Western and Eastern philosophy, and traditions of meditation, particularly Zen. This is a way that proves able to create self-reflexive spaces for myself when activated as the methodology within my studio inquiry, and for others in fora of organisational learning and development.

Clustered around and within Creative contemplation is my learning fora with clients becoming conceived as a species of performative installation in which my agency and role as practitioner becomes being (an) Attendant - a specialised model and mode of facilitation commensurate with artistic processes being ‘powerful beyond measure ... to make people think and feel’ (Darsø, 2004:164).

The conception and enactment of this collective system of transdisciplinary, transphilosophical, transpraxical space, practices and practitioner, shows itself as the culmination of this practice-led research. The content also considers two tangible systems of self-inquiry embodying Creative contemplation: Story box, a portable interactive sculpture, and Oblique inspirations/Open mind, open heart that assumes the form of a set of cards and guidebook.

As you will hear Creative contemplation is a system of mind investigating and cultivating itself that repeatedly proves capable of revealing reality beyond usual modes of perception and thought, generating (often profound) insight and enabling sustained transmutations of individual and collective mind(s).
that, in turn, generate sustained change in behaviour and applied practices in the workplace. When shown situated in relation to the orthodoxy of investigating and cultivating mind(s) in organisational learning and development this practice–research clearly demonstrates how creative–arts based ways of knowing significantly extend knowledge and practices in this domain.

Although originally expected to be for the use of adults specifically in an organisational context, over the years, the ways and tools of *Creative contemplation* are consistently seen to be accessible and beneficial to people whose age, background, education, personal ability, professional experience, and so on, vary greatly from the typical homogeneity of professional organisations including, for example, children of primary and secondary school age, and those with physical and/or intellectual disabilities – readily accessed and activated by people to enable more and other ways of being and doing irrespective of the context. As such, this work shows its nature and its potential to be that of its source: able to transcend fixed frameworks be they ontological, epistemological, of academic disciplines, domains of practice, or contexts and sites of human endeavour.

At a time when, arguably more than ever before in human history, the human mind needs to become more adaptive, and adapting, to meet the increasingly complex, ambiguous, uncertain conditions of the world in which we live, any practices that can effect lasting change in ways of seeing, thinking and acting in, and on, the world may be considered a useful and valuable contribution to human knowledge and practices.

The becoming of knowledge and practices within research/practice, and the effects arising, are embodied and transmitted in a number of ways. This *Bookwork* and the contextualising experiential component on campus, *The space of being (an) Attendant*, are partial embodiments. Other embodiment is within practitioner’s ontology – a myriad of subtle yet significant accumulative, and still accumulating, fine adjustments and recalibrations of workings of eye/mind/hand. These are beyond taxonomy but/and evident to me in practice as a notable maturation, becoming more skillful, adept, confident, wise and, perhaps most importantly to me, more courageous and compassionate in being (an) Attendant in my applied practice with others. As well as being absorbed and disseminated through my presence and pedagogical practices in being (an) Attendant, the knowledge emerging within practice/research is further embodied within, and transmitted through, my design process and the tangible contemplation devices to which it gives rise.

I trust the becoming of practitioner, practice and productions unfolding within this research will be heard in the telling as it is presented here.
She had been working on it for fifteen years, carrying about with her a shapeless bag of dingy, threadbare brocade containing odds and ends of colored fabric in all possible shapes. She could never bring herself to trim them to any pattern; so she shifted and fitted and mused and fitted and shifted them like pieces of a patient puzzle-picture, trying to fit them to a pattern or create a pattern out of them without using her scissors, smoothing her colored scraps with flaccid, putty-colored fingers. (Faulkner, 1956:151)
A prelude, a story and some dis/continuous un/en/foldings

After much experimenting with compositional structures – composing, recomposing, returning to earlier compositions – the (verbal) material written into being finally settles into the pattern now at hand (or, perhaps more accurately, is compelled to settle, by the timeline for submission).

We begin with a prelude setting earlier scenes in my professional practice that precede *A story of applied practice: Transposition / Transmission / Transmutuation*. This story exemplifying *Creative contemplation* at work in fora of organisational learning and development is something of a rhizome itself within the larger rhizome of the Bookwork, in that it contains and connects to all points and places in the research that need to be remarked. Following the story are *Some dis/continuous un/en/foldings* of its dimensions: a handling of its fabric to enable (more) direct insight into what is within its folds, in particular, three performative installations – two in applied practice in sites of organisational learning and development, and their predecessor taking place in a movement of research staged in creative arts’ site of exhibition and performance.

There are certain characteristics of these un/en/foldings. At any one time we are seeing (only) patches of the fabric. As we move, meandering from one patch to another, we may overlap a previously seen area. In other movements we pass over patches in between, relinquishing segue. Then, at times, we are examining the cloth so closely we see the individual fibres, their composition, character, flaws; then viewing it at arm’s length so we see texture and contour, gaining impressions of (more) overall form. At other times we are so encompassed within the folds, we become part of the fabric.

To write in this way is, I realise, to make demands of one’s readers who may reasonably be impatient to get to the point, and who may find the sinuous byways and incidental curvatures along the way dangerously close to a baroque self-indulgence. But perhaps the impatience for a linear exposition is part of the problem; if our opening to the future depends in part on renovating our modes of historical narrative then an attention to the process of getting from one location to the next may not be self-indulgent but critical in establishing the value of the knowledge garnered. (Carter, 1996:17)

The choice of which patches to address and which to pass over, is obviously shaped by the stated intentions and scope of my academic research. This inevitably means the degree of un/en/folding the story’s double layered dimensions of research/practice varies, and some dimensions speculated upon in the meanderings of the research are not explicitly examined (more on this in Un/en/folding No.1).

All this, then, is not a fixed framework constructing an argument and asserting propositions. Much like a situation of applied practice, I am presenting a purposeful and carefully considered assemblage of practices, philosophy and possibilities; sometimes explaining, sometimes reflecting, sometimes speculating, sometimes probing, sometimes drawing connections on your behalf, sometimes not. Whatever the mode, whatever the voice, I am not insisting, nor trying to impose upon, only ever offering the work for consideration and acceptance, having faith in what it has to say.

*Everything must be seen through one’s own microscope and one has to reach one’s own conclusions in one’s own way.*

(Trungpa, 1996:7)
Breathing is the movement of life, the vital process that connects the body with its environment. The more we open and deepen awareness of the breath and the body, the more we understand the intrinsic dynamism of our entire experience. Nothing stands still for a moment. Breath, heartbeat, body, feelings, thoughts, environment are facets of an indivisible, interactive system, no part of which can really be claimed as “me” or “mine”. (Batchelor, 1998:96)
I invite you to...

Be seated comfortably with your back straight but not rigid

Relax shoulders, neck, jaw ... wherever you feel tension in your muscles try and release it

When you are comfortable, turn your attention to your breathing

Focus on the temperature of the air as you inhale through your nose ... 

... and upon it as it is exhaled through the nostrils

Notice the subtle but unmistakable sensations as you breathe in ... breathe out ... breathe in ... breathe out ...

As and when thoughts arise, try to let them pass in to, and out of, awareness without distracting your attention

... breathe in ... breathe out ... breathe in ... breathe out ...

... attending to the breath as you do so ...
She could not reconcile the anxieties of a spiritual life involving eternal consequences, with a keen interest in guimp and artificial protrusions of drapery. (Eliot, 1871:8)
In 1994 I leave full time employment in the clothing industry, disillusioned with what I am witnessing of the ways of seeing, thinking and acting in/on the world. I am becoming ever more convinced that the arts have something to offer in extending ways of knowing and modes of knowledge production in the realm of Business and Management. I take up a teaching position at the University of New South Wales in the College of Fine Arts (CoFA), School of Design Studies, and continue to ponder the matter.

The Bachelor of Design Studies is the only course of its kind at the time where design itself - its practices, principles, processes, philosophies - is treated as the discipline not its fields of application e.g. products, graphics, interiors etc. The course focuses on cultivating ways of seeing, thinking, handling of Surface + Form + Space that can be applied in all fields of design. A command of these skills comes first, the technical knowledge and specialist practical skills needed for application in a particular field come after.

The teaching staff is an ensemble cast of practitioners - a sculptor, several architects, makers of jewellery, film and performance, a textile artist, designers of graphics, theatre, urban public space, historians and an industrial psychologist. I am the first frock designer into the mix. In studio teaching six members of staff guide one hundred and twenty students.

One of the foundational approaches in teaching new students exploratory, emergent thinking is through making conceptual models - small scale abstract 3D artworks - a method particularly favoured by the teaching architects, and other designers of (public and private) built environments, to explore and articulate intangible, experiential aspects of a design response.

During my stint we experiment with using this method to investigate, capture and communicate bodily experience such as sweet and sour tastes, hearing different kinds of music, physical sensations - dry crackers in the throat, rough and smooth textures against the skin and so on. Observing this method applied to exploring inner world, felt experience rather than outer world solutions to a design brief, and seeing its effects in sensitising students to experiential knowing, is highly influential in my thinking. When I come to design the DPI Creative futures program six years later it plays a major role.

We also teach Design Studies in short, intensive courses to students from other disciplines across the university - Chemistry, Engineering, Commerce, Life Sciences and so on - as part of their General Studies electives. The constant refrain from students in these courses is that these are the most challenging modes of thinking encountered in their education. Some go as far as to say they are not sure they are actively thinking at all in their main study.

All this gives me much food for thought.

The masked self / The unseen face
Each year the first year students undertake a compulsory project where they are required to make a self study in the form of a life-size clay model of their head and face. It is an exercise in close observation and accurate sculpting using malleable but exacting material. Typically, once the heads are completed and assessed they are recycled or destroyed. On impulse I seek permission to design and stage a subsequent phase to the project, one that will be entirely voluntary on the part of the students and will not be assessed in any way. I call it the The masked self / The unseen face. It draws into the design studio strands of psychology in which I have a long standing interest (but no formal training). This exercise embodies a loose set of generative ideas taking shape in my mind to probe psychological and emotional dimensions of self that I believe could be the heart/mind of a new species of enterprise for art/design.

I offer the students a lecture encompassing my basic knowledge and understanding of Carl Jung’s theory of the shadow self - the unseen and
hidden parts of self not usually revealed to others (or even ourselves). I merge this with a slideshow of tribal, ritual and ceremonial masks from cultures around the world. The students are now invited to reconsider the clay model of the physical, seen face and make some adaptation, an intervention, that they feel expresses their own masked self / unseen face.

Come the day set to view the work of the students who have chosen to take part in this exercise, five colleagues and I make our way to the allocated studio. It is not an exaggeration to say that we are stunned by what we see. Against all our expectations all hundred and twenty or so students take the opportunity to do the exercise and we are greeted by a sea of heads and faces transformed by the most extraordinary, sometimes quite beautiful, sometimes humorous and sometimes quite shocking, even alarming, expressions of the masked self. We are all lost for (or rather lost of) words.

After the teaching staff regathers its wits, we offer the students the opportunity (again, entirely at their own discretion) to say something about their ‘masked self’ works. Once more, we are completely unprepared for what happens. Every student chooses to speak. We hear from every student present, in turn, which you can imagine takes some hours. And every other person present listens in silence, without comment, without interruption. The stories are at once deeply revealing, intimate, savagely honest.

This episode is instrumental in my decision to attempt to reconstitute something of this educational milieu outside the higher education sector and make it available/accessible to a broader constituency. But how? How to transpose ways of knowing from one realm of knowledge production to another - from the Creative Arts to Business and Management? And, more importantly, how to transfer/transmit them in such a way that people who are not trained arts practitioners are enabled in these ways - to try and ensure the ‘expertise’ does not remain resident with the professionals?

There lies, perhaps, the main mystery of the world: the impossible abyss which separates the two sides - the side where the Self lives, and opposite, the side where the Other extends. Yet man has discovered the means by which the two sides may merge in a most subtle way, and this is in the work of art: for he projects and inserts into it the very substance of his inner life which thus becomes inscribed in space as both image and object … perceptible to other. And although this work of art is made up of materials and dimensions made up of the outside world, it reflects image born of sight and memory that show the world transformed.

Thus the work of art, far from being an ornament, a fanciful addition to reality, lies at the heart of the mystery of Being. (Huyghe, 1972:xi)

The self, Winnicot wrote, has an urgent need to communicate with others, but a still more urgent need, in its depths, to remain unfound. The self is elusive, the player of hide and seek. It wants to be both separate and connected, to shine alone and lose itself in the group. (Lohrey, 1997:270)
As (Ann) Hamilton notes, “The link most people miss is from the textile work. The repetitive building of a cloth continued in my handling of disparate materials. What changed was the shift from covering and seeing clothing as a membrane to considering the architectural surround as skin. It was a simple step, but a huge shift in scale and thinking.” (Simon, 2002:25)

If you come into her studio what will you find? What is this place? A small factory, laboratory, archaeology site, museum, library, storeroom, shrine, ruin, memorial, installation. Nothing seems out of place here because it has no fixed place; always in flux, ebb and flow. An artist’s studio is never still; everything leaks.
(Emmett, 1998:7, on Janet Laurence)

Spa for the mind

By this stage, through my training and professional practice (and possibly some inherent inclination), I have a cultivated affinity with physical spaces; a familiarity with their spatial language and an appreciation of the influence they exert on us and the quality of experience they can engender, be they temporary wearable/portable fabric spaces or permanent physical environments. Within a year or so of opening my new practice I turn to space and forms of installation for vessels of transposition and transmission.

I conceive of a physical environment embodying my vision, ideas and thinking in its physical being. In collaboration with two long-standing friends and the generous financial backing of a private benefactor I create a site for the work, my own and applied work with clients; a hybrid physical environment – studio / laboratory / gallery / museum / meditation space / counselling room / showroom / shop – situated at the edge of Melbourne’s central business district. I conceptualise and communicate it as a Spa for the mind and it is open by early 2001.

One afternoon, during the month-long opening event introducing this endeavour, two people (unknown to me) from DPI (an organisation unknown to me) who have heard about this experiment come and spend a few hours exploring. We have a conversation about the ideas, my approaches and what I believe these can bring to extending
The design studio functions as my workspace with my creative processes and work in progress apparent and available for comment, conversation and contribution from members and visitors. There is a substantial library of books, artefacts, images - a source of diverse knowledge, curiosity, inspiration made available to you. And here you will find the Think wall, paying homage to the ground-breaking exhibitions designed by Charles and Ray Eames for IBM in the 1950s (Kirkham, 1998), and inviting you to exercise your imagination. These, the other rooms, and the spaces linking them, leak into each other, calling visitors’ attention, curiosity and contemplation.

The contemplation room, for instance, contains a large antique Chinese herbalist’s cabinet now become a contemporary reinterpretation of curiosity cabinets of nineteenth century naturalists and collectors, into an interactive 3D sculpture inviting self-reflective inquiry. As you open each deep drawer its multiple compartments reveal and present myriad objects, substances, materials with myriad qualities and characteristics - familiar, strange, odd, mysterious, lost, found, constructed, organic, odorous, manufactured, with/without obvious purpose, origin, provenance.

... Hamilton’s studio became not just a place to work but the work itself. (Simon, 2002:31)

Spa for the mind offers memberships for individuals and organisations, short and long courses of arts-based experiential learning, evening conversazione (open to any interested parties) devoted to exploring the creative processes and practices of professional creators, coaching/mentoring (especially for students of art and design), retail of tangible thinking tools I am devising, and products and artworks commissioned from local artisans and artists. The whole spa or its comprising spaces are also available for hire by people who are vetted and deemed to hold aligned values. It is a specialist (and, as far as my research shows, unique) site of knowledge transfer and knowledge production for those seeking to enhance ways of seeing, thinking, doing.

This late-Victorian, two storey building housing the project is still characterful and alive with memories of its occupants and their occupations (one of which, aptly enough, is found to be a textile merchant). I conceptualise its rooms as both a sequence and an entirety of spaces of varying character and logic; housing activities, events and experiences encompassing, celebrating, engaging and activating different modes of mind through visual, tactile, gustatory, olfactory, aural, oral, kinesthetic, somatic means.

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... Hamilton’s studio became not just a place to work but the work itself. (Simon, 2002:31)
When you become a member or visit the Spa for the mind you are given a guided introduction and tour by one of the custodians but/and thereafter you will not find these spaces formally attended by those of us working there. Your interaction with, and within, the spatial installation/s is (more) self-directed, inviting you to follow your curiosity and inclination. Some guidance is present, should you wish it, in discreet and minimal text that ranges from the sparest of prompts to designed exercises.

Although the Spa for the mind is not open to passers-by its interior domain is linked to the exterior public domain in various ways. One is through a glass door situated at the apex of the building’s two exterior walls that incorporates devices to intrigue and invite interaction from the street, resulting in some visible alteration within the Spa, disrupting the usual partition between exterior/interior space. Another utilises the large expanses of glass frontage giving on to two streets.

The visual exchange between inner and outer that these transparent apertures allow (if left uncovered) are purposefully extended and amplified by a rotating exhibition/display system used to acknowledge the life of the street and address passers-by. Here, offerings are made to public mind: artefacts, images, text that may offer ideas, thoughts, stories; may pose questions and (perhaps) provoke thought, prompt self-reflection; works in progress are presented for public consideration and contemplation, such as my earliest experiments with Oblique inspirations cards.

Over time I come to see this aspect of Spa for the mind foretelling the concept now so evident in my thinking, practice and research - rendering membranes (more) permeable, allowing fluid exchange between/within frameworks of mind, frameworks of knowledge production and transmission.

Ann Hamilton makes unfamiliar rooms, unfamiliar scenes, in familiar places. They are perceptual situations as much as spatial and temporal interventions, a kind of art-making that may be described as a way of working and a resulting work that intersects the real and the invented, that emphasises the process and duration of its making as well as the finite amount of time it is shown to the public in material form, and that locates meaning in the interrelationships of adjacent parts as well as the contexts in which the individual components were found or made. The overall work, known in the terminology of contemporary art as art installation, is thus imbued with social and historical conditions of its siting as well as the particulars of its making and architectural housing. (Simon, 2002:11)

Installation is not a medium you can reduce to essences. It involves materials, processes, and forms to create a situation that viewers have to cope with and reconstruct by movements and questions about what it is exactly that they’ve actually confronted both physically and conceptually, compounded by an awareness of others in the space. In that sense it may be a social form, not a solitary contemplative one.

(Robert Storr in Simon, 2002:13)
As well as Spa for the mind having a permanent site my intention is to transpose its ideas and operations to other sites through transportable and/or temporary or semi-permanent manifestations. Through word of mouth an executive of a large brewing company based in Melbourne hears about Spa for the mind and approaches me to consider a space within the organisation’s head office. The loose intention is to create an environment conducive to (more) creative thinking and conversation. Inspired by Marcel Duchamp’s series of ‘portable museum’ works of the 1930s and 1940s, Box in a valise (Bonk, 1989; Cabanne, 1997), I conceptualise a self-contained, reduced scale, mobile version of Spa for the mind. I picture Creative contemplation kiosk as something like an oversized travel trunk that can be wheeled into an organisation’s physical environment and opened at will to create a Spa for the mind space within another space. Although I succeed in engaging this organisation’s interest in the concept and I am retained to develop it, the design proposal does not proceed with this (or any other) client.12

I experiment with miniature scale versions – Sensory snacks – a personal Creative contemplation kit in a large noodle box. The interlocking leaves of the box’s opening/closing mechanism unfold to disclose a collection of multisensory devices incorporated in Spa for the mind: a disc of soundscapes, miniature versions of artefacts and made works; two hand made books, one of activities, exercises and guidelines for use, the other a journal blending blank pages and surprise inserts – reflective questions, fragments of thoughts, ideas, images, text. These are something akin to the multisensory Fluxkits designed and assembled by George Maciunas circa late 1960s –1975, exemplifying ‘the modality of knowledge that the philosopher David Michael Levin has called “ontological thinking”’ (Higgins, 2002:37).

I am convinced I have a winner. I manage to sell one.

Ontological thinking is radically different: it engages us in the opening wholeness of our being, and “takes place” as much in the life of our feet and hands and eyes as it does in our head, our brains, or our “mind”. (Levin in Higgins, 2002:38)

Story box

And, there is Story box whose scale and 3D form pay homage to Joseph Cornell’s box-based art works, Object (Roses des vents) circa 1942–1953 and Untitled (The life of Ludwig II of Bavaria) circa 1941–1952 (Blair, 1998; Waldman, 1997, 2002). Story box is a miniature museum of curiosities filled with myriad, diverse 3D/2D artefacts, oddities, original artworks and ephemera. Using the sensory – visual, tactile, olfactory and aural – languages of objects as ready-made symbol systems, this is a navigation instrument to explore and express aspects of mind and heart inaccessible to conventional modes of thought and conversational language (Gardner, 1982, 1993).

I see it could be of potential benefit in a variety of practice fields: facilitation, counselling, psychotherapy, coaching, individual and organisational development, change management and so on, anywhere where practitioners are seeking means for deeper yet safe self-inquiry that can enhance the depth of inquiry and the degree of self-disclosure. This attempt at portable interactive sculpture comes to life.

12. I still have faith in this idea and introduce it whenever a suitable occasion arises. In 2008 I informally present the concept to a federal government department embarking on an initiative to use design as an agent of organisational transformation.
Over years to come *Story box* is readily embraced by (traditional) practitioners in these fields and shows itself easily incorporated into their existing practices to enrich, enhance and deepen that work. I make each one to commission in an extended interpretative process, aspiring to capture and embody the ontological character of each practitioner/practice. *Story box* will also become an integral component in the experiential learning fora I will eventually create and conduct. When the Creative futures program with DPI begins I fashion a series of three with environmental scientists in mind incorporating a multitude of organic, mineral, geological, animal and agricultural materials, objects and substances into their being – a portable Spa for the mind curiosity cabinet.

*Story box*

As the inquirer, you first frame a pertinent open-ended question such as:  

*What would help me most in resolving the conflict in my current situation?*

Holding this question in mind, slowly explore and consider the contents of *Story box*. Allowing your intuition to guide you, select object/s that in some (unspecified) way resonate with this inquiry. The set of glass spheres, for example.

Take time to slowly contemplate with hand and eye and mind the metaphor and symbolism of the object/s. Then contemplate in what ways this might relate to your issue.

*What may be being revealed here? What insight may be available?*

*Spheres.*

*Spheres of glass. One opaque.*

*One filled with vibrant colour.*

*Swirls. Swirls swirling in liquid space. If I hold it to my eye it is an oculus.*

*My view is altered,*

*the world I see is glimpsed in fragments – light and shadows are at play in an ever-shifting pattern.*

*When viewed through this lens, how does my situation look?*

*What do I see that I didn’t before?*

*What is conflict now?*

*I see another reality.*

*My conflict is fluid, in flux. Not fixed. It can (and will) pass if I do not hold on to it.*
I needed to return to that private ground from which raw feeling can become reflection; that secret realm that belongs to each heart, and that language once called sacred, a usage we have lost, leaving us with no word to describe an inner space sacred to us alone, without the consecration of church but with perhaps the blessing of a god. The ground that transforms reflection into understanding, and brings rest, a ground that paradoxically connects us back to a life steeped in the lives and stories of others.

(Modjeska, 1997:157-158)
More ways to put fish up trees

As with any new endeavour, and particularly so with an experimental one such as this, the creation of its processes, products, and its commercial development, takes time. We are offering and conducting, with modest success, short public courses open to individuals: Creative spirit having (more) inner world focus of cultivating self, and Creative mind focusing (more) on outer world matters, generating new approaches to issues, tasks, situations.

Commissions to create and conduct experiential learning at Spa for the mind for organisational clients are few and far between. Initially these are short sessions of about two to six hours following a format merging Creative spirit / Creative mind courses. If the client is requesting assistance for, say, the marketing team to recreate corporate communications strategies and materials, the inquiry may start with reflective inquiry such us: What is the essence of our service(s)? What is the uniqueness I/we bring to this work? What is the highest purpose of our work? What is the feel / smell / taste / colour / texture of that? Thereafter moving into more applied thinking: How might we use this to communicate to others? What might that look like? What other, new possibilities can be seen here?

Expanding the client’s scope of focus beyond the (more) external and pragmatic – how to do better business development, more effective marketing, more innovative products and services, and so on – opening it to the (more) internal and philosophic, situates my work both within and beyond other commercial endeavours devoted to expanding ways of thinking. This dual dimensional incorporation casts my operational logic as encompassing, and, at the same time, also extending what Edward de Bono (1999) defines as the mode of applied thinking needed for the new millennium: design thinking.

But, to what end?

Although my early efforts seem to allow/assist realisation a pond may make better sense for fish rather than a tree, and allow/assist ways to make a pond quite simply and without unnecessary expense, I realise there also/alternatively may be meta-level monkey mind at work where my efforts are helping put fish up trees more effectively and efficiently.

I recognise I am not paying sufficient attention to the frameworks framing the client’s brief. The brief presented to me is really an answer – recreate corporate communications strategies and materials – but what is the question?

I am shaping my experiential learning response to help generate other/more frames of mind to deal with the fish but not sufficiently questioning why the fish is in the frame at all, what is the desired outcome that putting it up a tree aims to produce? Monkey mind (especially my own) needs to become (more) aware of its frameworks giving rise to frameworks, framing views and action. I turn (more) sustained attention to metacognitive processes and cultivating capacity for self-reflexivity: ’self-awareness in the sense of an ongoing attention to one’s internal states,’

Our inner and outer worlds are related. They do not exist separately from each other. They are two aspects of the same reality. They are two components of a mutually interactive binary relationship. The elements of each of the component, the inner and the outer, are so complex as to obscure the simplicity of this interactive relationship in which, and by which, evolution proceeds. (Salk, 1983:50)

It suggests that we are required to turn our attention inward in order to deal with the problems that arise from our outer conditions. (Salk, 1983:50)
We come to know what it means to think when we ourselves are thinking. If our attempt is to be successful, we must be ready to learn thinking. As soon as we allow ourselves to become involved in such learning we have admitted that we are not yet capable of thinking. (Heidegger, 1951:345)

in which 'mind observes and investigates experience itself, including the emotions' (Goleman, 1996:42).

My thinking is being highly influenced by Jonas Salk's (1983) philosophical meditations, Anatomy of reality: Merging of intuition and reason, in which he proposes that the purpose of the human mind is now to 'become creatively engaged in the process of meta-biological evolution, consciously as well as unconsciously' (1983:112); for the mind to participate in its own evolution in the interests of the survival and evolution of itself and all living things.

I respond to Salk's call 'to turn our attention inward in order to deal with the problems that arise from our outer conditions' (1983:50).

I turn my attention inward, away from using arts-based ways of knowing to improve business operations and outcomes, towards bringing such ways of knowing to meta-level matters of the frameworks of mind giving rise to the frameworks framing organisational operations and outcomes, and the effects these may have on those within the organisation and those outside within its sphere of influence.

As my practice/research unfolds I realise through observation of my clients' experiences that outer world changes are only sustainable if they are commensurate with inner world changes - when change in thinking about doing is matched by change in thinking about being. The realisation that lasting changes in thinking co-arise with purposeful thinking about thinking continues to deepen over time, bringing metacognition more and more to my attention and into my practice until metacognitive and cognitive facets are inseparable aspects of each other, and all experiential learning work I conduct with clients begins in the inner world, with the mind inquiring of itself and its habits before it considers actions and applications to outer world tasks. This starting point - inner world inquiry rather than outer world innovation - has become non-negotiable in my applied practice and can require some vision and courage on the part of an organisation to be prepared to probe and reveal the workings of individual and organisational mind/s.

By early 2002 I am enrolled in the School of Management where my (first) research proposal (Art and metaphor: Designing transformative practices for emotional intelligence), approved by the Business Faculty, positions self-reflexivity as a central concern of the study. It forms part of my rationale to be in this domain where management theory and practices consider self-reflexivity to be a key element in what is commonly called emotional intelligence (EI). A form of intelligence that encompasses a range of capabilities such as impulse control, persistence, zeal and motivation, empathy and social deftness; one that is becoming (more) vital and more highly valued in the workplace (Goleman, 1996). Hence, initially locating the research in the domain of business, the applied field for an arts-based methodology of self-inquiry intending

13. See Appendix E.
to generate, and cultivate, self-reflexive capabilities of both practitioner/researcher and her clients.

As the year unfolds I am rather abruptly prompted to examine machinations of my own mind implicated in a mess about to manifest when unforeseen events in the lives of my two business partners of the time remove them from company operations, leaving me as a sole operator. At the end of the year I make the extremely difficult decision to close the Spa for the mind and relocate my practice to a space for my sole use. I transfer and recompose some of the same physical elements and devices in a smaller scale, private (re)manifestation of my creative and spiritual home.

Paperwork I - III, 2003, Collage series, found text

This turbulent period of radical and painful disruption prompts an extended series of made works in my research, probing practitioner/researcher mind.

One day, browsing in a second hand bookshop, I find a book called The Girl Guides' Kit, 1937. Some of its stories feature a girl guide called Natalie and her adventures. I make a lengthy movement of inquiry through cutting and collaging this found text.

and rectifying her mistakes, with a laugh at her own stupidity, she stumbled on.
"Thank you," said Natalie humbly.

"There you are, Natalie. We couldn't find you."
This is an answer, but what is the question?

Goleman’s (1996) work cited in my (first) research proposal is widely known in circles of organisational learning and development and his economic rationale is useful in justifying the value of investing time and money in developing EI, but my personal motivation comes from sharing the concerns of Salk (1983) and many others for the human prospect at large (e.g. Diamond, 2005; Eisler, 1987; Flannery, 1997, 2008; Heidegger, 1953; Homer-Dixon, 2006; Hubbard, 1998; Lovelock, 2005, 2006; Mathews, 2005; Orr, 2002, 2004). Having the natural disposition of a prophet of doom it is a concern I am well-suited to hold and one that prepares me well to meet the world of environmental science and scientists.

In early 2003 I am contacted by Bronwyn Clarke, one of the two DPI staff members visiting Spa for the mind in its opening phase. Our conversational seed, quietly germinating unseen for two years, now comes to fruition when newly recognised conditions within the organisation provide an apt context, rendering my ideas (more) concrete, the interactants’ felt experience (more) embodied, somehow (more) graspable to (more) rational mind.

I am approached to discuss the possible design and production of a ‘futures kit’ for DPI envisaged as some form of manual. With meta-monkey mind in mind I negotiate an initial consultation with DPI staged as a thinking forum where the three-person team responsible for coordinating this project use Creative contemplation methodology to investigate the project brief already developed and supplied by them. I invite them to re/consider: What are the conditions within DPI that this futures kit is responding to? Or put another way: What is the question to which this futures kit is the answer?

Activating the methodology, each person makes a small scale, 3D abstract model responding to their inquiry, embodying the organisational conditions, as they perceive them, in expressive, visible form as they do so. In contemplating the made works a very distinct shift in perspective emerges, bringing with it a clear realisation that the fundamental question and answer of the project are not aligned. The futures kit is an answer but to another question. The real question, the reality of the situation, as it reveals itself to the group needs another order of response – not of the ilk of information-based printed manual so common in organisations, but a form of experiential self-inquiry. In the analogy of Abraham Maslow’s (1962:15) proposition, ‘When the only tool you have is a hammer, it is tempting to treat everything as if it were a nail’, this could be depicted as some fine grade sandpaper rather than a hammer being the tool for the job at hand.

By the time of this, our first consultation, when the true nature of the project becomes understood by the team, just under half the original budget is left for design, production and implementation:

14. Over the years to come this slow, unseen unfolding over time shows itself to be a distinct characteristic of the commercial business transactions I am able to make (or not), closely mirroring the temporal order within/of the experiential spaces created.
more than half the budget being absorbed in-house in committees, meetings and developing a (what turns out to be misplaced) brief for the 'futures kit'. I develop a design proposal accordingly, accommodating the limitations of budget and the knowledge surfaced in the thinking forum.

I propose a program offered as individual personal/professional development with no specific, applied organisational outcomes set in advance - the premise being to increase the capacity of the organisation by increasing the inner world capabilities of its constituent individuals. I stipulate participants are to be self-selected only (rather than being nominated and/or instructed by someone in a position of higher authority), and that participants will be asked to make a personal commitment (only to themselves) to complete the whole program and its self-directed activities during its three month duration.

It seems almost miraculous to me that I manage to secure the commission and investment of an organisation to risk adopting such an experimental commodity, with all its unusual conditions, that is untested in organisational learning and development, transposing ways of knowing from the arts into a scientific research organisation to increase the capacity of its highly trained, highly educated scientists to meet complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty in (more) responsive, (more) creative ways.

At the meeting where DPI makes its final decision on whether to proceed with my proposal (or one of the others tendered by other consultants) I witness the steering committee’s discussions and decision making process. It is clearly recognised, and discussed at length, that this program is not amenable to the organisation’s conventional evaluation framework and techniques. Based on other experiences presenting radical proposals this is the point at which the prospective project is likely to fail. I wait and watch in silence.

I am intrigued to observe two senior male executives on the committee who (I am told afterwards have not agreed on anything in fifteen years) respectively reveal distinctly philosophical and poetic aspects of mind. I am surprised and delighted to hear that despite not knowing how to evaluate it, despite the implications this may have for organisational accountability, despite the set of very specific conditions I am setting that are exacerbating the whole matter of measurement, the committee (and these two men, in particular) are in agreement that it is important to expose DPI staff to such a program. They will proceed and attempt to develop suitable evaluation methods along the way. Their courageous move is amply rewarded by the outcomes for the organisation and the hundreds of staff who participate in the Creative futures program in the months and years to come.15

15. Discussed in Un/en/folding No.4 and the paper presenting a case study included as Appendix A.
I am about to attempt to bring arts-based systems of knowing and knowledge production to scientists grappling with the complex, uncertain future of the natural environment and humanity’s prospect inextricably interwoven within it. This is not only the first time I am going to facilitate a long term program of experiential learning of my design, it is the first time I am going to do it on-site in an organisational setting, in physical spaces that are not familiar to me, are not associated in any way nor imbued in any way with arts conventions and/or practices – studio, gallery, museum, Spa for the mind. Spaces in which, up until now, I approach facilitating learning for me much as I would approach teaching undergraduate students in academic sites of Creative Arts.

Somewhere along the way, establishing my professional practice and research in the domain of Business and Management, I am unconsciously inculcated with the view that to be able to properly conduct my work in an organisational context I need to be versed in the conventions of facilitation prevailing in the field. I undertake instruction from a highly experienced, well respected professional in this area.

I have a somewhat adverse reaction to much of the underlying premise of the instruction which is to direct, control and manage people’s behaviour to a set of accepted norms, towards a predetermined outcome. This framing clearly positions the facilitator (more) outside the process, (more) as arch orchestrator directing and controlling events and participants who are (more) situated within the process, all operating within defined (but not necessarily transparent) parameters. Before my instruction in facilitation orthodoxy goes very far I am cast into the work with DPI where I begin to find/fashion my own way to engage and guide others in my experimental art processes of self-inquiry in the real time experience of the practice situation; in the dialogic, experiential interaction with the particular given of circumstances, context, site, the Being of the beings present.

When introducing myself to participants I describe my role as guide, rather than facilitator and make explicit I will not be directing, orchestrating and managing them and/or their experiences, each person is responsible for managing themselves and taking an active role in deriving what they may from what is being offered.

The organisation’s evaluation of the pilot program, completed late in 2003 with just over a hundred participants, assesses it as an unmitigated success, and funding is provided for a further three rounds of equal size over the next two years, and for specified post program support activities to perpetuate the work and its now documented benefits. This also includes a discretionary fund for requests made by ‘graduates’ of the Creative futures program. It is this administrative and financial portal that opens into the work with LandLearn in early 2005.

And unscholarly imaginings, in my experience, can on occasion magically make the thickest veils instantly transparent, while the scholar’s eye is still examining the intricate warp and weft of the veil itself. (Dessaix, 1997:281)
The studio
It is early 2005 I am to undertake a piece of work with LandLearn - a group of educators housed within DPI - committed and passionate in their work supporting school teachers in matters of teaching and learning related to sustainable use of land for agriculture. The group would like to create an innovative sustainability ‘thing’ for schools but feels it has reached the useful limits of its habitual modes of thinking and, left to its own devices, will rehash its existing (print-based) resources for teachers.

Based on her recent experience of Creative contemplation and some of its tangible thinking systems in DPI’s Creative futures program, Ann, the LandLearn Co-ordinator, raises the possibility of me assisting her and her team (that includes other graduates of the program) to apply these modes of inquiry and knowledge production to engage the complex, slippery issue known as sustainability. This opportunity presents itself with unusual and fortuitous conditions where the program neither has to be completely designed in advance nor be approved by anyone other than those involved, providing a capacious container for some further experimentation in the ways of Creative contemplation.

I mull this over in my studio, pondering my experience the year before, as part of my research, exploring boxes in practice/practitioner psyche through making what I later come to see as a site responsive installation. After a year of earnest, frustrated designing and planning a piece of studio inquiry to investigate my practice I take the radical step of surrendering my schemes, plans and sets of ideas. Instead I take up residence in the gallery/performance space retained for the work, advertise a viewing at the end of the allotted period and wait to see what happens. For days I stay still in a silent communion between my being and the being of the space, eventually moving to engage materials and (more) overt action and agency; all the while paying attention to what arises, to what may (or may not) emerge; yielding, opening to the (more) dialogic, to the (more) poietic.

With this experience in mind I suggest an experiment to Ann that allows LandLearn’s program of inquiry a fluid, adaptive structure. Ann readily agrees. I loosely map a continuum of Creative contemplation spanning the four or five months available to us. It interweaves facilitated and self-directed inquiry that starts in the intangible inner world of the LandLearn team members, extends through the tangible outer world, and then moves into designing and producing a sustainability ‘thing’ for schools but/beyond that the work will be (more) improvisational, becoming along the way, in its way.
The gallery
In the days before our first session together, I am at an exhibition at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) called *Colour power* that surveys the influence of acrylic paints on Aboriginal art since 1984. The rear wall of the gallery space holds a vast work painted on a tarpaulin. It has clearly been created by many hands using diverse marks, motifs and movements coming together in an immensely powerful and cohesive whole. As I come into the presence of this work, tears arise and begin a soft, steady flow.

When I read the text on the gallery wall it states simply that the work, *Ngurrara 1 canvas*, is a work made in 1996 to tell these Indigenous people’s story of their relationship to the land; made to take into a land rights hearing in the Australian High Court to communicate/transmit to the judiciary the artists’ connection with the land. The artists believe if the judges see their story, receive the evidence transmitted through the painting, they will understand this order of relationship to country.

The library
Come our first day’s work I make the journey to Kilmore just over an hour’s drive north of Melbourne: a central meeting place for us over the coming months, where we are to work in the town library’s meeting chamber. As usual, I arrive early to commune with the space/site and conduct my rituals of cleaning and preparation imbuing the space with mindful care. And prepare myself on this ground to be (an) Attendant in/of/to the space of self inquiry, the work itself and those undertaking it.

In attending/tending to and preparing the site I begin by being simply present within and to the space. I walk around it, survey its contents, its state of being, notice its physical conditions. I become as open and as sensitive as I can to its atmosphere, feel, transmissions. In dialogic silence the character of its presence, and what it may be bringing into the work to be conducted within its folds, becomes opaquely revealed. Its service of holding is acknowledged.

I begin to infuse essential oils and play carefully chosen music as I start the work of cleaning the space and sorting and arranging furniture. I take particular care in cleaning the work table and chairs. I then set places, laying out coloured and lead pencils with the journals I have designed and made by hand for each person, and set out two tangible devices of my design giving mind, sensory – visual, tactile, olfactory, kinaesthetic – means to investigate itself.

On a table to one side of the octagonal room I unpack my portable studio, laying out equipment, utensils for making – to cut, glue, stitch, stick, bond, assemble, compose, construct. I arrange these alongside materials easy for an inexperienced maker to handle: papers, fabric, felt, gauze, balsa, modelling wire, yarns, string, buttons, found objects, powdery substances that can be sprinkled, and much more.
Later, with an open ended question of self-inquiry in mind, accomplices will be given time to contemplate the qualities of the materials, their colour, line, texture, weight, contour, pattern, dimensions, smell, temperature, in/stability, in/flexibility and so on. They will be invited into a process akin to taking soundings of the materials, sensing resonance with the question/inquiry, (more) allowing the materials to chose them. If they feel inclined to venture outside and glean from the environment around the library they are encouraged to do so. Here material (language) is becoming navigational instrument of realities of mind and heart.

I set the work tables with water and glasses that I make sure are clean and dry.

When all is prepared to the best of my capacity within the given circumstances I meditate in the space. About ten or fifteen minutes or so. Seated comfortably, attending to the breath.

When they arrive I welcome the five participating members of LandLearn; I invite them to arrive into the space, to make themselves comfortable. I serve warm and cold drinks. When everyone is seated and feels settled, and introductions are complete, I invite the group to undertake a similar meditation exercise and guide them in bringing awareness within, through attending to the breath. Calming mind, becoming (more) present to self, state of body, mind and being, and (more) fully present within the space and to the work we are undertaking.

When I sense all are (more) fully present, I ask if people feel ready to proceed.

I then begin to talk. I present my intentions and the tenuous, fluid structure for the work over the coming months and, in keeping with my standard practice, make some specific requests concerning ways of being with self, others and the work at hand:

*Keep your mind and heart as open as possible. Be as open as possible to whatever arises and whatever presents itself both within and without.*

*Try to refrain from judging whatever arises for yourself and others; as much as possible, accept it with friendly curiosity.*

*There are no right or wrong answers, just what arises.*

*Be respectful of your own experience, the experience of others and the intentions and experience of the work. I encourage you to bring your full attention to being here and being open to what may be; resist checking messages, making calls and so on.*

*To the extent you are able, activate and maintain metacognitive awareness: try and observe your mind in the moment; try to be aware of not just what you are thinking but how you are thinking and responding moment to moment as your experience unfolds.*

I spend some time talking to the group - another process of imbuing, steeping mind/s, preparing philosophical and pragmatic ground - in a way intending to both introduce and invoke the complex
of knowledge systems and systems of knowledge production in/forming the methodology and the tangible devices – the set of Open mind, open heart, cards and guidebook, and the portable interactive sculpture of Story box. These two devices are engaged in the first two of three gradually unfolding movements of inquiry, beginning with private, individual self-inquiry: What is sustainability in the context of my inner emotional, psychological world? In due course, the focus then moving outwards: How do I see, experience, engage, practise sustainability in the outer/physical world? Later extending further outwards to encompass the collective experience of the team engaging with and practising teaching and learning related to sustainability: How do I/we experience and practise sustainability as a team?

To contemplate the latter I invite the group to collectively create an artwork exploring sustainability. This is my first experiment with collaborative (rather than individual) creative activity, resonant of the Indigenous artists’ endeavour giving rise to Ngurrara 1 canvas. The (untested) framework I give the group is that it is not an exercise in collaboration and team effort. I have a vague notion of disrupting the habitual machinations of team mind (whatever these may be). No negotiation is required – Can I put my strips of torn yellow paper next to your leaves? – nor are we concerned with group consensus for an approach to the task. The intention is to be individuals, to work alongside each other, in a shared creative space and shared creative act with a common focus on ‘sustainability’.

I ask that designing-mind is strongly resisted; any attempts to control the process are relinquished. Allow the distributed intelligence/s of eye/mind/hand of self and others, materials, methods and modes to co-create, to bring forth. I emphasise this is a non-representational mode. This is not seeking to make a diagrammatic picture where different elements represent aspects of the already recognised, the currently known. The invitation is to work (more) in three dimensions with collaging and constructing and to engage in direct, unmediated handling of materials, including paint if it is used.

The intention is to allow non-intentional, unknowing mind; to allow the artwork to emerge, to come into its being, and to accept whatever visual, tactile, spatial form emerges no matter how distasteful it may be. There is no concern with technique or conforming to any pre-supposed/pre-existing considerations of aesthetics. The focus is on the process, on art making as mode of revealing rather than producing an artwork.

I encourage them to be in, and of, the inquiry, to yield to the question’s questioning, to let the question ask you: How do I/we experience and practise sustainability as a team?

I ask everyone to be as open as possible to whatever might arise in the inquiry – within themselves and within the shared space with others, and reiterate the
request for metacognitive awareness, to try to observe themselves in the moment; to notice what they are experiencing, how mind is engaging and responding in real time, in being in performative process.

Not unexpectedly, the group assumes the known and familiar mode of ‘doing’ team and begins to try and establish consensus on an approach to the task – to agree on the size of paper to use, who should do what, and so on. This goes on for some time.

My role being (an) Attendant is to activate, hold and influence the space of inquiry by direct and indirect transmission to(wards) opening further, to(wards) the liminal, beyond the thresholds of the familiar, the known, the comfortable. It is to model mind open/ing to more than the known and familiar. The degree of in/direct transmission is improvisational, delicate intuiting of moments to act (more) intentionally.

In this moment I am moved to suggest that I nominate the size of the canvas while people chose materials they intuitively feel drawn to work with. The group accepts this, and as they occupy themselves contemplating materials, I begin to tape together large pieces of paper to create a canvas spanning multiple tables.

The group returns to the canvas and seems somewhat taken aback by its scale, seeming somewhat immobilised.

I wait and watch. As I calmly attend, I am acutely aware of my increasing anxiety.

This isn’t going to work. We’re running out of time.

I become aware of the expectations I am harbouring; expectations of what I would like to happen, completely incongruent with what I am asking of the group, to try to allow whatever is there to emerge, whatever that might be. My body is tense, my jaw tight, shoulders raised. I breathe deeply; consciously relinquishing expectant mind seeking pleasing outcomes. I relax my physical bearing and inner tension. I attend to my breath. I wait.

The space responds in kind.

A slippage occurs.

The group silently, spontaneously slips out of ‘team’ and into another mode of being; being individual but/and connected to others through a creative enactment; each person working separately on areas of the canvas using quite different materials, media, motifs. The scale of the canvas has them work standing up and moving around it; mapping intertwining paths around each other as they step in and out and around, to add, consider, attach, remove, (re)align, (re)compose.

It is a silent, rhythmic dance-like performance.

At some point Jenny begins to create a web-like structure from white wool yarn. She quietly announces (to no one in particular) she feels compelled to overlay this web onto the manifesting
work. Without discussion or negotiation she passes the ball of yarn to someone else. They in turn unravel the thread, secure it in some way, somewhere on the work and pass it on. I am moved to silently and discreetly proffer a pencil as a spindle to ease the unravelling of the yarn. My gesture is understood, the motion becomes easier, smoother. The movements of unravelling thread, handing on, receiving, are enacting an intangible web of connections mirroring the tangible web of thread appearing within the work.

It is effortless, seamless, poetic.

There is no moment of finish imposed on the process. The natural extent of this visual and gestural enactment of sustainability is reached in its own time – maybe only thirty minutes or so.

We stand for some time, each of us silently contemplating the artwork that has emerged.

In time, I ask the group what, if any, observations they are able/willing to share of their lived experience in this creative process and the made work.

In amongst the collage of observations that emerge Jenny tells of earlier in the day picking up a piece of pink ribbon attracting her attention, that remains unused until now:

_I was looking at the web. I thought that at that point there, where all the threads seem to cross, I could tie them all together with the pink ribbon. As I tried, I realised it wasn’t possible. But I kept trying, thinking if I try harder I can make them. And then suddenly I saw that that is exactly what I am always trying to do in my work and cannot. I always think I have to make all the threads from everywhere, in everything we all do, tie together and I never can. And I just keep trying to make them and get so frustrated and despondent because I can’t. But I see now that’s not how it is. The work we do is only one thread and there are lots of others all working with the same thread somewhere else, even some time else. All of it is already connected. I don’t have to make it all tie together at my one place, at my point, it is already connected._
The courthouse(s)
A month later when I am to meet with the group for the second session, at the last moment, our usual venue in the library is unavailable. We are instead offered the historic courthouse – a building not open to the public, rarely used, without plumbing - a neglected site. Before the group arrives I fetch and carry water from the nearby park. As I am walking back and forth, my body experiencing the weight and difficulty of carrying the water, even this short distance, I feel an enormous wave of empathy for all the women (and children) I have seen (in print and on film) trekking several times a day to and from distant wells, often with huge containers balanced on their heads. I feel immense gratitude for my good fortune and the wonders of indoor plumbing.

In these unusual circumstances and conditions I clean and prepare the space as best I can with my usual rituals, and prepare myself in the space to greet the group. I am acting as custodian of the group’s large artwork emerging in the library a month earlier and bring it with me on the day. I carry it carefully into the courthouse, I unroll it, and lay it out on the table in front of the judge’s bench. I arrange chairs so we can be seated around it.

As members of the group arrive the strange presence in the courthouse of three female figures – adding to our all female group – attracts intrigued comment. A large framed portrait of Queen Victoria is chained to the judge’s chair, presiding over us. On one wall of the chamber two life-size images of women in nineteenth century dress present themselves – giant cut-out paper dolls bearing silent witness to proceedings.

The day before, in my studio I sit in the presence of the artwork, attending to it with listening eyes. In my journal I capture as best I can in words what I sense in this contemplation, the knowledge embodied in materials, marks, motifs. Here, in the courthouse, I invite my accomplices to do the same, picking up/continuing the thread of my inquiry that emanates from their collective inquiry evidenced in the artwork.

I proffer threads of thought from my journal:


Reality - meta / physical - creative - spiritual
Layers upon layers of stories / sustainability stories / stories to sustain / stories to pass on

The group spends time in quiet contemplation, listening to the artwork, writing as and when the inclination arises. When they come, the oral reflections reveal transmutations in
structures of thought and language being realised in the dual sites of the inquiry, and practice in the workplace. Mind and vocabulary are opening to more than, revealing distinctly spiritual aspects of (individual and collective) relationship to the land. The concept and term 'management' yields, opening to 'custodianship'. Poetry appears as the commensurate linguistic mode rather than (more) familiar prose to capture and transmit experience.

The group speaks of how the web presenting itself in the collective artwork – in which LandLearn and its work is enmeshed, connected to *lots of others all working with the same thread somewhere else, even some time else,* is becoming a shared conceptual structure and visual symbol for their individual and collective thinking and understanding of themselves as practitioners and their practice/s, and in communicating to others the nature of their roles and work as educators in this field. And so it goes on.

The stories continue to be heard in the courtroom as we pay attention, gathered about the artwork in front of the judge’s bench.

Then, there is another slippage …
Distinctions separating times and places disappear

the web in the artwork before us
becomes manifest reality
connecting times / peoples / places / stories
Here we are
a(ther) group of people
with a canvas, an artwork
created to tell of connection to the land
telling that story
in a courthouse
connected to the canvas in the gallery
created by Indigenous people as evidence of relationship to land
to tell that story
in a courthouse
The becoming of Creative contemplation

I have a suspicion that left to its own devices, given sufficient time and attention, the story of Creative contemplation at work in my applied practice may un/enfold itself to you showing what needs to be shown, saying what needs to be said about this research, however …

… in this and subsequent parts of the book I offer some assisted un/en/foldings of the story to enable (more) direct insight into what is within its folds.

I am particularly using the term un/en/folding here to circumvent implications of completely flattening folds of time, space and experience in the fabric of the story, even temporarily. Rather than laying out the fabric on a hard surface, pressing it flat with firm hands for examination of its uppermost surface, my intention is a gentle handling of undulating/undulated fabric where folds unfold and refold revealing something of both its surfaces.

If the fabric is resting on a surface at all it is gently in the lap, as it is handled in the manner of Heidegerian concernful dealings (Heidegger, 1927), where through such dealings with things the world is revealed to us, and our ‘apprehension is neither merely perceptual nor rational. Rather such handling reveals its own kind of knowledge’ (Bolt 2004:64).

The characteristic of this way of un/en/folding is that at any one time we are seeing only curved planar patches of the fabric. As we meander from one patch to another we may pass over patches in between, relinquishing segue. In other movements as fabric undulates we may partially re-encounter a patch reappearing in relation to other patches. At times we are examining the cloth so closely we see the individual fibres, their composition, character, flaws; then viewing it at arm’s length enabling us to see texture and contour, gaining impressions of (more) overall form. At other times we are so encompassed within the folds we become part of the fabric.

But it goes without saying that, where the ground is imagined flat, as a potential field of dimensionless lives, there can be no curvature, and none of the contracting and folding, that are associated with amplitude. And without amplitude, a science of vibrations, there can of course be no sound, no traces of movement. There can indeed only be the little silences of signs. (Carter 1996:14)
The fabric of the story is double faced - constructed of two layers tightly interwoven with each other. There is no appearance of two separate layers, they cannot be pulled apart, they are of each other but/and each face may have different characteristics of appearance, colour, texture, density of weave. This is the fabric of practice/research.

Although the story shows (more) the face of my applied practice which is itself a form of investigation (a methodology of inquiry enacted for/with others) it is co-formed of its inseparable other face, doctoral research. The choice of which patches to show and which to pass over, is obviously shaped by the stated intentions and scope of my research proposal/s. This inevitably means the degree of un/en/folding the story’s double layered dimensions varies and some dimensions encountered in the meanderings of the research are not directly presented.

A prime example of this is the matter of femaleness. I am female, feminist, lesbian. The LandLearn group in the story is all female. There is the strange presence in the courthouse of three female fi gures – the large framed portrait of Queen Victoria chained to the judge’s chair, and two life-size, monochromatic images of women in nineteenth century dress. My supervisors over the years are all female. It is significant to me that this typeface is designed by a woman and honours a woman forgotten in her field of design (typography). 16

Other threads and questions of gender, its construction, its operations, will become (more) evident as we contemplate the studio inquiry where the production of garment-based images and forms, and their attendant reflections, reveal (more) practitioner/practice-mind. To what extent, and how, gender is a factor in all this is pondered along the way but/and falls outside the boundaries demarcated for the research and therefore is not explicitly addressed. It is present but silent, much like the two life-size cut-out paper dolls bearing silent witness to proceedings in the Kilmore courthouse.

This first un/en/folding handles what is central in the scope of research, Creative contemplation, the methodology of inquiry evolving in the course of practice/research that is now the heart/mind of my professional (and personal) practice. It begins to show the complex web of practical, philosophical, theoretical correspondences within this transdisciplinary work. As we consider the story showing Creative contemplation at work in my applied practice with others, I ask you to hold in mind that the processes, tools, operations, and so on, mirror what happens in my studio/workspace – the site of the methodology’s initial emergence. The difference is only in context and degree of artistry. In my workspace I am working alone. I am more adept as I am more practised. Where, in the story, the questions are fashioned to focus attention on sustainable ways of relating to self, other, the world, in my workplace questions orientating movements and acts of inquiry are fashioned towards meeting aims of the research, especially as it concerns coming to (more) explicitly know what is the ontology, epistemology, philosophy and practice of being (an) Attendant.

The story of applied practice shows us an exemplar of Creative contemplation at work in the domain of organisational learning and development. As can be seen, this constitutes an extremely complex (temporary) human ecology of interacting systems and spaces of inquiry/experience – both collective and individual systems and sub-systems, and collective and individual space/s and sub-space/s – enacted and experienced by Attendant and accomplices. All taking place within the all-encompassing space of experiential learning fora, a species of performative installation originating within/from practitioner being (an) Attendant. These two elements – methodology of inquiry/performative installation – co-exist as a Salkian unit of reality: two elements in asymmetrical, binary relationship, in constant dynamic, dialogic interaction (Salk, 1983:38). They co-exist and co-create. They bring each other into being. Creative contemplation is enacted within the space/site of performative installation. Enacting Creative contemplation brings the space/site of performative installation into being.

The eye of insight

The story shows something of the mind-making and mind-unmaking, the flux of unbecoming/becoming – that can come
about in Creative contemplation/performative installation where converging conditions - circumstantial and consciously created - produce emergent, self-reflexive, transformative space/s capable of expanding perceptual intelligence of eye/mind/hand. For the LandLearn women transmutations of the operations of eye/mind/hand render permeable the membrane between pragmatic and philosophical dimensions. There is a recovery, a restoration of quiescent epistemological and ontological faculties conducive to awakening the eye Murphy describes as adapted to the whole rather than the part:

The eye of insight is a whole-adapted eye, and radically relativises the seeing of the conditioned, part-adapted mind (though it does not in any way wipe it out). The most radical, imaginative and creative insights spring from the sense of the whole. (Murphy, 2004:64)

Their individual and collective enterprise is no longer considered solely in pragmatic terms so favoured in organisations (development and delivery of curriculum materials and professional development workshops to teachers) but and also in philosophical, poetic terms where the work of teaching and learning related to sustainability becomes continuous acts of (re)constituting reality, a constant (re)creation of the web of connections, as Jenny describes, with 'others all working with the same thread somewhere else, even some time else'. In becoming-other, there is a recovery of philosophical, poetic sensibility restoring curvilinear dimensions to time/space/place/experience, reinstating dimples and folds and slopes into the social field ‘where different folk might “roll” together or significantly depart’ (Carter 1996:13).

But, as Goethe understood, the corollary of flattening out space and time was that no convergence of interests could ever be discovered; no dimples, folds or slopes remained in the social field where different folk might “roll” together or significantly depart: ‘We see men of a certain importance, but with no trace of a similar tendency and a common interest; each one as isolated being goes his own way, without sympathizing in the exertion of others. They seem to me like billiard balls; which run blindly by one another on the green cover without mutual knowledge, and which, if they come in contact, only recede so much the further from one another’. (Carter, 1996:13)

In the cycles/states of un/becoming occurring in the two fora in the story (and the remaining span of work in the following months) an ontology of sustainability emerges and steadily develops where the group (individually and collectively) describes a sense of becoming sustainability.17 The notion of sustainability is no longer limited to an instrumental way of doing, a way of applying knowledge and trying to change the behaviour of others through instruction. Sustainability becomes individually and collectively felt. It becomes (more) a matter of individual responsibility for the team where a view and an approach founded on (more) didactic ground of instructing others yields to (more) dialogic ground. Attention becomes (more) concentrated within self; attending to integrity of personal demeanour and practice congruent with what the team (individually and collectively) advocates, as such becoming a living embodiment of Ghandi’s often quoted maxim: you must be the change you wish to see in the world.

What is documented, as our work together progresses, is the team’s (individual and collective) observations that long wished for, yet unforthcoming, behavioural change in others is now coming into being through this (more) indirect, (more) subtle yet significant ontological influence: mind opens (more), being opens (more), doing opens (more), distributing a (more) continuous and (more) vital variation.18 Within the work LandLearn and I see and describe this as waves of enablement emanating from the group to those around them in their sphere of practice and influence, in its way replicating/extending the order of transmission emanating from being (an) Attendant.

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17. See Appendix C for a paper on this project.
18. I reiterate these effects are being realised over the full series of performative installations and self-directed work in between that spans four months and the subsequent phase of the project designing a product and services for schools. The project and its evaluation is documented in McDonagh, N. (2005). Landlearn - A case study in changing minds, innovating outcomes. Melbourne: Department of Primary Industries.
Becoming-other begets doing-other
My years of applied practice clearly (and repeatedly) show me the potency of this order of ontological transmutation to effect sustained (and sustainable) change in doing: becoming-other begets doing-other. This explains a conundrum I repeatedly encounter in the first fifteen years of my early professional practice, how is it that organisations are so frequently unable to sustain changes they are seeking to make? The part-adapted eye directs attention (only) toward analysing what we are doing rather than examining the source of our doing – how we are being, seeing, thinking.

The state of un/becoming, or becoming-other as Margaret Somerville (2007) describes it, is a significant strand in her research of new, radical methodology for pedagogical research provisionally called postmodern emergence. Here she describes a purposeful ‘undoing of self’ as a necessary/inevitable aspect of this order of research: ‘To do the sort of research I associate with emergent methodologies I need to de-authorize myself each time; it is about a process of undoing … the preconceptions, the left-brain habits of logic and order and to respond differently to the landscapes of the research’ (Somerville, 2007:230).

Whatever the variation in terminology there is congruence in our understanding of the ontology of such methodology constituting ‘the undoing of self; the space of unknowing; the absences, silences and disjunctures of the liminal space with no narrative; the relational of any coming into being; and the messiness, unfolding, open-ended and irrational nature of becoming-other through research engagement’ (Somerville, 2007:235). The story bears witness to this for all performers involved. In this it is also bearing witness to my practice enabling such research methodology to be transferable and applicable to the context and sites of organisational learning and development, and not limited to the academy.

In the Möbius strip (Fig.2) of exchange between inner and outer worlds the Attendant’s state of being activates/models/influences the quality of space for those engaging in self-inquiry: 19

I relax my physical bearing and inner tension. I attend to my breath. I wait. The space responds in kind. A slippage occurs.
The group silently, spontaneously slips out of ‘team’ and into another mode of being …

Being (an) Attendant is self becoming (more) emergent entity, (more) emergent site/space, where notions and senses of self are in flux, negotiated/negotiable. The extent to which I can activate/yield to this state sets the degree to which the given state of the space/site of the practice situation, and those within it, may become destabilised; may become destabilised enough to unsettle fixed frames of individual and collective mind/s, and the mind of the site, making permeable such membranes of mind that serve to separate and enclose. This ontology transmits, (potentially) setting self–destabilisation in motion for others. To the extent that they are receptive/willing/able to yield to this vibration, this then amplifies effects on

Felt is a supple solid product that proceeds altogether differently, as an anti-fabric. It implies no separation of threads, no intertwining, only an entanglement of fibers … what become entangled are the microscales of the fibers. An aggregate of intrication of this kind is in no way homogeneous … it is in principle infinite, open, and unlimited in every direction; it has neither top nor bottom nor centre; it does not assign fixed and mobile elements but rather distributes a continuous variation.

(Deleuze & Guattari, 2002:475-476)
the mind of the space and all within it (including me), opening the being of self, others, ground, materials, to more than the part-adapted.

This purposefully activated state of becoming-other is imperative in being (an) Attendant if the order of self-reflexive space/s in the story is to (potentially) emerge. To constitute and maintain this order of emergent, transformative inner and outer space is performative creativity; a chancy improvisational proposition; movements of moment to moment unpredictable un/becoming.

Non/intentionality
As the story tells us (p.68), intentional non-intentionality is a distinct aspect of Creative contemplation:

\begin{quote}
I ask that designing-mind is strongly resisted; any attempts to control the process are relinquished. Allow the distributed intelligence/s of eye/mind/hand of self and others, materials, methods and modes to co-create, to bring forth. I emphasise this is a non-representational mode. This is not seeking to make a diagrammatic picture where different elements represent aspects of the already recognised, the currently known … The intention is to allow non-intentional, unknowing mind, to allow the artwork to emerge, to come into its being.
\end{quote}

This is a call to relinquishing modes of teleological mind, coaxing mind into becoming-other than knowing, directional, directing; to enter into unpredictable, reciprocal, dynamic, dialogic exchange between human bodies, bodies of objects, materials, space, place, temporality and process (Bolt, 2004; Carter, 2004; Somerville, 2007).

\begin{quote}
This purposiveness without purpose operates in a different order from the realm of signs. (Bolt, 2004:94)
\end{quote}

Here, we temporarily diverge from Somerville’s ontology of emergence where it is in ‘the relationship with inanimate objects and technologies, that we, in the process of becoming-other, can intentionally manipulate – stone, wood and clay, pencils, crayons, brushes and paints, computers, words and paper, cloth, thread and scissors – among the myriad other things that we humans have chosen to use to create’ (2007:234 emphasis mine), and reconverge in her handling of images created in the course of her own research:

\begin{quote}
At the moment, these images want to develop into forms. These forms are poetic, sun-bleached, skeletal, bones stripped of extraneous matter, ideas coming into form.
\end{quote}

\begin{quote}
If I think they have to be anything, produce anything, they freeze, they die and lose their alive mobility. The only thing I can do with them is play, and even playing sometimes seems too serious. It is almost as if I have to visit them without intention, to approach them obliquely, not knowing they are even there. (Somerville, 2007:231)
\end{quote}

It is in making my first work of intentional material self-inquiry in this doctoral research (2002) that I find myself unintentionally meeting
Evidence of passing / The carcass carrier, 2002

This mixed media, performative assemblage is the first made work of the doctoral research, probing practitioner/researcher psyche. Evidence of passing / The carcass carrier emerges in the aftermath of the death of my beloved Spa for the mind, that in its demise takes with it a long cherished friendship and business partnership.

It is 5th October 2002 when I write about the makings of this work in my journal:

I went to see an exhibition called EMBARK/DIS-EMBARK - very beautiful pieces. On the way back to the car I spontaneously began to pick up small items/objects - evidence of human passing (as I did at Barwon Heads in Jul/Aug 2001). Pieces of glass, a golf tee, a small car part ... then my attention was drawn to a bone fragment. I stooped to pick it up. Then I noticed more & more. I began to fill my pockets, then my black mesh bag.

What was I thinking at the time?

I can't say that I was ‘thinking’ * - I was simply absorbed in the task of collecting, seeking, gathering. I occasionally picked up other items - bits of paper, a few shards of coloured plastic. I had no idea or intention of what I would ‘do’ with the items. I had vague notions of evidence/Candy Jernigan/a created piece of work of some kind - possibly each item bagged as evidence - of what?? I allowed the thoughts (*too concrete a term) to circulate, percolate. When I got home, I immediately began to wash & scrub the bones. Cleaning each with a toothbrush. This felt like a ritual cleansing of sorts. As I scrubbed, inspected, rinsed and laid out the fragments & pieces of bone to dry, I was vaguely wondering what creature the bones had come from? How? When? Why here? A concept began to form (unaided by applied thought) - ‘carcass carrier evidence of passing’. Jules’s question to me several years ago, “When are you going to stop being a carcass carrier?”
This, and subsequent contemporary journal entries, show the intelligence of my eye/mind/hand to be (able to be) attentive to some but not all aspects of making that give rise to this work. It is attending very much to practical processes associated with production but is not mindful and attentive to the performative aspects of the making – the movement and embodied experience involved – that have/are their own epistemological order.

There are oblique references to the performative, knowing body in the title that may refer to my performance following in the footsteps of another (metaphorical and/or actual) carcass carrier who had shed (some of) her load in passing, and in the conception of the piece as performative assemblage to be rolled and be carried about.

What I do not record, however, but that my body remembers still, is what it is being an actual carcass carrier in the moment and movements of the intent scavenging for bones in that damp earth, on that day, at that site. My pockets filled to bulging with them, then being unable to stop, compelled to collect as I find more and more and more, and my fine, black mesh bag becoming swollen with them. My hands blackened, engrained with dirt; walking, slightly stooped, laden with my precious, stinking bones, my garments distended to accommodate their number.

There is no mention in my records of the amount or degree of labour involved in the cleaning and caring for the bones. How stubbornly traces of tissue and blood cling. No mention of the careful selections made from the ossuary, how painstaking is the composing/recomposing required in finding right relationship of bones and other media I feel drawn to include in this assemblage on a grey, felt blanket that is purposefully made to be rolled, tied and carried about.

When the composition is eventually found, I hand stitch the bones to the blanket. This requires difficult manual manoeuvres, even for my trained sewer’s hand. I frequently prick my fingers, bleeding into the work. It takes many hours. Some of these are spent sitting in the dismantled Spa for the mind, in the last days before vacating the building; abandoning the site, its dreams, its ghosts. The final hours of work are done at home.

I sit there like some lone witch, hunched over my grisly sampler, stitching purified bones of unknown carcasses onto a grey felt blanket. It is late at night, the television is on, sound off. It is 12th October 2002. I look up to see images from a news bulletin – the bombing of a nightclub in Bali. I see people carrying human carcasses on grey blankets from the wreckage of a destroyed building.
It was ... (Ann) Hamilton’s first accumulation piece incorporating animal matter, and using found objects whose reworking required multiple steps of tending and preparation: washing, cleaning, opening, cleaning again, as well as gathering, positioning, and affixing. (Simon, 2002:39)
Acting as the tender for the full duration of the show (malediction, 1992), Hamilton seemed to be reconnecting with the most basic references of her work, pragmatic and spiritual. Here were the ritual and practice of repetitive labor as their own redemption, and also the sense of a guardian sitting with and honoring the dead. (Simon, 2002:124)

Precisely because art can be confused with life, it force attention upon the aim of its ambiguities, to ‘reveal’ experience. (Kaprow, 1966:82)
Connective tissue
In the moment of sitting with my grey felt blanket of bones watching people in another country, another culture, another segment of time, carrying human carcasses on grey blankets, my being registers a profound disruption of habitual perceptual intelligence whose reality is constituted of fragments existing as separate parts in time and space. Consciousness is stretched. Reality becomes continuous, connective flux of thought, breath, experience, moments, events, places, stories, being.

At the time, I see it (more) as a somewhat startling, spooky coincidence; unable to fully recognise ontological effect/s emanating from making. When this order of experience is again realised in the courthouse three years later I have come to share Bolt’s view that ‘... through creative practice, a dynamic material exchange can occur between objects, bodies and images. In the dynamic productivity of material practice, reality can get into the images. Imaging, in turn, can produce real material effects in the world’ (2004:8).

It is very difficult to express in words what, and how, it is that I am experiencing making my blanket of bones alone at home, and in those moments of slippage in the courthouse when membranes of mind become so permeable that distinctions separating times, places, people, stories disappear, revealing ‘a connective tissue of exterior and interior horizons’ (Merleau-Ponty, 1969:131) stretching through times and places and sites and stories, connecting us / our work / our artwork in that courthouse to the Indigenous artists sitting on country / making an artwork telling their story of connection to land / that artwork telling its story in that (other) courthouse in that (other) place at that (other) time.

This particular order of (more) permeable or (more) expanded consciousness might be likened to the fabric of a familiar garment becoming stretched, opening (more) the weave of its constituent threads, becoming a (more) capacious, (more) permeable skin. It remains the same garment but it now has (more) allowance, (more) capacity, inviting and accommodating fluctuations in dimension/s, if/as/when they arise.

Evidence of passing / The carcass carrier proves to be a highly informative work not just in what it reveals in the period of making, but in the dis/continuous revealing it offers over the subsequent years of research. It captures Creative contemplation methodology in its nascent stages, the order of knowledge (potentially) produced where insights into and effects on intelligence of eye/mind/hand can emanate from/within processes of material making. It shows the peculiar dis/continuous temporal unfolding of knowledge stretching over/through time when the agency of corporeal knowing, somatic mind is revealed years later. And it eventually offers a view of becoming-other in the course of practice/research, an insight into transmutations of practitioner/practice mind coming into being over time.
... oneness is a seamless web of everything that transforms all separateness into distinctions that are recognized as arbitrary. Any word, any notion, any intellectual conceptualization, any serious intervention by thought shatters the delicate spell of oneness.

... In the mythological terms of the West, this spell of oneness was broken in the expulsion from the Garden. The goal of Taoism and Zen, in these terms, is to return to this oneness while allowing the game of separateness. (Grigg, 1994:226)
Four organs

In its mature form I tenuously (and I emphasise tenuously) conceptualise Creative contemplation as constituted of four organs, each with its own co-existing, co-forming functions – Making / Movement / Meditation / Attendant as the activating organ. I recognise the risk in using this metaphor of playing to the (more) part-adapted mind’s eye, conjuring up a medical/surgical image of discrete objects that can be excised and replaced, each with its own highly specialised/specialist practitioner. I strongly emphasise the metaphorical aspect being activated here is the (more) whole-adapted mind’s eye view where organs are open, permeable vessels; fluid entities existing in a dynamic, inter-connected, inter-reliant fluid system / system of fluids.

When Evidence of passing is materialising (2002), the making dimension is already taking conscious shape. The movement dimension of the knowing body, somatic mind, is deeply implicated in the process but yet to be consciously realised. The presence and effect of meditative practices/metacognitive processes and the notion of the artist/maker/practitioner as Attendant have yet to be manifestly and consciously recognised as organs. These latter aspects are gradually being (more) realised in the work with LandLearn and assume, fuller (more) recognisable presence through subsequent movements of critical reflection and creative action (Sullivan, 2005) within my research (as we are about to see), and are further developed in subsequent practice situations (within and without DPI).

Making

The making of Evidence of passing is already a way of knowing rather than a mode of production – a reciprocal exchange between hand/materials/movements of making to navigate and reveal realities of mind and heart. In the period preceding the work with LandLearn my survey of literature is connecting me with Australian works drawing on Western philosophy of pôiesis and performativity, and referencing Indigenous cultural practices, most particularly Barbara Bolt’s (2004) text Art beyond representation: The performative power of the image. This and other congruent works (e.g. Carter, 1996, 2004) overlap with literature on Indigenous arts, ceremonial and cultural practices, systems of knowledge and knowledge production (Mundine, 2002; Nicholls, 2002; Ryan, 2004; Watson, 2003; Webb, 2002).

Adding to this entanglement are two profound encounters with artworks of Indigenous artists. One, my meeting with Ngurrara 1 canvas at the NGV, is written into the beginning of the story (p.66): ‘... a vast work painted on a tarpaulin.... created by many hands using diverse marks, motifs and movements coming together in an immensely Fluids, unlike objects, have no definite borders; they are unstable, which does not mean that they are without pattern. Fluids surge and move, and a metaphysic that thinks being as fluid would tend to privilege the living, moving, pulsing over the inert dead matter of the Cartesian world view. (Young, 1990:192–93)
powerful and cohesive whole. As I come into the presence of this work, tears arise and begin a soft, steady flow.

The other is meeting Dorothy Napangardi’s work *Salt on Mina Mina*, 2001, face to face (rather than in print). It is on show at the RMIT Gallery. When I enter the first of the exhibition spaces I am alone and the painting is not in view. I stop at the threshold of the second space. I can feel the painting. I know when I cross the threshold it will be to my left, and I will have to turn a hundred and eighty degrees to face it. I wait. I close my eyes and breathe deeply - some sort of spontaneous preparation to come into the presence of the work. When I do, it is not seen. It is felt.

What could a seeing that is beyond the dualism of seeing and not seeing be like? An initial, easy, answer is that this kind of seeing would not see objects. Then what is seen? A presence. Not a static object, but a dynamic, vibrant presence ... (Stambaugh, 1999:57)

This specific convergence of knowledges and experiences coming (more) into conscious awareness is drawing attention (more) to the performative power of the made artwork and its making; the productive performative continuum found in Indigenous cultural practices, (re)making everyday living, physical, human, spiritual reality at that time and place (Carter, 1996, 2004; Watson, 2003). In an interview with Barbara Bolt (2004) Julie Dowling, an artist from the Yamatji tribe, bears witness to this performative continuum in the art-making of artists from the Balgo region:

As the girls were doing it they were singing a song about it [and] they were doing the actions with it ... Each step means there’s another step to go on and this part of the country is this part of the picture so that as you are acting out the dot, dot, dot, dot, even the action in itself is quite rhythmical, but when you bring that into connection with the heartbeat and also I’m telling a story now; this dot connects with this dot; this story is about this … the whole connection with the land comes from the process up. (Bolt, 2004:141)

I later recognise these influences collecting and culminating in (what at the time is) an intuitive, improvised move to introduce a piece of large scale, collective making into LandLearn’s inquiry into sustainable ways of relating to self, other and land. I offer them threads of the transphilosophical, transcultural ground we are attempting to invoke and request they direct and maintain attention on the process rather than the artwork (p.92), ‘to try to observe themselves in the moment; to notice what they are experiencing, how mind is engaging and responding in real time, being in performative process’.

The oblique presence, influence, invocation of Indigenous epistemologies within the continuum of praxical dance/s taking place in the story in studio, gallery, library and courthouse, be it (more) directly or (more) indirectly transmitted through my ontological and/or oral transmissions is a development of
great import.

This is the becoming of the peculiarly Australian ground described in the opening paragraphs of this text. The ground on which Heidegger and Lao-tzu meet, becoming-other; a transphilosophical, poietic place ‘founded on uneven ground that shifts or which already, by virtue of its natural obliquity, furnishes an infinity of positions, poses, points of rest to anyone prepared to traverse the ground in different directions’ (Carter, 1996:3). This is radical ground where epistemological traditions may meet and merge and new knowledge may emerge, may become discernible; where individual and collective reality is constituted in the mobility of performance, in the performativity of material practice.

Here we converge again with Somerville’s work-in-progress, postmodern emergence, that, I suggest, is arising from just such ground. Somerville, an Australian academic, explains her work is responding to her own experience, and that of her higher degree research students, finding it necessary to constantly develop alternative methodologies that will accommodate diverse traditions of knowledge, culture, and personal experience. In this she particularly implicates Indigenous epistemologies as a long standing and continuing strong influence in her thinking, referring to her research conducted in partnership with Indigenous communities, projects with individual Aboriginal co-researchers, and Indigenous students having to develop methodologies that sit between Western knowledge traditions and Aboriginal heritage of knowledge and country (Somerville, 2007).

In the Kilmore library when I tape together large sheets of paper to create a canvas spanning multiple tables, I tentatively have in mind the scale of the tarpaulin on which Ngurrura 1 canvas is painted. It is an unintentional consequence that the size of it has my accomplices (p.69) ‘work standing up and moving around it; mapping intertwining paths around each other as they step in and out and around, to add, consider, attach, remove, (re)align, (re)compose’. The ‘silent, rhythmic dance-like performance’ being constituted is a surprising delight, drawing my attention to the co-forming elements of performing bodies and material work, movement making/material making becoming one: The movements of unravelling thread, handing on, receiving, enacting an intangible web of connections mirroring the tangible web of thread appearing within the work’.

This is methexis at work (Carter, 1996:84): ‘the ‘non-representative’ principle behind Celtic, and Aranda, art, whose spirals and mazes reproduced by an act of concurrent actual production a pattern danced on the ground’.

It is this principle, and source, Bolt (2004:124), ‘an Australian living in the glare of an Australian sun’, uses to theorise a massive movement of deterritorialisation arising from the Australian environmental context that fractures the European-based ‘nexus between light, form, knowledge and subjectivity’, moving ‘beyond the transfiguration that Heidegger claims for art’ (2004:125) into material transformation; the principle she activates ‘to account for the radical material performativity of Indigenous cultural productions’ (2004:189):

What emerges in and through methexis is a different sort of practice and a different politics of practice ... in methexis a pattern begins to emerge from amongst the shifting shapes of relational ontologies. The process of methexis allows us to recognise how it is there is a transmutation between art and life. It is concerned with the veritable material productivity of the performative act. (Bolt, 2004:189)

In the story, when I am sitting in my studio in the presence of the large artwork made by the LandLearn women in the library, attending to it with listening eyes (p.71), what I sense and try to capture in words, is permeated with undertones of the breath and movement of Napangardi and her kinswomen dancing up country (Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002):


Reality - meta / physical - creative - spiritual

Layers upon layers of stories / sustainability stories / stories to sustain / stories to pass on
Movement
Witnessing the effortless, seamless, poetic dance of knowing bodies in LandLearn’s art-making leads my research into a purposeful foray into somatic work with Melbourne-based dance artist, Alice Cummins, who is also a qualified practitioner of Body Mind Centering® (BMC), originated by Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen, who describes BMC as ‘...an ongoing, experiential journey into the alive and changing territory of the body. The explorer is the mind — our thoughts, feelings, energy, soul, and spirit. Through this journey we are led to an understanding of how the mind is expressed through the body in movement (Cohen, 1993:1).

This extended period of somatic research with Cummins (2006-2008), conducted in one-to-one sessions and subsequent group work in a series of workshops she calls Residing in the bodymind, proves to be highly influential in cultivating bodymind of practitioner/practice and bringing the moving, knowing body (more) into being as a recognisable organ within Creative contemplation.

At the beginning of the span of individual BMC sessions when Alice inquires into my state of being I respond in words, usually seated cross-legged on the floor, describing my inner world through sensory metaphors – visual, tactile, olfactory, gustatory. Overtime this gradually extends into incorporating manual descriptions, depicting through gestures of hand and arm. By the time our one-to-one work is coming to its close, when Alice makes her opening inquiry, language is mute. I enact a series of attitudes as she attends. She invites me to repeat the sequence, focusing my attention on the quality of spaces and movements of transition from one state to another, one position to another, the way of becoming one from another. What is here?

What is the what is, of/in the spaces of what is not?

This extended period of somatic inquiry following the work with LandLearn is interweaving my studio-based research where I am immersed in investigating being (an) Attendant, and it is permeating subsequent situations of applied practice. I notice I am (more) conscious of corporeal transmissions, (more) attentive to physical demeanour, noticing (more) any disjunct between verbal and somatic communication, my own and that of others. In learning fora with clients I find I am incorporating body movement and gesture into my repertoire of modes of direct transmission, performing depictions of various modes of mind.

In miming (more) teleological, didactic mind, for example, so prevalent in organisational philosophy, processes and practice, body movement and gesture is an upright, somewhat stiff stance. Arms taut, extended straight out from the body, hands perpendicular, palms facing forward – moving forward in a linear trajectory, at a steady pace eye/mind/hand applying even, constant pressure: exerting constant pressure on self.
others, world. This is an agency whose ontological disposition is (more) of direct, hungry eye; directional, seeking, mind; directing, grasping hand.

Its (more) dialogic, poietic (non-identical) twin is (more) relaxed, natural posture, arms at ease in front of the body, hands resting gently in each other: an agency of the still point, (more) tenderly disposed to attentive, whole-adapted eye; receptive, allowing mind; gently permitting hand. This mode of corporeal dialogue, characterising ways of thinking in somatic terms, proves to be highly evocative in communicating modes of mind and demonstrating the efficacy of the body as acting, knowing, speaking entity.

During this period Cummins is conducting Masters research into her dance practice, aligning and comparing two bodies of knowledge: the fluid body of feminist philosophy, in particular the work of feminist scholars Luce Irigaray and Elizabeth Grosz, and the fluid and organ systems of BMC originator, practitioner and teacher, Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen. Cummins’s research explores how the experiential and the philosophical counterbalance each other, expanding on existing knowledges that abound around the body, improvisation and performance, and contributes to feminist theory through the inclusion of the practising dancing body and how the embodiment of ideas can stimulate ways of knowing and perceiving (Cummins, 2008).

I am privileged to witness both the making of her performance works and her exegesis as they find and take their respective forms, adding to the philosophical and praxical ground of her own work. This intellectual dimension, opening of its own accord during our somatic work together, becomes another space of transmission and exchange, transposing ideas and ways between our respective creative arts sites and, in accumulating in the fabric of my studio practice and inquiry, becoming available for further transposition through my applied practice and my research.

Bolt, in using convergences/divergences between her thinking and that of Derrida and Heidegger to situate and develop her theory of a performative logic of art practice, depicts an analogy between dance and drawing:

A dance improvisation begins by referring back, to other dances, to other steps and movements. In the movements back, in the recall, the dancers move forward and the dance breaks open and divides and multiplies. It becomes a production, both a presence and a representation. Drawing could be similarly described ... in the movement back and forward, from looking up and down and looking back, recalling and doing, there emerges a multiplicity where many traces or marks refer back to other traces and the traces of others. (Bolt, 2004:35)

Bolt then weaves into this Deleuze’s thinking on the affect and effect of movement inherent in making, and the corresponding movement at work in the work that is:

**Capable of affecting the mind outside of all representation; it is a question of making movement itself a work, without interposition; of substituting direct signs for mediating representations; of inventing vibrations, rotations, whirlings, gravitations, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind.** (Bolt, 2004:41)

When she poses the questions: ‘So what is this dynamic that enables vibrations, rotations, whirlings, gravitations, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind? How do you produce within a work, a movement capable of affecting the mind outside of all representation?’ Bolt advances that this ‘... occurs in practice itself. Here the preconceptions about things are relinquished as the action establishes its own rhythm or logic’ (2004:41).

I see that what is taking place within the matrix of Creative contemplation/performative installation is rendering Bolt’s theoretical manoeuvres into praxis and practice. It is also transposing this logic and operations from discipline-based domains of art and the academy into a broader arena of organisational life, learning and development. And it is transposing the practices themselves from the hands of specialist/specialised practitioners - in the story, into the hands of educators concerned with the pedagogy of sustainability. Here, in my story of our ensemble enactment, Bolt’s theoretical, conceptual analogy between the dual activities of dance making and mark making becomes actual productive activity where the separate activities of movement-making and material-making
merge into existing and operating as another Salkian unit of reality constituted of 'two elements in asymmetrical, binary relationship, in dynamic, dialogic interaction' (Salk, 1983:38); a dialogic dance between two elements, each giving rise to the other.

We see the action establish its own rhythm and logic whose motional character and conditions create self-reflexive space/s ripe with possible affect and effect on mind. We feel the flux of praxical, philosophical, ontological, epistemological, corporeal, material movement/s of practice that 'enables vibrations, rotations, whirlings, gravitations, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind' (Bolt, 2004:41). And not only 'in the movement back and forward, from looking up and down and looking back, recalling and doing' does a multiplicity emerge 'where many traces or marks refer back to other traces and the traces of others' (Bolt, 2004:35 emphasis mine), it is a multiplicity where traces and marks at the same time refer forward; foretelling other traces and the traces of others yet to come into being.

This is performative practice generating emergent space/s capable of radical disruptions to habitual modes of eye/mind/hand; an order of space whose logic is of permeable, fluid, mobile temporality, ontology and epistemology - able to return us to philosophical and pragmatic spaces we have yet to be.

The space that art creates is space outside of a relentless self, a meditation that gives both release and energy. (Winterson, 1996:185)

In the unfolding of an arm there is a mechanical function, but more essentially there is the movement itself... In the space of my attention it is this folding and unfolding that I might choose to get lost in and to find another sense of time and reality. When I am deeply involved with my 'folding/unfolding body' I am lost to 'real' time. I am inhabiting another place and time. ... It draws me towards myself and opens the horizon of my body for new realizations or awareness. This topography is my own and also not. It is a vast landscape of possibility. (Cummins, 2008:28)
Meditation

The metacognitive organ of Creative contemplation is evident in the story as part of the guidelines for conduct, and in the regularly repeated reminders/exhortations/coaching to sustain this mode of mind as far as possible. This is not necessarily an easy matter and it is common that participants in my fora are encountering it for the first time, and I always demonstrate my real time self-observations at that time and place. Typically, this is telling how I am acutely aware of my anxiety in conducting group work (even after many years, many sessions), and introducing my inner character I call Sally Jane whose desire it is to be thought clever (we will meet her later in my studio inquiry). I describe being aware of these machinations but/and I am attending as diligently as I am able to, to the task at hand: being (an) Attendant, conducting the learning forum, unconditionally offering (potentially) useful ideas, methods and tools that participants are free to accept, or not, based on their evaluation of their own experience.

In Buddhist philosophy and contemplative practices this order of self-reflexivity is referred to as ‘mindfulness’ (Batchelor, 1998; Fontana, 2001; Murphy, 2004; Trungpa, 1996, 2001; Suzuki, 1970). Here we come to the contemplation dimension of Creative contemplation and its aspiration and intention to being a system of material meditation; a practice of mind observing and investigating its own nature and

So it is necessary to introduce the idea of mindfulness. Then we can examine ourselves each time, and go beyond mere opinions and so-called common sense conclusions. One must learn to be a skillful scientist and not accept anything at all. Everything must be seen through one’s own microscope and one has to reach one’s own conclusions in one’s own way. Until we do that, there is no savior, no guru, no blessings and no guidances which could be of any help at all. (Trungpa, 1996:7)

20. Initially this is simply to illustrate the mental activity I am requesting, but I quickly realise this act serves in a number of other important ways and it becomes a mandatory inclusion in the introductory component of any learning experience I conduct. Revealing something of the machinations of my mind/heart serves to build trust with the participants (who commonly identify with the type of vulnerability and fallibility I am revealing), it demonstrates the/a level of personal disclosure invited and acceptable, and it obliquely works to soften preconceptions participants may have of my role/function as ‘expert’ and/or ‘trainer’ – a view of facilitator that I (still) find common in organisational learning and development.
Meditation is not a matter of trying to achieve ecstasy, spiritual bliss or tranquility, nor is it attempting to become a better person. It is simply the creation of a space in which we are able to expose and undo our neurotic games, our self-deceptions, our hidden fears and hopes. We provide space through the simple discipline of doing nothing. Actually, doing nothing is very difficult. At first, we must begin by approximating doing nothing, and gradually our practice will develop. So meditation is a way of churning out the neuroses of mind and using them as part of our practice. Like manure, we do not throw our neuroses away, but we spread them on our garden; they become part of our richness. (Trungpa, 2001:2)

From the earliest days of my professional practice I have a regular meditation practice of one sort or another, all deriving from Buddhist traditions, the fundamental basis of which is for each of us to directly experience reality as it is, not as we think it is; not through books, and concepts and what someone else might tell us, but through our own direct lived experience, that is aided through meditation.

A habit I develop early on is to meditate as preparation for any creative work be it (more) in the register of design or (more) in the register of art.21

As my role/agency as practitioner becomes more implicated in my applied practice, that is, when I enter the long-term arrangement with DPI (2003), this habit gradually appears within Creative contemplation methodology. First, as a personal matter, becoming an integral part of my private preparatory rituals at/in/on/within the site of applied practice in being (an) Attendant, and subsequently as part of the Attendant’s transmissions guiding participants in a simple, short meditation (seated on a chair) becoming (more) consciously aware of body/mind through paying attention to the breath.

The minds of most of us are in constant movement. To recognise reality in the middle of this movement is like a person trying to paint a landscape from the window of a fast-moving train. If through meditation our mind learns stillness, it can retain its own equanimity ... “Unmoving” does not mean “without thoughts and emotions” – that would deprive us of our human nature. Rather, it denotes that the Zen mind is not pulled and pushed this way and that by thoughts and emotions. The “unmoving” mind enjoys thoughts and emotions, uses them creatively, is not disturbed by them, and can focus attention on them as it pleases. (Fontana, 2001:80)

My earlier meditation practices derive (more) from those Tibetan Buddhist traditions that have something of a script and use imagery and visualisation techniques to cultivate particular attributes, such as maitri – loving kindness. As the research progresses I become more interested in Zen Buddhist practice adapted within the cultural context of Japan. Zen concentrates very much on ‘the material, ordinary, everyday world’ (Watts, 1960:25). It is a fiercely pragmatic tradition without dogma and scriptures, beyond concepts and words, a way of seeing directly into the nature of mind (Murphy, 2004; Reps, 2000; Suzuki, 1970; Watts, 2006). Watts suggests the best equivalent English term for Zen might be ‘concentration’ but not in the ordinary sense of ‘an intense mental effort to hold one’s mind upon a single point’ rather,

... concentration in the sense of being free from distraction, a sense of total presence of mind; of being, shall we say, thoroughly all there. Most of us in our thinking are wandering from this to that to the other thing, and are constantly distracted. And Zen is the opposite of that. It’s being completely here, fully in the present. And you know when you’re completely concentrated, you’re not really aware of your existence. (Watts, 1960:26–27)

Zen is cultivated through meditation and koan training. Zazen, seated meditation, is the form most commonly known in the West (there is also standing Zen, walking Zen and lying Zen) where one (attempts) to just sit and become completely present, allowing that which we call ourselves to fall silent (Watts, 2006). A koan is a seemingly paradoxical anecdote or riddle – what is the sound of one hand clapping? – that ‘asks us at the deepest level it can find in us, what is it? What is the true nature of everything? What is the true nature of self?’ (Murphy, 2004:65). The koan way is the crooked path of wisdom intending to induce a potent unknowing that opens ‘a space between the conceptual mind of knowing that, from a koan point of view, is badly in the way, and
the mental impotence of a mind that is simply blank and mute’ (Murphy, 2004:65). It is here, in the business of the unknowing mind that we fold back into the creative dimension of Creative contemplation.

If you have ever tried meditation (in any of its myriad Eastern forms) you will be aware that the requirements of these practices for ‘real research within ourselves’ (Trungpa, 1991:7), often originating from centuries old, monastery-based traditions, can be seriously at odds with the speed and demands of modern Western life in general, and particularly at odds with the milieu of modern Western organisational workplaces. It is here the arts offer us other pathways into potent unknowing. ‘Unknowing is a state of making yourself available without the self in the way. Artists intuitively find some way to this mind …’ (Murphy, 2004:66).

This is not exclusively the realm of the trained artist, it is the realm of creativity, a capacity inherent in human being. The creative state of mind is a fluid state characterised by high tolerance for ambiguity, ambivalence, sensations of knowing but not knowing, the co-existence of oppositional tendencies (Briggs and Peat, 1999; Gardner, 1982, 1993; Hughes, 1999). This is Keats’s negative capability, ‘that is when man is capable of being in uncertainties, Mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact & reason’ (Claxton, 2005:149). It is the creative state of being that we can all access where chaotic, nonlinear, metamorphosing, inner and outer reality are a mobile continuum flowing back and forth permeating being, permeating permeable mind. This is the creative state where we are available to ourselves without the self in the way.

Such unknowing is not the end of the track: the point beyond which thinking can go no further. This unknowing is the basis of deep agnosticism. When belief and opinion are suspended, the mind has nowhere to rest. We are free to begin a radically other kind of questioning. (Batchelor, 1998:97)

The creative and the contemplation are another cooperative Salkian unit in mutually supportive dialogic dance, each vitalising the other as the whole, Creative contemplation. And in this epistemological, ontological mélange there is, of course, the added dimension of actual material production emerging from/in/of this state of unknowingness; not random material works but material works emerging from mind investigating a particular aspect of itself. An aspect towards which attention is directed through a question crafted for this purpose: What is sustainability in my inner world? What is it to be patient? Compassionate? Tolerant? What is fearlessness? What stops me?

In an alternative activation, rather than a koan setting in motion unknowingness, unknowingness is invited/induced by and within the mélange of Creative contemplation operations – its carefully crafted artistic activity and self-reflexive attention – to open ‘a space between the conceptual mind of knowing that, … is badly in the way, and the mental impotence of a mind that is simply blank and mute’ (Murphy, 2004:65).

The questioning that emerges from unknowing differs from conventional inquiry in that it has no interest in finding an answer. (Batchelor, 1998:98)

21. There is a correspondence here to be found in the highly influential German school of the 1920s and 1930s, the Bauhaus, that is the model for the majority of design schools today. Johannes Itten, painter and teacher, began his studio classes with group meditation, and, interestingly to me, was given to wearing special robes for his work.

22. Meditation spaces and formal sessions of meditation are becoming more common in organisations, for example, during the course of this research the ANZ bank created a specialised space in its Melbourne head office. Where meditation does occur in organisations, however, it is usually seen and used as a tool for stress management rather than a form of self-inquiry.
This is making mind available to itself, without mind being in the way, through material making: making that at the same it is revealing mind, offering self-insight, it is embodying mind in visual, tactile form – a material form that becomes an object of/for contemplation in its own right. And, one that can be repeatedly contemplated over time continuing the inner/outer dialogue in which, as the work speaks to you it offers deeper insight, producing greater self-understanding.

Hogen, a Chinese Zen teacher, lived alone in a small temple in the country. One day four travelling monks asked if they might make a fire in his yard to warm themselves.

While they were building the fire, Hogen heard them arguing about subjectivity and objectivity. He joined them and said: ‘There is a big stone. Do you consider it to be inside or outside your mind?’

One of the monks replied: ‘From the Buddhist viewpoint everything is an objectification of mind, so I would say that the stone is inside my mind.’

‘Your head must feel very heavy,’ observed Hogen, ‘if you are carrying around a stone like that in your mind.’ (Reps, 2000:71)
we are now wending our way towards the installation mentioned in the story taking place in 2004, the year before the fora with LandLearn in the Kilmore library and courthouse - the movement of research, staged in a creative arts' site of exhibition and performance, that is so influential in shaping that journey of inquiry in applied practice. This is the work from within which emerges the conceptualisation of my learning fora as performative installation, and my role/agency within these as being (an) Attendant.

I carry away large financial debts and my bundle of tended bones, *Evidence of passing*, from the emotional debris of *Spa for the mind*, my elaborate, permanent physical installation, and continue working with transportable and/or temporary manifestations of this concept. At the first review of my research progress my portable blanket of bones, is submitted (and accepted) as a visual text of the researcher/practitioner’s inner world, hand in hand with the compulsory written report. It then becomes the basis of a simple, small scale interactive installation staged at my candidature confirmation conference - *Alternative texts: Visual metaphors of personal experience* - where the Business Faculty delegates are invited to contemplate this and other recently made artworks investigating machinations of practitioner/researcher mind. The interaction is facilitated through oral and written invitation and a series of reflective questions: *What do you see? What story do you read? What kind of emotional and psychological experience do these visual metaphors evoke for you?*

In the months that follow I undertake a collaboration with three other PhD candidates in the School of Management also trying to bring other modes of engaging and knowing from the Creative Arts into Business, and Management Education: Peter Burrows, Daria Loi, and Louise Mahler. Collectively we are attempting to transpose ways from
opera and the performing arts, visual arts, design and architecture. Together we devise an interactive installation that we call *Four slantwise explorations of practice-based research*. It comprises four stations designed to engage and activate different modalities – visual, aural, oral, tactile, verbal, kinaesthetic, somatic – all intending to evoke a reflective/reflexive experience where the participator (re)considers means of conducting practice-based research and capturing and communicating its data.

*Four slantwise explorations of practice-based research* is presented twice to academics, practitioners and researchers, first at RMIT’s (2003) conference on practice-based research and soon after at the invitation of the Association for Qualitative Research in a seminar for its members. Although my three colleagues and I are present with the installation on these occasions our role is limited to inviting people to participate and being available for dialogue with participators after their interaction, should they wish it. We do not actively facilitate people’s experience in any way; instruction and information is minimal. Engagement with the installation’s four stations is more or less self-directed, so participants have to not only locate themselves in relation to this unfamiliar physical form and its objects as they first encounter it, but then also try to orientate themselves in the conceptual / intellectual / philosophical / practical spaces inherent in, and generated by, this device and its intentions. It is only after any participant has engaged (or not) with the installation that they are provided with a jointly written statement of our intentions described in these excerpts:

> A number of questions, assumptions and claims about practice based research are inferred in these works – but in each case the ‘reader’ is asked to enter an engagement with the ‘researcher’ where the parameters of that engagement are unclear — the details still to be worked out...together.

The texts constituted by this engagement are blurrier and less stable than the familiar strings of words and symbols, black ink on a white page. Perhaps you may hear the researchers asking (and responding to) the question ‘what constitutes practice-based research?’

Each of the researchers represented here is guided by the principle that we all know more than we can tell (Polanyi, 1966). This principle is embodied in their work as both insight and challenge.

Their individual responses to this puzzle are played out in these installations, a bottle, a bear, our eyes and some crumbs — bridging and connecting the experiences of the researchers with others, creating a constructivist text in the liminal space in-between. Provocatively the researchers say that without your participation there is no research...

And in the end…a place to begin

The experiences that ensue from these installations should not be confused with the meaning that clusters around a shared metaphor. Rather our efforts are intended to inspire erratic movements, eccentric personal travel rather than providing a means of mass transportation...

It is as if you were to suddenly find yourself at a bizarre transport node, a point of departure where instead of trains and steel tracks you find a bicycle ready to take you in any direction you choose...

Thank you for engaging with our work.

On both occasions it is staged the work gives rise to some lively, robust discussions amongst the academics present. In reflecting on the experience, and the number of people who did not interact with the installation, I contemplate what is gleaned from observation, and comments heard, regarding the degree of uncertainty and anxiety generated by the lack of guidance on how to approach this thing. I try to imagine I am not a scholar of visual art, design, or dramatic arts. Perhaps I am an academic in the School of Economics, I am at a traditional academic conference in a standard conference venue, in a typical, charmless seminar room, orientating, and situating, myself by all the associated codes. Here, without warning, I encounter an arts-based installation inviting (uninviting?) interaction unassisted by its makers who are standing by watching me.

A certain degree of uncertainty is to be expected in encountering the unfamiliar and surely must be (potentially) helpful in prompting mind into exploratory and (perhaps) self-reflective modes: What is this? How do I approach and engage with it? What’s this about? There’s no way I am going to shout into a bottle! Why not? How will it be to look into a
stranger’s eyes through a slot in a perspex barrier and hold their eyes in a silent exchange? Too much uncertainty and anxiety however must surely be a (potential) hindrance, generating movement away from, rather than into, other conceptual / intellectual / philosophical / practical spaces available here.

Do we, does the installation, expect / ask too much?

We want to see and yet we are afraid to see. This is the perceptible threshold of all knowledge, the threshold upon which interest wavers, falters, then returns. (Bachelard, 1969:85)

When the pilot Creative futures program begins with DPI in the following weeks I stage another transportable, temporary, interactive installation of this ilk as a way of framing the first day’s activities and setting the conceptual and philosophical scene for the arts-based approach underpinning this course. Its three stations invite differing combinations of sensory engagement – visual, tactile, auditory – with a selection of material artworks (including Evidence of passing) and recorded sound and spoken word (heard through personal earphones). Participants are also invited to take a small memento incorporated into the installation for this purpose.

Despite my qualms about the potentially unhelpful demands such a device may place on interactants, and despite being present in this forum as facilitator of a learning program, I do not give close consideration to the particulars or degree of my agency in assisting interactants to engage with the installation. I do give some verbal introduction but I am still relying (more) on the usual device of written statement plus self-reflective questions.

I am rather abruptly pushed to reconsider the issue when I am almost immediately confronted with a participant who aggressively attacks the whole notion of non-representational art as pointless rubbish, and leaves the program in its first few hours in evident disgust.

Clearly there needs to be some adjustment to my handling of this alien system of knowledge transposition and

Heidegger ... believes we need to go to the work of art and ask what and how it is. It is very difficult to set aside our preconceptions and “listen” to the work of art. To be able to hear what the work of art has to say, one has to be receptive to its particular voice. (Bolt, 2004:90)
production and its potential for generating so much uncertainty it is rendered inaccessible.

I initially consider finding some way of priming participants’ minds to handle the works as systems of transmission but instead I turn attention to my own transmissions and ways of handling participants’ responses to meeting something (more) unknown, (more) uncertain, (more) ambiguous. And I contemplate ways of enabling them in their own handling of their responses, to individually finding a quality of handling they deem helpful. The intention of the program is after all to increase personal capacity to meet complexity, ambiguity and uncertainty in (more) responsive, (more) creative ways. And here we all are - possibly me more than anyone else in the room - in the midst of real time, moment to moment lived experience, witnessing the degree to which we possess Keats’s negative capability ‘of being in uncertainties’ (Claxton, 2005:149), witnessing our moment to moment choices to move towards, to move away from, to hold the tension between these impulses and stay engaged in an open, fruitful manner (or not).

I come to truly know the meaning of the term steep learning curve.

Due to the implementational structure of the program, I am conducting the same workshop on six consecutive days at different DPI sites across Victoria, allowing me to make immediate adjustments to the process and my role/agency in relation to it. My intuitive response in re-staging the installation on subsequent days is to physically and ontologically move (more) into the in/tangible space/s of the installation – where it is in the room, the personal space of those engaging with it. My intuition is not to facilitate in any overt way. It is rather to ‘hold’ the space; to be present, attentive and available but not to intrude or instruct. I act (more) as a watchful custodian; a custodian of/from the realm of creative arts. That this seems to assist is borne out in the group’s meta-level reflections on their responses to interacting with the installation, being more cognisant of their uncertainty and better able to stay aware and engaged. To my relief, there are no further furious rejections, but there is still a number of people who quit the program at the end of the first day. When surveyed on their reasons they typically cite finding the personal and exploratory (rather than strictly professional and instructional) nature too challenging but/and they are at pains to credit the organisation for making such a radical program available to staff, and can see its benefits.

The participants that go on to complete the pilot Creative futures program are remarkably receptive to the radical (and personal) nature of the course (despite finding it challenging), and are emphatic in their favourable assessment of the effects and outcomes emerging from it. This does little to mitigate the stress of the morass of uncertainty I am experiencing in implementing and inventing how to guide this program of my own design, taking an approach untested in organisational learning and development, transposing ways of knowing from the arts into a scientific research organisation. Not for the first (or last) time I wonder at the wisdom of my whole risky enterprise and whether I am up to the job if it is to generate so much anxiety. I am given to reflect on the comfort afforded me by the purposefully created domain of Spa for the mind with its highly stage-managed creative arts codes and transmissions.

I realise I am in the thick of a much trickier manoeuvre transposing ways of knowing from one domain to another operating in the physical sites of the receiving domain. It puts centre stage my role as envoy and custodian of other knowledges and practices. In so doing, it directs my attention (more) to the ways I am creating learning spaces suitably receptive to other conceptual, philosophical, practical, ontological ways, and how I am occupying and relating to the physical spaces in which the work is taking place. By the end of the first three month program it is evident from participants’ oral and written evaluation that these spaces are proving to be transformative but my ways of being and doing that may be helping, and those that may be hindering, my endeavour are not yet apparent to me.
In their evaluation participants comment on my performance as a facilitator distinguishing it from facilitation as they know it in learning and development courses, and they attribute a substantial degree of the transformative nature of their experience to this, particularly feeling safe, free from judgement and assessment on my part, and being assisted to notice what would typically be beyond their sphere of awareness and attention. In the months following the completion of the trial I undertake the movement of research in which the framing of my learning fora as site-responsive, performative installations, and my role and agency within these as being (an) Attendant, becomes present but/and beyond my sphere of awareness and attention at that time and place.

What I present in this section is what becomes seen in the years following this piece of work as the capacity of the (more) whole-adapted eye that I am (more) readily able to bring to applied practice - being able to perceive more of what is, and what is not on behalf of others - extends to (more) readily contemplating (my) self / practice / research.

This, the piece of investigation referred to in the story (p.65), that is ostensibly concerned with exploring boxes in practice/practitioner psyche but proves to be equally revealing of my ontology and conduct in applied practice which is not consciously the direct (or indirect) focus of the investigation:

After a year of earnest, frustrated designing and planning a piece of studio inquiry within my research to investigate my practice I take the radical step of surrendering my schemes, plans and sets of ideas. Instead I take up residence in the gallery/performance space retained for the work, advertise a viewing at the end of the allotted period and wait to see what happens. For days I stay still in a silent communion between my being and the being of the space, eventually moving to engage materials and (more) overt action and agency; all the while paying attention to what arises, to what may (or may not) emerge; yielding, opening to the (more) dialogic, to the (more) poietic.

It takes place in early 2004 in the exhibition and performance spaces at CoFA. I am alone when I first enter the empty gallery/performance space that is to be my studio-laboratory for the next eight days. My opening intuitive approach to this space, as it is with any space of practice, is 'a kind of site-reading' (Simon, 2002:1), listening to its presence, trying to sense its being.

Like so many spaces in which I am finding myself working in applied practice this one too has a certain air of neglect, displaying a certain lack of care and attention. Those previously occupying and using the space leave it littered, uncleaned.

Nasrudin was now an old man looking back on his life. He sat with his friends in the tea shop telling his story.

“When I was young I was fiery - I wanted to awaken everyone. I prayed to Allah to give me the strength to change the world.

“In mid-life I awoke one day and realised my life was half over and I had changed no one. So I prayed to Allah to give me the strength to change those close around me who so much needed it.

“Alas, now I am old and my prayer is simpler. ‘Allah,’ I ask, ‘please give me the strength to at least change myself.’”

(Kornfeld and Feldman,1996:184)
In a reciprocal process attending the many ways a site “speaks” to the artist and the many ways she might “speak back”, (Ann) Hamilton’s work might be … recognized as “site-responsive”, quite specifically in her words, as “an act of attention”. (Simon, 2002:14)

I spontaneously begin to do what I am intuitively doing in applied practice. I clean. I find a table and chair. I clean and arrange them. I burn incense. I light a candle. I prepare the space for work, doing it all (more) slowly, (more) thoughtfully, being able to pay (more) close attention (without the constraints of time and consideration when participants are expected). It begins to become apparent to me, this is (also) the work, not a prelude to it: the way of approaching, entering, occupying, becoming present within, listening and speaking to the space, the site. And it begins to become (more) clear to me that it is not solely the pragmatics of the way but/and also the philosophy of the way.

In the days to come I am occupant and custodian of this particular space in a solitary immersive meditation. My material is the question of boxes. A meditation on the box, in a box: eight days silently attending to boxes of the mind in the physical white box of the gallery/performance space; waiting and watching within, paying attention to what arises (or not).

The comfort of the plan

In the conversations I have about this experiential inquiry at the time it is in progress, the thread and theme of anxiety is strong. When people hear I have no plan, that I am just being (not doing) in the space, contemplating boxes, their anxiety at the very idea seems to be almost as great as mine is in the actual reality of it. Oh, the power and comfort of the plan and its defined steps and strategies to arrive at a predetermined destination. I think of the all-powerful standing of the plan in organisations – strategic plans, operational plans, business development plans, marketing plans, research plans, project plans; the resources and departments devoted to planning, the planning that goes into making plans, the planning that goes into planning to make a plan. The terror and anxiety of being without one.

At one point in my immersion, I consider mapping my anxiety levels, hour by hour, directly onto the white walls. I desist. I stay still and attend to the box/es within, and the box without, that I am within.

... some of her most critical materials are intangible: sound and aroma, reading and speaking, ... light and time. Above all, time is Hamilton’s most crucial material. ... The relations of things to their making... the duration of forming. It is bodying forth and embodiment. (Simon, 2002:14)

I first began making them (installations) because I was interested in a form that allowed for a physical immersion, and perhaps because I am less a form giver than a form responder. Just as I am happy to inhabit the organ of my skin so was I initially happy to inhabit the space I was working in, to let the work seek and find its border at the perimeter of the space while at the same time pressing against its edge like water leeching under the door – the fishbowl effect of growing to the size of the container. (Ann Hamilton in Simon, 2002:14)
Moreover, it was an art space made more ordinary, more democratic in some sense by virtue of putting labor in the foreground, changing a gallery space into a working studio, and by eliminating the divide between worker–performer–artist and audience, for the boundaries of the work’s preparatory installation and its “opening” to the public had overlapped. (Simon, 2002:25)

Human beings are capable of powered flight; we can travel across ourselves and find that self multiple and vast. The artist knows this; at the same time that art is prising away old dead structures that have rusted almost unnoticed into our flesh, art is pushing at the boundaries we thought were fixed. The convenient lies fall; the only boundaries are the boundaries of our imagination. (Winterson, 1996:116)

She is not afraid of pain. The dark places attract her as well as the light and she has the wisdom to know that not all dark places need light. She has the cardinal virtue of critical courage, sifting her ideas and her impressions through a fine riddle of words, until the clumsiness and the uncertainties drop away, leaving her with word and thing, rare and rich. (Winterson, 1996:177)
On day six the meditation becomes material, giving rise to a suite of 2D and 3D forms using the minimal (and random) supply of materials I have to hand. The first of the material works to emerge is a series of thirty-six A3 black and white images: photocopies of accumulative, accumulating collages constructed from cut-out paper dolls and their costumes extracted from two sheets of wrapping paper.

It begins with a lone girl – the only one of her kind amongst the dolls. I name her Alice and place her, undressed, unfettered, in the centre of the sheet.

In the accumulating collage she gradually disappears amongst the costumes and characters she is expected to assume in life, that are forming a female felt – a very dense fabric where all the fibres are forced to become so tightly enmeshed and entangled, no single strand is visible.

In the last image Alice re-emerges from the felt, positioned floating slightly above the surface of the page. A tiny figure, now in colour. She takes flight in/on a 3D form suspended overhead in the void – a cloud fashioned from bookbinders’ gauze, containing/carrying all the original, colour cut-out paper dolls, now backed with/by text from Gaston Bachelard’s (1969) *The poetics of space*.

I call the installation *Making female felt*. In the artist’s statement in the exhibition handout I cast the individual and collective work/s as an invitation for self-inquiry, to consider the ways you (may) box yourself in.

One’s identity, like Alice’s behind the looking glass, is always contested: the seemingly paradoxical element of changing one’s identity leads to self-identity itself losing its stable meaning. It reflects on the dynamics of becoming-other and discarding or transforming the values that were once established. (Semetsky, 2006:12)
Try to go back through the names they’ve given you. I’ll wait for you, I’m waiting for myself. Come back. It’s not so hard. You stay here, and you won’t be absorbed into familiar scenes, worn-out phrases, routine gestures. Into bodies already encoded within a system. Try to pay attention to yourself. To me. Without letting convention, or habit, distract you. (Irigaray, 1985:206)

Don’t cry. One day we’ll manage to say ourselves. And what we say will be even lovelier than our tears. Wholly fluent. (Irigaray, 1985:216)
On the gallery floor below the cloud (that I notice is sporadically raining accessories - I am finding the occasional handbag or parasol in my hair), is a partial rectangle, an open-ended frame delineated in masking tape, at once inviting attention to the ground and implying a space - a box open at one side. On it is written two (real) voices expressing contrasting interpretations of my relationship to the box: one casts me (more) as its servant, the other casts me (more) as its mistress.

I remember the feeling - incredulity and something close to panic - when my supervisor tells me in a meeting just before I undertake this work at CoFA that she would like to see me set aside the boxes. I may even be gripping the edge of the table in the European Café as I hear her words, thinking, "Are you mad?! I am a box!" I am terrified and excited at once; permission to free myself of the box ...

During my residency in the gallery I tell a wise, trusted, intellectual patriarch about this and my mission to abandon the box. "No, no, no!", he says. "She should be in awe of your way with the box. Anyway, it's not about boxes, your boxes are doorways." I halt my rush away from the box. I reconsider. I realise I may be, and can be, both its servant and mistress (at once). The box is what it is.

Rather, what is the ontology of its handling and its handlability? Box being cage? Box being portal?

Stark Young declared at one point: "If Martha Graham ever gave birth, it would be to a cube". (Gardner, 1993:277)
Think outside the box, as long as it’s not a box

The full, final physical form of the CoFA exhibition comprises three parts, two of which involve other practitioners and made works they generate, all emanating from physical and/or conceptual boxes. One of these components involves four of my former colleagues from the multidisciplinary teaching team in CoFA’s School of Design Studies (p. 49). I am granted ethics approval for their participation in exploring how a kit of my making may invoke self-reflexive space, and may be useful for personal and professional practice development.  

I send each of them in advance a box containing a selection of the same materials and small objects incorporated into Evidence of passing—felt, bookbinders’ gauze, bone fragments, silk embroidery thread, small strips of text excised from an old book, paper tags, cotton tape, and a few others. Accompanying these are two black and white photocopies: one showing a detail of Evidence of passing, the other, pages from my journal dated 5th October 2002—the excerpt presented earlier (p. 84). I also include some loose written guidelines (but no explanation of the contents) to initiate the recipient’s engagement with the box and the things and images the kit contains, and a notebook to record responses and reflections along the way.

Each person works independently without consultation, brings their made work on the day of the viewing to exhibit and participate in group reflection on the process, their responses and experience. The Boxwork does show itself as an opening into self-reflexive spaces of varying intensity for these four practitioners. For one of the makers what emerges within the processual space is influential enough to have her reframe her own PhD research.  

The third component is an installation where two aged teddy bears—one belonging to me, the other to Peter Burrows of my research cohort—are amongst posters of email correspondence between us mapping a fragmentary dialogue about what constitutes valid forms of text in the context of research. If Evidence of passing, my portable blanket of bones, and the collaborative Four slantwise explorations of practice-based research, test the membranes of research orthodoxy’s envelope, Peter is possibly about to rupture those membranes, insisting his bear in a box, accompanied by other artefacts and written material, is valid as, and should be submitted for examination as, a thesis (not a project).

The bears muse upon the notion so favoured in organisations, thinking outside the box.

24. Howard Gwynne.
25. Carol Hudson, Mark Jacques, Mark Ian Jones, Carol Longbottom.
   See Appendix G for ethics approval.
pm
humes have stopped/gone & the
fruits have returned.

10:00 pm

After coffee from the Costa Thackway

sent text messages

planning fun now.

10:30 pm

I am in a white box

Writing a response to boxes

a box of full unthinking

promises to collect collate

to catalogue, contain in a

in a physical manifestation

my compulsions in me

and feeling anxiety

its boundaries, its blank

The compulsion to fill it

for fear of not filling it the fear

remaining empty, unclaimed

role of occupancy or ideas

I contemplated leaving it

Closing the door, I walked

... but of course, no, what

does people think of me, what

did they say?
THE CUT OUT DOLLS

There are threads floating around - inner characters, the roles we take up (especially women).

All these outfits suitable for different occasions, events, roles, forms of behaviour.

They seem so pregnant with expectations - when you put on this green coat with its smart red collar, and armed with your bucket and spade, you will go to the beach and you will have fun.

The coat has such a military air about it - rigidity, obedience - the caged child.

Every outfit has a story. Every outfit reflects the character, and her story ...

One thing is certain about what actors call the "outside-in" approach inherited from English repertory actors who came here in the '50s: it's remarkable how easily people fall into a character when they costume themselves.

Graeme Blundell
Weekend Australian July 16-17, 2005.
A site sensitive institution in a constant state of becoming

Once, whilst I am still within *Spa for the mind*, and then again soon after *Making female felt*, I experience the performance installation works of Museum of Modern Oddities (MoMO), founded and staged by artists Katy Bowman and Neil Thomas. MoMO is a museum “in process” committed to inquiry and discovery, ... a site sensitive institution in a constant state of becoming ... one of Australia’s leading site-specific performance making companies’ (Victorian Government, 2006). My first encounter is with a work staged in an old hardware store designated for closure after many decades of service to its inner city local community. This manifestation offers ‘experiences of ‘Urban Anthropology’, ‘Surface Archaeology’, ‘Taxidermy’ ‘Special Events’ and that most crucial of all contemporary museum items, a ‘Museum Shop’ ... This was a performance in which the very act of entering the museum engaged visitors in their own self-directed, exploratory role’ (Kirby, 2002:1-2).

In her piece on MoMO Sandy Kirby suggests ‘... its location in the hardware store confused people’s expectations. What exactly was this? A museum? A shop? A commercial venture? An art work?’ (2002:1). She goes on to describe the opening agency of the ambiguity of the physical space:

Released from the rather passive activity of viewing institutionally sanctioned ‘art’, displayed in defined contexts, a new space opened up here where visitors became the controlling agents, choosing to see the mass of hardware objects before them as art, as junk, as memory, as fiction and as history. Written feedback from museum visitors enthusiastically proclaimed: ‘What a heap of junk! Better than art’, ‘Absurd and beautiful’, ‘Like the best Joseph Cornell box in the world, this is: strong and fey and full of unanticipated connection. Thank You’.

(2002:2-3)

At the time I am surprised that although I am briefed/prepared by media reviews about what I am visiting, my perceptions and habits of mind are sufficiently confounded and confused to generate a self-reflexive state of thinking about how I am thinking, and being acutely aware of it. For me it is (more) than the ambiguity of the physical context setting codes, meaning, interpretation in motion. It is (more) the effect/s of finding myself un/wittingly actively participating in the performance of the work that disrupts (more) habitual modes and frameworks of assessing/analytical/categorising eye/mind.

My second encounter with MoMO performance installation is the work *Lost and found*, just as the project with LandLearn is beginning. The small exhibition space is transformed into an experiential abstraction of a lost and found office. Neil Thomas is present attending to the space and attending to the exhibits. The exhibits themselves have been constructed to invite varying degrees of engagement – from idly curious browsing, to sitting down and typing (or hand writing) a personal story on an index card specifically designed to capture your story and immediately incorporate it into the exhibition.

At a chosen moment, Neil Thomas, dressed in a uniform of one-piece work overalls, approaches visitors and engages them (to whatever degree they are willing) in a collaborative act of exploring notions of lost and found in their lives. Some people come and go without this interaction with the artist and have instead a self-directed engagement with/in the installation. Both forms of engagement act in their separate and collective way/s to prompt some dimension of reflective/self-reflective experience and emotional response – my own ranged from gentle curiosity about the owner of a lost oddity, to a reawakening of grief over the loss of my beloved *Spa for mind*.

For Heidegger, the preservers of the work, those who come to experience and apprehend the work of the work, belong as much to the createdness as the creators. In createdness the work asserts that it is. (Bolt, 2004:107)

Bowman and Thomas view MoMO works as co-created, co-performed with the people who visit/participate, in which interactors are ‘released from the rather passive activity of viewing’ (Kirby, 2002:2), through the artist’s explicit/implicit invitation/invocation. The degree to which this may happen correlates to the performative agency of the artist creating, activating and attending (but not mediating) these spaces of exchange and reciprocity. This
is the agency absent from the (purportedly) interactive installations discussed earlier (p.104). Four slantwise explorations of practice-based research, staged at an academic conference where, ‘Provocatively the researchers say that without your participation there is no research…’, and my subsequent version in applied practice with DPI that compels a participant to leave the learning program.

... the contemporary artist role has undergone a drastic change from a producer of aesthetic objects to a cultural–aesthetic service provider, whose real ‘commodity’ is his/her performance as a facilitator, educator, coordinator or even bureaucrat. (Kwon, 2002:51)

Artist being (an) Attendant
In the MoMO examples it is obviously not solely the performativity of the artist’s agency that can engage others in participation – I know the agency of the traditional facilitator can be highly performative and effective in engaging the participation of others, but/and its logic and purpose is of another order altogether. It is also that these spaces are of a certain order of arts practitioner/practice mind – its processes, intentions, ontology, epistemological logic and material. These are all open, unpredictable, phenomenological spaces and processes of social and psychological exchange and reciprocity that with varying intensity model/mirror those of Creative contemplation. The artist (as facilitator) is inviting others into a unpredictable co-performance within a space of their custodianship, in which they may be a one person ensemble cast improvising within, and across, the roles of custodian, performer, guide, conversation partner, provocateur, philosopher, anthropologist, host, visionary, counsellor of sorts, sales person, technician, and so on and so on.

In her early works Ann Hamilton often includes human figures (sometimes herself) that she calls attendants, who are sometimes performing tasks. It is from here that I co-opt the term attendant, partly in reference to Hamilton’s practice and philosophy, but more for the various explicit meanings of both noun, attendant, and verb, to attend, and other meanings suggested by it: attending to – being present to another person and/or a task; taking care of, ministering to someone/something; to wait on with service; tend – disposition towards; to care for; tender – meaning gentle, soft-hearted, also to offer, and the notion of exchange, some form of currency, something of value that facilitates a transaction. All of these are at play in my role and agency within Creative contemplation fora.

Although the structure of the finished form of Ann Hamilton’s installations seen by the public is not open to variation, including improvisations by Hamilton’s attendants or a project’s visitors (Simon, 2002:20), Hamilton’s behind the scenes process and her role—artist as activating agent—resonate with the operations of Creative contemplation and my role within its fora:

> Hamilton creates her installations by first reading an existing architectural space … then taking a series of “soundings”. Hers is an intuitive solo process, … She continues with what she has called a number of “conversations”: with her readings, with herself, with her … materials, … and with the often large group of people with whom she works to put an installation in place. Thus her installations become self-reflexive analyses and self-contained social systems (Simon, 2002:15).

It is from the merging of these influences, experiences and examples (and some others in similar vein) that the conceptual framework of performative installation, and artist/attendant as its activating organ, emerges. The effect this has on praxis is subtle and highly significant for practice and personally for me as a practitioner.

In the fora comprising the pilot Creative futures program I am (more) a performative agent guiding a process that is (more) external to me, (more) akin to a traditional facilitator. In the emergent re/conceptualisation I am brought (more) directly into the processual space, creating it and being created by it. I see in this a formalisation and development of my intuitive movements in applied practice in re-staging the (inert) installation when I physically and ontologically move (more) into its in/tangible space/s, becoming (more) part of its operations and agency. Here the watchful custodian becomes (more) performative agent amplifying the performative agency of other beings in the space, and the being of the space itself.

When the next rounds of the Creative futures program begin in the months following Making female felt I re-enter applied practice as artist/attendant situated (more) within a processual and experiential framework that I am activating (rather than applying). I dispense with the inert installation device. I am now viewing these learning fora as performed, not quite yet performative, installation (that final phase of becoming is yet to take place within the LandLearn project which is yet to emerge).

In becoming re/cast and re/trained in being (an) Attendant there is heightened sensitivity in enacting the pragmatics of my preparations that are now (more) ritualised, (more) consciously enacted rituals, and the philosophical dimension of this way is now open, present and active. Typically the spaces of my applied practice are meeting rooms in buildings predominantly serving as offices (sometimes with laboratory and other scientific research facilities). These are multipurpose meeting spaces not conceived or constructed with much care or character. Over this is usually layered
the casual disregard of occupants who leave behind tables marked with coffee mug rings and other stains and spillages. I see these attitudes and acts accumulating over time in the presence and fabric of the space that speaks back to occupants in terms of carelessness: "It is not necessary, important or worthwhile to invest time, care and attention in the being of this space, this place."

And, by extension, it is not necessary, important, worthwhile to invest time, care and attention in the being of work being conducted within this container. And, by extension, it is not necessary, important, worthwhile to invest time, care and attention in the Being of the beings conducting such work within this container. No beings and their work are nurtured by this, most particularly when that work is the work of self-inquiry.

Attending to a space with care, imbuing it with care has its own powerful transmissions and we will return to this in the un/en/folding to follow.

_They (artists) do not require the traditional signs, rooms, arrangements, and rites of performance because performance is an attitude about involvement on some plane in something going on. It does not have to be onstage, and it really does not have to be announced. ... Nonart art, when applied to performing, means making a performance that doesn’t resemble what’s been called art performance._

(Kaprow, 1976:174)
My heightened sensitivity in relating to the box of the room emerging from the *Making female felt* work plays out too, at the scale of the transportable *Story box*, where my handling of it is noticeably (more) as philosophic, poietic, portal.

**A tale of two frogs**

I unobtrusively take a seat at the table of one of the three small groups of participants. They are reflecting on their self-inquiry using *Story box*. I listen. When their conversation comes to its natural close I seek any metacognitive observations they are willing/able to share on how they are finding the experience: *How is it for the mind to think through the language and stories of objects? What insight (if any) is being gained into the workings of mind and heart?*

The responses are typical of what is generated in applied practice situations. Without my immediate presence, in their shared inquiry the participants tell me *Story box* has enabled fresh, beneficial ways of seeing and thinking; useful and welcome insight has been gained. One person recounts for my benefit being drawn to choose the two toy frogs in that particular *Story box*.

One is exquisitely hand-crafted from a single, long strand of grass, purchased from a man who was making them on the street in front of Melbourne Town Hall. When asked about the origin of this craft he tells me about his childhood and life in rural China, about being taught how to render in grass and reeds the insects and small creatures found in the country around him. The second frog is machine made from some sort of solid but slightly pliable rubber or resin, and painted without any great care: an indelicate lump approximating frog; manufactured in China.

The story teller describes how these two frogs – one she likes, one she does not – speak to her of how she sees and thinks about herself as two people: one version of herself who goes to work and another who is the outside-of-work self – one of whom she likes and one of whom she does not particularly care for. In contemplating the creatures with her hands she realises the tension between these two aspects and the effort she is investing in maintaining their separation at some psychological and emotional cost. She demonstrates with the toys how they are going to become friends, to relate more closely to each other. And she tells me about her surprise at the process – from an intuitive choice of objects to this insight and what she feels is a move towards restitution of relations between these separate selves.

I pose a question, *“What is the essence of ’frogness’?”*

She stares at me with slight puzzlement, repeating the question slowly, several times over, as if trying it on; an unfamiliar form of garment whose openings are not located in the expected places to admit arms, head, body.

I tenderly hold the space of her effort, I hold her gaze. Without instruction the other participants hold the silence, their
attention palpable. After some time she asks me, "Can you say more?"

"They are both frogs. They have been formed in different ways so each one has different qualities and characteristics. Even though one is attractive to you and the other isn’t, they are both expressions of the same thing – frogness. They are not uniform but they are unified ... two inseparable, co-existing aspects of one another, two aspects of the same reality. We can see them as separate entities or the same entity having two different expressions."

I can feel her mind trying on this more capacious, more accommodating clothing.

I pose another question, “How does that feel in relation to the two yous?”

Within seconds I sense her mind and body relax. She smiles. “I get it. It's all me. It's just me in different places with different people. I can just be me, wherever I am. There’s only one me ... Thank you.”

When I see her again a month later at the second facilitated session (of three) in the course she tells me what a profound change our encounter is generating in how she sees and relates to herself. She declares, “I am forty-five years old and for the first time in my life I finally feel like I am all me.”

This story of multifaceted, multidimensional, phenomenological, dialogic exchange/s and transmission/s of mind and material object/s generating insight is regularly repeated in my applied practice. Even without the amplifying effects of my direct transmission/teaching in being (an) Attendant the insight gained from self-directed engagement with Story box is already fruitful, softening such membranes of mind operating to define and keep apart two separate selves at some psychological and emotional cost. What needs to be remarked here though is that participants’ individual self-inquiry is taking place within the greater space created and being held by me being (an) Attendant whether or not I have a (more) direct hand in their inquiry.

In the encounter between Attendant and participant in the tale of two frogs, in the moments and movements of our minds meeting (more) directly, I endeavour to sense how much hers is willing/able to stretch, to soften its membranes and existing structures to allow other concepts, ideas and their effects. When tested, if this participant’s mind is not willing/able to allow, to permit these other structures of thought in the moment/movement of our exchange I do not insist. In these circumstances I suggest and encourage her to hold the notion of ‘frogness’, to sit with it over the coming weeks without seeking or grasping at answers, and see what arises. I reiterate there are no right or wrong answers, and not necessarily any answers at all in this inquiry, there is just being unfolded by the question.

The three month duration of each individual Creative futures program, and the total duration of the collaboration with DPI over five years, allows the organisation to trace and evaluate the accumulative effect of this order of guided self-inquiry. This tells me the transmission often continues to unfold itself beyond the participant’s conscious awareness, and may yet realise further, deeper insight at some later time, in some other place, if it is discernible/discrimined. In this example, insight into the two selves being inseparable aspects of each may yet be realised in time, but/and my experience is that my agency serves to amplify the potential and process for this to occur. And, in the structure of a course like this with repeat encounters, there are further opportunities in being (an) Attendant to draw attention to what the participant may be bringing back into the space but that has (so far) been unrevealed.

We come again to Heidegger encountering Lao-tzu and the Tao - bringing what may be there into being, as one becomes able to discern it. And, becoming able to discern it, brings it into being – here, assisted by me being (an) Attendant.

29. This exchange takes place in 2004 and I have no further contact with this person who works and lives in regional Victoria. In the days I am writing this piece of text in 2008, our paths cross on a Melbourne city street.
Courting anarchy (or not)

As indicated earlier, when the sub-project with LandLearn emerges from the wider Creative futures initiative, it does so with unusual and fortuitous conditions. The journey of inquiry neither has to be designed in advance nor be approved by anyone other than those involved, inviting them to participate (more) as active accomplices, co-creating the work. This presents a capacious container for some further experimentation in the ways of Creative contemplation and my role in being (an) Attendant, opening the space for more site-responsive, context-responsive, improvisational fora.

In the library, on Day I, in a spontaneous move in the phase of individual making (preceding the group’s collective making), I participate in making alongside the LandLearn team members. Unconsciously this explicitly and radically unifies us as an ensemble cast, amplifying (more) our individual and collective performative agency, opening the space (more) to (more) possibilities. This is a radically different logic to that of conventional facilitation’s positioning of the facilitator (more) outside the process, (more) as arch orchestrator directing and managing events and participants who are (more) situated within the process, towards a predetermined outcome.

Actual participation in a work of art courts anarchy. It invites the participant to make a choice of some kind. Usually that choice includes whether to participate. In choosing to participate, one may also be choosing to alter the work – its object, its subject, its meaning. In choosing not to participate, one has at least acted consciously. In either case the work has been acted upon (which is different from thinking about acting). Though the artist sets up the equation, the participant provides its terms, and the system remains open to participation. To (Allan) Kaprow participation is its whole: it engages both our minds and bodies in actions that transform art into experience and esthetics into meaning. Our experience as participants is one of meaningful transformation. (Kelly, 2003:xviii)

With regard to the effects emerging from the re/conceptualisation of my learning fora as performative installation, and artist/attendant being the activating organ within it, I discover this new framework of viewing and understanding practice/practitioner in the domain of organisational learning and development is (more) confident, (more) robust, less susceptible to becoming lost in the framing effects of physical sites and epistemological traditions of this domain. That is to say, it has this effect once it is (more) fully embodied in practitioner/practice ontology. That I discover this to be the case comes about through an experience that is the antithesis of the practice situations with LandLearn.

The extent of the effects and experiences of un/becoming, becoming–other realised in Creative contemplation/performative installation is by no means certain...
or guaranteed but I do now know that the degree of potency and possibility that comes forth into being in the space/s corresponds with a convergence of favourable conditions - both circum-stantial and purposefully created.

By this I do not mean created solely by me. I now know the importance of the qualities of agency of others, as well as my role/agency being (an) Attendant. I know that being (an) Attendant within/of/at that time and place does not guarantee self-reflexive space comes into being, but/and I do know that if I do not, it will not. This makes itself (more) explicitly known to me when, a few months later, elated by my experience with LandLearn, I somewhat cavalierly attempt to replicate the experiment of making a large collective artwork, with another group, in different circumstances and different conditions. This proves to be most highly instructive in the need to embody a supportive framework of, and for, the practice; to attend concernfully and diligently to all dimensions of this work.

When I enter the practice situation in question the framework of my learning fora being performative installation, and artist/attendant being the activating organ within it is still taking form, it is not yet a fully formed vessel but I am not aware just how leaky is my craft-in-progress. Here, the conditions and circumstances of the experiment vary in many respects from those of the LandLearn situation. The group is much larger (twenty-five rather than five). It is comprised of organisational development (OD) practitioners not all of whom are known to each other, and none of whom have experienced Creative contemplation before. It is a short evening session within the context of a regular monthly forum of a professional association. It takes place in a community centre that during the day serves as a social club for the aged, depriving me of time to prepare the space and myself within it. There are interruptions with people arriving late, being flurried and distracted, and distracting others. Also, with my agreement, the session includes a component to be facilitated by a traditionally trained OD practitioner. The topic for inquiry is: What is being ethical in practice?

There is no foray into the unknown, no insight of the order I know to be possible. People have a nice time, playing with materials, colour, form, line, texture, making a representation of notions about being ethical in practice. There is no becoming-other here. The participants say afterwards it is an enjoyable and beneficial experience allowing them to explore the matter in a creative mode. They are pleased and surprised at what becomes known about each other through interpreting the artwork. I do not deny or undermine the value of this, but/and I am struck by the stark contrast between this and my experience with LandLearn in particular, and with my wider experiences of Creative contemplation.

In critically reflecting on this later I possibly learn as much in these three
hours through direct lived experience of what is not making Creative contemplation/performative installation, as I do in the three years leading up to this event through researching what is. What I learn about being (an) Attendant provides good impetus for the studio inquiry I am about to undertake into the ontology and agency of being (an) Attendant.

In the emergent operations of Creative contemplation there is obviously no fixed prescription for a set of ideal conditions and individual and collective conduct. Many of the circumstances are outside my purview. The venue, for instance. I do make requests to my clients to hire venues with certain features such as windows and natural light - an evident transparent membrane admitting dialogue between interior/exterior worlds - ample room for people to work/move, the kind of food and beverages to be provided, but these are not always met. There are some conditions I can set on minimum and maximum group size, (sometimes) on minimum duration of the work to allow it to unfold over time, and that participation is self-selected. Beyond this, who turns up on the day, what they bring with them in terms of qualities and frames of mind, experience, favoured ideas and views, is what it is. This 'chanciness and uncontrollability' (Kaprow, 1987:224) dictates that the individual and collective enactments that I activate can be loosely scripted but/and again, this is emergent space and process, and much of being (an) Attendant is paradoxically improvisation within strict and lenient structure/s; meticulous im/precision.

Within being (an) Attendant it seems there are certain ontological, philosophical and pragmatic elements that are essential if the intended order of self-reflexive space/s is to be possible. My three hour instruction in the art of not creating self-reflexive space/s dramatically emphasises that my solo rituals of preparation/dialogue with/within site, and solo conduct of the forum - all absent in the community centre practice situation - are not negotiable in applied practice situations.

This salutary instruction intensifies the shift taking place from viewing myself (more) pragmatically as a consultant applying art-based methods within organisational learning and development, to viewing my endeavours (more) philosophically as the work of art, creating alternative transdisciplinary, ontological and epistemological spaces within an organisation; opening, or possibly re-opening, the relentlessly pragmatic space of the workplace to the (more) philosophic, the (more) poetic. This is the art of creating temporary self-reflexive spaces capable of permanent transformative effects within those co-creating and being created by them.

Over time, in becoming practised in their ways, these spaces may come to exist within individual bodymind, held within the Being of the beings constituting the collective bodymind of the organisation, remaining available to it. The phases of

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*Creative practice can be conceived of as a performance in which linkages are constantly being made and remade. As one of the actors, the artist becomes a force or intensity involved in the action. The other actors similarly become forces and intensities. Whilst each has the same praxiological status, each has its own character and contribution to make. Thus creative practice is a co-emergent practice.* (Bolt, 2004:84)
the Creative futures program following the pilot include a post-program support kit for groups to continue the work of self-inquiry in the workplace within a structure of self-directed activities. When the organisation’s tracking of the Creative futures initiative and its effects comes to an end there are groups still continuing their own fora after four years.

Je suis l’espace où je suis
I am the space where I am
(Noël Arnaud in Bachelard, 1969:137)
That how I am, and what I do in practice situations, is distinctly other to traditional facilitation is evident from participants’ evaluation of the multiple phases of the Creative futures program, and further reinforced by LandLearn team members who are all (traditionally) trained facilitators for their own applied practice with teachers. They all emphatically attribute a significant degree of the transformative nature of their experience/s to me being (an) Attendant rather than being a facilitator as they know it. And here we come more into the folds of what it is for me being (an) Attendant, the peculiarities and specialities of this agency that serve to create self-reflexive spaces.

By the time the suite of fora with LandLearn is complete, towards the end of 2005, I am within the School of Art and focused on (more) closely investigating being (an) Attendant through studio-based inquiry. Creative contemplation methodology is here turned inwards on itself to probe its activating organ. This frequently proves to be a performance of mind twisting manoeuvres of being (an) Attendant to being (an) Attendant, upping the ante in un/making practitioner/practice mind. The variations in density and detail of what is to be found in Un/en/folding No.3 mirrors variegation of the epistemological and ontological continua emerging in these acts of inquiry; continua of (more) private, personal insights making being (an) Attendant more fluent, (more) praxical modifications able to refine and amplify conditions conducive to creating self-reflexive spaces, and (more) philosophical maturation.

It is important to note that in the three years in which the selected works discussed here are gradually unfolding, slowing coming into being in the private realm of my workspace, I am actually conducting the inquiry in dis/continuous movements of alternating modes, across alternating sites.
There is studio inquiry through material making (or unmaking in the case of Dismantle) and there continues to be self-observation in applied practice situations. This is of particular importance as some profound effects of the studio inquiry only become explicitly known when I am in applied practice being (an) Attendant. It is here in the alternative mode/site of knowledge production that tacit ontological transmutations corresponding to the metaphorical dimension of material thinking are revealed.

As ever, maintaining attention to meta-level matters, in activating Creative contemplation to investigate its activating organ – being (an) Attendant – the overall methodological system is at the same time it is investigating itself, is cultivating itself becoming (more) refined as research and applied practice continue to unfold hand in hand.

**Book of inquiry**

These selected movements within my studio inquiry involve the modes and forms of digital photographic works and making, unmaking or remaking, the material forms of garments and books. One of the book-works, *Book of inquiry*, initially seems destined to be a more conventional journal/notebook – a repository of notes about thinking about being (an) Attendant, reflecting on studio inquiry as it is unfolding. *Book of inquiry*, however, reveals itself (more) as an artefact of being (an) Attendant to being (an) Attendant, acquiring its own telling transmission. One embodied characteristic is the non-synchronistic temporality permeating practice and research.

The first intervention I am moved to make in the readymade book form – a high quality, handmade journal received as a gift – is to selectively number the pages with a conventional numbering system where increasing numbers mark a linear progression from front to back, implicitly tracing time. I do start working with the first few pages in sequence but thereafter I find myself working in an apparently random sequence.

As concession to the research context and to being able to plot trajectories of thought and movements over time, I selectively date entries with a rubber stamping machine. This reveals a unified system of two co-existing counter-chronological and chronological systems where all co-exists in fluid partitions of time sliding back and forth, disrupting habitual perception of temporal order. And it serves to trace a web threading back and forth through time connecting what emerges at that time and place with what emerges at this time and place, each revealing more of the other.
This characteristic, manifesting in *Book of inquiry*, draws my attention to the importance of non-synchronicity in the ways of *Creative contemplation*, especially in relation to my applied field where there is a widespread convention for one- or two-day workshops accompanied by an expectation of immediate learning and change. It is a reminder that the condition I intuitively impose on my initiatory programs of staff development within DPI – that they span a number of months – is a vital factor contributing to the degree and depth of what may transpire within these spaces; as is reinforced by what transpires in the subsequent short, one-off forum with the association of OD practitioners (p.122).

As *Book of inquiry* and my collection of garment-based works are becoming hand in hand in the studio inquiry so, correspondingly, their respective presences are interweaving each other here.

*It is perhaps an obsession with progress and the rhetoric of 'before and after' that prevents us from inhabiting the process of things without end, a fluid temporality in which the three partitions of time slide through each other like a moving snake.* (Carter, 2004:52)
The Stumbling Block is a book, either wedged to open the wrong door or so massively closed that it takes at least two to open it. It is gathered, this supine architecture of information; a chained cathedral library fastened against usage. A solid yolk of arrogance gloats the cover and bindings with locks and closed contrivances. Only the agreed scholar is given the combination and candle, to lean into its interior. The block has grown to grudge these limp intrusions, preferring invention or accident as its chosen visitors. Shadows can pick its lock, displaced images or sounds; their filed teeth engaging with its heart.

Catling, B. (2007, November 5). Personal communication.
Dismantle

It is August 2005. With my experience of the suite of learning fora with LandLearn still fresh I am musing upon the nature of being (an) Attendant. I begin to develop an inclination to unpick a much treasured garment bought some twenty one years before in Hong Kong. By Japanese designer Yohji Yamamoto, this item of androgynous menswear seems to meld the dress of Zen monk/nun, Catholic priest’s frock coat and nun’s habit.

Once inside its folds its ecclesiastical sensibility induces a feeling of (self) containment, a certain seriousness. It has noticeable weight, the black wool gaberdine fabric hanging in perfect balance from the shoulders; it calls for a certain quality of upright bearing. I think now it may be the ultimate garment of/for being (an) Attendant. (But one needing adaptation to the Australian climate).

Although it is rarely worn, I feel deep attachment to it, carefully carrying it about the world with me as I move countries, states, cities several times over the twenty one intervening years. One day, after four or five months of just holding the inclination to dismantle, I find myself resuming the habit of the (lone) needlewoman, bent over her cloth. Sitting quietly in the window of my workspace, for the best light, I begin to unpick my precious, old, pristine garment - stitch by stitch, seam by seam, piece by piece - contemplating the un/making and what is transpiring within this dis/continuous act unfolding over (another) three months.

At intervals I take to my meditation cushion close by, loosely punctuating the material contemplation with Zazen, sitting with and observing mind; unpicking threads of thought. These intervals - seated on floor rather than chair - and their spacing feel like long, loose tacking stitches that lightly, temporarily hold garment pieces together while the form is becoming and may yet be re-considered, re-formed; a state before components are (more) permanently conjoined (or not).

As the work of dismantling proceeds the garment transmits its lineage of highly skilled craft and extreme care. It begins to reveal the full extent of its precision as its exquisitely crafted inner components become apparent. The degree of attention given to every aspect of structure and construction, every fine detail of the seen exterior and unseen interior of its being, invokes in me a sense of psychic/spiritual recognition; awareness of being of this lineage of making-mind.

My hand and eye are highly trained in the art of the silken thread, the tiny stitch, exacting hand-crafting of seam, pocket, opening and closure; threading needles, marking joins, the finest of adjustments, picking up a single stitch with the tip of a pin, unpicking one stitch at a time to adjust by millimeters to give responsive shape mirroring the body’s form, to accommodate the body’s movement even when encased in fabrics.

Habit, noun - a long, loose garment worn by a member of a religious order or congregation.
Archaic: dress; attire; a person’s bodily condition or constitution.
Phrase: habit of mind - disposition, temperament, character, nature, makeup, constitution, frame of mind.
After sitting, a monk asked Great Teacher Yueh–shan Hung–tao: 
"What are you thinking of in the immobile state of sitting?"
The master replied: "I think of not thinking?"
The monk asked: "How can you think of not thinking?"
The master replied: "By non–thinking."
(Dōgen in Stambaugh 1999:57)
with no tolerance for mistakes - unfor-giving fabrics that remember; retaining visible evidence of every wayward act of the needle, every ill considered or clumsy stitch. My eye, hand and disposition are attuned to quiet, circumscribed painstaking labour - perhaps making hundreds of tiny identical bows of salmon–pink duchesse satin, conserving their thousand frayable edges in hand-stitched folds, to decorate a fantastical garment worn once.

In a reverse response as I unpick and separate, I collect, sort and conserve every component of the dismantling garment right to the last single piece of thread. Along the way I photograph the intimate details of its being. I am using a digital camera for the first time. Initially, I am simply making the customary visual record of process required by guidelines for research by art project but I soon find the camera becomes an attentive eye. I very precisely frame the image in the viewfinder (there is absolutely no question of cropping later). I often have to make several attempts, making fine adjustments of hand and eye and immediately delete images that I know to be not right-seeing. I am re-minded of (my) needle seeking exact point of puncture, of unpicking errant stitches.

Working in this way with the camera becomes a meticulously performed homage to the precision, care and attention of the garment makers’ craft through (corresponding) acts of precision, care and attention. The emergence of this practice, performing acts of minute attention with the camera, comes to permeate the rest of my inquiry.

When the garment is completely dismantled it feels as if my research project too is completely dismantled. A material koan: in a paradoxical sleight of hand this act of inquiry to construct knowledge deconstructs itself in the process, arriving at nothing. No-thing (more) to say. No-thing (more) to do. Being (an) Attendant is no-thingness.

I am ironically amused that my enduring efforts over the preceding years to become more self-aware have become an unbecoming of self, an unpicking, dismantling fabric of (the) mind; its ideas, constructs, stories, concepts about itself. Whilst my own notion of ‘self’ as a project to be developed, cultivated, managed is dismantled I cannot see this being a winner as a communications strategy for my business. My field, after all, is individual and organisational development not un-development. I restrict the application of this insight to being (an) Attendant.

No longer conceiving of self as a project for development, a thing to be managed, when next in a situation of applied practice I find I have a (more) non-interventionist demeanour towards myself, rather than managing self/mind, I am (more) simply meeting self/mind but with substantially increased equanimity.

I experience this as (more) readily finding the still point within, that

The gate of a koan opens when you can let go of what you know with your mind, and open a kind of passionate unknowing that lies beyond the grip of mind. You don’t understand a great koan so much as allow it to understand you; you allow it to resolve the koan of yourself. (Murphy, 2004:65)
meditative state where all co-exists, without attachment to constructs of self, where the usually unseen, unwelcome, unexamined is allowable and allowed. I see this ontology more and more as potent in its ability to influence/inform the experiential space of (my) learning fora. Now, steeped in paradox, I recognise the subtle yet significant disrupting movement of stillness.

This intentional disposition in being (an) Attendant can be compelling enough alone in its transmission to others to unsettle usual modes of mind. The more still my mind, the more still participants’ individual and collective mind/s may become, allowing more/other to co-exist, more/other to arise; allowing attention and apprehension to diffuse. *Spa for the mind* is evoked, its disruption of membranes usually separating interior/exterior physical space now transposed to disruption of membranes within inner ontological space; where membranes of mind usually serving to separate become (more) permeable, opening to more/other ways of seeing, ways of thinking, ways of being, ways of generating more/other knowledge.

It becomes apparent to me that some aspects of this work in/directly refer to and re-present aspects of *Making female felt*, particularly the interruption to structures of teleological thinking where finally I relinquish any attempts to plan or knowingly design an exhibition and surrender to the unknown and to unknowingness. In those circumstances it is (more) desperation narrowing my options rather than any great wisdom, willingness or courage. In the case of *Dismantle* I discern a more conscious willingness and degree of courage bringing about surrender to the inclination that arises and persists. There are layers of surrendering here, not only surrender to intuitive inclination but also surrender to what this asks of me: to actually and symbolically dismantle highly prized, preserved sartorial form and its codes and its myriad associations with/of well-established constructs of self.

I am (more) aware that this is inclination (not to be mistaken for, or transformed into, directional/directed intention) and metaphorically handle it with a certain respect and trust, so that when this gives rise to manual handling of the material garment there is no discernible, deliberate intention exerting influence, directing movement towards any specific pre-identified/identifiable action/s or outcome/s. I simply allow this particular inclination to become performance, and performance to emerge in response to the inclination to dismantle this precious garment: a habit acquired at a time and place framed within/by the business of (fashion) design. In its gradual emergence, and stretched, folded temporal-ity, the performative acts of dismantling actual habit are dismantling habit/s of fashioned/fashioning mind.

_Dogen said, ‘To enter the Way is to study the self. To study the self is to forget the self.’ How interesting: a meticulous study that becomes a meticulous ‘forgetting’. What is this forgetting of self? (Murphy, 2004:170)_,

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Western thought concentrates very much on knowledge as an encounter, and talks about facing facts, facing reality, as if somehow or other the knower and the known came from two completely different worlds and met each other. The phenomenon of knowledge is almost the precise opposite of that. Instead of being a collision of two wandering bodies in space, knowledge is much more like the expansion of a flower from its stem, where stem and flower are the knower and known, the expression of something that lies between them. We tend in all our metaphors and common speech to think of life as a process that has polarized itself, coming out from a centre and expressing itself in terms of opposites. (Watts, 1965–1967a:147–148)
In the dance between theory and practice, he realized that practice is practice is practice. Making sense of what we do is finally less important than paying attention to what we are doing. Lifelike art, artlike Zen, Zen-like life — each slipped easily into the other like attentiveness passing from noticing metaphors to sitting on a cushion to picking lint from a sweater. Kaprow now felt he could just do his works by — and as — himself. (Kelley, 2004:204)
The Attendant’s (actual) garments

After Dismantle and before any more material inquiry happens (non/intentional or otherwise) a spontaneous digital work emerges whose standing and transmission is (again) indiscernible to attention of eye/mind/hand intentionally directed towards getting on and doing the research. I somewhat irritatedly view it as an irrelevant distraction and have stern words with myself.

I am about to get another lesson in the ways of the (more) part-adapted eye and its direct attention narrowing the field of perception, and further instruction in the diffuse attention of the (more) whole-adapted eye.

All artistic structure is essentially ‘polyphonic’; it evolves not in a single line of thought, but in several superimposed strands at once. Hence creativity requires a diffuse, scattered kind of attention that contradicts our normal logical habits of thinking. (Ehrenzweig 1967:xii)

Aprons, floating about in my thoughts for many months, are receiving my direct attention. I am thinking about them, noticing them every where I go. I am mesmerised by the range of them worn by Dames Judi Dench and Maggie Smith that I happen to see in the film Ladies in lavender; the costuming required for English gentlewomen of the 1930s to perform domestic work – cleaning, cooking, gardening, sewing. Whilst my mind is preoccupied with aprons and all they may symbolise I find myself spontaneously photographing the garments I wear in practice situations, being (an) Attendant. I am performing again the acts of minute attention arising in Dismantle, but now closely attending through, and within, the camera’s viewfinder to fine details of stitch and seam of garments still in service. These acts of attention spread to take in the what is, the given, of the room in which I am. I attend to the fading roses that happen to be present, to the tiny spider making a web between leaves, the exquisite shadows cast by fallen petals. The song of blackbirds fills the room. This becomes an extensive, prolonged and engrossing exercise in which I am lost, ‘I’ is lost.

I eventually regain my sense of self. I berate myself for wasting time, mucking about rather than getting on with the ‘real’ work. At some point I am able to see that this is the real work of being (an) Attendant: to pay close and careful attention to what actually is. Here, paying close and careful attention to the given actuality of the room, what is actually in it and happening within it, not what I think should be happening or I would like to be happening for my personal comfort or gratification. I make some visual/aural experiments on my computer with the images and birdsong.

As for my actual garments, they do have a certain character sometimes noted and commented on by participants in the fora in which I am being (an) Attendant. This becomes an early topic of conversation initiated by Jessica, from LandLearn, when she later apprentices herself to me as Attendant in training. I realise when being (an) Attendant in applied practice I am drawn to garments for these occasions that have the mien of my dismantled habit – clothing with a hint of the Catholic convent or Zen temple.30

In the notebook he submits to me as part of his work produced in Experiments in (con)text at CoFA, I notice Mark Jacques records the rationale for his piece, Resurrection city, a photographic survey tracing progress around the fourteen stations of the cross laid out in Melbourne’s CBD, surrendering the fourteen objects in the Boxwork kit: Natalie sometimes dresses like a priest, that seems like justification enough.

30. The images appearing alongside the story of applied practice with LandLearn come from this work.
And things, what is the correct attitude to adopt towards things? And, to begin with, are they necessary? What a question, but I have few illusions, things are to be expected. The best is not to decide anything, in this connexion, in advance. If a thing turns up, for some reason or another, take it into consideration. Where there are people, it is said, there are things. (Beckett 1970:4)
It is my nativity, my astrology, my biology, my physiognomy, my geography, my cartography, my spirituality, my sexuality, my mentality, my corporeal, intellectual, emotional, imaginative self. And not just my self, every self and the Self of the world. There is no mirror I know that can show me all of these singularities, unless it is the strange distorting looking-glass of art where I will find not my reflection nor my representation but a nearer truth than I prefer. Natura is the whole that I am. The multiple reality of my existence. (Winterson, 1996:150)
Materialising non/self in practice

When I return to the notion of aprons as a form through which to materialise being (an) Attendant in practice I am retracing a thread back into my early career in the clothing industry when my regular design duties include creating a range of women’s aprons for production and distribution in Japan.

When the contemporary moment of garment making finally comes, however, I am not drawn to a form of apron I have recently seen or designed at some time. I am drawn instead to using a pattern I have for a simple tunic. It is a pattern for an actual garment of mine of which I have two – one black, one white – that are a staple of the Attendant’s wardrobe.

What is clear to me from the start of this phase of inquiry, even before the first complete apron/tunic materialises, is that these garments are not intended to be worn and I never actually put them on, even in the privacy of my studio. Even though they are physically wearable they are not to be physically worn.

It is difficult to discern the ground of this unequivocal position. The only premise I can lay my hands on is that they are an externalisation of internalised habits and, once externalised, are to be contemplated face to face, not to be re/assumed. These are not 3D personal spaces to be repeatedly re/claimed and occupied.

They remain unassumed mantles in permanent 2D repose on their wire hangers; no-body’s clothes and/but a way of ad/dressing self in the practice of being (an) Attendant.

A non/form of ad/dress.
Ordinary clothes don’t express the inner truth of the person so much as they create it, working from the outside in.
(Hollander, 2000:16)
The back is the condition of being the front: Part 1

One day fossicking about in a favoured haunt - the warehouse of an importer of Oriental furniture and textiles - at the back of the vast space, in the bottom of a box, I find fragments of old (some, very old) fabrics, covered in dust, some with desiccated insect wings caught in their folds. On further investigation I find they are come from Japan. I carefully sort through, select and purchase a batch without purpose in mind.

Soon afterwards I begin to read Rozsika Parker’s (1996) The subversive stitch: Embroidery and the making of the feminine. My next movement of material inquiry opens through a series of samplers. Using small fragments of the awaiting Japanese cottons these emerge not through traditional handling where fabric is embroidered but by imprinting ink onto/into it, using alphabetical rubber stamps, carefully composing and constructing words one letter at a time. A sort of tattooing where fabric skin absorbs ink. The four samplers emerge as two sets of paired pieces. The first set constitutes something of a mantra for being (an) Attendant – Be still / Be open / Be calm / Be soft / Be kind. Its unexpected paradoxical twin emerging soon after – Anxiety / Panic / Resistance / Heat / Nausea / Stress / Dread.

No nice neat square of white cotton hand-stitched into my Book of inquiry for this one. Ripped shreds of fabric, run through with repeated/repeating tracks of machine stitching; a coarse, urgent imprinting of blood red ink.

To focus on what is, brings into focus what is not.

But when attention is focused on oneness, separateness becomes the center; when attention is focused on separateness, oneness becomes the center. Each negates itself as soon as attention is given to it. ... Because of oneness, nothing matters; because of separateness, everything matters. (Grigg, 1994:227)
For the British Women’s Suffrage Movement … embroidery was employed not to transform the place and function of art, but to change ideas about women and femininity. Far from desiring to disentangle embroidery and femininity they wanted embroidery to evoke femininity but femininity represented as source of strength, not as evidence of women’s weakness. …

At the head of the procession a huge banner flourished the word Rectitude. Slogans were uniformly well designed and direct with simple, strong, instantly legible lettering. Ask with Courage; Alliance and Defiance; Learn and Live; Dare to be Free; Courage, Consistency, Success. (Parker, 1996:197-198)

(Kate Walker) took the format of the sampler, but the stitched sayings are defiant not compliant, most unladylike; ‘Wife is a four-letter word’, ‘This is a present to me’, both declaring her rejection of the self-repression and submission encouraged by traditional sampler-making. (Parker, 1996:207)
The mutual arising of the samplers is replayed and amplified when two paired fronts emerge when I turn to working with the paper pattern of my tunic garment. Both are assembled from fabric remnants that incorporate the edges that are usually deliberately avoided and discarded in garment production - the what is nots. The what is not that allows the what-is to be discernible. One front is calm, simple, white cloth, white stitching. The other front is of the frenetic, the fractured, the fragmented. It is marked by oscillation from this to that, from that to this, from here to there, from there to here; movement away from, towards. It is directional/directionless, endlessly seeking, restless mind. Once this second element of the binary is manifest it assumes its place behind its counterpart, masked by its (more) still, (more) quiet sister. A veneer of calm presented to the world masking anxiety in being (an) Attendant.

Ghosts of the CoFA student project (p.49): The masked self / The unseen face

There is no question of either/both of these fronts becoming part of a complete/d, functional garment.

In time a back is made - not of fabric but of paper. I stitch together the twelve pages of my second research proposal, my passport into the School of Art - the sheath of academic credibility behind me, covering my back. The what is nots of this sheath are stitched into the Book of inquiry - the remnants of my deconstructed intellectual framework, the plan for this research, reconfigured in a book of non-linear, non-narrative logic.

One day, while in transit, rain gets onto and into this paper cut out. The ink begins to bleed in places. There is a symbolic and actual disruption of intellectual knowledge, academic effort. Words become blots – logic of the blot (Carter, 2004; Claxton, 2005).

In time the non-identical twin of this back will emerge, but that is some months off yet.
Girl with two faces valued as goddess

A baby with two faces was born in a northern Indian village, where she is doing well and is being worshipped as the reincarnation of a Hindu goddess. “She drinks milk from her two mouths and opens and shuts all the four eyes at one time,” Dr. Ali said.

Rural India is deeply superstitious and the little girl is being hailed as a return of the Hindu goddess of valour, Durga, a fiery deity traditionally depicted with three eyes and many arms. Up to 100 people have been visiting Lali at her home everyday to touch her feet out of respect, offer money and receive blessings, Mr. Singh (her father) said.

The Australian, Wednesday April 9, 2008

Durga -
Durga manifests fearlessness and patience, and never loses her sense of humour, even during spiritual battles of epic proportion. An embodiment of creative feminine force (Shakti), Durga exists in a state of svatantrya (dependence on the universe and nothing/nobody else) and fierce compassion.
Push my buttons
I am aware from my earliest practice situations being (an) Attendant, long before that term is conferred, that one aspect of (my) mind evident in my real time experience is that in the endeavour to be open to what is, to allow actually what is (not what I would like to be), I am (more) vulnerable to my emotional/psychological 'buttons' being pushed.

When it happens it is (more) usually in reaction to a man and certain (what are commonly characterised as) masculine attitudes that reveal fixed aspects of (my) mind: opinions, views, prejudices I am holding (sometimes hoarding), positions and ground to be defended. I am Pavlov's dog.\footnote{Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936), Russian physiologist who through the study of dogs' production of saliva formulated the basic laws of conditional reflexes, that is reflex responses, like salivation, that only occur conditionally upon specific previous experiences of the animal.}

When I begin this particular material inquiry this trait is well known to me. I have self-management techniques and strategies for its sporadic occurrences in practice situations. But/and if self is no longer conceived as a project for development, and an entity whose aspects are to be managed ...?

I am somewhat surprised at how emphatically I am drawn to this bright red wool felt acquired some years earlier from a merchant of felt for specialist industrial and commercial purposes. I love its feel and colour. It seems so unambivalent. So positive in its declaration of itself.

The oh, so careful sorting of the buttons; carefully choosing those I want and those I do not. Laboriously selecting and rejecting buttons – on what basis?
All the figurative ones – bears, bows, flowers – why reject these? I retain geometric shapes. Why so important to discard the bears and bows and flowers? What arbitrary basis for preferences and prejudices? And so many of them, all so carefully arranged; so many opinions, views, judgements, preferences, prejudices; so many positions/aspects of self to defend to maintain, as if that is all I am.

I cut front and back pieces of the apron/tunic from the happy cloth. I smile at the instructions marked on the pattern piece: CUT 1 SELF. I carefully arrange the buttons while the garment pieces are flat, before the body is constructed; I begin to attach them with needle and thread. It proves arduous and fiddly (even for my hand) to repeatedly pierce the felt, to align needle and thread with the holes in the buttons. I produce an unhappy, unwelcome mess of clumpy stitches and knots on the interior face of the garment to be.

As I attend, as I persist, a much simpler technique emerges where I am able to superficially (and safely) attach the buttons to the (sur)face of the exterior face only, where the stitches are (mostly) concealed in the density of the felt. I no longer need to keep awkwardly inspecting the inner (sur)face to see how the interior is being marked. I am simply addressing the surface that presents and is visible to the world.

Unbeknownst to me, as this aspect of (my) mind is becoming (more) materially embodied in the analogous body of the tunic, a reverse ontological effect is taking place – an unbecoming – an ontological evanescence. This only becomes evident to me when next tested in a learning forum where I encounter qualities of mind in others, primed to push my emotional/psychological buttons. These buttons are transformed. They still register pressure but no longer activate a conditioned reaction within to be managed. They are resting lightly on the surface of the sheath facing the outer world, no longer penetrating the inner world surface with their unhelpful reactionary mess of clumpy stitches and emotional knots.

Art possesses the unique power of the child. It is an act both of self-revelation and of engagement with the world. Every time a consciousness is awakened it recapitulates the human being’s extraordinary emergence as a sentient entity. (Brassaï, 2002:8)
It was found that knowledge has anatomo-physiological conditions, that it is formed gradually within the structures of the body, that it may have a privileged place within it, but that its forms cannot be dissociated from its peculiar functioning; in short, that there is a nature of human knowledge that determines its forms that at the same time can be manifest to it in its own empirical contents. (Foucault, 1970:319)
The poet, when his heart is weighted, writes a sonnet, and the painter paints a picture, and the thinker throws himself into the world of action; but the woman who is only a woman, what has she but her needle? In that torn bit of brown leather brace worked through and through with yellow silk, in that bit of white rag with the invisible stitching, lying among fallen leaves and rubbish that the wind has blown into the gutter or street corner, lies all the passion of some woman’s soul finding voiceless expression. Has the pen or pencil dipped so deep in the blood of the human race as the needle?

(Grand and Sinclair, in Parker, 1996:15)
What in an individual is determined by nature and what by nurture and environment is, according to Rousseau, radically different in relation to the two sexes. ... he presents a lengthy list of feminine qualities he considers to be innate in women. Shame and modesty, love of embellishment and finery, the desire to please and be polite to others, and skilful shrewdness tending to duplicity – all these characteristics are presented as inborn and instinctive in the female sex. (Parker, 1996:123)
Care

The fabrics and paraphernalia involved in the making of this apron/tunic find me one day when I accompany a friend (for her purposes) to a rural shop devoted to quilt making. As I browse the equipment and utensils, threads and yarns, browse the rolls of fabric, the baskets of fat quarters, fat eighths - pieces of fabric precut to specific sizes traditionally used in quilt making - I am called to re/assess a long held and favoured personal disdain for such textiles as these; their patterns, their associations with a certain construction of femininity. I have long dismissed them as twee, cutesy, sweet.

A genre of print designs commonly found in classic aprons, this is the antithesis of the severe, masculine formal cloth of my beloved (now dismantled) Yohji Yamamoto frock coat. Standing there in that space, surrounded by such things, I contemplate the lineage of women’s craft represented here and its attendant associations. I am moved to extend a contrite hand, make some act of re/clamation and atonement. I carefully consider the multitude of fat eighths. About twenty or so different traditional patterns - florals, paisleys, checks, stripes, spots - present themselves. They are then joined by three fat quarters of Australiana print designs with kangaroo, platypus, koala.

... for working-class girls, needlework was connected to domestic work in preparation for their future as wives, mothers or domestic servants; ... (Parker, 1996:188)

To make a garment from these diminutive pieces I have to first construct a continuous fabric big enough to accommodate the pattern pieces. I am at pains to use the customary tools and conventions of size of quilt making. What ensues is time consuming labour over a number of days, first carefully pressing each individual piece of fabric, then finding the patchwork ruler’s right section of pattern (identical to finding exact composition with the camera) and carefully tracing the edge of this frame, the precise cutting of each of the squares, the long period of composition and recomposition required for the squares to come into right-relationship with each other.

As all this goes on I find my attitude to the fabrics softening. I am given to first contemplating the exacting skill required in traditional quilt making which, in turn, gives rise to myriad associations emanating from both the object of the quilt (as comforter) and the domestic (traditionally) female realm in which quilts are (traditionally) created, exist and function, merging with notions of women conventionally cast as the custodians of comfort and the dispensers of care. In the act/s of constructing this garment, in this way, from these particular fabrics, I am becoming (more) aware of my complicity (for many years) in undervaluing what is commonly considered to be women’s work. As the construct of femininity I associate with these ’sweet’, ’cute’, ’girly’ printed fabrics - being agreeable,
compliant and restricted by/in/through domestic servitude - comes (more) clearly into view, it is at the same time receding from view as honour is being (re)conferred in handling and working with these fabrics in an attentive, care-full/care-filled manner. It feels like an influential disjunct is being redeemed: the disjunct between my long held, much nurtured view, and the reality that from my earliest learning fora I instinctively, easily and readily incorporate domestic services - cleaning and preparation of the space, attending to people’s physical comfort and so on - as important, honouring/honourable service.

As this inquiry is unfolding in studio and sites of applied practice what becomes (more) clear to me is the true nature and role of the domestic service/s unwittingly transposed into the professional domain of organisational learning and how they serve in creating ripe conditions for self-reflexive space/s, including gently unsettling the given (enough). One of the effects helpful to me as a practitioner is disrupting tacit notions of the facilitator as prime authority in the space. Being of/in domestic service seems to disrupt (more) fixed ideas of what the nature of my authority might be in the space, to open it to more than the known.

I am observing (more) visibly noticeable impacts on people’s demeanour as they cross the threshold into the prepared space/s. It becomes (more) common to hear unsolicited comments of surprise and intrigue that a room so familiar and frequently used can look the same yet feel so different, favourably affecting state of mind and general well-being. This transmission of/from the space (whether people are conscious of it or not) is able to generate a sense of being cared for, allowing the psyche to settle into the space; tacitly conveying safety and permission to be with self, that attending to mind/self is necessary/worthy work. This becomes amplified by the degree of attention given to people’s comfort such as noticing that a heavily pregnant woman seems to be uncomfortably affected by the stream of cold air coming from an air-conditioning vent and finding her an alternative place to work.

[It is perhaps unsurprising that it is women who (more) often articulate (more) appreciation at being served, cared for and attended to in small ways.]

The intermingled exchanges of (me) dispensing and (others) receiving care seems a persuasive influence in what I conceive as a softening process; modeling a way of handling self as an entity worthy of concernful dealings rather than management and manipulation. At the start of any learning forum with others it feels to me as if individual and collective mind/s and heart/s are (to some degree) encrusted; a crust formed of habitual work modes, expectations and assumptions about learning and development workshops, and more besides. The disposition of care, and dispensation of care, in being (an) Attendant aids the steeping that
is an initial part of the practitioner’s transmissions. Steeping them in care and attention within a physical space now steeped in care and attention, helps soften the crusts protecting mind and heart, opening being (more) to the work of self-inquiry.

In a practice situation coinciding with the making of this apron the venue is a meeting room in a community-based facility dedicated to cultivating sustainable ways of living, producing food and so on. On entering into and meeting the space, its transmission is one of deep exhaustion, depletion and neglect. I feel my being responding in kind and know I have to make a deliberate countering effort – ontologically and practically. The furniture available is variously mismatched, broken and to be retrieved from outside where it is languishing and decaying exposed to the elements. Much carrying, composing, cleaning is required to adequately prepare work spaces for the number of participants expected.

At the end of the session, when participants have the opportunity to share any last comments, thoughts, impressions, observations they have, one person speaks about experiencing the space as restorative. She describes feeling it is as if the space is redeemed in such a way as to allow and enable her to notice (more). In contrast to her usual ‘manic mode’ of being/doing in the room she notices that she notices, and takes time to pay attention to how, outside in the garden, the compost bin is gently rocking in the breeze.

I offer, “In the context here, where your work and the work of the centre is promoting, cultivating, educating in relation to sustainability, what is this experience, what is your realisation, drawing your attention to? What is it saying to you?”

Kate Walker’s attitude is characteristic of contemporary feminists’ determination not to reject femininity but to empty the term of its negative connotations, to reclaim and refashion the category:

I have never worried that embroidery’s association with femininity, sweetness, passivity and obedience may subvert my work’s feminist intention. Femininity and sweetness are part of women’s strength. Passivity and obedience, moreover, are the very opposites of the qualities necessary to make sustained effort in needlework. What’s required are physical and mental skill, fine aesthetic judgement in colour, texture, composition; patience during long training; and assertive individuality of design (and consequent disobedience of aesthetic convention). Quiet strength need not be mistaken for useless vulnerability. (Parker, 1996:215)
Limited to practising art with needle and thread, women have
nevertheless sewn a subversive stitch – managed to make meanings of
their own in the very medium intended to inculcate self-effacement.
(Parker, 1996:215)
Against the faith men had in the institutions they and not women had shaped, women upheld some other principle of selfhood in which being surpassed doing. Long ago men had noticed something unruly in this. Women simply enclosed the space which men longed to penetrate. (McEwan, 1997:55)
10.06.2006

The 'dolly' cut-outs, the fronts are so sweet! I am feeling nauseated & repelled by them but/and compelled(?)
impelled to continue - no question of that. Sweet is (the)
unknown to me. I don't do 'sweet'. Maybe they're a sweetener
for/of me.

Making

Making the fronts.

I do not ‘know’ what I am doing.

I am clear in my practice of non-knowing

Un-knowing?
Non-knowing?
UN? NON?
Q of difference

Making the fronts is generating in me
thoughts of 'I do not know what I am
doing'.

What am I doing here (w. this 'art'
project)?

Why am I making these twee dolly
cut-outs?

Feelings of fraud, self-criticism, stupidity.

At the same time totally accepting and
trusting of the practice.

Engrossed in it

Being in the unknowing
I seem unable to just let the garment be. I try to put various notions upon it. One is bows. I have a box of Japanese hand made, tiny, silk bows. I see a metaphorical word play with to bow, bowing, being gracious. Covered in bows. The garment resists. Another imposition/intervention (monkey mind at work) is to insert/sew hundreds of strips of text/words into/through the fabric. The garment firmly resists and remains as is. Unadorned. Transparent.

Comprised of two uninterrupted planes - no back seam. No embellishments. No additions, no unnecessary stitches. No patchwork. No unnecessary interventions/markings. Trying to simply be in the moment of practice situation. No unnecessary interventions. Allow it to be as simple and transparent as possible.

The notion of non-intervention - that we might choose to do nothing as a viable course of (non)action - becomes incorporated into the repertoire of ideas and ways offered for consideration. It proves to be a show stopper! Striking in its capacity to stop people in their tracks. It runs so very counter to the organisational given of doing something, existing to do things, make things happen, produce more. It requires time to be received and considered and tried on …

A question of exposure in the garment. I am virtually naked - only covered/protected by a thin, porous veil of knowledge. You can see right through it. You can see right through me.

When I am being (an) Attendant with others I try to make transparent my epistemological sources (and implicitly assert my academic credentials). I am reminded of one of my motivations to enrol in doctoral research: to give scholarly credibility to me / my ideas / my experimental creative practice; a way of bolstering my self; having the backbone to go out into an unknown realm and try to sell my work - conceptually and financially.

I remember the intimidation I feel stepping into practice within DPI in 2003, facing a room full of science PhDs: feeling fraudulent; a reconstituting frock designer with a few ideas not tested to any great degree outside the safety of university teaching where my authority rarely comes into question … I don’t really ‘know’ what I am doing. I can offer little in the way of theory and philosophy only practical experience/personal knowledge. And, after all, that kind of know-how is not as important as intellectual (especially scientific) knowledge, is it?!

Eight years later I am awash with the stuff! Too much knowledge? Stuffed with knowledges - epistemological taxidermy?! An exhortation: hold all knowledge/s lightly.
In and out, behind, across.  
The formal gesture binds the cloth.  
The stitchery’s a surgeon’s rhyme,  
A Chinese stamp, a pantomime  
of print. Then spoor. Then trail of  
red,  
Scabs rise, stigmata from the thread.  
A cotton chronicle congealed,  
a histogram of welts and weals.  
The woman plies her ancient art,  
her needle sutures as it darts,  
scoring, scripting, scarring, stitching.  
The invisible mending of the heart.  
(de Kok, n.d.)

The gauze is reminiscent of surgical dressing.  
Dressing, noun: a piece of material placed on a wound to protect it.
To practice Zen meditation is to settle and touch and convey the heart-mind – that dark eye of seeing into your true self-nature. And to continue more deeply on the path is to agree to grow more and more accountable to what we glimpse when we shatter the habitual gaze that protects us from the real condition of our being. … we practise becoming more porous and boundless, … (Murphy, 2004:89)
20.01.2004

10.45am

Day II in the CoFA space. Anxiety inducing experience coming into/entering the white box today. No bird sounds - mechanical noises only - road sweepers, buses, vacuum cleaner(?) somewhere.

12.00pm

Machines have stopped/gone & the birds have returned

[Disgusting coffee from the CoFA tuck shop]

1.00pm

It started with a challenge about boxes. The need to prescribe containers and containment.

My impulse to collect, collate, curate, catalogue, contain in a box.

Here I am in a white box considering a response to boxes, being boxed, putting things in boxes.

I am in a physical manifestation of my own compulsion. I am in a box and feeling anxiety about its boundaries, its blank walls. The compulsion to fill it. The fear of not filling it, the fear of it remaining empty, no trace of occupany or ideas.

I have contemplated leaving it as it is. Closing the door and walking away...but, of course, No, what would people think of me, what would they say?

The box, a box, a cage, a trap, a contrivance

a contrived container

Containment becomes restraint, suffocation, extreme control and deprivation.

Setting ideas free. Setting ourselves free.

contrived container controlling creativity

Where is caged?

In the mind, in the heart?

In the eyes, a way of looking,

a way of seeing?
The un/becoming of caged

In the midst of the apron making phase I acquire a kit of rubber stamps of birds. I am very pleased with this kit and I test it in my *Book of inquiry* on page 149. Something intriguing and delightful happens. I choose a stamp of a caged bird, press it onto the ink pad and imprint the page. I repeat this twice more.

Seeing them here in their chance composition the primary inclination may be to read the images from top to bottom as an unbecoming of cage from which the bird disappears. The sequence of images actually emerges in the reverse, from bottom to top - the becoming of cage and its prisoner. Taken together as a single unit of reality the emergent process and its emergent image, captures both movements as aspects of each other and themselves. Not a single uni-directional movement of eye/mind from one point to another, from here to there - but a continuous dual directional exchange starting at either top or bottom and/or middle. An invocation to see more than the eye/mind is usually inclined to physically/intellectually see.

I am smiling all the while I use this image in making a swing tag for my metaphorical clothing; branding my garments.

The un/becoming range. A range of un/becoming garments.

*Unbecoming, adjective: (esp. of clothing or a colour) not flattering; (of a person’s attitude or behaviour) not fitting or appropriate; unseemly*
Conserve

Amongst the batch of Japanese fabrics acquired from the importer of Oriental furniture and textiles are pieces retaining traces of previous incarnations - the vestiges perhaps of a pocket, an armhole, a buttoning closure; mapping previous compositions, bearing traces of unpicked stitches, infused with stains of age and liquid spilt long, long ago; incarnations captured in warp and weft.

Even though these fabrics are aged and stained they show evidence of careful laundering and pressing; being handled with care, many times, over many years, in many lifetimes, softening the body of the fabric. When the time comes to handle them, a ritual of careful selection is enacted. I am compelled to incorporate pre-existing seams, retain evidence of former manifestations, preserve threads still attached in ancient stitch holes.

Pieces large enough to accommodate the pattern are collaged together - another patchwork but, unlike the earlier apron, Care, where the seams are hidden within the garment, here I lay the pieces flat, one over the other, incorporating selvages: a very careful cobbling together of aged, worn, stained, laundered, conserved pieces of fabric from Japan.

I create a pouch/pocket on the front - a carrying device, a container constructed into the container of garment - that proudly carries a noticeable stain; allowing the stained, the blemished.
The garment’s appearance is deceptive - it appears dirty because it is stained but the stains are immovable, the fabric has been washed and laundered many times. It is clean and pristine in its blemished state.

There is something very humble about this garment’s being - unashamed by its blemishes. Not wearing them as a badge of honour, rather being perfectly reconciled with them as part of the very fabric of its being - literally, as they are not to be removed (only by excising them perhaps). This is how it is. It is what it is. This is how I am. This is what I am.

A disposition of allowingness: allowing all of un/seen self to be present without judgement. This aspect of being (an) Attendant transmits welcome acceptance of stains and blemishes of the inner world - the embarrassing, even shameful, parts of (my) self / (our) selves.

Being unstained is like meeting a person and not considering what he looks like. It is also like not wishing for more color or brightness when viewing flowers or the moon. Spring has the tone of spring, and autumn has the scene of autumn, there is no escaping it. So if you want spring or autumn to be different from what it is, notice that it can only be as it is. Or when you want to keep spring or autumn as it is, reflect that it has no unchanging nature. (Dōgen, in Stambaugh, 1999:50)

Things simply are as they are, regardless of what we want or do not want. Being unstained cannot be intended or wished for at all. It has to occur of itself. (Stambaugh, 1999:51)

Selvage, noun: an edge produced on woven fabric during manufacture that prevents it from unraveling. Origin late Middle English: from an alteration of self + edge, on the pattern of early modern Dutch, zelfegghe.
The back is the condition of being the front: Part 2

Six months after the paper tunic back constructed from research proposal pages, another back (that is emphatically a back) emerges. It is constructed in the same way as its predecessor, emerging as another rather stiff and inflexible plane but this one fashioned from tracing paper. Transparent, impermeable, waxy, non-absorbent. When I transcribe excerpts of poetry, letter by letter, the ink remains wet on the surface for days.

The inner freedom from the practical desire,
The release from action and suffering, release from the inner
And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded
By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving,
Erhebung without motion, concentration
Without elimination, both a new world
And the old made explicit, understood
In the completion of its partial ecstasy,
The resolution of its partial horror.
Yet the enchainment of past and future
Woven in the weakness of the changing body,
Protects mankind from heaven and damnation
Which flesh cannot endure.
(Eliot, 1943:5)

Go, go, go, said the bird: human kind
Cannot bear very much reality
(Eliot, 1943:4)
The poetic back re/draws attention to the sense of separatedness of front/s and backs/s. In the concurrent dimension of literature survey threading alongside, in and out, of this whole phase of the making dimension, the teachings of Alan Watts are making their way towards me by a circuitous path. I meet him in Mel Gooding’s monograph on herman de vries where he is cited as an influence on/in the artist’s thinking and work. This prompts me to acquire a text of Watts’s talks and, a few weeks after the emergence of the poetic back (nine months after the appearance of the staunchly front fronts) I find:

As an example, let’s consider the relationship between the back and front of anything. Is the back the cause of the front, or is the front the cause of the back? What a silly question! If things don’t have fronts, then they can’t have backs. If things don’t have backs, then they can’t have fronts. Front and back always go together; that is to say, they come into being together. And so, in just the same way as the front and back arise together, Taoist philosophy sees everything in the world arising together. (Watts, 1965-1967c:131)

This correspondence between epistemological systems is generating philosophical ground and grounding for being (an) Attendant in practice but/and is instructively uncloaking something (more) of modes that come into play in theorising practice, and says something about theorising the theorising of practice.

In practice, when in the moment and direct experience of being (an) Attendant, this is a state of non-separatedness. My emotional/psychological state is not either calm or anxious, it is both at once, co-existing, co-arising. The membranes are (more) permeable, be they between elements of my overall ontological state/s and/or systems of knowledge production that are invoked and engaged in fluid co-production. The overarching intention of my work is not to replace one set of modes of mind with another – either this or that – it is both/and – to open to more than habitual, accustomed epistemological and ontological frameworks; for myself and for others.

In my research (rather than practice) endeavours, when I am conceptually, if not physically, in the academy’s domain of knowledge production I am (more) aware of just how much (more) membranes are susceptible to impermeability: the (more) permeable in practice, inclines to being (more) impermeable in investigating practice. The source of this seems to be the perceived and/or real influence of tacit/explicit structures of thought, frames of mind, traditionally favoured and/or privileged in academia; the perceived and/or real effects that I am experiencing of membranes between discipline-based academic schools, exacerbated by working in linguistic modes and intellectual ways of knowing.

If the fronts are notionally the lived experience of practice and the backs are notionally academic/intellectual inquiry to theorise that practice, their separatedness speaks of my challenge in conducting and capturing my research in congruent mode, manner, material form. These material thoughts on ‘the back being the condition of the front’ (Watts, 1965-1967a:149) make me mindful of diligently trying to maintain the fluid exchanges of the im/permeability binary in good working order; trying to maintain transdisciplinary mind and modes, especially when the context of research where this school or that school, these conventions or those conventions, inadvertently works to counter what it ostensibly supports.

There is also an aspect of (my) psyche well-primed to counter efforts to be of, and in, transdisciplinary mind and mode in the academy’s domain: Pavlov’s dog’s friend, Sally Jane.
He (de vries) was making himself independent, especially of the idea of 'art' as psychologically, intellectually or emotively expressive, personal and special. Art, he had come to realise, is a mode of being. (Gooding, 2006:29)
Sally Jane
It’s Sally Jane. The earnest C+ student (B- on a good day). So eager to be seen as clever, so eager to please, to please her teachers.


Constructed from remnants. Front and back slightly mismatched.

The front face – neat and tidy and oh, so sensible.
Those lines of white stay-stitching say something prim and proper. A costume for a good girl, a well-behaved, well-mannered, compliant girl. A girl who doesn’t cause trouble. People pleaser.

Sally Jane tries too hard – kills the work in the process. It puts me in mind of a friend’s young daughter, in danger of suffocating her pet rabbit by hugging it too tightly in her enthusiastic love. Unable to moderate her eagerness, unable to be gentle enough in her handling of this creature, it is returned to the pet shop for its own well-being.

A cautionary re-minder, re-minding, against eye/mind/hand tightly grasping. Do not squeeze the situation, people, processes, be it practice and/or research. Hold lightly. Trust myself, trust the work, trust my knowledge, trust my know how. Keep the faith. (Is this frock nun-like? Novice-like, perhaps?)

Keep faith with the work, its intention, those present, the site, the space, what arises.

The back face, unlike the front, not quite so neat and tidy. Two pieces patched together. Flaws in the cloth, rips in the fabric. Deliberately incorporating flaws into the (back) body; embodying/assimilating that which is usually excised. Allowing the flaws. Allowing my flaws. Allowing the flaws of others.

Gold lettering – cataloguing mark still evident. There is a gold ‘A’. A slightly faded, fading gold ‘A’. Top of the class.
A is for Attendant.
A slightly shabby gold ‘A’ for being (an) Attendant.
Eating the menu instead of the dinner

The front and back of this apron are both inscribed but/and through processes that are of noticeably different indirect and direct character. The method of inscribing the front is (more) convoluted, (more) indirect.

I stamp out onto loose sheets of paper some standard pejorative terms from my repertoire of self criticism. In a highly unusual move (in the phase of garment-works) I employ computer technology, scan the letters and manipulate them – increase their size and visibility.

I print them and then cut out the individual letters, twice over. The second time to more closely pare away the white border around the red letters. I am fascinated by the discards, the excised what is not. I pay attention at length to these fragments and the forms they make as they fall away. Intriguing miniature table-top sculptures. I make many, many, many acts of attention. I generate many, many, many photos.

When I finally have all the letters and return my attention to the business of the front, they commingle, disrupting their original relationship/s and meaning.

The alphabet miscellany is laid out on the reverse face of the fabric but facing forward; slightly veiled. Re/arranged many times, the positioning carefully calculated and measured – a combination of obvious and thinly disguised mild abuse emblazoned across the chest and streaming around the hem edge.

It is eventually machine-stitched in place.

Inscribing the back comes from direct contact between hand / rubber stamp / inkpad / fabric. Each letter is directly applied to the fabric that receives and disseminates; distributing ink across/through its constituting fibres, becoming permanently written into the body. The fragment of text speaks of in/direct experience of reality.

In this monstrous performativity body becomes language rather than merely inscribed by language. (Bolt, 2004:10)
These material contemplations bring to mind a great challenge encountered in researching the practice of being (an) Attendant - the tension between the indirect and the direct. In practice being (an) Attendant is to be diligent and disciplined in attending to what actually is, not what I/we think is. This is an aspect of in/direct transmissions - passive and active - drawing attention to what may be productions of mind creating an obfuscating layer, a buffer of ideas about reality and preferred, more palatable, versions of it rather than what it actually is. In being (an) Attendant perceptions are probed: What is my evidence? What is your evidence?

In practice, being (an) Attendant is (solely) being (an) Attendant. In academic research, necessarily inclining (more) to thinking about rather than solely being of, much of my research endeavours oscillate between (more) separate states of research or practice. The great task comes to be to continually try to soften the membrane between practice, being 'of' being (an) Attendant, and research being 'about' being (an) Attendant; to allow research to become (more) 'of' being (an) Attendant, and allow a way of being (an) Attendant to being (an) Attendant to become acceptable/accepted research.

Intellectualization creates a gap or lack of rapport between you and your life. You may think about things so much that you get into the state where you are eating the menu instead of the dinner ... confusing the map with the territory. (Watts, 1965-1967d:115)

As this middle way becomes (more) apparent, trying to hold to it is tiring and mind-twisting manoeuvering. Wrestling with the craft only yields (more) in the latter stages of research to somewhat (more) steady navigation and phases of smoother passage; becoming both cause and effect of the fashioning of this Bookwork and its sister, the experiential component, intending to be both of and about being (an) Attendant.

Zen, like poetry, is hard on words, insisting that the core of reality lies beyond words and phrases, yet resorting to words and phrases, as human beings do - and not as makeshift gesture or apology, but as an immediate disclosure of that reality. (Murphy, 2004:80)
This middle course (that initially feels extremely narrow) becomes somewhat (more) navigable through a deepening spread of what constitutes (my) material practice. I gradually come (more) to handling all media, modes, methods - thought, writing, literature, words - in the manner of my (more) literally material, material practice/s. My strong inclination to utilise rubber stamps to hand construct words as thoughts investigating themselves (especially in a book form - *Book of inquiry*) is alluding to this for some time before I am able to discern this dimension of the practice and what it may be saying.

So what the (Zen) master wants to do is get you into relationship with what is, as distinct from ideas about what is. This is a very important preliminary discipline, but later on you may also realise that the process of thinking is also what is, that thoughts in their own domain are as real as rocks, and words have their own reality as much as sky and water. Thoughts about things are in their own turn things, and lead you eventually to the point where you can intellectualize and think in an immediate way. (Watts, 1965-1967d:115)
Things are measurements; they are units of thought, like inches are units of measurement. There are no things in physical nature. How many things are there in a thing? However many you want. A “thing” is a “think”, a unit of thought; it is as much reality as you can catch hold of in one idea. (Watts, 1963-1965:77)
The Attendant’s manual
Throughout the phase of apron-making inquiry I have vague thoughts about making an Attendant’s manual, a play on the form and format so favoured in organisations – one playing a starring role in getting my relationship with DPI underway. When this ‘manual’ emerges it is at some remove from my speculations and ideas of a book with dispositions formulated in words. The book that emerges is (more) simple and (more) complex – (more) manual as performative prayer book.

The book itself is a readymade small, neat volume of buttery, vellum paper: bound in black leather, discreetly notched at its opening edges to hold the black, tubular elastic closure; beautifully crafted, a pleasure to hold; provenance unknown.

I contemplate this artefact for some time. When I am moved to act I count the number of pages - verso and recto. Taking my miniature stamping machine in hand, I manipulate its cogs setting the rubber numbered bands to 0240. I hold the book, allowing the pages to open where they will. I imprint the bottom right hand corner of the page. I reset the numbering stamp to 0239 then imprint its reverse. The ritual is repeated until the counter has become 0000.

The resultant effect is a disruption to conventional ordering, rendering it at once familiar and unfamiliar.

What manifests next is a ritualised piercing of the membrane of each page, in exactly the same place on each plane: a minutely measured, minute piercing enacted with (my) sewing needle; an act eliciting acute attention in its performance, producing a presence requiring acute attention for it to be apparent; a point easily overlooked by unattentive eye/mind/hand.

Bringing-forth brings out of concealment into unconcealment. Bringing-forth comes to pass only insofar as something concealed comes into unconcealment. This coming rests and moves freely within what we call revealing [das Entbergen].
(Heidegger, 1953:293–294)
Habit of the formless self
Throughout the period of making garments addressing self I feel there are seven aprons to emerge. After six I keep sensing one is missing. Every time I hang the tunics to contemplate them I include the seventh hanger, with its empty, transparent garment cover; the presence of absence.

I return to this again and again. It seems as if there is no-thing there to emerge but on some occasions (more) teleological, instrumental mind responds and I make designs for a garment to complete the un/becoming range. The sketches, the plans, remain on their pages. I stay mindful of the seventh non-presence, and go about the business of research and practice. Time passes. More time passes. One day, mind preoccupied elsewhere, I hear this form speak.

What is, is what is not. The absence of a tunic, no body there. No self to clothe. A non-garment of the formless self.
I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing; there is yet faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the waiting.
Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness the dancing.
(Eliot, 1943:15)
Seven dispositions of being (an) Attendant

In the midst of this phase of studio inquiry (prompted by a conference paper in development at this time) I find myself synthesising (my) insight into being (an) Attendant as a complex of dispositions - something akin to a system of principles, or a set of notes to self.32

As the studio inquiry progresses the set of dispositions distill, shift re/compose, expand, condense - content, perhaps, for an apprentice’s handbook of being (an) Attendant (?)

32. This conference paper is included as Appendix C.
Disposition of care
Be assiduous in providing and dispensing care:
Care of the space - its condition, cleanliness, configuration.
Care of the people within it, their comfort and well-being.
Be gracious in service/serving others.

Disposition of fierce compassion
Be compassion. Act with compassion towards others at all times.
Be clear, compassion is not pity with any sense of judgement or arrogance
that has you hold yourself separate. It is connection and empathy with
others that recognises and acknowledges the frailties and imperfections
we all have as human beings.33
Meet whatever arises with compassion for self and others, no matter
how personally confronting or uncomfortable - even/especially when
confronted, maintain compassion.
Adopt fearlessness in calling attention to what is/to what is not,
what is present/what is not.

Disposition of the listening eye
Pay exquisite attention to what transpires. Particularly to that which arises
but seems to be unnoticed by less practised eye/s; eyes unaccustomed to
hearing the unhearable.
In the periods of spoken reflection (on process and produced material
form) do not intervene, nor insist, nor instruct, nor interpret. Rather
(just) gently call attention to aspects manifest in the enactment of making
and/or in material form that are unremarked but which intuitively feel
worthy of attention. The unattended proffers valuable insight. In this
regard, the Attendant’s role is to amplify the degree of transformative
experience available (whether or not others are able and/or willing to avail
themselves).
Disposition of the still point

Allowing the still point that allows all.
The still point where all arises and co-exists.
Be still.
(Be) hold.
To hold still within;
to ‘hold’ the Being of others as they inquire of themselves.

At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered. Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.
I can only say, there we have been; but I cannot say where.
And I cannot say, how long, for that is to place it in time.
(Eliot, 1943:5)
Disposition of the given

Gracious acceptance of the given.
The given of place,
time, self, others,
lived experience in
that moment.
Acceptance of what is there.
And what is not there.
The given of just what is. And,
just what is not.
As it is. For what it is. Or is not.
Nothing more,
nothing less. The actual.
Not ideas of what is or what should be
but what actually is.
Disposition of **non-attachment**

Have non-attachment to

- opinions
- judgments
- likes/dislikes
- expectations
- outcomes
- comfort
- control
- knowing

*In order to arrive at what you do not know*

*You must go by a way that is the way of ignorance.*

*In order to possess what you do not possess*

*You must go by the way of dispossession*

*In order to arrive at what you are not*

*You must go through the way in which you are not.*

And what you do not know is the only thing you know

And what you own is what you do not own

And where you are is where you are not.

*(Eliot, 1943:15)*
Disposition of **non-knowingness**

Attendant mind is (an) allowing mind. The mind of non-knowingness that is non-directional, not seeking to grasp, to make grasappable, to render knowable in known terms, to name, to categorise, to resolve, to define, to solve.

Being (an) Attendant is Being being of the (more) whole-adapted. Practice being of fluidity, of permeability, of no fixed positions; being tolerant of chaos, ambiguity, uncertainty, the unknown, the unusual, the unseen. Be observant, forever in flux, allowing what is to arise, permitting what is and what is not, to be what is and what is not; accepting what is, as it is. And, as it is not.

... Knowing must therefore be accompanied by an equal capacity to forget knowing. Non-knowing is not a form of ignorance but a difficult transcendence of knowledge. This is the price that must be paid for an oeuvre to be, at all times, a sort of pure beginning, which makes its creation an exercise in freedom. (Jean Lescure in Bachelard, 1969:xxix)
It was the artist’s intuition and insight that was responsible for this discovery, therefore the artist’s special function was to achieve states of knowing and awareness that did not depend on familiarisation with vast quantities of accumulated knowledge … (Walker, 1995:24).
I shall roll you all some eyes
with my sainted hands.
Old paper squeezed
smooth and drying
in the gullets of these tepid fists.
All the written meanings will be
drenched away into the skin,
the salty chalk pellets reaching mute
& sip at a reincarnate hunger to learn.
I will teach you sight
unbraiding the matt volumes
of darkness between the slutted heavens
and the simple
earth.
(Catling, 2001:33)
Trying to bring my order of transdisciplinary mind and modes into the milieu of organisational ontology and epistemology that prevails is by no means a straightforward or easy matter. Admission into an organisation is not guaranteed, even when practitioner/practice come on invitation. Admitting such ways necessarily requires some adaptation of prevailing frameworks of (individual and collective) thought and practice to accommodate other. Admission depends on the degree of plasticity inherent in these structures. Even when there may be genuine willingness, excitement and good intention, these structures may reveal an inflexibility that will not (sufficiently) yield.

In the prelude, describing the meeting where DPI makes its decision to proceed with my proposal, I allude to other prospective projects that fail at this point (p.62). The cause of their defeat is instructive. One such example is Created ecologies, a concept developed with the aforementioned Mark Jacques.34

It is a site-responsive, and site-specific, system of interactive sculpture that serves to generate, collect, accumulate, facilitate, tell and conserve people’s stories in a particular location. In concept and physical form it pays tribute to Janet Laurence and Fiona Foley’s sculptural installation, Edge of the trees, situated on the forecourt of the Museum of Sydney, occupying the site of the first Government House (Dysart, 2000).

The Created ecologies proposal is developed at the invitation of a large petroleum company moving its head office from an iconic building in Melbourne’s central business district. The architect of this building vetoes the transfer of the identifying (and also iconic) sculpture that stands on its forecourt so the new premises in the eastern suburbs find themselves with a pre-prepared, expectant but now vacant dais for a sculpture. Another aspect of the relocation is the organisation’s wish to manage the

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34. Former teaching colleague and participant in Experiments in (con)text at CoFA.
impact on its staff and acknowledge the imposition it is making on/in the physical site and the local, largely residential, community surrounding it. We see this as a transformative opportunity to address an extensive set of needs with one multidimensional, multifunctional proposal.

At the presentation, despite the client’s evident and stated interest and excitement, and the fact that the design proposal meets many clearly identified needs in various business units within the company, for a fraction of the collective budget these business units would expect to expend on their respective issues, the proposal is not approved. Why? The financial expenditure cannot be categorised. It proves too difficult to categorise the project and allocate it to more than one cost centre or create a transdepartmental category and have departments collaborate financially. I experience this very same issue more than once with organisations in diverse sectors: structures of organisational systems mirroring systems of thought giving rise to them, in turn, reinforcing those structures of thought. These are frameworks and frames of mind that diligently serve to maintain solid divisions and impermeable boundaries between departments, functions, business units, administrative and financial categories, ideas, ways of knowing, forms of knowledge.

Even once admitted into an organisation my work is still vulnerable to the effects of internal frameworks and structures. The project with DPI happens to arise outside of the organisation’s people and culture department (that handles matters of organisational development and what is still commonly, and tellingly, referred to in organisations as human resources). As such, the project is free of its frameworks and conventions.

In the period between funding being approved for further rounds of the Creative futures program (based on the success of the pilot) and the subsequent phase of work getting underway, there are moves internally within the organisation to bring the program within the people and culture framework. Just as I am preparing to begin phase two I am advised the project is on hold while attempts are being made to impose certain frameworks upon it. Fortunately, the project is allowed to continue on its own ground but not before I spend two weeks facing the possibility of being put out of business through financial exposure to my suppliers of materials and custom-made goods relating to the project. I am not privy to how the situation is resolved. At the end of its second phase the Creative futures initiative is finally brought within the frameworks of people and culture and soon comes to an end.

For an experimenter these are hard times. The best of times and the worst of times. The challenge is exhilarating and enviable. The struggle is vertical. (Winterson, 1996:191)

Her installations are created ecologies, laden with transformative possibilities. (Emmett, 1998:7 on Janet Laurence)
My unusual move of trying to pass through the membrane between academic schools mid-way through the research proves to be very trying, requiring me to develop a full second research proposal and submit to a higher degrees by research approval process for a second time – a reiterative process so extended and stressful it nearly causes me to abandon my research altogether. Fortunately the situation is eventually resolved and I choose to continue.35

A lasting effect of this is creating something of a membrane in my research where work in the early years is rendered almost invisible. I have to actively and diligently work to counter the impression (for myself and others) that the research is beginning in the School of Art, rather than being a continuation of research in progress for more than four years, and to maintain the inclusion, influence and integration of the knowledge produced whilst housed in the other domain.36

Logic of the pen diagram
In the general course of my practice I come to (professionally and personally) know and work with learning and development consultants and facilitators who are traditionally educated and trained in schools of Management and/or Adult Education. This, and working with organisations of different stripes, gives me some familiarity with common and widely used instruments, models and methods being used in the field for purposes of self-development and cultivating thinking. These are predominantly theoretically derived by researchers in the academy, for use by practitioners who have to be trained and accredited in their use, who then apply them in sites of individual and organisational development where they are a standard part of the required repertoire.

These tools predominantly hail from behavioural and cognitive psychology and neuroscience, and favour analysis, assessment and categorisation of a person’s emotional, psychological, thinking, or behavioural preferences. These are common and widely used instruments such as, Hermann Brain Dominance Instrument®, Belbin® Team Role Theory, Myers Briggs Type Indicator®, Genos Emotional Intelligence Measurement Tool.

The resulting assessments from these, and other instruments of their ilk, typically provide a beginning and basis of a learning program designed with a corrective bias towards the instrument’s inherent normative framework. The intentions of these and other instruments, methods and approaches are variously to generate greater understanding of the thinking preferences, emotional or psychological character and behaviour of self and others to improve culture and productivity in the workplace; broadly speaking, the same as Creative contemplation.

Over the years, as my practice/research progresses, it becomes more apparent to me how the inherent framing of these

35. Thanks to action taken by Professor Elizabeth Grierson as incoming Head of School, and advice and support provided by Professor Robin Usher.
36. If this holds true for all transdisciplinary practice-research it may prove instructive for the academy in efforts to encourage and support such endeavours in the interests of the new knowledge/s that can arise.
tools serves to perpetuate their particular logic and paradigm, revealing more of what and how Creative Contemplation/performative installation is contributing to practices and knowledge in this field.

Here I extract some distinguishing threads.

This particular thread, running through and beyond the defined scope of my research proposal, concerns the agency of visual communication in framing frames of mind. Over the years I become conversant with the visual language – the design and design devices, and graphic and photographic imagery – used to represent and communicate such instruments (including the examples cited) to those engaging them, being assessed by them, and attempting to bring about some personal change in accordance with them.37

Without any exception seen in my practice/research to date these show categories/types/preferences, whatever is the currency of the model or instrument, contained within graphic boundaries, literally framed, and separated.

There is not a blurred edge, an overlap, a graduated field of colour, a wavy dotted line to be seen.

The diagrammatic representation of the Hermann Brain Dominance Instrument® designed to cultivate whole-brain capacities is typical of the genre (Fig. 3). The (written) explanations associated with the (visual) models emphasise the quadrants are not discrete, fixed modes. We all have and use all of them. It is rather that our brains have preferences but/and the 2D diagrammatic, colour-coded model helps us separate, identify and categorise our preferences – in the way and logic of the part-adapted eye (Murphy, 2004).

With the well-established power of visual material to capture and communicate (Arnheim, 1969; Berger, 2002; Gardner, 1982, 1993; Robertson, 2002; Sullivan, 2005) it is easy to see how these representations can be working counter to the holistic; diminishing moves towards the whole, and/or further cultivating part-adapted eye/mind/hand.

37. This is largely through the stream of my business and professional practice designing and producing learning journals for consultants who use these models, giving me many hours in the presence of this ilk of instruments and their visual forms. These commissioning consultants are keen to move beyond traditional representation of their material and, at the same time, bring aspects of my intellectual property into their practice through these hybrid arts/management book forms. In an extension of this, there are four consultants/colleagues in my close circle – all trained and accredited in the instruments cited – for whom I have made a Story box to commission especially for use alongside these instrumental processes to (very successfully) open the processual spaces created around these instruments (more) to other ways of self-inquiry, to other dimensions of thinking and being.
Logic of the blot

In negotiating the scope of work with DPI for the Creative futures program I include the origination and design of all visual communication (including copy writing) associated with promoting the course and conveying the nature of its content, including creating a 'brand' identity for it. The invitation for the pilot program is what I call Juxtaposition mosaic - a set of nine printed cardboard tiles, made to fit the hand. As the name suggests, it is an interactive form where the double-faced sections can be brought into myriad possible arrangements, experientially revealing the learning program’s exploratory nature and content, and visually conveying its identity and information about its why, where, when, how. This approach extends into 2D print and electronic formats pushing the envelope of the organisation's corporate visual standards guidelines as far as possible.

On day one of the program when I inquire of participants what is their impetus for enrolling in the course and what expectations they may have of it, they frequently cite the creative engagement evoked by the invitation, and/or the atypical imagery of the promotional material generating expectations of a radically different type of learning experience, thus reiterating the efficiency and efficacy of visual representation and/or presentation to carry, convey, demonstrate, evoke frames of mind be they of logic of the diagram or logic of the blot (Carter, 2004; Claxton, 2005).

This re/threads into Hermann’s idea of whole-brain technology, the idea of the brain using more of its full capacities becoming more whole-adapted. The instruments, models and methods in general use in organisational learning and development rely almost exclusive on linguistic (predominantly left brain hemisphere) modes of operation – their own and that of the respondents, and that of the consultants activating and applying them. This is standard conversational language which Gardner’s (1982, 1993) extensive research shows to be limited in its capacity to engage with and articulate emotional/psychological experience. And, in the case that we are able to articulate such experience, intellectualising and expressing it through (standard) linguistic modes tends strongly towards framing it as what we think we do, how we think we respond rather than how we actually respond, wherein often lies notable disparity. Apart from excluding multiplicitious other modalities, solely engaging linguistic modes specifically privileges those (more) able to articulate emotional/psychological experience, and generally privileges native speakers of the dominant language. As a consultant and colleague of my close acquaintance observes of organisational learning and development, ‘We take a very left brain approach to right brain stuff’.

I trust by now Creative contemplation’s credentials as actual whole brain (and mind) technology are self-evident.

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If it is to be as smart as it can be, the brain must remember how to let itself paint with watercolours on wet paper, and let ideas bleed into each other, as well as learn how to draw neat diagrams with a sharp pen. (Claxton, 2005:306)

38. Dina Pozzo, Director, Insium Consulting, personal communication.
Normative frameworks

Another thread distinguishing Creative contemplation that I would like to draw out here concerns norms. That there are normative frameworks embedded in instruments of the ilk being discussed here is self-evident to any consultant applying them, and any participant using them, if they are alert and attentive to such matters. Exactly how and against what benchmark the norms are originally established and the respondent’s data is measured, assessed and categorised is another matter. This information may or may not be transparent, and may or may not be readily available, to those attentive to such matters and who consider them important for the frameworks of ontology, thinking, behaviour, values and so on that are being constructed and/or cultivated.39

For example, I know from conversation with the academics who originated it,40 and from personal experience of having my emotional intelligence quotient assessed by it, that the Genos framework is, ‘an emotional intelligence measurement tool that assesses the way you use and manage emotions at work’, where ‘measurement is carried out according to an empirically-based five-factor model of emotional intelligence’,41 and is assessed against ‘a normative database of 4000+ (Australian-based) executives and general business staff’.42

For this to happen I complete an online questionnaire in which my responses can only be approximations as they are inevitably restricted to a limited number of preordained options. And, if

Most organisations are what one might call ‘calculative’, ‘action oriented’, and ‘repetitive’ in their behaviour. They do not contain space for reflection which might modify the calculation, the action, and the repetition so as to make the organisation more reflective, open to innovation and flexible. (Bain, 1994:9)

In Heidegger’s estimation, failure to reflect on our Being as beings will result in self-deception and blindness. (Bolt, 2004:15)

39. From my observations, and what I learn from colleagues accredited in applying these and other instruments, models and methods in common use, their norms are accepted without discussion or question. In the general course of business when I have the opportunity to discuss the matter of norms with those responsible for commissioning organisational learning and development work – how and by whom the norms are established, whether the organisation is aware of them, approves of them, is responsible for them – it is, without any exception that I can recall, the first time such matters are being discussed.
40. Professor Con Staugh and Dr Ben Palmer both at Swinburne University at that time, 2002.
a context were to be specified, my choice of answer from the options available may vary enormously for the same question according to, say, whether I am in a situation with people I trust or do not trust, or that I know well or do not know well. My ratings in four of the five factors (as defined in the tool) are extremely high. In the fifth I rate very poorly: Emotional Recognition and Expression: the ability to identify your own feelings and emotional states, and to express those feelings to others.43 I do not think it necessary nor desirable to interlink the ability to recognise one’s own emotional states in real time and express them. I hold the view that it is important to be aware of one’s emotional states in real time but it is absolutely not compulsory to keep everyone else updated on them. In this instance the associated personal/professional development will seek to move me closer to the norm.

As Bolt says of predetermined interpretative schemes, they ‘have the propensity to grasp, divide, classify and reorganise process into usable data. They are, in essence, reductive and equipmental’ (2004:117). The pen diagram logic of this (and other frameworks in common use) un/consciously effectively and efficiently reduces the enormous complexity, variability and ambiguity of human ontology to a matter that can be approached, analysed, approximated, managed and developed through (more) instrumental, handling. I reiterate I am not advocating either logic of the pen diagram, or logic of watercolour blots. I am advocating either or both according to the context. And, as I see it, the discernible, notable absence of the latter, reveals/creates an open/opening space for its emergence/presence – the very space within which Creative contemplation is un/en/folding and being un/en/folded.

And what of norms and Creative contemplation? As far as possible, any un/consciously normalising influences are diminished and/or made transparent. In negotiating, with DPI the terms and conditions of the Creative futures program I make it clear no emotional/psychological assessment instruments are to be used in conjunction with my work, any/all self-assessment and establishment of norms is the remit of each individual participant according to their specific context and experience, be it personal, cultural, religious, social, educational, and so on. This is made abundantly clear to participants in the learning fora where I also make as transparent as possible the practical, philosophical, theoretical sources and influences I am drawing upon and that are woven into the methodology. I articulate the intention of the work is to create a space of self-inquiry where, to the extent they are willing/able, they are encouraged to take a friendly and curious approach and explore self/mind, within the container and ways of Creative contemplation, with me as custodian and guide. They will assess for themselves the extent to which personal change is effected (or not) within the course.

I emphasise my point here is not to undermine the value of any instrument, model, or method in common use in organisational learning and development. My intention is to draw attention to the importance of meta-level awareness of the nature of any given frames of mind; the frameworks and framing within such frameworks, and the frameworks and framing that emanate from them, and that are cultivated by them. And it is to recognise the logic and limitations within all frames of mind to be useful in all situations and for all purposes (be they frames of mind operating in the logic of watercolours on wet paper or the logic of penned diagrams). I am reminded of the clothing industry’s one-size-fits-all labelling system which in actuality is (more) one-size-fits-some-on-some-occasions-in-some-circumstances; bringing us back to Maslow’s (1962:15) proposition, ‘When the only tool you have is a hammer, it is tempting to treat everything as if it were a nail’ – an analogy I often hear used in organisations referring to (individual and collective) limited/limiting ways of seeing and thinking.
Hammer/nail habits
Talking about only having a hammer as an abstract concept is one thing, actually being aware enough and able enough to see this in its reality is, as I know all too well for myself, another matter altogether. The prevalence of the hammer/nail habit of mind is seen repeatedly in the Creative futures program but/is outside the general awareness of the participants. This becomes evident in the course of the first day when participants are asked to work in small groups and generate answers to the question: What practical steps can we take to develop our inner world capabilities such as patience, courage, respect, resilience (whatever capability is nominated by participants)?

I emphasise to participants the task is not to analyse why/how we come to be in this situation but to tackle how we can move through/beyond it. I conduct this activity in twenty sessions that, in total, comprise forty-four groups of six or seven people from all organisational levels, areas and locations. Every time, without exception, the groups set about this task and find themselves distracted and bogged down in debating the causes of the current situation (sometimes assigning blame), and/or mistaking the 'what' for the 'how' - offering the statement, 'We need to be more respectful of each other', as a solution, but not suggesting any practical ways into actually becoming more respectful.

There is of course the mandatory metacognitive strand within the activity where participants try to observe, in the moment, workings of mind and heart: 'I notice I'm thinking this is too hard. I feel irritated and I am responding by going into distraction, disengaging from the task at hand and instead I am worrying about answering emails'. What is typically revealed through the groups’ (assisted) reflection on the self-reflexive processes is (in no particular order):

〜 The task is ‘slippery’ – very difficult to engage with and then stay engaged.
〜 Many believe they are making progress until prompted/assisted to observe themselves more closely.
〜 They do not devote any time at the start to considering the nature of the task and explore appropriate ways to approach it – in a metacognitive extension of Maslow’s analogy: What is the job? What is its true self? What tool/s may best serve?
〜 There is unanimous consensus that the way they are approaching this task is how they approach all tasks at work.44

I design the activity to give participants a real time, direct lived experience of how the nature of some tasks/problems makes them immune to habitual ways of engaging and thinking. Hammers are not very effective where fine grade sandpaper may be required. Participants are then introduced to the concept/s of Creative contemplation as a mode of engagement, as a way of seeing/thinking/being/doing.

They repeat the exercise using Story box (Figs. 5 & 6), at the same time paying metacognitive attention to what

difference (if any) they experience between engaging the question through the sensory modes of these art-based devices and their earlier experience of inquiry through (more) usual, habitual linguistic modes. The contrast is usually stark, enabling a subtle, sustained, productive engagement with the question. This engagement is frequently described as more democratic with all group members participating (more) fully, making a contribution rather than the discussion/debate in which certain voices dominate.

In brief, from here the course moves into an extended phase of Creative contemplation, activating and privileging artistic modes alongside a range of linguistic modes – oral and written. This opens with a phase of collecting potential materials for making artworks in the way of eye/mind/hand described in the LandLearn story – taking soundings, sensing resonance between self, materials and question. In this case: What aspects of self are most important for me in meeting, and creatively responding to, complexity and uncertainty? This phase unfolds into making (and contemplating) a small collection of artworks embodying aspects of self that are (individually and personally) deemed desirable and beneficial, such as being more courageous, or more patient, or more respectful of others.

As the course is progressing, a composite material map of (certain aspects of) the participant’s inner world is emerging, becoming yet another object for/of further contemplation, culminating in a forum of attentive listening/storytelling much as seen in the story with LandLearn in the Kilmore courthouse.

Heidegger’s conceptualisation of praxical knowledge or handlability … supports the argument that it is through the handling of materials, methods, tools and ideas in practice, that art becomes experience. Thus it is at the level of eyes and hands that the work of art escapes the frame of representationalism. (Bolt, 2004:48)

Radically, Martin Heidegger argues that it is not consciousness that forms the basis of understanding. He proposes that we do not come to know the world theoretically through contemplative knowledge in the first instance. Rather, we come to know the world theoretically only after we have come to understand it through handling. … Understanding is the care that comes from handling, of being thrown into the world and dealing with things … This relation of care is not the relation of the knowing subject and an object known. (Bolt, 2004:49)
**When the artwork speaks**

As stated earlier, *Creative contemplation* and the prevalent and prevailing (more) instrumental instruments of self-inquiry share the same broad aim: to generate greater understanding of habits of thinking, emotional or psychological character and behaviour of self and others to improve culture and productivity in the workplace. What I would like to un/en/fold (more) here is *Creative contemplation’s* mode of knowledge production and the order of knowledge arising, the form/s in which this becomes embodied and presented when it is at work in fora of organisational learning and development, and, in so doing, (more) closely situate the blot-like ways and logic of *Creative contemplation* alongside its counterparts operating in the same domain in ways and logic of the pen diagram.

As already seen, the matrix of *Creative contemplation* is a merged flux of transdisciplinary, transphilosophical ontology and epistemology; a methodological space and system of permeable, fluid frameworks of knowledge traditions, modes of production and presentation. This is methodology whose practical performativity is (as already heard) notably theorised through Bolt’s research and development of her performative logic of art practice. Although speaking here in terms of painting she makes it clear her thinking and theory applies to all forms of visual art:

Heidegger wants us to be open to the particular possibility that the image can be thought and experienced in quite a different way, as openness. If we are open, then we may find ourselves in a position where the artwork speaks to us, rather than remaining in a place where we are always calling the tune, always being masterful. Derrida also implores us to listen to the painting. If we listen to the painting he says, citing Artaud, ‘it would “strip” us … of the “obsession” of “making objects be other”’. When the artwork speaks, it cuts through the thing-concept and allows us to come near the thing character of the thing. The being of the painting comes forth and speaks. (Bolt, 2004:104)

Bolt is, as we know, speaking from the position of art practitioner/researcher/academic, as the maker who is herself at once the source from which both the performance of art making and listening is arising, as is the case for those activating *Creative contemplation*, be it me in the privacy of my studio or others in the shared space of applied practice. But/and, there is the additional dimensions of its folds where *Creative contemplation* is a performative methodology, not of externally-focused attention towards art practice, not of trained and/or professional practitioners making art works in designated sites of art practice, business and scholarship, but an internally-focused practice of mind observing and investigating its own nature and workings through (non-specialist) art making, applied in the field of organisational learning and development.

In the convolutions of creating/contemplating, these two actions – making the work/listening to the work – merge into short-succession cyclic continua: creating material embodiment of self-knowledge emerging in the making whilst contemplating self in the act of creating/contemplating the emergent object, in turn creating (more) self-knowledge articulated verbally. The dialogic co-becoming at work/play here is folding Bolt’s (2004:104) bricolaged principle back in/on itself where maker/listener (rather than image) is being ‘thought and experienced in quite a different way, as openness’. In these closely interweaving cycles it is the being of the maker’s mind that is coming forth and speaking – something of a twist in the Zen tradition that holds the mind of the maker may be discerned in the made object (traditionally functional items such as bowl, cup, dish). Here, with attention focused inward, mind investigating itself through material meditation, the emergent object is the mind of the maker.

In its lifespan of five years the Creative futures program attracts nearly three hundred participants who between them make some two thousand individual works in the process of self-inquiry, providing untold opportunities to witness *Creative contemplation* at work as a material practice of mind observing and investigating its own nature and workings. An example: patience is extensively nominated by participants in the Creative futures program as a
Inquiry unfolding Being

In these operations of inquiry, as participants are unfolding their inquiry/are being unfolded by it, the emerging ontological, embodied knowledge is coming forth into (more) conscious awareness, in turn becoming (more) available to the intellect and linguistic mind, becoming explicit knowledge. This knowledge is also concurrently becoming embodied and presented in various material visual and verbal forms. There is the small collection of 3D visual/tactile, abstract artworks embodying inner world capabilities, that comes together as a composite material map of (certain aspects of) self. There are rough sketches, (more) developed drawings, and possibly photographs (participants’ kits include a disposable camera). There are verbal forms - written and oral: written and oral reflections, oral (and sometimes written) stories; linguistic forms encompassing, poetry - traditional and/or experimental in ilk; prose - descriptive and/or informative; notes; thought maps. Occasionally, lyrics for a song emerge, or a script for a monologue or dialogue or dramatic scene. The variants go on.

This is Creative contemplation’s counterpart to an online questionnaire.

Organisational Theory:

Experiential knowing is through direct face-to-face encounter with person, place or thing; it is knowing through the immediacy of perceiving, through empathy and resonance. Presentational knowing emerges from experiential knowing, and provides the first form of expressing meaning and significance through drawing on expressive forms of imagery through movement, dance, sound, music, drawing, painting, sculpture, poetry, story, drama, and so on. Propositional knowing ‘about’ something, is knowing through ideas and theories, expressed in informative statements. Practical knowing is knowing ‘how to’ do something and is expressed in a skill, knack or a competence. (Taylor & Hansen, 2005:1213)

Taylor and Hansen (2005) elaborate further on Heron and Reason’s extended epistemology that is following Susanne Langer’s ideas about the role of art and the idea that different ways of knowing require different forms of presentation of the knowledge that arises:

Langer suggested that tacit knowledge can be represented through artistic or presentational forms and explicit knowledge can be represented through discursive forms. Discursive forms are characterized by a one-to-one relationship between a set of signifiers and the signified, while presentational forms are characterized by a whole that is not divisible into its component parts. The idea that different ways of knowing require different forms of representation and in particular aesthetic, embodied tacit knowledge requires presentational/artistic forms of representation,
is a direct challenge to the completeness of the dominant intellectual forms of academic knowledge (e.g. journal articles like this). (Taylor & Hansen, 2005:1214)

The heuristic ways of Creative contemplation clearly encompass and activate all these ways of knowing, allowing them to co-exist, co-create; co-operating to cultivate (more) whole-adapted brain/mind/eye/hand. These different ways of knowing, accompanied by their commensurate material systems of knowledge capture and different forms of presentation show a (more) full, (more) specific, rich, personalised account of participants’ capabilities, created by themselves, for themselves.

I see the 2D pen diagram logic of the standard assessment instruments as akin to having you select from a limited range of generic statements and sentences to quickly construct a written report about your inner world, making it correspond as best you can, to whatever degree, with what you think your (inner world) is.

Creative contemplation’s logic of the 3D blot is exploring in (more) extended timeframe, discovering (inner world) material of tacit and explicit self-knowledge, and fashioning an illustrated, multimedia, multidimensional, multisensory text able to speak of you, to you, bringing what is self (more) into conscious being as you become (more) able to discern what is. And, over time, becoming more able to discern what is self, bringing more into being.

In reiteration of my position, I am not undermining the value of any instrument, model, or method in common use in organisational learning and development. My intention is to reveal and draw attention to the frameworks and framing within these instruments, and the frameworks and framing that emanate from them, and that are cultivated by them, so their suitability for their intended job may be questioned and assessed.

This may be another version of the mismatched question and answer initiating the DPI project. If the prevailing concern is for an instrument that can be quickly and efficiently applied, the standard tools and their limited modalities are highly qualified. If the intention is to generate transformative effects, genuine transmutations of (individual and collective) thinking and practice then, I contend, something of the inefficient but highly effective order of Creative contemplation is the go.

Indeed, if (Ernst) Cassirer secured one special niche within his circle of forms of knowing, it was now given to the arts. He recognized that art provided a richer, more vivid and colorful image of reality and offered as well more profound insight into its formal structure. (Gardner, 1982:45)

A good phenomenological text has the effect of making us suddenly ‘see’ something in a manner that enriches our understanding of everyday life experience … A powerful phenomenological text thrives on a certain irrevocable tension between what is unique and what is shared, between particular and transcendent meaning, and between the reflective and pre-reflective spheres of the lifeworld. (van Manen, 1990:30)
Random evaluation comments

I’ve been to a lot of courses where I have learned ‘tricks’ – ‘tricks’ for stress management, time management or whatever, but they have had no real impact on me, my way of thinking, or what I do. This course has really impacted deeply and connected me to my inner world capabilities. I can actually feel the difference. I am different.

Because Creative Futures focuses on developing inner capabilities, sometimes it may be difficult to explain how the course assists employees. However, the impact for me has been very real. Two months after completing the course I had the opportunity to spend a few days with a colleague I had not seen since before Creative Futures. On the second day she remarked that it was as though she had gotten into the car with a completely different person.

Creative Futures revealed something I had been struggling with for most of my life, that had prevented me from being truly present in everything that I do – being fixated on the outcome. Every time I feel the tension rising, I visualise the Open Mind, Open Heart cards for “unattached to outcome” and “hold lightly” and I relax.

It was an ‘out there’ course but the presenter and the material made it the best course I have ever done in my many years in DPI. It has truly developed fundamental change for the better.

I’m back (to Day II) because I was able to stop myself in a few situations from letting my emotions control my actions. I was able to assess my thinking in the moment and not let other’s emotions or body language control me either. It’s very powerful.

(McDonagh & Gilroy, 2005:12–26)

If people in conversation are observing and reflecting on both the source and the direction of their attention (the inner and the inter-subjective space), and sharing those reflections, a spontaneous combustion of consciousness can occur. If so, collective self-reflexivity can lead to deeper, more fine-tuned sensing of reality, thus to wiser action.

The leader in my field, but there is no field.

When I begin my refashioned professional enterprise my work is (more) clearly framed as adapting and transposing modes of knowledge production from the arts into the field of organisational learning and development. As this interwoven practice/research is telling, my endeavour soon assumes a double layered habit where the philosophic co-exists and co-operates hand in hand with the pragmatic, enabling mind to investigate its own nature and workings through the material meditation of Creative contemplation.

Although originally expected to be for the use of adults specifically in the domain of organisational development - (both) my research proposals frame this as my field of applied practice - as research and practice unfold, I find myself more and more working beyond this field in diverse contexts with people whose age, background, education, personal ability, proficiency in English, professional experience and so on vary greatly from the (more) typical homogeneity in professional organisations.

In the story of the sub-project with LandLearn, the collaboration is initiated by the group’s wish to move beyond (individual and collective) habitual modes of thinking to create an innovative sustainability ‘thing’ for schools. Our project goes on for some months beyond the scope of the story to successfully meet the team’s desire. The sustainability ‘thing’ manifests

The fundamental Deleuzean concept of fold contributes to the blurring of boundaries between epistemology, ethics and psychology: subjectivity expresses itself through emergence of a new form of content: it becomes other by way of interaction, or the double transformation ... (Semetesky, 2006:20)
in dual forms: another version of my *Oblique inspirations* tangible thinking system we name *Creating sustainable futures*, and a suite of professional development (PD) experiences under the same name for teachers – an adaptation and abbreviated version of LandLearn’s own journey of inquiry.\(^{45}\)

In a sub-sub-project, I work with Jessica Connor (of LandLearn) to conduct this suite of PD, that incorporates use of the new thinking tool, with teachers at a school for children with special developmental needs. Some of these teachers then voluntarily suggest using similar methods and *Oblique inspirations / Creating sustainable futures* in their classrooms. One teacher, for her own purposes of pedagogical practice and development, documents her process and her students’ responses. What emerges is so striking to her she invites us back to the school to hear about her experiment and see the students’ art works. She describes feeling ‘stunned’ when children who are unable to read or write, and deemed to have minimal conceptual ability, reveal highly sophisticated thinking about sustainable ways of relating to self, others and the world. We are moved to tears hearing her stories.

She tells us the existence, breadth and depth of such capabilities remain unrevealed by conventional frameworks, means and methods in place, and that she is sure they would have remained so if not for this arts-based way of knowing and its associated tangible thinking systems.

*I believe art puts down its roots into the deepest hiding places of our nature and that its action is akin to the action of certain plants, comfrey for instance, whose roots can penetrate far into the subsoil and unlock nutrients that would otherwise lie out of the reach of shallower bedded plants. (Winterson, 1996:35)*

The remarkable consistency that *Creative contemplation* shows in this, and many other contexts, being readily accessible to people – as they are, however that may be, wherever they may be – and being capable of generating (often) profound insight, and un/making mind – making new ways of being and doing – transcends boundaries of any single identified field, situating it in the midst of human mind/s. In the latter years of this research/practice I can be heard to wryly quip, "I’m the leader in my field, but there is no field."

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\(^{45}\) A paper discussing the project is included as Appendix B.

In a long conversation with the artist Piero Manzoni, in 1962, de vries discovered that they shared a similar view of the social purpose of art, which they defined as ‘deconditioning’: the liberation of the imagination from habitual responses to things, from conventional modes of seeing, thought and feeling. (Gooding, 2006:12)
(Other) arts practitioners in the frame

... it is the artistic process that is becoming the artist’s business ... and the artists in business are ahead in that sense, as they are actually selling their process – not their product.

(Darsø, 2004:30)

Although I no longer consider my practice to be (exclusively) framed within Business and Organisational Learning and Development I feel I should mention the growing presence of the arts and arts practitioners within these frame/s.

As I know from my own research cohort, and observations over years of applied practice, the arts are finding their way more, and in more ways, into organisational practice and research. Lotte Darsø’s text (2004) Artful creation: Learning–tales of arts–in–business is a rare example of literature in an emerging field she identifies as Arts in Business. In it she presents examples and case studies of projects derived from her international survey of such work in Europe, North America and South Africa. Darsø also develops a theoretical framework based on Otto Scharmer’s Theory U: Learning from the future as it emerges, to better understand the learning processes involved, and individual and organisational transformation that may occur depending on how deeply the arts are engaged. She sets out four options:

1. Business uses the arts for decoration.
2. Business uses the arts for entertainment, either by giving employees benefits such as tickets for selected shows, performances, exhibitions in their leisure time or they invite artists into the company for performances at annual meetings, customer events or special occasions.
3. Business applies the arts as instruments for team building, communication training, leadership development, problem solving and innovation processes.
4. Business integrates the arts in a strategic process of transformation, involving personal development and leadership, culture and identity, creativity and innovation, as well as customer relations and marketing. (Darsø, 2004:14–15)

Martin Ferro-Thompson frames a narrower field he situates neighbouring Arts in Business: Organisational Art (OA), ‘... a tentative title that designates art projects by contemporary artists, who work together with non-artistic organisations (such as companies, institutions, communities, governments and NGOs) to produce art that in one way or another evolves around organisational issues’ (2005:3). He goes on to say, ‘OA can tentatively be described as socially engaged, conceptual, discursive, site-specific and contextual. ... Ultimately OA is about cooperation and exchange, rather than just change’ (2005:3–4). In distinguishing OA from Arts in Business Ferro-Thompson says, ‘Naturally there are several overlaps between the two fields and an artist could easily be part of both’, but ‘... the instrumental idea of “use” or “application” of art (methods) is counter to the emergent nature of OA and the nature of art itself’ (2005:15).

If asked to situate my own practice in relation to these two framings I would say it transcends both and curves through both OA and Arts in Business (category 4 in Darsø’s framework). It transcends...
both in its grander philosophical urge for mind to participate in its own un/becoming in the broader interests of the human prospect, and in its (more) philosophical hand/handling turning ‘attention inward in order to deal with the problems that arise from our outer conditions’ (Salk, 1983:50). It then curves through both in its (more) pragmatic hand/handling - encompassing the (more) emergent and the (more) applied - in subsequently turning attention outwards, giving form to new/other/more ways of doing that emerge from mind’s investigation of itself and its habits.

Although arts processes are increasingly seen in Business and Organisational Learning and Development these are not always applied, activated or facilitated by arts practitioners. Art derived processes are common in the repertoire of many conventional facilitators who use drawing or painting as expressive modes of engaging and exploring. In my observation these operate in the register of my experience with the professional association of OD practitioners discussed earlier (p.122), an essentially diagrammatic mode (whether rendered in paint or coloured texters) engaging, perpetuating and reinforcing (more) representational thinking: This is me, this is the team, here is our project, this is our goal, and here are our stakeholders. Looking at them like this I can see we need to bring all parties closer together.

I see a double paradox in these circumstances. Whilst these practitioners may not have good artistic skills and processes to enable participants to access deeper dimensions of feeling and being that may emerge in performative rather than representational art processes, they usually have good (conventional) facilitation skills knowing how to handle the sort of emotional states that participants may experience in such investigation.

On the other hand, as Darsø emphasises, ‘artistic processes are powerful beyond measure … to make people think and feel’ (2004:164) and as such require ‘good process and facilitation skills, which … artists do not always have’ (2004:163). Darsø does not discuss, and neither does any other literature found (so far), how these arts practitioners typically operate in their role as facilitators and in what ways this is lacking.

The ways and tools of being (an) Attendant are context-specific, site-responsive practices/processes/products becoming, and being honed, in real time, direct, lived experience of guiding collective arts-based inquiry in applied practice situations with client organisations. As such, I contend, these ways and tools have unique cogency and viability within Business/Organisational Learning and Development. Here my practice/research contributes to both twists of the double paradox.

There are two aspects of arts practitioners’ practice in Business/Organisations that intrigue me but about which I am unable to glean much of real substance. One, is the extent to which, if any, that these practitioners are purposefully adapting or refashioning their processes in response to the organisational context in which they are operating, and in which they are (most usually) working with people neither trained nor practised in the creative arts. The other aspect concerns transposition of systems of knowledge production and transmission of ways of knowing from artists to non-artists. From my observations in the general course of commercial practice, and the sparse available literature, my impression is that custodianship of these ways remains (more) in the hands of the arts practitioners and, to all effects and purposes, still in the domain of the creative arts. Even though the site of the artists’ activities is the organisation, if there is no considered, purposeful, heuristic transmission and enablement within that site the tradition of knowledge production and transmission returns to its primary site. We are back in the story with the Indigenous artists bringing Ngurrara 1 canvas as a system of knowledge transmission into the Australian High Court.
We might also note aesthetics’ ability to transform the very categories we use to organize our experiences. Aesthetic forms of expression are like experiments that allow us to reconsider and challenge dominant categories and classifications. Innovative forms resist existing classifications altogether, compelling the creation of new categories… making possible the juxtaposition of concepts that had been incommensurable. So aesthetic experiences not only transform organizations, but the lenses we use to view them. (Taylor & Hansen, 2005:1216)
Vision and courage

Before we leave arts practices and practitioners in the frame of Business and Organisational Learning and Development I must offer a countering view to Darsø’s (2004) cautionary warning. As mentioned, Darsø uses Scharmer’s Presencing model (Fig.7) to theorise levels of experience, learning and change in her case studies. In this four level model, Level 3 involves feelings and Level 4 ‘... the deepest level, enables contact with people’s Higher self, which means their passion, commitment and will. Real transformation happens only when these last two levels are reached. We must, however, imprint these levels with “handle with care”. Only healthy and honest organisations should attempt to work with all levels. Most companies are better off with only the first two levels of “business as usual” (Darsø, 2004:162).

I certainly (and obviously) agree that particular facilitation skills are needed to work safely and helpfully in the ontological emotional/psychological dimension of individual and organisational capacity. If, however, there is a specialist skilled creative arts practitioner involved I disagree with this basis for assessing suitable organisations for this depth of work.

I think it likely that most organisations would like to claim they are ‘healthy and honest’. If the self-reflective capacity exists for an organisation to recognise it is not ‘healthy and honest’, and be prepared to admit it, I suggest this is, in itself, indicative of a degree of health and honesty. I know that practitioner/practice of the order embodied within Creative contemplation can help cultivate just those (individual and organisational) qualities of health and honesty.

For any organisation genuinely interested in individual and collective transformation, if there is an appropriately skilled practitioner guiding the work of arts-based inquiry and learning, I venture there are two requirements: one, the organisation has enough vision and courage to risk allowing a fluid, open-ended process rather than fixing a framework of predetermined outcomes at the outset; the other, that some (by no means all) beings within the organisation have enough vision and courage to (try to) open individual and collective Being to more than.
For a few weeks in early 2007 I am alone in the holiday house my partner and I have at Erowal Bay, a tiny township on the south coast of NSW, sitting on the shores of St Georges Basin, surrounded by Booderee National Park. Our house sits on the threshold of the bush. Before coming to Australia I cannot say I have any real sense of place or connection to the natural environment. From my first visit to Erowal Bay in 1997 I begin to gain some sense of what this might be. Over the years that follow, this unfolds into a deep affinity with this place and a sense of belonging to it, a sense that here I am nested in the world (Mathews, 2005). Some of the most fruitful work of my research takes place here.

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In blazing splendour signifying nothing
This period of retreat is during the phase of somatic inquiry through BMC and self-directed instruction in Zen meditation (discussed pp.94–101) that are interweaving their ways of cultivating (more) embodied awareness. Cummins describes the focus of her suite of Residing in bodymind workshops as ‘... developing a practice of attention. This becomes the ground for deeper investigation of our bodymind. This practice ... can be applied to many situations and offers a place of deep investigation for artists as well as professionals engaged in diverse fields of work and research’. Here, working in the company of a small group, in the performance space of a dance studio, we participate with Cummins as she blends BMC with/in the ways and modes of the moving body of (her) dance practice. Of the non-moving bodymind seated in meditation Murphy says:

Zazen cultivates an embodied awareness, and can open us in a deeper way to the knowings of the body. It is learning to be present with the whole body rather than just that pinpoint of the intellect and the customary buzz of thought, which deafens the world even more than all of our mechanical contrivances. (Murphy, 2004:205)
One day I am diligently going about my research business, ‘Sally Jane’ earnestly investigating being (an) Attendant, going about with her camera, self-consciously ‘doing’ being an Attendant to the given of the environment about the house. In exasperation I give up and make my way back to the house. It is blisteringly hot, and extremely windy. The huge gum tree at the front of the house is casting beautiful shifting shadows on a bare patch of dirt beneath its branches that has never shown any obvious signs of life; a seemingly barren area amidst the fecundity of the surrounding environment. I stand at the edge and watch the shadows.

I spontaneously raise the camera and take a photograph. When the camera recovers I take another, and then another, and another at intervals dictated by the camera, the viewfinder directed to the same spot. The air filled with the sounds of cicadas and parrots, my nostrils filled with the smell of eucalyptus, this becomes an extensive, prolonged and all-engrossing exercise in which I am lost, ‘I’ is lost. My awareness of self is restored, after an indefinable amount of time, by the sun burning my foot, no longer in the shade.

To the degree to which you are seeing properly, you are unaware of your eyes. In the same way, if your clothes fit well, you’re unaware of them on your body. And if you’re completely concentrated on what you’re doing, you’re unaware of yourself. (Watts, 1960:27)

Much like the digital work, The Attendant’s (actual) garments (p.139), I initially see this act as an irrelevant distraction. The next day I am about to delete the one hundred and eighty four images of shifting shadows when I am moved to make another visual/aural piece with this suite of images and carefully selected piano music: Estonian composer Arvo Pärt’s Für Alina. As I watch the work, the significance of both the actual act/s of attention, and the digital meditation emerging from it, begins to become apparent.

The work emerges from mind relinquishing its conscious framing of my activity, and spontaneously, unintentionally, simply, completely,
solely being (an) Attendant - not 'doing' being (an) Attendant in applied practice, not struggling with being (an) Attendant to being (an) Attendant for research purposes - just being (an) Attendant, in that moment, at that time and place.

Heidegger is quite clear in declaring poiesis as a mode of the Being of beings, is characterised by an emergent quality rather than constituting a knowing in advance. (Bolt, 2004:62)

In its way, this act of bodymind attention in one hundred and eighty four moments is the non-material twin of the material koan of Dismantle: coming to no-self, coming to no thing - literally - no material object. No-self, no-thing to say, no-thing to do. The ground of the Formless self (Stambaugh, 1999). And I am ironically amused that in my research I have yet to write forty thousand or so words about nothing. I imagine a swathe of inscrutable Zen masters, smilingly slightly perhaps, nodding knowingly at my realisation.

The artist, who is simply a representative human being, is to be regarded as part of nature, indistinguishable from it. Seeing is being, a creative interaction with the world: to see is, in itself, to create, to be an artist, to be. (Gooding, 2006:20)

I wonder, corrupt with reading, if there ever was a moment when this sentence - outside my window is a cardinal — was not an artifice; when the blood-red bird on a steel blue tree was quietly surprising and nothing urged me to translate it, to domesticate it into a textual enclosure to become its literary taxidermist. I wonder if there ever was a moment when a cardinal outside my window sat there in blazing splendour signifying nothing. (Manguel in Gibson, 2005:17)
The experience of oneness is holistic and cannot be reached by the usual logical processes. At some point a crisis in linear thinking creates a leap of necessity, a discontinuity that is equivalent to the leap in quantum physics or the phenomenon of emergence in systems theory. A new state of awareness is reached without any apparent linear connection to the previous one. *(Grigg, 1994:225–6)*
Education of the unartist/undesigner
Emerging outside the conscious frame
and context of applied practice or
research investigating it, Shifting shadows
draws my attention to how I see myself as
a practitioner outside of these frames. In
terms of Creative contemplation as personal
practice, Shifting shadows is a distinct
distillation: (material) art-making as act
of attention becoming act of attention
as (non-material) art. This particular
ontology of art practitioner, and the
pragmatics and philosophy of this order
of art closely align me with the art
practices of hermann de vries (Gooding,
2006), particularly in the given context
of the natural environment, and Allan
Kaprow (Kaprow 2003; Kelley, 2004)
both students and practitioners of Zen.

They (the artworks) possessed the quality of
tathata, which may be translated as ‘suchness’
or ‘thusness’, or as de vries puts it, ‘just this’.
This directness of visual apprehension, in
which the act of indication replaces verbalisa-
tion, is, as Alan Watts describes it, ‘[of] the
world just as it is, unscreened and undivided
by the symbols and definitions of thought. It
points to the concrete and actual as distinct
from the abstract and conceptual’. (Gooding,
on de vries, 2006:26)

Until this point, my notion of being
(an) Attendant is (more) associated and
contained within the framework of my
applied practice - as a specialist mode
and model of facilitation with, and for,
others, activating Creative contemplation and
its (potentially) self-reflexive spaces.
In enacting Shifting shadows the notion
of being (an) Attendant is becoming
a frame for everyday practice of life, a
practice of lifelike art (Kaprow, 1983).
From this, and its slowly unfolding
effects, I am becoming re/cast (more) as
the work itself, rather than being (more)
an agent of it. I am the work - a vessel
secreted and shaped by it.

And we saw art emptied of everything except
ourselves - who became the art by default.
(Kaprow, 1986:205)

I realise I now know (more) the way of
approaching and entering and conduct-
ing a practice situation empty handed; a
way in which the ontological and episte-
ological transmissions and practices of
being (an) Attendant (may) be enough
to create self-reflexive spaces for myself and others. I am becoming (more) the answer to my own research questions. This does not mean in applied practice I abandon material making for others encountering Creative contemplation for the first, or repeated times, I see this direct material engagement as vital – mine is disappearing after ten years of diligent material meditation. What it does mean in practice situations is that I experience greater self-reliance, greater confidence in the ways of simply being (an) Attendant – dissipating any vestiges of the nervous reconstructed frock designer, feeling fraudulent as she fronts up with her bag of (p)arty tricks (that may or may not work). I find I have, and can hold, (more) faith with being (an) Attendant, and the ways of this ontology of practitioner/practice.

Kaprow has often referred to himself as an “un-artist,” or an artist consciously shedding the conventions of art in order to have unfettered experiences of life. His experiment has been to play at life as an artist – to play, as he once put it, “in and between attention to physical process and attention to interpretation,” in and between body and mind, better to erase the duality. (Kelley, 2004:6)

The vessel of being (an) Attendant is not only the manifestation and container of the unartist as Kaprow may recognise her, it also holds her inseparable co-secreting, non-identical twin sister – the undesigner – and their variant ways of eye/mind/hand, and handling, and it holds the (now internalised) supporting ensemble cast: custodian, performer, guide, conversation partner, provocateur, philosopher, anthropologist, host, visionary, counsellor of sorts, sales person, technician …

In contemplating the metaphorical ground invited by Shifting shadows I see the shifting movements of art/ist and design/er in my professional practice, how each has come to co-exist, to co-create beyond conventional frames, frameworks and sites of art and design, becoming unartist/undesigner. In being (an) Attendant in applied practice with others while the ontology and agency of un/artist prevails (more) in the operations
of Creative contemplation investigating and cultivating mind (as in the project of the Creative futures program), my agency as un/designer may also come into play. The sub-project with LandLearn extends into designing and producing a tangible thinking tool for use by others as well as creating and conducting experiential fora for teachers, a process handled by the hands of attendant design/er.

This agency - more externally focused on creating tools others can use - is the mode (more) overarching my studio practice enabling the transposition of forms of knowledge and ways of knowing from one domain to another. I realise how closely this is a pragmatic and philosophic mirroring of my tertiary education in the creation of textiles and clothing - shifting back and forth through and across art and design modes, through and across ways of the knowing body and mind; shifting between ways of the (more) poietic and the (more) teleological eye/mind/hand; bringing-forth, transposing and translating form/s between, through and across dimensions.

To make a garment I am first taught to begin with a fabric, sensing its feel, character, peculiar properties. What is its nature? What is the mind of the material, its logic, its intelligence? I work in multiple dimensions, modeling directly onto and around a body form, a tailor’s dummy: entering into a dialogic dance between fabric, space, time, bodily form - one’s own and the dummy dance partner; addressing the body/self, how to clothe it, what the cloth and the clothing will embody and transmit to and from the wearer when they assume the mantle; a second skin, a portable personal space, that signifies and carries codes - codes of conduct, codes of ceremony, gender, status - transmitting inwards and outwards. A material, spatial verb that can liberate, restrict/constrict, protect, expose/conceal, warm/cool, comfort/discomfit, boast, shout or whisper, invite or repel, (re)assure or undermine.

From pliable, persuadable fabric the corporeal, dialogic dance with material brings forth a portable, enclosure around the dummy. The fabric form is shaped and held by pins, pinning
together, temporary joins. It is refined through attentive, careful, precise adjustments. Then contours and cutting lines are marked on the body foretelling seams – where the garment will open and close to receive a living, moving body.

To make its form permanent and functional it is deconstructed, returned to a single, flat, horizontal plane where it is translated into a 2D template, a paper pattern/plan. A pattern that may be used for only one of its kind, for a particular solo wearer or it may be graded/sized to fit others – adapted to be amenable for multiple reproductions, to be repeatable, made transmissible through geometrical language for varied others.

The alternative approach and mode I am subsequently taught begins with design. Making begins with mind’s eye, ideas, pencil and paper. I consider possible or actual fabrics that may be to hand. I imagine, I picture, I speculate in line on paper. I formulate ideas in sketches, making a visual plan of sorts. I then use exacting mathematics and geometry to create a 2D template, a 2D paper plan/pattern that will translate an idea into a tangible 3D form. I cut the components from fabric according to the pattern. I assemble first by carefully pinning the pieces before stitching together the basic form, gradually realising its (potentially) 3D presence. There follows cycles of fittings on the body, making adjustments to the 3D form and creating their correspondences on 2D template.

In this dialogic, manual, material shifting back and forth between dimensions what the mind’s eye expects (or would like to see) coming into being adapts in relation to what is actually seen coming into being.
The ground in this research

... and neither moment with its implicit divisions between inside and outside, sacred and non-sacred, ever recognizes the openness of the ground, the ground as process, adjunct to walking and supporter of shadows.

(Carter 1996:4)

The contemplations invited by the Shifting shadows meditation – both the actual act/s of attention and the digital visual/aural meditation emerging from it – are manifold and open-ended: on the actual physical, geographical and environmental ground on which I/we stand; how we occupy such ground, by invitation or colonisation, the traces we leave, the impact we have upon it; the metaphorical, philosophical, epistemological, ontological ground we assume, create, commandeer, disregard, assert ... these contemplations are still going on nearly three years later with greater and lesser intensities, but always amplified when I meditate on the digital work.

It is this that prompts me to include Shifting shadows meditation in the experiential component of the submission for examination.

Within the myriad contemplations concerning the ground in this research I limit myself to remarking the following ways the horizontal plane, the physical and geographical ground repeatedly presents itself in this research in (more) direct and (more) indirect ways. As mentioned earlier, Shifting shadows emerges during the phase where somatic inquiry through BMC and self-directed instruction in Zen meditation are interweaving, both of which serve to sensitize my embodied and philosophical awareness of the ground. The BMC work with Cummins involves a high degree of working on the ground, in horizontal dimensions. Her performance work too is deeply related to the ground, to the horizontal:

‘I work on the floor; in the horizontal plane and dimension ... I roll, fold, enfold and unfold in endless ways, seeking without insistence. I am an unknowing body, following the contours of life lived below the surface of things. Through touch I gather information about myself and my environment, and it is a dance of infinite possibility ... the horizon forever open’ (Cummins, 2008:10–11).
Zazen brings the body into relation to the horizontal plane on which I/we stand as one assumes a seated position on the ground for the act of Zen seated meditation. The photograph in the catalogue of the Colour power exhibition at the NGV (Ryan, 2004:117) shows the artists painting Ngurrara 1 canvas sitting on the ground; body, canvas, art-making attuned and responding to the ground. The collective artwork of the LandLearn group comes forth in the horizontal plane as artists’ moving feet trace new patterns into the ground of that exalted site of Western knowledge, the library. And, prior to all this, there is the marking of the ground in Making female felt (p.107), creating an implied space delineated by voices written onto/into the ground; voices freeing fixed frameworks of eye/mind/hand.

At no point in the process of arrival, survey, settlement and residence does the ground make any claim upon our attention. (Carter 1996:2)

Bolt (2004) and Carter (1996) suggest the human stance inherent within the Australian landscape is one where eyes are sensitively cast down to the ground, attending to its contours, codes, signs marking physical and spiritual life; a stance that is radically disrupted for Indigenous peoples by European colonisation as induction into enlightenment ways of seeing the land shifts eyes from the ground to the horizon, divorcing seeing from the dance (Carter, 1996).

Like Carter I am an immigrant to Australia. When coming to permanently relocate myself here from London (1990) I clearly remember not seeking another place to live but another way to live. In this, Australia is my ground of un/becoming. In its way Shifting shadows is something of an actual, and symbolic, ritual act returning, recasting, the eye’s attention to the ground, acknowledging the significance and spirit of this country. It feels to me that the process of un/becoming of practitioner/practice mapped here is Australia specific. I feel England would never have afforded me such a process. Now that this process feels mature, however, I do feel ready and able (and curious) to conduct my work outside Australia.
In researching literature on Zen thought and philosophy in the period of *Shifting shadows / BMC / Zazen* I am intrigued to find Reps’s suggestion that ‘Zen might be called the inner art and design of the Orient’ (2000:15), and delighted to find the teachings of Susan Murphy that immediately become a steady companion.

Murphy is, unusually, a female Roshi (Zen teacher), steeped in Zen traditions of the East whose teachings ‘reimagine the profound discoveries of that tradition in an entirely new context’ (Tarrant, 2004:vii). She is a creative arts practitioner – writer and film director – living and working in Australia, is Australian, and has a special interest in the affinity of Dharma and Australian Aboriginal spirituality: ‘the most ancient unbroken line of earth-based spirituality on the Earth, still alive in various ways and forms despite its collision two hundred years ago with post-Enlightenment Western culture in its most aggressively colonising mode’ (Murphy, 2004:105).

Murphy asks of Zen tradition: ‘How will we unfold it? How will it unfold us, here in this Australian corner of our magical planet?’ (2004:105)

In its way I see this practitioner/practice/research softly responding to just such an inquiry.

*my desired place is this closeness to ground relieving the soles of my feet from such singular resolve to crack other horizons (Cummins, 2008:80)*
There is a rather poetic postscript to *Shifting shadows*. In the months after my act of attention at that time and place — attending to the ground attending to me — shoots of grass begin to emerge in this patch of earth which for the previous ten years, at least, has shown no obvious signs of organic life.

*It’s all to do with attentiveness, with the way everything awakens under the gentle beam of one’s sympathetic attention ... When one emanates this gentle beam, when everything on which one’s look falls is bathed in this kindly light and warmth, then the world walks at one’s side and poetics blossom in one’s footsteps.* (Mathews, 2005:169)
In the complexities of our minds and lives we easily forget the power of attention, yet without attention we live only on the surface of existence. It is just simple attention that allows us to listen truly to the song of a bird, to see deeply the glory of an autumn leaf, to touch the heart of another and be touched. We need to be fully present in order to love a single thing wholeheartedly. We need to be fully awake in this moment if we are to receive and respond to the learning inherent in it.

(Kornfeld & Feldman, 1996:73)
The teachings of Zen, Vedanta and Mahayana – patterns of insights and actions that are neither intellectual nor intuitive, neither conceptual nor affective – went deep into the living practice of de vries, and shaped a central desideratum: art as such is neither here nor there, and is inseparable from life, being but an aspect (as science is another) of the means by which reality is revealed to the seeker. (Gooding, 2006:26)
6

Final words

Today, in 1979, I’m paying attention to breathing. I’ve held my breath for years – held it for dear life. And I might have suffocated if (in spite of myself) I hadn’t had to let go of it periodically. Was it mine, after all? Letting it go, did I lose it? Was (is) exhaling simply a stream of speeded up molecules squirting out of my nose? …

… These are thoughts about consciousness of breathing. Such consciousness of what we do and feel each day, its relation to others’ experience and to nature around us, becomes in a real way the performance of living. And the very process of paying attention to this continuum is poised on the threshold of art performance. (Kaprow, 1979:196)

Much like the contemplations invited and invoked by the Shifting shadows meditation, what may be drawn from this research is equally manifold and open-ended, encompassing both the local, very particular and already actually realised, and opening to speculation on the global and ‘the possibility of a differently grounded future’ (Carter 1996:46). In terms of the local, particular and actual, realised through this practice-led and art-based research, I trust that the form and content of this Bookwork clearly addresses the research aims and its questions:

~ In what ways can my work act to create self-reflexive spaces for my self and others?
~ In what ways can I capture the creative process of both constructing and attending to self-reflexive spaces?
~ What constitutes a philosophical, theoretical and methodological framework supporting these practices?

I trust, also that by now it is evident how this work is already, actually contributing to knowledge and practices in the area of Business known as Organisational Learning and Development and the emerging field of Arts in Business, and the ways this research has enriched, enhanced and refined this practitioner and her practice.

Transcending disciplines in practice and research

In addition, I would like to further draw out the following threads from the body of practice-research fabric. The first is art as a way of knowing, most particularly as a way of coming to better know self. Allan Kaprow’s notion (and oeuvre) of lifelike art is a practice conducted beyond the conventional frameworks and sites of art institutions, in the midst of everyday life. It is a form of art ‘at the service of life’ rather than artlike art that is ‘art at the service of art’ (Kaprow, 1983:201).
Lifelike art is an art practice highly influenced by Zen, paying close attention to everyday events, activities and behaviours. He holds that this way and form of art can make a vital contribution to the most pressing problems for human beings and human society:

What is at stake now is to understand that of all the integrative roles lifelike art can play ... none is so crucial to our survival as the one that serves self-knowledge. Self-knowledge is where you start on the way to becoming "the whole", whether this process takes the form of social action or personal transformation. ... What I have in mind when I say "self-knowledge" ... is the passage of the separate self to the egoless self. Lifelike art in which nothing is separate is a training in letting go of the separate self. (Kaprow, 1983:217)

Kaprow goes on to say:

It is even possible that some lifelike art could become a discipline of healing and meditation as well. Something like this is already happening. If it develops more intentionally (and we don’t know if it will), we may see the overall meaning of art change profoundly - from being an end to being a means, from holding out a promise of perfection in some other realm to demonstrating a way of living meaningfully in this one. (Kaprow, 1983:218)

This practice and research shows Creative contemplation to qualify as such a discipline. Emerging, as it does, from transdisciplinary, transphilosophical, transpraxical practitioner/practice mind, it is one proven capable of transcending frameworks of practice and research, ontology and epistemology. It clearly shows itself able to be accessed, activated and applied in sites of everyday life and endeavour by people, young and old, of diverse mental and physical abilities, in divergent contexts. In this, I see it is also addressing Bolt’s call for art to happen in the midst of beings if it is to be an essential and necessary part of being:

Whilst art may once have been viewed as the privileged site of poietic revealing this no longer holds true. If Art is to be an essential and necessary part of being, then it is in the midst of beings that Art must happen. Thus, if in our everyday life we open to possibility, such day-to-day practices as cooking and eating may be poietic rather than instrumental. Here, lived embodied experience is the element in which art thrives. In our contemporary society, art is no longer contained within the province of art business. Art has been brought into the midst of life. (Bolt, 2004:188)
The hand becomes an eye that fuses and concentrates all five senses and sees things whole. (Lee, n.d)47

The Hand-in-Hand Handling of the Pragmatic and Philosophic Hand-in-Hand

In opening (more) to speculation on the global and 'the possibility of a differently grounded future' (Carter 1996:46), as this research is coming to a close, I have been given more and more to contemplating the human hand. In the first of his three volume philosophical inquiry into human being called The hand, Raymond Tallis confers responsibility on this remarkable organ for taking ‘humans over the threshold dividing consciousness from self-consciousness’ (2003:14). He postulates human beings have ‘... a displaced awareness of the centrality of our handedness to our nature and cultures. A “Hand Philosophy”, ... may be a portal into thinking about our own nature: our greatness, our current limitations, our future potential. ... The hand ... may point the way into the future of mankind. ... it may have something to say about human possibility’ (Tallis, 2003:9).

Given my own experience with Creative contemplation and what my practice-research has shown me when it is at work in the hands of others - especially those concerned with matters of sustainability - I am completely in agreement. Tallis is speaking here as a philosopher proposing a philosophy, not a practice, of the hand as ‘a portal into thinking about our own nature’ (2003:9). As an arts practitioner-philosopher at the end of eight years research into such matters I say this portal will only open to new, useful dimensions of seeing and thinking when the pragmatic and philosophic are working hand-in-hand, in a non-oppositional, asymmetrical binary unit where each element is in constant dynamic interaction with the other (Salk, 1983).

It is here I see the possibility to bridge the prevalent divide between the what and the how. In the literature surveyed in this research there are many philosophers and scientists, and those who are both, asserting the extreme urgency of the human mind to adapt its ways of seeing, thinking and doing in the world, to better meet the complexity and uncertainty of conserving the natural environment that supports human life. The work of Diamond (2005), Eisler (1987), Flannery (2008), Heidegger (1951, 1953), Homer-Dixon (2006), Hubbard (1998), Lovelock (2005, 2006), Mathews (2005), Midgeley (2002, 2004), Salk (1983) and Tallis (2003) are some examples where such a change of mind is urged but the pragmatics of how we might do it is not presented. This looks to me like a mirroring on a grand, even global, scale of the circumstances of the Creative futures program where the three hundred or so environmental scientists and other staff, relying solely on intellectual and linguistic modes of thinking, identified the what but not the how, and in their case were repeatedly mistaking the what for the how without realising it (p.200).

We have seen that the order of self-reflexive, emergent spaces created in this practice-research proves able to generate profound insight into philosophical
Further practice-research: An environment of the adaptive mind

Whilst my contemplations may seem to suggest I am planning to try and save the world, my encounter with Zen has relieved me of a tacit salvationist streak permeating the opening movements of refashioning my professional practice. My intention for further practice-research is somewhat simpler. As this Bookwork attests, over the extended years of practice-research I have accumulated a significant body of philosophical and practical knowledge on un/making mind. My intention (as it was when I began this practice) is to adapt, and transmit, as much as possible of this knowledge and its associated practices in ways and forms that are accessible and useful to others. The concept of an environment of the adaptive mind is, in many ways, a re-imagining and refashioning of the physical Spa for the mind as a virtual installation.

My aim is to develop and test a web-based environment of, and for, the adaptive mind, making it readily available to those who have already expressly stated interest and others who may yet become interested. Whilst it may seem paradoxical to use a web-based environment when so much of this work is about direct manual material meditation, I am keen to extend my experiments (within and outside this research) using digital means to create self-reflexive spaces that also interweave material as well as non-material practices of mind investigating and cultivating itself.

... arts processes are critically important kinds of human exchange that have the capacity to change the way we think about how we come to know what we do. (Sullivan, 2005:193)
My hunch about art is that a field that has changed in appearance as fast as it has must also have changed in meaning and function, perhaps to the extent that its role is qualitative (offering a way of perceiving things) rather than quantitative (producing physical objects or specific actions). (Kaprow, 1976:177)
Ultimately, we want to be of service to the larger world. The arts give us a means to grapple with the most complex issues of existence. We have to trust our explorations; however the work comes out, we have to embrace it and allow it to be. This is one way that humanity progresses and heals its wounds. (Spradlin, 2006)
The common theory of the artist as one possessed is well known, but I think it truer to call the artist one in possession; in possession of a reality less partial than the reality apprehended by most people. The artist cannot occupy the middle ground, and the warm nooks of humanity are not for her, she lives on the mountainside, in the desert, on the sea. The condition of the artist is a condition of Remove. (Winterson, 1996:168)

... for the hand is not isolated from the brain, nor manipulation from discourse, nor manual activity from the evolving global frameworks of emergent human consciousness ... (Tallis, 2003:34)

We have to recognise that although we are not ultimately self-created, we are increasingly the authors of our own nature, the products of our own handiwork, and living in a nature of our own making. (Tallis, 2003:347)

The path
It seems apt to close with a comment on the challenges - personal, professional, practical, epistemological, financial, administrative, to name the first ones that come to mind - that this transdisciplinary practitioner/practice and her endeavour have encountered along the way.

I say to others coming after, this is not a path sympathetic to the faint-hearted, the readily deterred, the easily bruised. But/and, for those of a mind to walk it, it is a path of untold rewards and potent possibilities.

I contend that given the possibilities art as a way of knowing presents for the human mind to become more adaptive, and adapting, to meet the increasingly complex, ambiguous, uncertain conditions of the world in which we live, it may be the duty of the arts and arts practitioners to actively embrace such a path, placing art firmly in the service of life.
References and Bibliography


Irigaray, L. (1985). This sex which is not one. (C. Perter & C. Burke, Trans.). USA: Cornell University Press.


Appendices


F. Department of Primary Industries permission to cite Creative futures project and its evaluation.

G. RMIT Ethics approval.
Abstract
In 1999 I established an experimental design practice that declared,

‘Our vision of the C21st is one where human potential is fulfilled through creativity. We believe imagination, creativity and design are the vital tools needed for growth and development beyond technology.’

The experiment was to test my growing conviction that principles of art and design could be taken beyond their traditional boundaries, and 1. Used to create effective new tools and methods for self-development, and 2. Applied in the field of individual and organisational development to cultivate personal, social and economic wellbeing. But how to set about this? What are those methods and tools? And, would anyone take a reconstructed frock designer seriously in these matters? This paper shares findings from the (ongoing) experiment and case studies an organization, the Department of Primary Industries (Victoria), who did take me seriously and has reaped significant rewards in the growth and development of its staff.

Refashioning a design practice:
From frocks to self-development
The impetus for even attempting the experiment was my ever growing concern, shared with many others, that our habitual modes of thinking are limited and committing us to unsustainable ways of being and doing in the world (in relation to ourselves, others and the environment); and that there is a pressing need to extend these modes (de Bono 1999; Eisler 1987; Goleman 1996; Hubbard 1998; Salk 1983).

But how? How can we usefully investigate and develop the mind? What methods are best suited to this task? Is there inner world technology? What are the tools for the job?

One of the primary existing and very effective methods for this work is meditation (in all its myriad forms). These techniques, however, mostly originate from ancient traditions of Eastern spiritual philosophy. Anyone having tried some of these techniques knows the requirements of the practices can be seriously at odds with the speed and demands of modern Western life. Is there a more amenable, contemporary form of self-inquiry? Something that can be used in the context
of our daily life and work?

Also, like many others (Arnheim 1969; Bolt 2004; Carter 2004; Collier 1972; Dewey 1934; Eisner 2002; Gardner 1982;), I share the belief that ‘arts processes are critically important kinds of human exchange that have the capacity to change the way we think about how we come to know what we do’ (Sullivan 2005, p193). So, the brief (to self) was to design stuff for effective self-inquiry, that utilizes/transfers/activates creative modalities found in art and design, but accessible for people who are not art and design practitioners. And then get people outside fields of art and design to buy it (conceptually and financially).

Creative contemplation®

My design ‘movements’ in response to the brief have gone through many reiterations but have, in recent years, distilled into what I call Creative Contemplation - a self-reflexive process of creative action and critical reflection that has proved very effective in enabling greater self-understanding that, in turn, brings about individual and organisational development.

Through experience of applying Creative Contemplation with clients, I have come to understand that its cogency comes of its two inseparable, intertwined elements: A Methodology of Material Practice and the Attendant. In more practical terms, this is a form of thinking through the hands using material language, that is enabled by my presence in the role of a ‘custodian’ of the creative inquiry; a role that I call being (an) Attendant.

The operational structures of these two elements (and the elements they each in turn comprise) are Möbius strips where inner and outer exist in a seamless relational exchange/flow where inner becomes outer...becomes process...becomes product...becomes process...and so on.

A theory in support of the Möbius strip operations is constructionism, derived by Papert (1980, 1993) who asserts that the physical act of constructing tangible things in the outer world with our hands is mirrored in our inner world, by our mind constructing intangible forms, such as knowledge. This, in turn, informs the things our hands are constructing, which then informs the knowledge the mind is constructing, and so on, and so on.

Where this speaks of the ‘Creative’ part, the ‘Contemplation’ part references meditation practices mentioned earlier. Throughout the work participants are asked to attend (as best they are able) to two strands of mental/emotional activity: 1. The cognitive operations in the practice – attending to the tasks; 2. The meta-cognitive activity of self-witnessing; to try and closely attend, in the moment, to workings of mind and heart - not what they are thinking and feeling, but how they are thinking about and responding to, those thoughts and feelings. To attend, to notice but/and not to judge.

Being (an) Attendant

The Attendant is key in the design of operationalizing all this for others in a non-art or design context, such as a science-based government department. She seeks to create the most favourable possible conditions - physical and meta-physical - conducive to Creative Contemplation: where people feel safe to inquire and reveal of themselves, feel free of judgment. The intention is to enable them to engage the creative intelligence of materials and embrace art making as an act of self-realization, at that place and time (Carter 2004).

In the Möbius strip exchange between inner and outer worlds, the Attendant’s state of being models/transmits/informs the quality of space for a person’s work of self-inquiry. To constitute and maintain this order of transformative space is an act of creativity. Being (an) Attendant is the same state of creative being experienced in the act of making art, but that state of mind is induced without doing the making. A state that allows the imagination to fathom the continuous, multiple, simultaneous, complex, abundant and partly invisible nature of reality, and reveal its fathomings through art (Winterson 1996). Possibly the most significant aspect of creativity employed in being (an) Attendant is unknowingness; creative mind does not seek to resolve or grasp at answers; it accepts a state of fluidity, of permeability, of no fixed positions – a kind of creative agnosticism – that allows the mind to change itself (McDonagh, 2004).

As custodian of this creative inquiry, and the inner/outer world spaces in which it takes place, the Attendant initiates the process by crafting tenuous open-ended question(s) that locate the mind and heart in the nature of the inquiry. In the Creative Futures Program case studied in this paper these are questions such as, In your inner world what is resilience? How is it when you are in the moment of your lived experience of being resilient?

Methodology of material practice

Engagement with Materials/Material Language

In the Creative Futures Program there is a specific strand of process and a kit for participants to collect materials/substances/objects with which they have a personal affinity. I supplement these by providing materials such as papers, fabric, felt, gauze, balsa, that are easy for an inexperienced maker to handle With the question for inquiry in mind participants...
take time to contemplate the inherent qualities of the materials - colour, line, texture, weight, pattern, etc – and intuitively select those that have some resonance for them related to the question/inquiry. Material language then becomes the navigation instrument to explore the abstract, intangible, unrecognised realities of mind and heart in the lived-experience of ‘resilience’. The symbolic value of the materials is a secondary concern.

Enactment in/through/of Making
This methodology emphasizes and activates the performative principle of art making (Bolt 2004; Carter 1996). Participants are encouraged to focus on the dynamic process of creative inquiry, to be fully in the act of making where ‘the material practice of art can transcend its structure as representation and, in the dynamic productivity of the performative act, produce ontological effects’ (Bolt 2004, p186).

Embodiment in Material Form
The art object that has emerged in the enactment of making now becomes an object of inquiry that is contemplated as a material embodiment of the reality brought into being by the maker - a story that is heard by attentively listening through the eyes...

Attentive Listening
...this blend of aural/visual contemplation intends a more oblique sensory consideration, allowing more subtle discernment of the complex of data generated, be it knowledge, experience, insight, art object...

Stories Materialized
...data that come under the all encompassing, generic term ‘stories’, which the inquirers further materialize, in diverse (written and spoken) forms, by engaging with verbal language as yet another material.

But what does all this look like in an applied situation? And what does Creative Contemplation do for people who engage in it?

An applied example: Creative futures program and kit
Early 2003, I designed the Creative Futures Program and Kit for staff development within the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI). Creative Contemplation was applied to help people cultivate inner world capabilities to deal with complexity and uncertainty - emotional and psychological capabilities such as resilience, courage, flexibility and so on – and thereby have more positive agency in creating the future. I was drawn to the notion of the staff being predominately environmental scientists practised in collecting data from/about the external landscape. I designed a format and tools that closely referenced this but reversed the flow of attention inwards, to the inner landscape.

DPI recognised from the outset that offering a program, that had no known precedent in organisational development, presented a risk - the program would not necessarily be widely embraced, and the benefits could not be measured in conventional ways. Despite this, DPI had the courage and foresight to go ahead and, was rewarded by unprecedented results.

The program spans three months, combining three one-day workshops and, in between sessions, self-directed activities that are supported by Creative Threads sent by email and participants meeting to do some of the creative work in each others’ company. The experiential components are supported with kits of tangible tools that embody the methodology:

A Journal with readings, guidelines, activities and other learning materials
A Collecting Kit to gather materials, objects, and so on, to use in making artworks and
An Exhibition Box to house them
Oblique Inspirations® Open Mind, Open Heart set of cards and guidebook for individual use
Post Program Support Kit for 12 months of self-directed activities for participants to continue their self-development.

Program overview
The Creative Futures Program starts with clips from three sci-fi films made over a twenty-year span (c.1980–2000). These show three visions of the future that illustrate how, as human beings, we can easily make technological advances but seem unable to advance ourselves, our thinking, our relationships to others and the world around us. Participants are asked to explore how we might go about changing this - not how/why we got here - but how can we move forward from here and progress the development of our (complex, abstract and non-technical) inner worlds.

Every one of the 20 groups that has undertaken the program so far has been given the same task, and every time the results have been the same. The groups immediately set about investigating this challenging and complex question in habitual, conventional word-based ways. Every group, without exception, found it could not stay engaged with the topic, easily getting distracted and/or bogged down in investigating what was specifically not under investigation (how/why we got here). This serves to demonstrate how some tasks or topics are immune to conventional word-based approaches and our usual ways of engaging and thinking. Participants have time to reflect on this
experience and consider what the implications of this are for them as individuals and for our shared world (and all before lunch!).

Participants are then introduced to the proposition of Creative Contemplation® as a mode of engagement and a way of thinking. They are given some tangible tools to use - individual sets of Oblique Inspirations® Open Mind, Open Heart cards, and for group use, a Story Box - a piece of interactive sculpture that uses the material language of objects for self-inquiry. They repeat the earlier exercise and investigate the difference between engaging with the question using the material tools compared to their more usual, habitual verbal modes of engaging and thinking. The contrast is usually stark, enabling a subtle, sustained, productive engagement with the question.

Over the following weeks participants go on to investigate nine inner world capabilities that they believe are the most important to them in dealing with complexity and uncertainty. They use the Collecting Kit to collect their own materials that have some intuitive creative intelligence/material language resonance for them with the inquiry. Then, by thinking through the hands, artworks are created embodying in material form the maker’s lived reality of these capabilities. These are gradually assembled in the Exhibition Box, becoming a sort of map of the inner landscape. The significance of this is that the maker now no longer has to rely on limited, generic words as tools to explore, to know, to understand complex, intangibles such thoughts and emotions. S/he not only has a new mode of engaging and thinking but s/he has also produced a visible symbolic language in the outer world, of an inner world capability; a symbol system the mind can now use to effectively think with and generate deeper, useful knowledge of and about itself.

The process (thinking through the hands) and the product (the made artworks) are both subjected to cycles of verbal inquiry in two forms - one written, in a journal, the other spoken (at each person’s discretion). This acts to reveal meaning to participants in ever deepening layers; allowing the mind to more fully apprehend and comprehend its experience and knowledge of the capabilities under inquiry here, such as compassion, responsiveness, flexibility and so on.

The third, and final, day of the program is devoted to exhibiting the collective works, Storytelling and Attentive Listening. Each person (voluntarily) subjects his or her experience and artworks to further layers of inquiry through this form of reflection, particular to the methodology. As they do so, the construction of their self-awareness and resulting self-knowledge becomes even more robust.

Self-awareness and self-knowledge shape our responses and actions in any situation but to usefully engage and manage the increasingly complex and uncertain conditions we face, we require higher levels of both. By knowing what it feels like to be better in these conditions - be aware, be resilient, be courageous - we can do better - we can stay engaged not become overwhelmed and withdraw, maintain our ability to think creatively - and actively generate the kind of Creative Futures we would like for ourselves, for others and the planet.

Outcomes

DPI’s courage was justified and rewarded by significant individual and organisational benefits from the Creative Futures Programs delivered to 20 groups, totalling about 300 staff, over 2003 - 2005. This extended time span has allowed data to be gathered from participants 12-24 months on, that demonstrates the changes derived from increased personal insight are lasting and have sustained benefits to individuals and the organization.

All participants indicated that the course had an impact with many describing it as ‘profound’, ‘significant’ and ‘enormous’. Many made references to being more confident, calm and self-aware in life and at work. Many also referred to a greater awareness of their own creativity, and cited changes in their modes of thinking, illustrated here by a few random responses reproduced from participants’ evaluation of the program and its effects on them.

‘I’ve been to a lot of courses where I have learned ‘tricks’ - ‘tricks’ for stress management, time management or whatever, but they have had no real impact on me, my way of thinking, or what I do. This course has really impacted deeply and connected me to my inner world capabilities. I can actually feel the difference. I am different.’

‘It was fun and playful. It felt liberating and I feel more relaxed over this month and accepted a couple of challenges that I would normally have shied away from. I began to realise that I can think differently; there’s more to me than I’ve been letting on to myself…and everyone else.’

‘During the month (between sessions), I found on one occasion I was aware of how I was feeling and it was an eye-opener. It was weird! I felt better and more in control and didn’t give way to my emotion. I felt calm. It was remarkable.’

‘It was an ‘out there’ course but the
presenter and the material made it the best course I have ever done in my many years in DPI. It has truly developed fundamental change for the better in.’

‘Because Creative Futures focuses on developing inner capabilities, sometimes it may be difficult to explain how the course assists employees. However, the impact for me has been very real. Two months after completing the course I had the opportunity to spend a few days with a colleague I had not seen since before Creative Futures. On the second day she remarked that it was as though she had gotten into the car with a completely different person.’

‘Creative Futures revealed something I had been struggling with for most of my life, that had prevented me from being truly present in everything that I do - being fixated on the outcome. Every time I feel the tension rising, I visualise the Open Mind, Open Heart cards for “unattached to outcome” and “hold lightly” and I relax.’

It is important to note that the program is not necessarily all plain sailing. The experience can be challenging, even confronting, for participants (and the Attendant). It was not unusual at the start of Day I to hear such comments as:

‘I heard good and bad things about the course. One person hated it and found it really difficult. The other person loved it…it seems really challenging and interesting.’

‘Someone told me it was hard and confronting but she really enjoyed it and learned so much about herself.’

And, during the course, for people to comment:

‘I’m back (to Day II) because I was able to stop myself in a few situations from letting my emotions control my actions. I was able to assess my thinking in the moment and not let other’s emotions or body language control me either. It’s very powerful. I am confused and uncertain as to the course and could think of many reasons not to come today, but I’m here to challenge this’.

Further applications within DPI

The significant success that Creative Futures has enjoyed has led to me being engaged to apply my methodology in specific areas of the organization to benefit particular teams and their projects. This has come about through three ‘graduates’ of the course who are in key positions within the organization, and who have had the vision and courage to want to apply the methodology in their particular areas.

One is LandLearn, an education team housed within DPI working with schools to raise awareness and explore issues of environmental sustainability. They were seeking a ‘paradigm shift’ in their thinking about ‘sustainability’ to benefit their work as a team and to create specific professional development workshops for teachers, and thinking tools for use in schools. Since starting the project in early 2005, we have been very successful in achieving those aims, and the innovative results are now being favourably received by teachers around the state (McDonagh 2006). Two more applications just underway at the time of writing are with DPI’s Innovation Team re-envisioning the future of innovation within DPI and, in a separate project, with the Strategic Policy Unit to develop the organization’s individual and collective strategic capability.

And to conclude...

I set out to show that principles of art and design could be taken beyond their traditional boundaries and effectively applied to the work of individual and organisational development. I trust that what I have been able to convey in this paper serves to illustrate to artists and designers the success of my experiment in fashioning a new creative practice and applying it in a new field bringing substantial benefits to others outside of art and design circles.
Notes
1 Vision statement, on company marketing and communication materials (brochures, postcards, invitations).
2 My reconception of the artist as Attendant is the basis of my current PhD research, In/sight: The Art of Creating Self-Reflexive Spaces.

References
Collier, G 1972, Art and the Creative Consciousness, Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
McDonagh, N 2004, Oblique Inspirations®: Open Mind, Open Heart, McDonagh Design, Melbourne.
McDonagh, N 2006, LandLearn: Changing Minds, Innovating Outcomes, report prepared by N McDonagh for Department of Primary Industries, Victoria.
Introduction

Most of us are familiar with what we might call doing sustainability; learning about and managing our external (natural and constructed) environments, saving water, reducing waste, and so on – sustainability epistemology - knowledge that can be applied in/to/on the world (should we care to). In comparison, it seems much less individual and collective effort is directed towards learning about and understanding the human ‘inner’ environment of our minds and hearts – sustainability ontology. Our ‘beingness’ is how we regard and treat ourselves, others and the world. It generates and perpetuates the thoughts, ideas, views, values, beliefs that direct our choices, behaviours and actions that, in turn, shape how we humans impact on the world and those around us. If we regard both inner and outer worlds as inseparable elements of the same reality (Salk, 1983) and diligently attend to caring for both, we better serve our efforts to create human psychological and social, as well as environmental, sustainability. For example, it may be that I am a prolific recycler with a low ecological footprint but and have scant regard for those around me and generate hostility that undermines our individual and collective wellbeing. Usefully attending to the inner (as well as outer) environment can expand ways of viewing the world, to reveal other realities enabling us, as individuals and as societies, to become more sustainable in our being as well as our doing. This potentially allows all of us to cultivate, embed and embody sustainability within us, to embrace a holistic view of sustainability and what constitutes sustainable practices – personal, social, spiritual, economic and so on, as well as environmental – in our particular set of circumstances.

This chapter presents a case-study of LandLearn, a team of environmental educators who utilized an art-based methodology of self-inquiry I have developed to attend to their inner worlds and explore the notion of being sustainability. The journey of creative inquiry undertaken had two intentions. One, to expand in unspecified ways individual and collective modes of seeing, thinking about, and understanding sustainability beyond the team’s practical expertise. Two, to use any new insights or knowledge generated in the inquiry to produce something innovative and useful for teaching and...
learning related to sustainability.

Context
LandLearn is an education program housed in the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) Victoria, that has over the past decade been providing very successful Professional Development (PD) for teachers, learning workshops for students and curriculum materials related to sustainable food and fibre agriculture. In early 2005, LandLearn team members felt they may have come to the useful limits of their existing ways of seeing, thinking about, and understanding this vitally important topic. How to usefully (re)engage with the dilemma of sustainability - the use of the world’s natural resources to produce food and fibre and the need to conserve and replenish those resources?

I was invited to design a program of exploration for LandLearn using the art-based methodology of inquiry I have developed called Creative Contemplation®. For the past four years I have been working with DPI successfully applying this methodology to benefit individual and organisational development where it has no known precedent. DPI has demonstrated great courage and vision (especially for a science-based organisation) in utilizing this art-based system of knowing to develop staff capabilities that address diverse aspects of themselves, such as their capacity to deal with complexity and uncertainty, to be innovative, to be strategic.

This program of inquiry with LandLearn applied the methodology to generate greater self-knowledge related to sustainability that may also have applied benefit to others. It was conceived as a continuous journey of creative inquiry, where the investigation began in the personal, intangible, inner (mental, emotional, psychological) world of self-knowledge; gradually extending outwards into the realm of group and collective knowledge; ultimately arriving at applied knowledge to generate practical outcomes – a teaching and learning resource for schools. The journey was structured as a series of four one-day facilitated workshops, spanning four months linked in between by self-directed activities. Participants also had tangible tools in the form of Open Mind, Open Heart - a guided system of symbols for self-inquiry and a journal of related learning materials.¹

An Art-based Methodology of Inquiry: Creative Contemplation®
My education and professional experience are in design and art. Through this I have come to know that 'arts processes are critically important kinds of human exchange that have the capacity to change the way we think about how we come to know what we do’ (Sullivan 2005, p193). Ten or more years ago I focused my attention and professional practice on designing tools and methods that utilize/transfer/activate creative modalities found in art and design, but that are accessible for people who are not art and design practitioners. My design movements over the years have been influenced and informed by diverse bodies of theoretical and philosophical knowledge (eg Dewey 1934; Salk 1983; Stambaugh 1999) becoming distilled into what I call Creative Contemplation. This is a practical, art-based process of self-reflexive creative action and critical reflection (Sullivan 2005) that has proved to be very effective in enabling people to generate greater understanding of self, others and the world. The space available here only allows a brief sketch of the methodology but I trust this provides the reader with enough information to locate the work conceptually and philosophically and get a sense of its practical application.³

The cogency of Creative Contemplation comes of two inseparable, intertwined elements: A Methodology of Material Practice and the Attendant. In more concrete terms, this is a mode of thinking through the hands using material language, that is enabled by my presence in the role of ‘custodian’ (not facilitator) of the creative inquiry; a role that I call being (an) Attendant. The operational structures of these two elements (and the elements they each in turn comprise) are Möbius strips where inner and outer exist in a seamless relational exchange/flow where inner becomes outer...becomes inner...becomes outer...and process...becomes product...becomes process...and so on.

Being (an) Attendant
The Attendant is key in the design of operationalizing all this for others in a non-art or design context, such as a science-based government department. She seeks to create the most favourable possible conditions - physical and meta-physical - conducive to Creative Contemplation; where people feel safe to inquire and reveal of themselves, feel free of judgment. The Attendant initiates the process by crafting tenuous open-ended question(s) that locate the mind and heart in the nature of the inquiry.

Methodology Of Material Practice
Engagement with Materials/Material Language
The inquirers use materials such as papers, fabric, felt, gauze, balsa, that are easy for an inexperienced maker to handle. With the question in mind inquirers take time to contemplate the inherent qualities of the materials - colour, line, texture, weight,
inquirers further materialize data from their lived-experience, in written and spoken forms, by engaging with verbal language as yet another material.

Outcomes of LandLearn’s Creative Inquiry
To reiterate the intentions for this project were to:

- Expand LandLearn members’ individual and collective ways of seeing, thinking about, understanding sustainability beyond their practical expertise, in some way meaningful to them
- Use any new insights or knowledge generated in the inquiry to inform the design of something innovative and useful for teaching and learning related to sustainability.
- This journey of inquiry came to be known as ‘Creating Sustainable Futures’ and it produced significant intangible and tangible outcomes. ²

Intangible Outcomes
The experience had a profound impact on the team’s individual and collective thinking. It delivered significant insights for each of them into their ways of seeing, thinking about and understanding sustainability — particularly those ways tending to restrict, limit and frustrate their educational work. These insights enabled subtle but significant practice changes favouring growth rather than stagnation.

It is important to reiterate here that there were no norms embedded in the program — no impetus to direct people towards any particular way of thinking, any pre-destined view or any favoured practice – the insights and mind shifts were particular to each individual but/and had commonalities within the group. An example of this was evidenced in their use of language and vocabulary reflecting shifts in viewing themselves and their work. The notion of being temporary ‘custodians’ appeared. Custodians of the land, their education work, the intention of awakening sustainability consciousness in society; vastly expanding their idea of themselves as educators.

Further, participants revealed a distinctly spiritual dimension and disposition to the group’s being and doing that had previously not been evident and/or acknowledged. This served to connect the team and its education work to something greater than itself, beyond this particular time and place, alleviating feelings of desperation and despondency – allowing the burden of concern for the world to be held more lightly.

“But I see now...our work is only one thread and there are lots of others all working with the same threads somewhere else, even some time else and it is all connected. I don’t have to make it all tie together at my one place, at my point, it is already connected.”

During the journey of inquiry team members experienced a sense of becoming sustainability; this brought to the fore (for all concerned) the importance of individual responsibility in Gandhi’s sense of ‘being the change you wish to see in the world’. This in turn produced what is probably the most powerful effect of this whole exercise. At the risk of reducing a subtle but significant ontological proposition into a simplistic, crude characterization, this effect shifted peoples’ practice mode from ‘instruct through information’ to ‘influence by example’. Team members were surprised (and delighted) to notice that people around them, notoriously resistant to notions of sustainability (eg converting to ‘green’ energy) were now amenable to making changes they had been refusing for years, and made them of their own...
The Oblique Inspirations® Kit takes the Oblique Inspirations® Kit as well as a creative inquiry; an innovative thinking tool called Oblique Inspirations® as well as a PD program. These have been branded ‘Creating Sustainable Futures’ and both are being experienced by other educators and generating similar, notable benefits for them personally and enhancing their teaching practices.

Tangible Outcomes
As hoped, significant individual and collective insights were generated in the inquiry that then informed a significantly different teaching/learning resource for schools from the standard resource book LandLearn would have made before the creative inquiry; an innovative thinking tool called Oblique Inspirations® as well as a PD program. These have been branded ‘Creating Sustainable Futures’ and both are being experienced by other educators and generating similar, notable benefits for them personally and enhancing their teaching practices.

Oblique Inspirations® Kit
The Oblique Inspirations® Kit takes the broad, holistic view of sustainability mentioned earlier going beyond notions of sustainability limited to the environment. This device enables you to explore what sustainability is to you in your life – in relation to yourself, others and the world.

The Kit operates on two art-related principles supported by Gardner’s extensive research into creativity that shows ‘the basic unit of thought is the symbol and the basic entities with which humans operate in a meaningful context are symbol systems’ (1982, p39), and even more importantly, ‘an artistic medium provides the mind with the means for coming to grips with ideas and emotions of great significance, ones that cannot be articulated and mastered through ordinary conversational language’ (1982, p90).

The Oblique Inspirations® Kit provides the mind with a readymade system of symbols embodying diverse aspects of sustainability. The 48 cards in the Kit carry carefully chosen photographs, illustrations, graphic artworks and stories. These are not a compendium representing ‘sustainability issues’ rather they are a collection of images for visual contemplation; images to inspire reflection, curiosity, wonder. These threads of contemplation continue through the device of a Book of Inquiry where each image is linked to further inquiry, this time word-based. This may be in the form of philosophy; poetry; literature; quotes; factual scientific information, or self-reflective questions.

By inter-weaving diverse visual and verbal elements the mind works using the multiplicitous logic of the blot (Carter 2004) creating a continuous rippled canvas of self-inquiry; both revealing and creating new and unexpected connections. Working in the manner of the blot - in the way blobs of watercolour paint act on wet paper – closely mirrors the brain’s organic structure and natural system of functioning (Claxton 2006). In this way rich and useful insights can emerge, generating deeper understanding of mind and heart, which, in turn, informs our behaviour.

A sample of comments from teachers who are using the Oblique Inspirations® Kit serve to illustrate the affect (and effect) of this thinking tool on themselves and their students:

‘Before I opened the Kit I thought I had a good idea of what sustainability means to me but almost as soon as I started using the cards I began to realise I actually have a very limited view of it. I could almost feel my mind physically stretching to take in new ideas – it was quite amazing’.

‘I’ve used the Kit with my students (who have special developmental needs) and I was amazed by what came out of it… I had no idea they had such sophisticated conceptual understanding of sustainability. I’m sure we’d never have got to know this without using the Kit’.

Professional Development Program
The Creating Sustainable Futures PD program replicates a similar journey to the one undertaken by the LandLearn team but in a condensed version structured in 3 parts, totaling 9 hours, spread over 3 months. It further extends and enhances the art-based inquiry embodied in Oblique Inspirations® with Creative Contemplation processes of thinking through the hands where various forms of individual and group artworks are made (such as Wish Flags) that embody both personal and collective experience of sustainability.

At the time of writing, the first trial of the full three-part PD program is just underway with one school in Victoria, and two more expected to follow in the coming months. LandLearn’s experience of the journey can be gleaned from one member’s reflections:

‘Using this methodology and its processes allowed what we felt. It was an inspirational and positive activity that tended not to get bogged down in the details and the negativity that can often be associated with sustainability discussions.

Perhaps the greatest contrast between this process and more traditional approaches is that we were able to feel our ideas and messages about sustainability. It provided space for the team to explore alternative ideas in a supportive and non-threatening environment. It also highlighted the value of using non-traditional thinking processes to address such a complex issue.

A personal benefit for me is greater
freedom in the way I think about other problems or issues now.’

LandLearn and I wait with intense interest to see if this experience is shared by the teachers undertaking the trials but the indicators from a preliminary focus group (November 2005), who enthusiastically embraced the concept, bode well not just to enhance their own thinking but for applied use in the classroom:

’I can see that the ideas would work as a focus point to get the students really thinking. It would be valuable to use the Wish Flags, for example, to launch a whole school celebration and commitment to sustainability. We are rewriting our curriculum (in line with the new Victorian Essential Learning Standards) so the ideas are very relevant’.

Notes
1. Oblique Inspirations® Open Mind, Open Heart is a thinking tool produced by McDonagh Design
2. For full details of LandLearn’s creative inquiry and its outcomes see McDonagh, 2006 a).
3. For detailed description of Creative Contemplation® methodology see McDonagh, 2006 b).
4. The Creating Sustainable Futures PD program will be evaluated in 2007 and assessed on its viability to be delivered within the school system.

And to end…

It is worthy of mention that although Creating Sustainable Futures was initially conceived for those involved in environmental education it quickly became apparent that the concept is applicable to anyone concerned with living a sustainable life. We are deeply encouraged by the interest being shown by the corporate world, for example, the Environmental Partnerships Program of ALCOA and Elite, one of the BP group of companies, both of whom are particularly enthusiastic about the Oblique Inspirations® Kit. All of this encourages the view that Creating Sustainable Futures is a valuable contribution to achieving the shift called for in the Ahmedabad Declaration for Education for Sustainable Development, 2005:

‘Education for Sustainable Development implies a shift…to the recognition that we are all learners as well as teachers. Environmentally sustainable development must happen in villages and cities, schools and universities, corporate offices and assembly lines, and in the offices of ministers and civil servants’.

I trust that what I have been able to convey (in words!) demonstrates the potency and efficacy that art-based methods can have in expanding how we see and think about sustainability; in cultivating those two vital organs – mind and heart - that ultimately dictate whether or not our society can, or will, create sustainable futures.
References
McDonagh, N 2006 a), LandLearn: Changing Minds, Innovating Outcomes, report prepared by N McDonagh for Department of Primary Industries, Victoria.
Creating sustainable futures: LandLearn changing minds, innovating outcomes.


Abstract
As visual artists we know that, ‘Visual arts processes are critically important kinds of human exchange that have the capacity to change the way we think about how we come to know what we do’ (Sullivan 2005 p.193). But how do we transfer these processes to spheres beyond the studio, academy, gallery or classroom to benefit those who are not practitioners of visual arts? How might visual arts processes then be used to engage contemporary issues of pressing concern, such as sustainability? In this paper I show that through an adapted form of material practice and a re-imagining of the artist as Attendant, this can be realized.

Context for the Propositions
By way of context I’d like to offer a story from my applied practice. Since 2003, I have been engaged by the Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to apply my methodology of art-based inquiry to the personal and professional development of its staff – to cultivate the capabilities needed to better deal with complexity and uncertainty. This initiative has enjoyed significant success and has led to the methodology being used in specific areas of the organization to benefit particular teams and their projects. LandLearn is an education team housed within DPI that works with schools throughout Victoria to raise awareness and explore issues of environmental sustainability. LandLearn wanted to create something innovative for teachers and students but felt that they had reached the useful limits of their modes of thinking about this complex, slippery topic. In early 2005 I was invited to help them re-conceive their ways of engaging, thinking and communicating ‘sustainability’. This project is known as Creating Sustainable Futures.

The Art of Transformative Spaces
Some days before starting work with LandLearn I was at the National Gallery of Victoria (NGV) in the exhibition ‘Colour Power’ showing the influence of acrylic paints on Aboriginal art since the 1980’s. The rear wall of the gallery space held a vast work painted on a tarpaulin; it had clearly been created by many hands using diverse marks, motifs and movements but they came together in an immensely powerful, cohesive and affective whole. I read
the accompanying text on the gallery wall; a simple statement to the effect that this work, Ngurra Canvas (1996), had been made to tell a story of relationship to land. It was made to take into a Land Rights hearing in the Australian High Court. It was an attempt to communicate to the judiciary those peoples’ connection with the land. The artists believed if the judges could see those peoples' connection with the land.

Towards the end of the first day’s work with LandLearn, I asked the group to create a collective 2D ‘sustainability’ artwork. The framework I gave was that it was not an exercise in collaboration and team effort. No negotiation was required (“Can I put my strips of torn yellow paper next to your leaves?”) nor was it concerned with group consensus for an approach to the task. The task was to be individuals, to work alongside each other, in a shared creative space and shared creative act with a common focus on ‘sustainability’. I asked them to be as open as possible to whatever might emerge and to try and observe themselves in the moment, to notice (if possible) what they experienced being in the process. I also asked that they accept whatever material form emerged – not to design it or try and control it, but allow it to be revealed. Not unexpectedly, the group stayed in the known and familiar place of being and doing ‘team’ and began to try and establish consensus on an approach to the task – to agree on the size of paper to use, who should do what, and so on. This went on for some time.

As I watched, I became aware of my increasing anxiety and agitated thoughts, “We’re running out of time here! This isn’t working!” I relaxed my demeanour and inner tension. As I relaxed, the space responded in kind. A moment later a ‘slippage’ occurred. The group slipped out of ‘team’ and into another mode of being; being individual but/and connected to others, through a creative enactment. They began a silent, rhythmic, almost dance-like performance. Each person worked separately on areas of the paper canvas using quite different materials, media, motifs. The large scale of the canvas had them work standing up; moving around it; mapping intertwining paths around each other as they stepped in, out, between, to add, consider, attach, remove. One person began to create a web-like structure from white wool yarn. She said later she felt compelled in the moment to overlay the ‘web’ onto the manifesting work. Without discussion or negotiation she passed the ball of yarn to someone else. They in turn unraveled the thread, secured it in some way, somewhere on the work and passed it on. I was moved to proffer a pencil as a spindle to ease the unraveling of the yarn; the motion became smoother. This action of unraveling thread, handing on, receiving, enacted an intangible web of connections mirroring the tangible web of thread appearing within the work. It was effortless, seamless and poetic.

There was no moment of ‘finish’ imposed on the process. The natural extent of this material and gestural enactment of sustainability was reached in its own time – maybe only thirty minutes. I asked the group what they observed of their lived experience in this creative process and the made work. One person spoke of how earlier in the day she had picked up a piece of pink ribbon she was attracted to:

‘I was looking at the web. I thought that at that point there, where all the threads seem to cross, I could tie them all together. As I tried, I realized it wasn’t possible. But I kept trying, thinking if I try harder I can make them. And then suddenly I saw that is exactly what I am always trying to do in my work and

cannot. I always think for our work to be of value I have to make all the threads from everywhere, in everything we do, tie together and I never can. And I just keep trying to make them and get so frustrated and despondent because I can’t. But I see now that’s not how it is. The work we do is only one thread and there are lots of other people all working with the same threads somewhere else, even some time else and it is all connected. I don’t have to make it all tie together at my one place, at my point, it is already connected’.

A month later when I met with the group in the town of Kilmore for our second day together, our usual meeting place, the library, wasn’t available and we were offered the historic courthouse as a venue – a building not open to the public, rarely used and without plumbing; a neglected site. I had been appointed custodian of the large artwork the group had made and had brought it with me on the day. I cleaned and prepared the physical space as best I could and unrolled the canvas. We gathered around it, ‘listening through the eyes’ to what it embodied…in that moment there was another slippage.

Distinctions separating times and places disappeared. The web of connections manifest in the artwork became manifest in our lived experience in that time, at that place. Here we were, a (nother) group of people…with a canvas created to embody the story of relationship to land…telling that story…in the courthouse…connected to the Aboriginal artists and their painting in the gallery…made to evidence relationship to land…to tell that story in a courthouse. We were the web.

What are the implications of this story for both, forms of practice, and fields of practice for visual artists?
It is evident from the story that art-based practices have been used to create affective, transformative spaces. As visual artists we may realize these transformative spaces and experiences in our studios, immersed in the work of making art, where ‘the material practice of art can transcend its structure as representation and, in the dynamic productivity of the performative act, produce ontological effects’ (Bolt, 2004 p.186). Here though, consider that this is not an artist’s private endeavour in her studio but a group of people who are not art practitioners, who work in a government department, who are concerned with matters of teaching and learning related to sustainable agriculture.

In the course of my professional practice I have come to understand that this order of space is constituted for others through the cogency of two inseparable, intertwined elements: A Methodology of Material Practice and the Attendant. They each have different concerns and interests, different voices and language but one does not, cannot exist without the other. This is not the ontology and epistemology of either/or, it is a reality of both/and.

Creative Contemplation® is the term I use to encompass the combination of methodology and Attendant. There are some general aspects to note before addressing specifics. Throughout the work participants are asked to attend (as best they are able) to two strands of mental/emotional activity:

1. The cognitive operations in the practice: attending to the tasks.
2. The meta-cognitive activity of self-witnessing: to try and notice not what they are thinking and feeling, but how they are thinking about and responding to, those thoughts those feelings; to notice but/and not to judge.

The essence of the practical methodology will be recognized by anyone familiar with accounts of cultural practices of indigenous Australians but/and to put it in theoretical terms, it intertwines two notions: one, Levin’s ontological thinking that ‘engages us in the opening wholeness of our being, and “takes place” as much in the life of our feet and hands and eyes as it does in our head, our brains, or our mind’ (Higgins 2002); the other, Carter’s (1996) methexis that he describes as a principle of performativity associated with a concurrent material production.

To convey the operational structures of Creative Contemplation it helps to use the device of a Möbius strip where distinctions between inner and outer (edges and surfaces) can only be made superficially and momentarily; they exist in a seamless relational exchange/flow where inner becomes outer…becomes inner…becomes outer…with that in mind I will attempt to distinguish the methodology of material practice and the Attendant.

A Methodology of Material Practice
Crafting the Question(s)
As custodian of the inquiry and the inner/outer world spaces in which it takes place, the Attendant has to initiate the process by crafting tenuous open-ended question(s) that locate the mind and heart in the nature of the inquiry. In the story told earlier, the question posited to the LandLearn group was: How do you see, experience, engage, cultivate, practice, sustainability in relation to others and the outer/physical world?

Engagement with Materials/Material Language
I provide the group with materials such as papers, fabric, felt, gauze, balsa, that are easy for an inexperienced maker to handle. With the question for inquiry in mind participants take time to contemplate the inherent qualities of the materials - colour, line, texture, weight, pattern, etc – and intuitively select those that have some resonance for them related to the question/inquiry. Material language then becomes the navigation instrument to explore the abstract, intangible, unrecognized realities of mind and heart in the lived-experience of ‘sustainability’. The symbolic value of the materials is a secondary concern.

Enactment in/through/of Making
As already indicated, this methodology emphasizes and activates the performatve principle of art making (Bolt 2004; Carter 1996). Participants are encouraged to focus on the dynamic process of creative inquiry, to be fully in the act of making and allow the material form to emerge.

Embodiment in Material Form
The art object now becomes an object of inquiry that is contemplated as a material embodiment of the reality brought into being by the makers - a story that is heard by attentively listening through the eyes… ‘To look is to learn, if you listen carefully’ (Arnoldi n.d.)…

Attentive Listening
…the blend of aural/visual contemplation intends a more oblique sensory consideration, allowing more subtle discernment of the complex of data generated, be it knowledge, experience, insight, art object…

Stories Materialized
…data that come under the all encompassing, generic term, stories, which the inquirers further materialize, in diverse (written and spoken) forms, by engaging with verbal language as yet another material.

Artist as Attendant
The methodology of material practice alone is not sufficient to constitute the order of
transformative space under consideration here, it is inseparable from the agency of the Attendant. My re-conception of artist as (an) Attendant is the heart of my current PhD research and very much a work in process where my attempts to convey the notion seem clumsy and somewhat crude. However, at the risk of rendering an extremely subtle and cogent ontological proposition simplistic and possibly rather lifeless, I press on.

The Term ‘Attendant’
Ann Hamilton sometimes referred to the human figures in her her early installation works as ‘attendants’ (Simon 2000). Intrigued by the term, I was drawn to adopt it and invoke its many explicit and implicit meanings: Attend – to be present to another person or a task; take care of, minister to someone/something; give or pay attention to; Tend - disposition towards; to care for; Tender - multiple meanings of gentle, soft-hearted; to offer; the notion of exchange, some form of currency, something of value that facilitates a transaction. These speak of both the Attendant’s disposition and the spirit of her actions.

Creating the Conditions
The intention of the Attendant is to create for others the most favourable possible conditions - physical and meta-physical - conducive to Creative Contemplation®. People need to feel safe to inquire and reveal of themselves, to feel free of judgement. The intention is to enable them to engage the creative intelligence of materials and embrace art making as an act of (individual and collective) self-realization at that place and time (Carter 2004).

General Disposition of Being (an) Attendant
In the Möbius strip exchange between inner and outer worlds the Attendant’s state of being models/transmits/informs the quality of spaces for a person’s work of inquiring of their being and doing. To constitute and maintain this order of transformative space is an act of creativity. Being (an) Attendant is the same state of creative being experienced in the act of making art but that state of mind is induced without doing the making. And a few additional traits are disposed. Some that I currently recognize are:

Disposition of Unknowing
Possibly the most significant aspect of creativity employed in being (an) Attendant is unknowingness; creative mind does not seek to resolve or grasp at answers; it accepts a state of fluidity, of permeability, of no fixed positions – a kind of creative agnosticism (McDonagh, 2004).

Disposition of the Still Point
Being (an) Attendant is to hold; to hold still within; to ‘hold’ the Being of participants as they make their inquiry. Her fullest attention goes to being attendant not doing Attendant. The quality of this is epitomized by T.S.Eliot’s lines (1943 p.5):

Neither from nor towards, at the still point, there the dance is,
But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
Where past and future are gathered.
Neither movement from nor towards
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point, the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.

Disposition of Non-attachment
This disposition will be recognized by anyone familiar with Buddhist philosophy and practices; non-attachment to personal opinions, judgments, likes, dislikes. And we come back to implicate meanings of the term Attendant: Tender - gentle, soft-hearted; a spirit of care and compassion, here combined with acceptance and non-judgment of self, others, the process and what emerges.

Disposition of Attentive Observation
As custodian of the inquiry the Attendant pays exquisite attention to what transpires. She may gently draw participants’ attention to aspects that have gone unnoticed. These acts of noticing can significantly inform the degree of transformative experience available to the participant.

Creating Sustainable Futures: Changing Minds, Innovating Outcomes
Now to return to the Creating Sustainable Futures project unfolding throughout the rest of 2005. The original aims of the project were twofold:

Team Development - to extend ways of thinking about, understanding and communicating ‘sustainability’
Product Innovation - to create new curriculum material that actively engages and supports schools in sustainability education.

In regard to the first aim, the story shared earlier clearly testifies to the changing minds of the team members and, as the project progressed further, the experience of being sustainability, rather than just doing sustainability, became increasingly evident in the (individual and collective) language, ideas and actions of the team. This change of mind resulted in changes in their individual actions and behaviour,
which in turn, positively influenced changes in the behaviour of others (in relation to sustainability issues).

All of which then in turn, went on to address the second aim of producing something innovative and effective for teachers and students; informing the design of both professional development workshops for teachers and two creative thinking tools.

Creating Sustainable Futures professional development (PD) is a suite of workshops replicating the journey of creative inquiry undertaken by LandLearn, and the two Creating Sustainable Futures thinking tools are:

Oblique Inspirations® - a set of cards and guidebook (for individual and group use) to stimulate creative inquiry into sustainability, and

A kit for experiential teaching/learning for teachers who have experienced the PD workshops and, in turn wish to replicate the journey of inquiry with their students.

Furthermore, it became apparent to the LandLearn team that the methods of creative thinking underpinning both the Creating Sustainable Futures PD workshops and thinking tools, linked neatly into the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) framework, especially in the strands of Physical, Personal & Social Learning and Interdisciplinary Learning.

We have gone on to introduce Creating Sustainable Futures to teachers in a variety of PD and conference workshop settings where their response has been overwhelmingly positive. In the evaluation of a brief PD session designed to introduce the concept, teachers made comments such as:

‘I can see that the ideas would work as a focus point to get the students really thinking. It would be valuable to launch a whole school celebration & commitment to sustainability. We are rewriting our curriculum in line with VELS and so the ideas are very relevant.’

‘I enjoyed the non-threatening approach which allowed thoughts to flow. It made it easy to think - feel more deeply about the question of sustainability. I loved working with the Oblique Inspirations® cards - they were thought provoking. I’d love to do more of this thinking.’

And to end at the beginning...

I set out to show that through an adapted form of material practice and a re-imagining of the artist as Attendant, visual arts process can be transferred to spheres beyond the studio, academy, gallery or classroom and be used to engage contemporary issues of pressing concern, such as sustainability. I trust that what I have been able to convey of my professional practice and my research serves to illustrate to artists other possible forms and fields of practice that bring benefit to others and, last but not least, are commercially viable.
References
Higgins, H 2002, Fluxus Experience, University of California Press, Berkeley
McDonagh, N 2004, Oblique Inspirations®: Open Mind, Open Heart, McDonagh Design, Melbourne
In/sight: The art of creating self-reflexive spaces.
Research proposal, 2005. School of Art, RMIT
1. PERSONAL DETAILS:
Ms / Mr / Dr
Ms
Family Name: McDonagh
Given Names: Natalie
Student Number: 3026283

2. DEGREE:
Doctor of Philosophy

BY THESIS/PROJECT: Project

WITHIN THE SCHOOL OF: Art

TITLE OF PROJECT: In/sight: The Art of Creating Self Reflexive Spaces

SUMMARY OF PROJECT: This study is grounded in my professional practice in which I use processes of creative action and critical reflection with my clients to help them gain greater self-understanding to bring about individual and organisational development.

In this project I will investigate how my practice creates spaces of artistic self-reflexivity for people who are not artists. There are three intertwining lines of inquiry:

1. 3D Forms.
   I will investigate the role of the 3D forms that I most commonly employ in my work - the bag, the box, the book. To gain insight into how they may act to (in)form self-reflexive space, I will explore these devices through replicating and reconstructing my process of making these forms, as well as the forms themselves.

2. My Role as Attendant
   I will investigate my practice as an Attendant in these self-reflexive spaces to gain insight into the qualities, actions and rituals of Attendance that act to (in)form these transformative spaces.

3. Performed Installations
   I will then bring the data from the first two lines of inquiry into a series of performed installations that will be located in a space accessible to viewer/participants and invite their creative and critical engagement and feedback.

The objective of this studio project and exegesis is to achieve an enrichment of praxis that will be applied to benefit others through my professional practice.

SUPERVISORS AND CONSULTANTS (Please state affiliations):
Senior Supervisor: Professor Elizabeth Grierson, RMIT School of Art
Supervisor: Dr Sophia Errey, RMIT School of Art
Consultant(s): Dr Barbara Bolt, Melbourne University TBC

MODE OF PROGRAM: PART-TIME (Normal part-time commitment: 20+ hours per week)

ENROLMENT DATE:
Semester I 2002 RMIT Business/School of Management
Semester II 2004 Transferred to School of Art

PROPOSED SUBMISSION DATE: August 2008
3. THE RESEARCH PROGRAM

3.1 Title In/sight: The Art of Creating Self-Reflexive Spaces

3.2 WHAT? Brief Description

History of Enrolment
The theoretical and practical groundwork for this project has been in progress within RMIT since February 2002, when I took the unusual step for an artist/designer of enrolling in the School of Management. My proposal called Art and Metaphor: Designing Transformative Practices for Organisational Development was accepted by the Business Faculty in February 2003. The focus at that time was directed towards the benefits of my work to others in an organisational context. I subsequently had ample opportunity to witness these in my long-term work with my client, the Department of Primary Industries, so my focus shifted towards investigating the products and processes I create to construct self-reflexive spaces; hence in July 2004 I applied to transfer my candidature to the School of Art to allow me to foreground my own data.

The framework of my proposal(s) remains unchanged:
- Visual/tactile languages as tools to explore the human inner world
- Making as thinking through the hands
- Embodying self-knowledge through 2D and 3D form
- Ways of seeing/knowing/being
- Our capacity for self-inquiry/self-reflexivity/self-knowledge

These could be summarised as what philosopher David Michael Levin calls ‘ontological thinking’ (Higgins, 2002) and what painter and academic Barbara Bolt describes as ‘materialist ontology’ (Bolt, 2004).

Context for the Project
This project is grounded in my experimental professional practice in which I use processes of creative action and critical reflection with my clients for them to gain greater self-understanding to bring about individual and organisational development. Because this research is not situated in the context of conventional art practices or art disciplines, I’d like to offer a story from my work in an applied situation to create appropriate context for this project.

A client I have been working with since 2003 is the Department of Primary Industries (DPI). Within the DPI there is group called LandLearn that works with schools throughout Victoria to raise awareness and explore issues of environmental sustainability. Earlier this year I was invited to help them reconceive the ways they see, think and communicate ‘sustainability’.

Some days before starting the work I was at the NGV in the exhibition Colour Power that showed the influence of acrylic paints on Aboriginal art since the 1980’s. The rear wall of the gallery space held a vast work painted on a tarpaulin. It had clearly been created by many hands using diverse marks, motifs and movements but they came together in an immensely powerful and cohesive whole. The accompanying gallery text did not name the piece or the creators, it stated simply that the work had been made to tell those peoples’ story of their relationship to the land. It was made to take into a Land Rights hearing in the Australian High Court. It was an attempt to communicate to the judiciary their connection with the land. The artists believed if the judges could see their story they would understand.

During the first day of work with LandLearn I asked the group to create a collective 2D ‘sustainability’ artwork. The framework I gave was that it was not an exercise in collaboration and team effort. No negotiation was required (“Can I put my strips of torn yellow paper next to your leaves?”) nor was it concerned with group consensus for an approach to the task. The task was to be individuals, to work alongside each other, in a shared creative space and shared creative act with a common focus on ‘sustainability’.

I asked them each to be as open as possible to whatever might emerge and to try and observe what they experienced being in the process, as well as accepting whatever visual form was produced. Not unexpectedly, the group stayed in the known and familiar place of being and doing ‘team’ and began to try and establish consensus on an approach to the task – to agree on the size of paper to use, who should do what, and so on. This went on for some time.

This was my first experiment with this particular form of creative activity. I watched my anxiety increasing, thinking, “This isn’t going to work. What do I do?” In this space there is a very delicate balancing act of intuiting moments to make no intervention/make some intervention – precisely when,
what, how much? I made an effort to do as I had asked the group to, to be as open as possible to what emerged, whatever that might be. I tried to relax my demeanour and inner tension.

As I relaxed, it seemed the space responded in kind. A moment later – to use one of Ann Hamilton’s phrases – a slippage occurred. The group slipped out of ‘team’ and into another mode of being; being individual but/and connected to others, through a creative enactment. They began a silent, rhythmic, almost dance-like performance. Each person worked separately on areas of the ‘canvas’ using quite different materials, media, motifs. The scale of the ‘canvas’ (1.7m x 2.5m area of paper) had them work standing up and moving around it; mapping intertwining paths around each other as they stepped in and out and around, to add, consider, attach, remove. One person began to create a web like structure from white wool yarn. She said she felt compelled to overlay the ‘web’ onto the manifesting work. Without discussion or negotiation she passed the ball of yarn to someone else. They in turn unraveled the thread, secured it in some way, somewhere on the work and passed it on. I was moved to proffer a pencil as a spindle to ease the unraveling of the yarn; the motion became smoother. This action of unraveling thread, handing on, receiving, enacted an intangible web of connections mirroring the tangible web of thread appearing within the work. It was effortless, seamless and poetic.

There was no moment of ‘finish’ imposed on the process. The natural extent of this visual and gestural enactment of sustainability was reached in its own time – maybe only 15 minutes or so. I asked the group what they observed of their lived experience in this creative process and the made work. One person spoke of how earlier in the day she had picked up a piece of pink ribbon she was attracted to. “I was looking at the web. I thought that at that point there, where all the threads seem to cross, I could tie them all together. As I tried, I realised it wasn’t possible. But I kept trying, thinking if I try harder I can make them. And then suddenly I saw that is exactly what I am always trying to do in my work and cannot. I always think I have to make all the threads from everywhere, in everything we do, tie together and I never can and get so frustrated and despondent because I can’t. But I see now that’s not how it is. The work we do is only one thread and there are lots of others all working with the same thread somewhere else, even some time else and it is all connected. I don’t have to make it all tie together at my one place, at my point, it is already connected.”

The group described a sense of becoming sustainability. In the creative process they had come to experience being sustainability rather than just doing sustainability.

A month later when I met with the group in the town of Kilmore our usual meeting place, the library, wasn’t available and we were offered the historic courthouse as a venue – a building not open to the public, rarely used and without plumbing; a neglected site. I had been appointed custodian of the large artwork the group had made and brought it with me on the day. I cleaned and prepared the space as best I could and unrolled the canvas. We sat around it and I spoke to the group about what I saw and sensed in and from the image. Its embodiment of layers of stories – the story of their efforts to recreate their story of their relationship to LandLearn and the land itself, and the story they want to tell to others, about relationship to the environment. In that moment there was another slippage. Distinctions separating times and places disappeared. Here we were, another group of people, with a canvas created to embody the story of relationship to the land, telling that story...in the courthouse.

I believe this story illustrates Barbara Bolt’s proposition that ‘the material practice of art can transcend its structure as representation and, in the dynamic productivity of the performative act, produce ontological effects’ (Bolt, p.186). The part of the story I cannot tell you with any great depth of understanding is the nature of what I did and how I did it; how I constructed this transformative space for people who are not artists. This is the essence of my project, to realise the absent dimension of the story; to create it in material forms, images and words.

STUDIO PROJECT
My project uses the instrument of performed installation to investigate how I create spaces of artistic self-reflexivity for people who are not artists.

Performed installation
I am using the term ‘performed installation’ to explicate the particular form of installation I have in mind here. I have borrowed the term from artists Katy Bowman and Neil Thomas and their Museum of Modern Oddities. Their most recent work, Lost and Found, was installed in the City Gallery (Melbourne Town Hall March/April 2005) and offers a congruent reference for my intention. The small exhibition space was transformed into an experiential abstraction of a Lost and Found office. Neil Tomas was present, attending the space and attending to the exhibits. The exhibits themselves had been constructed to invite varying degrees of engagement – from idly curious browsing, to sitting down and typing (or hand writing) a personal story on an index card specifically designed to capture your story, and immediately incorporate it into the exhibition.
As Attendant, at a chosen moment, Neil Thomas approached visitors and engaged them (to whatever degree they were willing) in a collaborative act of exploring notions of ‘Lost and Found’ in their lives. Some people came and went without this interaction with the Attendant and had instead a self-directed engagement with/in the installation. Both forms of engagement acted in their separate and collective way to prompt some dimension of reflective/self-reflective experience and emotional response – my own ranged from gentle curiosity about the owner of a lost oddity, to a surprise reawakening of dormant grief over a lost dream.

I will use a similar model of performed installation in my project with myself as the Attendant.

Central in my investigation is the exploration of the dual aspects of my work in creating self-reflexive space in my professional practice:

1. **Creating Processes and Products**
   - The design of the creative processes and the form of the material products I make to assist people – what people will be invited to do and what tools I provide to help them do it.

2. **Being (an) Attendant**
   - My role as Attendant of/for the physical and meta-physical spaces where the processes are experienced – what I do, how I do it and what tools I use to do it.

1. **Creating Processes and Products**
   The three forms that most commonly appear in all aspects of my art work are the bag, the box, the book. I will undertake a studied exploration of these familiar but largely unexamined devices. In the act of replicating and reconstructing the process of making these forms, as well as the forms themselves, I expect to gain insight into how they may act to (in)form self-reflexive space. Some of my existing products/tools share commonalities with the boxed kits and books of Fluxus artists George Maciunas, George Brecht and Alison Knowles (Higgins, 2002), and Marcel Duchamp’s ‘portable museums’ (Bonk, 1989). I will further draw on these references to assist me in this aspect of my investigation.

2. **Being (an) Attendant**
   I have purposefully borrowed the term Attendant from Anne Hamilton (Simon, 2002), who frequently refers to people in her work in this way. I have chosen it for various explicit and implicit meanings it holds, such as
   - Attending to – being present to another person and/or a task; taking care of, ministering to someone/something; to wait on with service
   - Tend – disposition towards; to care for
   - Tender – meaning gentle, soft-hearted; also to offer; and the notion of exchange, some form of currency, something of value that facilitates a transaction.

**EXEGESIS**

My exegesis will provide the philosophical, theoretical and methodological framework of/for the studio project.

**Objectives**

The objectives of the **studio project** and **exegesis** are:

**Studio project**
- To achieve enriched praxis through the production of a resolved series of performed installation works that use 3D forms and lived experience to explore and embody:
  - The creative and critical processes I use to construct self-reflexive space
  - The nature of my practices as Attendant that may (in)form this space

**Exegesis**
- To produce a robust and resolved piece of written work that
  - Constructs the philosophical, theoretical and methodological framework for creating self-reflexive spaces.

**Research Questions**
- In what ways can my work act to create self-reflexive spaces for my self and others?
- In what way can I capture the creative process of both constructing and attending to self-reflexive spaces?
- What constitutes a philosophical, theoretical and methodological framework that supports these practices?
Outcomes
The tangible outcomes of the project will be the documentation and durable visual records of both the processes and products investigated. These are
- The series of performed installations that embody and enable the creation of self-reflexive space for myself and others
- The body of 3D works – in bag, box and book forms – utilised in the installations
- Creative and critical examination of my practices and role as Attendant in constructing self-reflexive space for others
- My experience of creating experiential processes and tangible tools to create self-reflexive space for myself and others

Intangible outcomes will be
- Greater insight into my practice
- An enrichment of praxis that will be applied to benefit others through my professional practice

Location
The studio-based research will take place in Melbourne. The development work will take place in my workspace and the performed installations will be sited in carefully selected spaces (yet to be confirmed). (I am giving consideration to appropriate sites that may be off RMIT premises. If this is the case, I have substantial public liability insurance to cover these activities).

3.3 WHY? Rationale for program:
I believe my professional practice already brings benefits to the community through my work’s demonstrated capacity to enable ‘critically important kinds of human exchange that have the capacity to change the way we think about how we come to know what we do, and the forms in which information, experience, and understanding can be created and communicated’ (Sullivan, 2005 p.193). This research program will generate a far deeper knowledge and richer understanding of my praxis and practice creating self-reflexive spaces; this in turn will benefit individuals and large organizations that I work with now and in the future.

I also believe that in documenting the knowledge generated through this research and making it available to a wider community of practitioners and researchers it has the potential to be usefully applied by others to
- widen the social and commercial scope of applied practice for artists
- bring non discipline-based creative practices to people outside the domains of art
- extend the notion of art as a powerful agency of human insight
- foster our growth and development as individuals and communities

3.4 HOW? Methods:
Process and Product
In this study, process and product are inseparable. In my practice they exist as a single unit of reality “comprised of two basic elements in an asymmetrical, binary relationship in dynamic interaction” (Salk 1983, p.38). In this form of relationship between product and process, meaning is co-located in the act of making as well as in the material form of the made object. Focus of attention is invited to move around, creating shifting sites of interpretation that reveal richer, more nuanced layers of meaning. Interpreting both the made objects and the lived experience of creating them becomes “a process of insightful invention, discovery, disclosure...a free act of ‘seeing’ meaning” (van Manen, 1990, p.79).

Studio project
In the studio project there are three strands of intertwining inquiry
1. Examine particular 3D forms in my work – the bag, the box, the book
- I will undertake a studied exploration of these familiar but largely unexamined devices
- I will replicate and reconstruct the process of how I make these devices, in the process creating new iterations of these 3D forms that will embody their own explication
- In critically examining my creative process as well as the created products I expect to gain insight into how these may act to (in)form self-reflexive space for others
2. Examine my practice as Attendant
   - I will use creative and critical reflection to investigate my practice as Attendant and gain insight into the qualities, actions and rituals of Attendance that act to (in)form self-reflexive spaces
   - The prime site for this aspect of my inquiry will be in the lived experience of my professional practice - in the real time and space activity of being Attendant
   - I will examine this aspect of my practice in self-reflective work in journal form, observing and recording my ritual activities such as:
     - preparation, packing and unpacking of materials, tools and equipment I take with me to the site of the work, wherever that may be
     - my mental and physical preparation
     - how I prepare the physical space for the work
   - I will use this data to inform my design of the performed installations

3. Performed Installations
   The third strand of inquiry will bring the other two into a performed installation that incorporates the 3D made objects (bag/box/book) and me as Attendant
   - I will create a series of installations (probably three) where each one will inform the next, both in its material forms and experiential aspects
   - The exact design of the first installation is not yet known. It will be based on, and informed by, the data that begins to emerge from the first two lines of inquiry
   - The performed installations will be located in a space accessible to viewer/participants and open to their creative and critical engagement and reflection
   - The data generated in these interactions will be collected in some form that can be physically incorporated into the subsequent installation, creating further layers of meaning

Exegesis
There will be a substantial exegesis in which I will:
   - Survey and evaluate the relevant literature to inform a sound philosophical, theoretical and methodological framework of the studio project
   - Expound on the installations and the individual works that investigate the construction of self-reflexive spaces.

Final Presentation
At the conclusion of the research I will present:
   - A durable visual record of the studio project
   - The accompanying documentation of the performed installations
   - The exegesis

Timeline
Stage 1   July - December 2005
   - Review and curate existing data gathered since June 2002 - particularly:
     My exhibition Experiments in (con)text, and Body of personal art works and journals
   - Continue to survey and evaluate the literature
   - Begin exploration of my role as Attendant
   - Begin creative and critical examination of the 3D forms (bag/box/book)

Stage 2   January - December 2006
   - Commence design explorations for installation #1
   - Finalise design of performed installation #1 and exhibit
   - Analyse and assimilate data generated through installation #1 to inform design of installation #2
   - Continuing exploration of my role as attendant
   - Preliminary outline of exegesis and the form it will take
   - Commence writing literature review
   - Commence design of performed installation #2
   - Produce further 3D works for installation #2 and exhibit
Stage 3  January – December 2007
- Continue developing and writing exegesis
- Analyse and assimilate data generated through installation #2 to inform design of installation #3
- Refine my role as attendant and qualities of presence brought to the role
- Commence design explorations for installation #3
- Produce further 3D works for installation #3
- Finalise form of performed installation #3 and exhibit

Stage 4  January – August 2008
- Analyse and assimilate data generated through installation #3
- Complete exegesis
- Finalise documentation of installation works
- Finalise presentation
- Present for examination

References
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Research Methods
See Item 3.5 below

Science
3.5 Research Methods subject to be taken as part of the program:

Applying for Exemption    YES
If YES, attach evidence of previous studies or competency achieved

EVIDENCE OF PREVIOUS STUDIES AND COMPETENCY

Summary
I have already successfully completed a Research Methods course at RMIT. In addition I have continued to study beyond the scope of that course (see bibliography below), attend seminars and workshops in various dimensions of research methods, regularly meet with a cohort of PhD candidates from different disciplines and have made conference and seminar presentations. I have also taken advantage of training offered through RMIT libraries in conducting effective literature surveys and e-database searches.

Studies
RMIT Business Faculty Research Methods course (BUSM1408) completed June 2002.

Cohort
Varying group of five PhD candidates from different disciplines who meet regularly primarily to discuss research methods.

Presentations
RMIT's Practice Based Research Conference, June 2003
In collaboration with three other members of my cohort I made a presentation called Four Slantwise Explorations of Practice Based Research. This took the form of an interactive installation and supporting written material. The installation housed four ‘stations’ each using different methods and sensory material (visual, aural, tactile, verbal) to construct a personal reflective/reflexive space and in/from that space, consider what constitutes valid forms of text to capture research data.

Association for Qualitative Research, Seminar, June 2003
The Four Slantwise Explorations of Practice Based Research installation was presented again to practitioners and researchers.

Phenomenological Workshop, July 2003
I attended a 3–day residential workshop on phenomenological research methods, hosted by QUT with Visiting Professor Lester Embree

Seminars
I have attended a number of seminars hosted by RMIT such as:
- Practice Based/Led Research at RMIT, October 2002
- Ethical Research with Professor Robert Brooks, May 2002
- Writing an Effective Literature Review, hosted by the Research Development Unit, July 2003

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3.6 Other studies required to be completed as part of the program: NO

4. ETHICS COMMITTEES
By completing and signing this form, you acknowledge the existence of RMIT’s ethics regulations/procedures and agree to comply with them.

Does this proposal require approval from one of RMIT’s Ethics Committees? NO

5. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
I have read and understood RMIT’s policy. There is no intellectual property agreement

6. TRANSFER FROM MASTERS DEGREE TO DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY CANDIDATURE
Not applicable

7. CANDIDATE’S SIGNATURE ___________________________ Date: 10th May 2005
8. Exemption (Waiver) from Research Methods subject recommended:
(Refer to 3.5 of this form)
Delete as appropriate YES NO
If YES, evidence of approval to be attached

9. Ethics Committee
Has approval been sought/granted from the appropriate ethics committee?
(Refer to Section 4 of this form)
Delete as appropriate YES NO
If YES, what was the classification
Delete as appropriate NR (no risk) MR (minimal risk) AR (at risk)

10. Intellectual Property
Is there an Intellectual Property agreement? NO

11. COMMITTEE APPROVAL/ENDORSEMENT:
Faculty Higher Degrees and Graduate Studies Committee

(Signature of Secretary) (Date)

Faculty Board
(Signature of Secretary) (Date)
Art and metaphor: Designing transformative practices for emotional intelligence
Research proposal, 2003. School of Management, RMIT
Proposal for a Programme of Practice Based Research

“Art is metaphor. Metaphor is transformation”

(Winterson, 1996, p.66)

TOPIC

Art and Metaphor: Designing Transformative Practices for Emotional Intelligence

An initial response to this topic might be, why is this research located in a business faculty rather than a faculty of art and design? The rationale is that the application of this study is in the world of work. The research crosses disciplines to draw upon theory and practice from the domain of art, and through design processes create methods that people can use to develop their emotional capability to address complex issues, tasks and problems that arise in the work environment. Another dimension to the rationale of this study in a School of Management is Goleman’s assertion that “a new competitive reality is putting emotional intelligence at a premium in the workplace and the marketplace” (Goleman, 1996).

The form of this proposal

Central to this proposal is the notion that as sentient, conscious beings, the human experience is one where our behaviour is (in)formed through a continuous, reciprocal dynamic of engaging and negotiating both our inner world (motive/being) and our outer world (action/doing). The form of my proposal symbolises these dimensions. In part, my proposal is formed by these written pages, and, in whole, by these written pages (what I propose doing), alongside a reflection of my inner world (my way of being) manifest through a series of artworks and journals. These will be presented at the candidature review conference on February 21st when there will also be an experiential component. These three components constitute my proposal.

The form of the whole proposal notionally symbolizes the three domains of application for this program of practice based research:

> self-reflexive practitioner
> practitioner as agent of transformation
> practitioner as teacher of transformative practices

Contention

My contention is that methods common in art and design, particularly making and communicating through visual language, symbolism and metaphor, can be fashioned into useful, beneficial practices that enhance emotional intelligence.

The research questions emerge from this contention.

Questions

- Why do these methods work?
- How do I make them happen for myself in a work setting?
- How do I make them happen for others in a work setting?
CURRENT BODY OF KNOWLEDGE
The following outlines the key constructs and methods intertwined in my contention and the situation of this research in the current body of knowledge.

Key Constructs

> Emotional intelligence
The notion of emotional intelligence (EI) is a widely accepted construct with growing currency in the domains of individual and organizational development. Emotional intelligence encompasses a range of capabilities such as impulse control, persistence, zeal and motivation, empathy and social deftness (Goleman, 1996). The capability of particular interest in this study is what Goleman (1996, p.46) describes as, “self-awareness, in the sense of an ongoing attention to one’s internal states. In this self-reflexive awareness mind observes and investigates experience itself, including the emotions”, and what Buddhism terms ‘mindfulness’.

My engagement with this dimension is framed by my experiences (inner and outer) as a practitioner and teacher of design, and enacted through art and design methods that allow us to manifest the unseen human inner world in the outer world. These methods create metaphoric and symbolic forms that can be, in the most replete sense of the word, read. These metaphoric and symbolic forms and their languages can take many and varied forms that might be read by being seen, heard, touched, tasted or smelled - a piece of poetry, a movement or gesture, a collection of found objects, a composition of sounds and so on.

The focus of this study is visible form.

“By re-moulding the reality we assume to be objective, art releases to us, realities otherwise hidden.”

(Winterson, 1996, p.58)

> Art and design practices
- visual languages and visual literacy
- making (of 2D and 3D forms)
- metaphor and symbolism
- storytelling
- contemplative practices self-curation

Visual languages and visual literacy
Visual language plays a powerful role in our lives. There is no doubting the ability of symbols and images to instruct, inform and influence us many times every day – road signs, computer icons, advertising – the list is endless. In discussing the language of vision Kepes (1944) states that, ‘visual communication is universal and international: it knows no limits of tongue, vocabulary or grammar.’ Artists and designers use this mode of symbolic and metaphorical language to represent and express the inner, intangible aspects of human life – emotions, experiences, concepts, ideas, possibilities, intentions - through visual media, such as images, symbols, models, structures, forms. These visual languages are not the exclusive domain of art and design, they are an inherent human capacity. Humans learn shape and colour long before they acquire the capacity for words. Even if our vocabulary of line, shape, form, colour, texture, has been neglected, it is still there and can convey diverse, rich, and complex meaning.

If a group of people is asked to respond to the same question concerning the inner emotional world, such as uncertainty or sense of connectedness, their verbal responses employ very similar words. If they are given the same limited components and asked to make a model, the visual representations reveal strikingly different and diverse responses. Making this richness and complexity visible carries the opportunity to see, reflect and consider quite differently, and has the potential to ‘reframe our understanding of things so that we create more options for action
for ourselves and others, and greater flexibility in what we do and how we do it (Cherry, 1999).

Making (of 2D and 3D forms)
The making of two and three dimensional forms of art encompasses three significant notions. One, Gardner (1982, p.90) expresses as, “an artistic medium provides the means for coming to grips with ideas and emotions of great significance, ones that cannot be articulated and mastered through ordinary conversational language.” The second, is the notion of constructionism (Papert, 1980, 1993), a form of thinking through the hands, which creates a reciprocal dynamic with our inner world. As we construct things out in the external world we are simultaneously constructing knowledge in our minds, which then (in)forms the things we are making, which then constructs more knowledge, and so on. This reciprocal dynamic can be focused on the ‘construction’ of self knowledge/self awareness through considered and purposeful design of the making task. An example is the task of constructing/making an emotional navigation instrument, some kind of model that represents our capacity to engage and negotiate our emotional experiences. The made artifact speaks to us in the outer world as a symbol and metaphor of this capacity in the inner world. The third, is what I term creative contemplation based on my personal and observed experience of making as a form of reflection and introspection induced by the combination of the framing of the task and the act of making. The further activity of reading the visual metaphor of the made artifact and verbally telling its story surfaces the self knowledge and allows us to make meaning.

Metaphor, symbolism and storytelling
There is an extensive and rich current body of knowledge concerning metaphor, symbolism and storytelling and it is located in a vast array of domains; the arts, art therapy, mind/brain research, psychology, philosophy, anthropology, creativity and cognition, curation and museum studies, spirituality, the list goes on. Indicative of the influences at play in this research is Gardner’s work on multiple intelligence and the notion that “the basic unit of human thought is the symbol, and that the basic entities with which humans operate in a meaningful context are symbol systems” (Gardner, 1982), and Schön’s (1971) assertions that metaphor plays a potent and creative role in human cognition and can transform the ways in which we understand and make meaning.

A gap in knowledge and practice
There are significant bodies of theory, practice and research concerning our inner world and how we might (in)form our emotional intelligence. These are found in a range of specialist and/or therapeutic domains such as art, counselling, psychology, cognition, the human brain/mind system, childhood development; this is where the knowledge appears to remain. Design is a process of both problem finding and problem solving that seeks to make tangible tools someone else can use. As such, design can be used to bring this knowledge out of specialist realms into the everyday world of people at their work.

As inhabitants of technologically advanced societies, everyday we are surrounded by and interact with the tangible products of design that meet outer world needs - technology, transport, communication, furniture, buildings, clothes, an endless list. There is also a notion gaining some currency of design as a mode of applied thinking that can be used to create intangible as well as tangible products. De Bono asserts that, “Design (thinking) can be applied to everything we do...we may seek to design a better form of democracy; we may seek to redesign the legal system” (de Bono, 1999, p.206). I currently can find no evidence that design is being used as a process to innovate progress in exploring and developing the human inner world.

Natalie McDonagh
Research Proposal, January 2003
Once identified this gap seems both curious and glaring.

RESEARCH

Rationale
The rationale for this research is both one of knowledge and one of application. The identified gap in current theory and practice offers an opportunity to make an original contribution to the existing body of knowledge and for the research to have wide and useful applications in the domain of individual and organisational development. Organisations already engaging with my practices are diverse in culture and industry: ANZ Bank, TXU Energy, Department of Primary Industries, a number of management consultants who then in turn apply them with their clients such as Shell, and so on. Resource, an architecture and urban design practice, are currently using my theory as a conceptual and strategic framework of a proposed programme of community engagement and regional development.

Research outline
A program of practice based research applied in three domains:
> the development of the self-reflexive practitioner
> practitioner as agent of transformation
> practitioner as teacher of transformative practices

Research process
The questions will be addressed through parallel processes of practice and research. These processes contain the following strands:
• Literature review
• Self-curation through making artworks
• Exhibiting, presentations at conferences and journal articles
• Reflective practice
• Design of methods and experiences utilizing art and metaphor
• Interactive research program with individuals and groups using these methods

Contention
Reiterating, my contention is that methods common in art and design, particularly making and communicating through visual language, symbolism and metaphor, can be fashioned into useful, beneficial practices that enhance emotional intelligence. The research questions emerging from this contention are

Research questions
• Why do these methods work?
• How do I make them happen for myself in a work setting?
• How do I make them happen for others in a work setting?

Research objectives
• Develop an integrated theory of how art and metaphor act as agents to (in)form emotional intelligence
• To develop my capabilities as a self reflexive practitioner
• To enable others to engage with these methods to (in)form their emotional intelligence
• To enable people’s ability to take these methods to others
**Research outcomes**

- An integrated theory of how art and metaphor act as agents to (in)form emotional intelligence
- Development of the self reflexive capability of this researcher/practitioner
- A set of practices using art and metaphor that be used by individuals and groups to (in)form their emotional intelligence
- Five case studies embodying the knowledge and methods to develop the capability of others to use these practices for themselves
- Five case studies embodying the knowledge and methods to develop the capability of others to teach these methods

**Scope and location of research**

The location of the project will be in Melbourne where my practice is based and where potential participants, individuals and groups, are known.

**RESEARCH METHODS and STRATEGIES**

**Paradigm**

This study can be said to operate in a research paradigm of interpretivism that regards social reality as a complex of socially constructed meanings (Jackson, 2002).

**Research methodology**

To meet the level of flexibility and multi modality required in this research Cunningham’s (1988) model will be used incorporating the five dimensions of:

- Experiential research
- Action research
- Contextual locating
- Collaborative research
- Dialogic research

**Experiential research**

This is the collection of data from my own journey as researcher/practitioner and the experience of developing my self reflexive capability. The data will be gathered through an on going series of self-curations. These will be carefully considered and framed to respond directly to experiences arising out of the research. The data from the self-curations will be in the form of a series of artworks as visual metaphor that will be subjected to reading and critical reflection in journals. This body of work will also be subjected to at least one public solo exhibition and, on an ongoing basis, to the reflective practice group. The experiential research component addresses the question, how do I make them (art and metaphor methods) happen for myself in a work setting?

**Action research**

Action research is the strategy for engaging with individuals and groups seeking to develop their emotional intelligence. These participants have not yet been confirmed but a number of potential willing participants have been clearly identified through consulting activities where they have expressly stated needs in this domain. These needs will shape the structure, length and complexity of the engagement as well as the framing of the tasks using art and metaphor methods, and the associated storytelling activities. This stand of the research encompasses the design component where methods and experiences utilizing art and metaphor are created for each context. I feel confident that from the number of willing potential participants that have been identified case studies will emerge in each of the domains mentioned:
practitioner as agent of transformation - five case studies embodying the
knowledge and methods to engage others in the use of these practices develop their
EI capabilities
practitioner as teacher of transformative practices - five case studies embodying
the knowledge and methods to develop the capability of others to teach these
methods

I anticipate this dimension of the research will commence later in 2003 and I expect
to seek a series of ethics approvals in each case.

I believe the objectives and aspirations of this study include the three defining
strands of action research that Cherry (1999) describes as:

- an action strand which is about making change: making useful and noticeable
difference to the world outside of oneself, and how to get things done in that
world
- a knowledge strand which is about enriching our collective wisdom about
how and why things and people work
- a learning strand which is about developing individual and collective
practice, enhancing our capability to do the same or different - possibly
harder - things in the future

and satisfies the criterion that action research ‘should have implications beyond the
immediate project...it must be clear that the results could inform other
contexts’ (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 1997)

The qualitative data generated from the primary sources mentioned above will be
collected through my observation as participant facilitating the tasks, the readings
of the artifacts and the telling of the associated stories. I anticipate the data will be
in a variety of forms: artifacts, photographs written and recorded stories, possibly
video, and journals. As the intention of action research is to directly benefit the
participating individuals and groups, I trust that the obtrusive nature of the data
gathering, and the degree of personal disclosure required will be acceptable.

The action research component addresses the question, how do I make them (art and
metaphor methods) happen for others in a work setting?

Contextual locating
The contextual locating dimension of the research model is the exhibition of the
artworks produced from an on going series of self-curations, along with
presentations at conferences and journal articles throughout the research program.
The self-curation artworks will be subjected to at least one public solo exhibition,
probably in 2004. I also intend to submit interactive art works/products that
embody and enact the notions of art, metaphor and storytelling to acquisitive and
non-acquisitive exhibitions and competitions. There will be at least two
submissions in 2003. The first of these is the Tactile Art Award (presented by the
Royal Blind Society and Object Australian Centre for Craft and Design) which is
seeking to extend the parameters of contemporary art exhibitions.
Some conferences of particular interest for presentation are the International
Design Research Society’s 2004 conference (being held for the first time in
Australia at Monash University) and the Association for Qualitative Research.

Collaborative research
A piece of collaborative research is a possibility under consideration and discussion
but no commitment has been made as yet. I expect this strand of research to become
more pertinent as the study progresses.
**Dialogic research**

Data will also be generated from a reflective practice group. I have invited a number of national and international contacts and colleagues to participate in this dimension of the research and expect the activities of the group(s) to inform theory and practice as it is evolving. The self-curation artworks, in particular, will be subjected to the critical reflection of the group(s). I anticipate the data will be collected in a variety of forms such as journals, audio/visual recordings and possibly artifacts.

**Approach to analysis**

I am guided here by the suggestion that ‘with research into a topic that is new... and on which there is little existing literature, it may be more appropriate to generate data and analyse and reflect on what theoretical themes the data are suggesting’ (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 1997). I can say that a relativist view will be taken in considering the data based on the assumption that a person’s reality is individually constructed and influenced by various frameworks of reference in life, such as education, culture, gender, religion, and ethnicity.

**Issues**

The potential issues I see arising from the nature of this research are:

- the degree of personal disclosure required, although this has not presented any difficulty so far in my experience
- the most challenging issue is establishing the criteria for evaluating benefits to participants

**Literature review**

*There are many places to search for new answers in a time of paradigm shifts*

(Wheatley, 1992)

A literature review will be undertaken to inform both the theory and practice in this research and it will most directly address the question, why do these methods work? This will draw upon existing bodies of knowledge including:

- Design philosophy, theory, and practice
- Psychology related to multiple-intelligence,
- Creativity and cognition
- Knowledge about the brain/mind’s use of symbol systems
- Art theory and the experiences of practicing artists
- Traditions of story telling through artefacts
- Museum studies and curatorial practices
- Traditions and forms of introspection and reflective practices

**TIMESCALE**

Conducting the research on a part-time basis I anticipate the program to take four to six years.
Department of Primary Industries
Permission to cite the Creative futures project and its evaluation
10 June 2004

Natalie McDonagh
McDonagh Design
121 Westgarth Street
Firzroy Vic 3065

Dear Natalie

Re Permission to cite Contract (103228) Creative Futures Program

Thankyou for your email regarding permission to cite the Creative Futures Program. The following is the agreed basis on which McDonagh Design can cite DPI as a client.

McDonagh Design:
• may cite DPI as a client
• may name and describe the nature of the work embodied in the Creative Futures Program and Kit
• may cite approved and published evaluation material
• will clearly acknowledge that design of the program and kit has been created exclusively for DPI
• will acknowledge that the IP of this particular format belongs to DPI and is not available to any other clients but MD retains the underlying IP of the methods/philosophy etc that is the basis and foundation of all McDonagh Design’s work

I look forward to working with you to implement key components of the Creative Futures Program (Phase Two). Please contact me on 56242337 if you require further information or clarification.

Yours sincerely

Bruce Weston
Coordinator, Forging Our Future
Hello everyone,
I trust this finds you all well and thriving.

Ann, Jess, Kathyn, Kathleen and Jenny, I'd like to ask your permission to use the story that appears in the DPI Report published in 2006, 'LandLearn A Case Study in Changing Minds, Innovating Outcomes' (copies of the relevant pages attached).

I'd like to use it in my PhD exegesis (the written component that accompanies the body of made works that comprise a PhD by art project) to create context for my professional practice.

My intention is to:
- Use it the story with minimal amendments - just those necessary to enable the 2-3 PhD-examiners to locate the story and themselves in relation to it eg explain that LL is an education program housed within DPI, elaborate on my practices in these sessions etc
- Use Jenny's name in the story (if you have no objections, Jenny, but happy to change it if you do)
- In the acknowledgements section of the exegesis to thank the five of you, by name, who participated. If any of you do not wish to be named pls LMK

If you could all pls LMK by Feb 15th

Thank you all very much

Natalie

Natalie McDonagh

McDonagh
2D 3D 4D DESIGN
THE ART OF THINKING

PO Box 1043
Hawthorn Vic 3122 Australia
Tel/Fax 03 9818 1397
http://www.mcdonaghdesign.com

REGISTERED TRADEMARKS

inspiration BY design  OBLIQUE inspirations  CREATIVE contemplation
From: Kathkemp@bigpond.com  
Subject: Re: Request for permission  
Date: 3 February 2008 5:05:18 PM  
To: natalie@mcdonaghdesign.com

Hi Natalie,

Lovely to hear from you. I would be honoured to be named in your PhD exegesis. I hope that you are writing up and soon to finish your PhD. You have had some barriers along the way and I hope that you have had some reasonable support and are happy with the work and recognition you've received.

I hope you are keeping well.

Regards,
Kathleen

From: Kath.Goyen@dpi.vic.gov.au  
Subject: Re: Request for permission  
Date: 4 February 2008 9:10:14 AM  
To: natalie@mcdonaghdesign.com

Hi Natalie

I hope all is going well with the PhD write up!!

Feel free to use any photos/ written material etc of me for your PhD - however I can help I am happy with!

Cheers
Kathryn

From: jessica@connor777@gmail.com  
Subject: Re: Request for permission  
Date: 6 February 2008 5:21:30 PM  
To: natalie@mcdonaghdesign.com

Hi everyone, it's amazing it seems to me as though the story is still very much alive... the web continues to be woven... Hope you are all well.

Natalie I would be happy for you to use the story in your exegesis.

Warm regards,
Jess.

From: alfagan@mcmedia.com.au  
Subject: Re: Request for permission  
Date: 6 February 2008 8:36:38 PM  
To: natalie@mcdonaghdesign.com

Hi Natalie,

That is fine by me for you to use the story in exegesis.

Cheers!
Ann
RMIT Ethics approval
January 2004

Plain Language Statement

To whom it may concern

Invitation to participate
You are invited to participate in research I am conducting into practitioners' experience of using art activities as a form of reflective thinking to enhance personal and professional development. This research is part of a PhD degree at RMIT University, School of Management that is being supervised by Professor Nita Cherry and Dr Sophia Errey. The working title of the project is Art and Metaphor: Designing Transformative Practices for Organisational Development.

About the Investigator
I am a design professional of 25 years experience who has for the past 10 years been exploring the uses and benefits of art and design methods applied to non traditional fields, such as business development and personal growth. This research program has emerged from my experience and knowledge gained over this period with individuals and groups in a diverse range of private and public sector organisations. The focus of my current practice is the design of tools and methods that assist personal and professional development, and that can also be applied in practice situations. These tools and methods can be thought of as forms of Creative Contemplation and your involvement is being sought to explore their impact and value in the context of professional practice.

Purpose of the research
The aim of my research project is to usefully expand the methods and tools available to practitioners for personal and professional practice development.

Location and Time commitment
You are invited as part of a group of four practitioners to participate in an experimental activity based at the Exhibition and Performance Spaces at the College of Fine Arts, UNSW, Sydney. This requires you to be present at the site for about 6 hours on January 29th, 2004 and to invest an amount of time, entirely at your discretion, in private reflection and making an artwork.

Activities involved
Individual
You will be provided (at the researcher's expense) with a box containing guidelines, a task and materials. As a solo activity you are asked to:
- Engage with the box of materials provided
  o reflect on the visual prompts, task, materials and your responses to them
  o record your reflections in verbal and visual notes
  o respond in the form of a conceptual artwork with the materials provided,

Group
The participants will come together for a session of group reflections where the degree of personal disclosure is entirely at your discretion. You are asked to
- Discuss the experience of the process, your responses, thoughts, ideas, any insights gained
- Offer interpretations of your own artworks as pieces of visual text and constructively contribute to the interpretation of other group members' pieces

Natalie McMenagh, PhD research project, RMIT Business Faculty
Potential benefits to you
By participating in this Creative Contemplation experiment you may
• derive useful personal and professional insight
• acquire creative methods for application in your practice

Data and confidentiality
Your experiences may be recorded in the form of taped conversation, photographs of the
artworks you make and the researcher's notes. These will be used in such a way that you
cannot be identified. Your anonymity and confidentiality in this project will be protected
by use of pseudonyms. As a participant, you will be asked to treat the group’s activities
as confidential and to respect the privacy of all group members.
Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time, and withdraw
any data unprocessed at that time, by advising the researcher and/or supervisors at the
contact details below.

Use of the data
Your data will be used to inform a written and visual thesis that will be available to
RMIT and a wider community of academics and practitioners. The research may also be
presented at relevant conferences and/or submitted to professional journals for
publication.

CONTACT DETAILS
Researcher
Natalie McDonagh Tel: 03 8415 1944 Email: natalie@modonaghdesign.com
Supervisors
Prof. Nita Cherry Tel: 03 9889 7369 Email: ncherry@netspace.net.au
Dr. Sophia Errey Tel: 03 9925 2371 Email: sophia.errey@rmit.edu.au

Concerns
If you have any concerns regarding this research please feel free to contact
Chair of the Business Faculty Human Research Ethics Committee
Tel: 03 9925 5594, Fax: 03 9925 5595 or Email: rdu@bf.rmit.edu.au

Natalie McDonagh, PhD research project, RMIT Business Faculty
RMIT HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Prescribed Consent Form For Persons Participating In Research Projects Involving Interviews, Questionnaires or Disclosure of Personal Information

FACULTY OF
Management
DEPARTMENT OF
Business

Name of participant:

Project Title:
Art and Metaphor: Designing Transformative Practices for Organizational Development

Name(s) of investigator:
Natalie McDonagh
Phone: 03 8415 1944 and 0414 524 266

1. I have received a statement explaining the process involved in this project.
2. I consent to participate in the above project, the particulars of which - including details of the process have been explained to me.
3. I authorise the investigator or his or her assistant to interview me or administer a questionnaire.
4. I acknowledge that:
   (a) Having read the Plain Language Statement, I agree to the general purpose, methods and demands of the study.
   (b) I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time and to withdraw any unprocessed data previously supplied.
   (c) The project is for the purpose of research and/or teaching. It may not be of direct benefit to me.
   (d) The confidentiality of the information I provide will be safeguarded by the researcher. Other participants will be asked to maintain confidentiality but I understand this cannot be guaranteed.
   (e) The security of the research data is assured during and after completion of the study. The data collected during the study may be published, and a report of the project outcomes will be provided to RMIT and available to a wider community of academics and practitioners interested in the field of organizational development. Any information that could identify me will not be used.

Participant’s Consent

Name: ____________________________ Date: 29.01.04
(Participant)

Name: ____________________________ Date: 29.01.04
(Witness to signature)

Participants should be given a photocopy of this consent form after it has been signed.

Any complaints about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chair, RMIT Business Human Research Ethics Committee, RMIT Business, GPO Box 2476V, Melbourne, 3001. The telephone number is (03) 9925 5594, the fax number is (03) 9925 5595 or email address is rdv@bf.rmit.edu.au

Natalie McDonagh, PhD research project, RMIT Business Faculty
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Participant's Consent:

Name: MARK JACQUES
Date: 29.01.04

(Witness to signature)

Name: 
Date: 29.01.04

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Name(s) of investigator: ____________________________
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Participant's Consent

Name: ____________________________ Date: 29/1/04
(Participant)

Name: ____________________________ Date: 29/1/04
(Witness to signature)

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Natalie McDonagh, PhD research project, RMIT Business Faculty

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RMIT HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

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(name of participant)

Name: ____________________________ Date: 29-1-04

(witness to signature)

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Natalie McDonagh, PhD research project, RMIT Business Faculty
A Zen master was invited to a great Catholic monastery to give instructions in Zen practice. He exhorted the monks there to meditate and to try and solve their koan or Zen question with great energy and zeal. He told them that if they could practice with full-hearted effort, true understanding would come to them. One old monk raised his hand. “Master,” he said, “our way of prayer is different than this. We have been meditating and praying in the simplest fashion without effort, waiting instead to be illuminated by the grace of God. In Zen is there anything like this illuminating grace that comes to one uninvited?” he asked. The Zen master looked back and laughed. “In Zen,” he said, ” we believe that God has already done his share.”

(Kornfeld & Feldman, 1996:44-45)