engaging Space

a practice of arranging

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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 in 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; and, any editorial work, paid or unpaid, carried out by a third party is acknowledged.

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Cropped thumbnails running down the length of the right side of each spread indicate separate sections. Perforations at the edge of a page draw the attention to what is hidden between pages. Bookmarks have been provided to link a project with some other point that has been noticed elsewhere.
Engaging Space focuses on arranging as means to engage with space. The adaptive arrangements and spatial negotiations of street vendors provide the stimulus for my inquiry. Noticing the various ways vendors constantly engage with space has led me to observe the ways spatial practices are adapted to suit various requirements. What might I learn, as an interior practitioner, from the spatial practices of street vendors? How might this be applied to an interior practice, to inform an understanding of adaptive methods to engage with space? Undertaking a practice of vendoring, the projects then become engaging spaces – exploring a practice of arranging to produce interiors.
Before embarking on this research, my understanding of spatial practices had been blinkered by assumptions that interiors required some form of planned construction in order to become ‘fit’ for inhabiting. Rejecting this narrow way of thinking has led me to question and notice the kinds of everyday practices where users make temporary interiors, almost instantaneously, of any space.

The various pasar malam of my childhood have long been a source of fascination for me with their unpredictable appearances and re-appearances.¹ They comprise of stalls...
that traders rotate in location amongst various housing estates for several nights every few months, and are usually attended by families from the estate and surrounds as a short outing. With stalls directly facing the street, traffic is often brought to a standstill during the pasar malam’s operating hours in the evening; at the end of each night, the street is returned to its usual state, passable by vehicular traffic for the next day.

In The Arcades Project, German writer and philosopher Walter Benjamin noted a similar makeshift arrangement for the use of space when he described a brief disturbance caused by workers repairing the pavement and laying the pipeline in a Parisian street. Vendors had installed themselves and displayed their goods on the stones “so that business was profiting, instead of suffering, from the brief disturbance.” Benjamin pronounced them “wizards at making a virtue of necessity” as they “make the street an interior.”

Now, as I encounter a vendor setting up her stall in the street, I realise she is part of an entourage that has long perfected the way I wish to practise: by temporary arrangements to invite others to engage with the space they have made use of. I have come to reflect upon my interest in encounters with street vendors and their ways of instantaneously transforming a street with their makeshift stalls. What is it that draws me to their small-scale enterprise? The practice of street vendors has made me more aware of the ways in which spatial arrangements could affect how an interior is perceived.
I have been collecting accounts of my encounters with vendors: as various ways of practicing spatially, as events that have attracted my notice, and as encounters that have punctuated my experience of the street. These accounts have consisted of sound recordings, stills, moving images, and observations of how street vendors engage with street space to make temporary interiors. My research investigates ways of sharing these accounts through a practice of vendoring: re-presenting these encounters in arrangements to enable continual re-interpretations.

What might I learn, as an interior practitioner, from the spatial practices of street vendors? And how might this
be applied to an interior practice, to inform my understanding of adaptive methods to engage with space? Chancing upon the ways in which spaces are constantly being utilised has led me to notice the ongoing re-presentation of space to its users, and the nature of spatial practices so applied. Engaging Space is an exploration of how a practice of arranging might engage. This involves projecting spatial arrangements to produce engaging interiors; this is the position of this document.

In exploring ways to engage with space, I have observed that the spatial practices of street vendors seize on opportunities, and adapt in ways to operate within space to engage the attention of other pedestrians. Vendors’ temporal arrangements – their arrangement of goods as spatial engagements in relation to the location of their stalls within a larger context – have provided the impetus for this research. The spatial implications of vendors’ practices are less about unchanging control than they are about constantly adapting and responding to changing spatial relationships. This framework for spatial practices has been informed more by Noticing (as a research method) than by a minutely detailed understanding of the uses of space. I imagine this is due mainly to the opportunistic nature of vendor-related practices that resist rational containment by any analytical approach; spatial practices frequently subvert the ranks of spatial hierarchy — tactically — to suit their purposes. As such, spatial practices have been understood to be formed within and through layers, carrying on to affect subsequent responses within space.

This research has been conducted in three locales: Taiwan, Singapore and Melbourne; the order beginning from the place where most vendor-related activity has been noticed. The possibility of encountering vendors in my home-state of Singapore has been significantly reduced as a result of strict laws enforced during post-war nation building. It was a pleasant surprise, then, to discover the engagement between people and spaces brought about by vendor-ly activities during my first visit to Taipei two years ago. Melbourne, like Singapore, is experiencing a dearth of street vending, though busking and street art greatly compensate for this by providing a medium between individuals and the spaces they occupy, and the subsequent opportunities for chance encounters.

With spaces that seem to be designed for a specific purpose, I often find its variant uses more interesting. Why are variant uses of space more intriguing than the intended ones? Perhaps it is because the open-ended outcome is a curious condition, providing the user with various possibilities to work from, and enabling various sorts of spatial connections to be generated as a result of temporary inhabitation. With his van doubling up as a mobile stall, a beverage-vendor sets up at a car park in Taipei on a Sunday evening. His arrangement of fairy lights and portable seating embellishes the space, making apparent the kinds of engagement he wishes to invite. Within the car park, this vendor has produced a spatial encounter by arranging in a way to engage others with his use of space. This draws others to the space he has temporarily occupied, thereby transforming it.
This research has also been a way for me to meld three seemingly disjointed practices at the outset: Interior Design, Publication Design and Music. As such, the projects that have been undertaken reflect elements from these three practices as a way of collecting and arranging to inform a resultant spatial understanding. The projects are presented as a series of small scale, individual works, and can be evaluated as a process of vending – seizing on opportunities to create spatial arrangements – that has informed my understanding as a whole towards an interior practice.

My focus on arranging is to convey various temporal ways of inhabiting spaces in an adaptive manner. I draw the reader’s attention to various incidents involving street vendors that have propelled my curiosity and come to inform my practice of arranging. I hope that this research will make apparent moments that might inspire others to inhabit spaces in ways that depart on their own ‘tactical trajectories’.
A brief outline to the encounters contained, in order from front to back, within this record: a section on Methods of Engaging highlights vendor-ly arrangements as an approach to developing my practice of arrangement; a series of Projects undertaken; and a Conclusion to what my research has offered to an understanding of an interior practice. However, having done away with numbered chapters – opting instead for a line of cropped thumbnails running down the right side of each spread in lieu of a content page – I suggest that the reader can choose to start from the image that most interests him/her, or at random, or proceed in a linear fashion. This enables the reader to take in the sections visually; it also provides a tactile guide, alluding to directional signs normally noticed as part of the practice of walking the street.

Finally, as an extension from the practice described, this document is arranged with several complementary threads of activities. Some clues:

1. Perforations at the edge of a page draw the attention to what is hidden between pages.6
2. Bookmarks have been provided to link a project with some other point that has been noticed elsewhere.7
3. Footnotes hold the potential for countless other trajectories of thought to take flight.8

6. As a teenager, I noticed the tactic of concealing ‘saucy’ spreads and articles between sealed pages of magazines generated curiosity around an otherwise ordinary article. It was a tactic used by the marketing department of that publication to lure a browser into purchasing the issue in order to read it. Years later, with a professional background in publication-design, I encountered sealed pages again – not as a result of deliberate action, but as a result of mechanical malfunction: where, during a print run, the pages were not properly trimmed. The use of perforations and ‘hidden’ content within the layout of this document provides an interesting disjunction between a deliberate action on my part, and, perhaps, an accidental discovery on the part of the reader that I am interested to explore as a method of engaging. 

7. At a bookstore or a library, or especially when the book is not my own, I frequently flip through a book, waiting for random fragments of information to present themselves. And when they do, in the form of a particular sentence or paragraph, or an image, I read through and leave a finger to mark that page. Soon, I have all five fingers on one hand stuck in various junctions while my free hand continues with the flipping; and wish there were bookmarks nearby. Post-it notes would do, too, if I was to hold on to the book for a while; but – sparing the pinch of dog-eared pages, I feel bookmarks to be suitable tactical insertions into books to link concepts with other concepts noticed. 

8. Here, I seek to provide points beyond the HarperCollins Dictionary’s definition of footnotes as ‘minor or tangential comments or events added or subordinated to a main statement or more important event’. Often, while reading an interesting essay, I would get thoroughly sidetracked by the commentary provided in the author’s footnotes. This is, for me, a mark of an intriguing article. Butterfield, Jeremy. ‘Footnote’. Collins English Dictionary. Great Britain: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003. (6th ed) p. 634
While vendors’ practices appear to be fairly straightforward in their attempts to make use of space to sell their wares, I suggest that such methods not only vary from one vendor to the next, but also are trickier than they seem because of their need to constantly negotiate between control of and dependence on various spatial conditions. While vendors arrange their goods and the position of their stalls as a means to engage the notice of potential customers, as a practitioner, I have made use of Noticing as a method to document vendors’ spatial arrangements to engage with space. These documentations— as noticings, have then been collected and arranged in ways to explore the nature of vending as a way to engage with and inhabit space.

As such, the heading for this section, Methods of Engaging, refers to the methods I have used to research the spatial arrangements of vendors. This has then led to an understanding of how vending might produce temporal interiors by adaptive methods of spatial arrangements, seizing on opportunities to engage with space and to become noticed.
How does one notice? When walking in the street, my attention is often drawn to the activities of other users of the street, especially if they are not walking; their temporary immobility makes apparent the various ongoing activities within the street, highlighting different possibilities within a single context. John Mason describes the practice of noticing as “an act of attention”, involving an exercise of recalling and seeking threads for multiple interpretations, rather than detailed explanation. It increases an awareness of the range of ‘things’ offered by making “a distinction, to create foreground and background, to distinguish some ‘thing’ from its surroundings.” Distinguishing ongoing practices from their surroundings makes apparent the aspects that have made them different. In this case, though the practice of vending is very much a part of the street, it is easily noticed for its temporarily immobilised nature amongst movement.

While walking, I often carry with me an MP3 recorder, handheld camcorder, digital camera and a sketchbook. Most street-based encounters rely on being chanced upon. These instruments are used to record what has been noticed, rather than document an entire scene.

A candy seller - an elderly woman, sits hunched against a pillar by the steps at a bank’s entrance. Setting up her makeshift stall, she removes from a large striped plastic bag an impressively simple arsenal of implements. The red plastic stool she sits on is the first to be taken out of the bag. She positions it against the wall. She sits, and proceeds to remove the rest of the contents: two containers, a pot of syrup, and a sheet of paper in a scratched plastic covering bearing the words ‘old fashioned candy’ is placed at her feet. The containers – one mineral water bottle with its top cut off and the other a tin can – hold, respectively, sticks for stirring the candy and serving sticks for the candy. These containers are attached to the...

10. Mason, p. 33
11. Mason, p. 33
12. These devices have enabled me to document the goings-on on the street and its users without creating too much of an obstruction to other users. They are partly state-of-the-art recording/playback equipment – rather, as comparatively low-end gadgets, they allowed me to capture occurrences within the street immediately, with little time required for setting up. The short time taken to activate these ‘low-tech’ devices was important because of the ephemeral nature of the occurrences I was interested in: vendors moved away quickly and it was useful to have my recording devices ready without much setting-up. In a way, these allowed me to be much more mobile than proper recording devices would have done.
13. This candy is served on a stick like a malleable lollypop. The vendor can prepare the viscous syrup beforehand at home.
pot with steel wire. She is only slightly obscured from the flow of pedestrians because she aligns herself along the wall with a key-maker who operates from a similarly sparse set-up.

To apply Mason’s practice of noticing, as already mentioned, as “an act of attention”, the candy seller is noticed by the way she has chosen to arrange herself to be encountered. Her stationary site amongst the movement on the footpath, the location she has chosen (at the entrance to a bank), and her position in relation to other vendors (such as the key-maker) contribute to distinguish the vendor from her surroundings. How might a practice of vendor-ly arrangements inform engaging spatial interventions? While a vendor’s motivations for getting noticed by other pedestrians becomes a way for the vendor to engage others, vendor-inspired arrangements engage others to notice by interposing changes in scale, movement, and degrees between concealment and openness. As an immediate response to spatial context, a practice of arranging makes use of noticing as a way to distinguish events from their surroundings, highlighting interiors that invite engagement. Noticing becomes a starting point from which other connections could be made.
collecting and arranging

Henri Lefebvre observed, “the diversion and reappropriation of space are of great significance, for they teach us about the production of new spaces.”

As a method of research, Collecting and Arranging become a way to engage with space, rearranging to produce new connections between viewers, interiors and space. As different arrangements from a collection are generated within space, they invite engagement between the practitioner, viewer, time and space; they become implicated as participants in the production of “new spaces.” Engaging Space explores the diversions provided by arrangements (and rearrangements), and the “new spaces” that are produced.

In describing the curiosity cabinet, art historian Barbara Maria Stafford observed the act of bringing together to “flatten hierarchies and invite new connections to spring up”, extending the “opportunity of inventing further relations.”

How might a practice of arranging flatten hierarchies, enabling connections to be made between the collection and the spaces within which they are situated? The idea of amassing by gathering ‘things’ of similar themes has been an ongoing process within my research. In accumulating various spatial arrangements that have been noticed, I have found myself in a continual process of devising ways to re-assemble them in new arrangements. Collecting has opened up possibilities for finding parallels, and for shifts in emphasis between various threads of enquiry, generating various permutations to invite new connections. Here, I use the word permutation to privilege the act of arranging by alternating between sets of subjects within a group in response to spatial conditions.


The array of brooms, feather dusters, mops, scrubs and other cleaning paraphernalia appears to be more visible than the vendor peddling in front. His street-cry precedes his appearance. Witnessing a mobile exhibition of cleaning implements has a strange incongruity against the mix of residences and small shops selling a range of food and beauty products. The elderly gentleman dismounts to re-arrange some of his goods that may have become dislodged during the journey; the street-cries stop correspondingly. The vendor’s mobility allows him to operate opportunistically; it is a practice that, as described by Michel de Certeau, "seizes on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment." By appearing in different locations, the mobile arrangement of the vendor flattens hierarchies, creating connections to be generated within changing contexts. 


A different vendor, with a markedly different arrangement, is encountered in a small car park beside the main road. The vendor steps out of his van with some plastic chairs and proceeds to unfold four fibreglass tables to face the van. Meanwhile, various popular melodies can be heard issuing from the speakers, attracting attention to his makeshift business. He rolls up the tarpaulin and unlatches the side of the van to reveal a hand-painted price list: a combination of songs and drinks (alcoholic and otherwise). Above this, a television set sits atop a karaoke machine; two speakers are located on either side, and there is a shelf to the right. From the shelf, he removes two black box files containing lists of the songs from his collection of karaoke discs in plastic sleeves. He sets these on two of the nearest tables, along with pads and pencils, awaiting his first customers of the evening.

The karaoke vendor makes connections with various situations by varying the arrangement of his movable elements such as tables, chairs, and his van in relation to the conditions offered by the site (i.e. lighting, circulation, visibility, etc.). In taking out the movable elements contained in his van and arranging them in various permutations, the vendor responds to the spatial conditions of the site in a manner comparable to a spaceship landing in a new space, disgorging its contents to ‘find out more’ about its new surroundings.
In a series of exhibitions entitled *Spacecraft*, curator Suzie Attiwill uses the prefix ‘extra’ – referring for instance to the word extraterrestrial, to suggest the changing relationships between the momentary passing through of the objects and subjects as a series of encounters sited, sighted and cited within space.\(^{18}\) Attiwill writes of “extraspace” that is in excess of meaning: one where meaning is produced in “new spaces” – that which is made in the space between the object and viewer – where the affect “can only be made intelligible after the encounter”.\(^{19}\)

Collecting and arranging become ways of addressing various spatial contexts by serving as ‘extra’ – layers added to a space, imbuing it with different meanings, and inviting users into an encounter, to come inside to engage.\(^{20}\) When expressed in terms of vending, they also suggest a means of arranging objects in ephemeral encounters before they are packed up and moved off. Within spaces, the interiors created are described by Christine McCarthy to be “transient”. She goes on to observe, “interiority is temporal, because changes in its variables […] can cause the dissolution or the materialisation of interiorities”.\(^{21}\) The new spaces that are produced and subsequently reproduced provide renewed suggestions of fresh connections between and through layers of hierarchies.

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How have these methods of engaging (i.e. Noticing, Collecting and Arranging) informed my understanding of the production of interiors on a broader context? As methods to research and document vendors’ engagements with space, these methods have led to explorations of vending as arrangements that adapt, opportunistically, to produce interiors.

My practice of interior-making, as a continual process of noticing-collecting-arranging, has been informed by the process of vending to produce transient interiors, where various ways of inhabitation – as means of engaging with space – can recur.

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18. The idea of the UFO, or Unidentified Flying Object, as a spacecraft is used as a way of ‘sighting, siting and citing’ to investigate the relationship between subject and object in a series of encounters. The viewer is invited momentarily into ‘an encounter with the object in … a space … crafted in particular ways’. In her text, Attiwill discusses the word ‘extra’ as a prefix (for instance, to the words extraterrestrial or extracorporeal) to suggest the ‘outside and beyond’ denoted by the momentary passing-through of the objects sited (cited, sighted as well) in the exhibition. Attiwill, Suzie. *Spacecraft* 0701, Exhibition catalogue. Monash University Museum of Art. 17 July – 25 August 2001

19. *Spacecraft*, as an invitation to craft space, explores ‘the conjunction between object, viewer, and space [where] the moment of encounter becomes a creative moment of interiorisation’. As ‘new meaning happens in the excess’, ‘new spaces’ can be produced with each process of arrangement, encounter and translation. See: Attiwill, Spacecraft 0701. Exhibition catalogue. See also: Lefebvre, p.167


Its present invents itself, from hour to hour [...] The spectator can read in it a universe that is constantly exploding. Michel de Certeau. ‘Walking in the City’

Significant literary work can only come into being in a strict alternation between action and writing; it must nurture the inconspicuous forms that better fit its influence in active communities than does the pretentious, universal gesture of the book – in leaflets, brochures, articles, and placards. Only this prompt language shows itself actively equal to the moment. Walter Benjamin. ‘Filling Station’

22. de Certeau. p. 91
23. Benjamin notes that it is in the small details on which the operation of the whole depends. Benjamin observes ‘one does not go up to a turbine and pour machine oil over it; one applies a little to hidden spindles and joints that one has to know.’ This implies an intimate knowledge based on active involvement, whether of the street, or with a practice. Benjamin, Walter. One Way Street. Trans. Jephcott, Edmund & Shorter, Kingsley. London: Verso, 1998. p. 45.
“some”

Exploring ways to engage with what has been noticed

The production of ‘zines with the title some set in motion the practice of noticing and immediate documentation of what had been noticed. As an alternative device to published magazines and books, some took the form of ‘zines. This was a tactic to keep costs and quantities low; it also provided for immediacy and accessibility.24 The content of each ‘zine was influenced by concepts that occurred from the readings, or time spent within the street, observing, taking notes, and sometimes taking photographs. Some reflected spatial practices and ways of engaging with space; some was also an exploration of ways to engage others by arranging what had been noticed to enable re-viewing, discussions, circulation and speculations.

As in Benjamin’s quote encountered at the heading of this section, the ‘zines were a sort of “prompt language” showing itself to be “actively equal to the moment.”25 By not actively pursuing a specific topic, different perspectives of spatial practices were brought to the foreground in each some. These were digressive detours to investigate encounters of everyday arrangements in re-presented forms.

As a way of drawing on my previous practice of layout design, the production of some have subsequently drawn my attention to spatial practices that have made use of space to engage others. In ‘Filling Station,’ Benjamin addressed the small details of prompt languages on which larger operations depend; some were investigations of these small details.26 As a way of arranging to bring before the public, some utilised the practice of publications to explore various aspects of engagement.
some #1: Singapore | Melbourne

Spatial practices in Singapore and Melbourne, exploring their arrangement in juxtaposition

148x105 mm

Paper, ink, inkjet printer, XD card, digital camera

some #1: Singapore | Melbourne contained observations and lines of comparison between the experience of the street in Melbourne and Singapore. Having lived in Melbourne for less than a month, the differences were stark and vivid. I was curious about how cultural differences affected perceptions of characteristics of the street. Having been effectively de-territorialised by the move from Singapore, the approach to design was to view the new surroundings as a process of ‘de-sign’, freeing the mind from preconceived recognition of actual signs.27

27. Deleuze and Guattari define deterritorialisation as an ongoing process of freeing a possibility or event from its actual origins. In Some #1, this is explored for its contribution in positioning encounters in terms of similarities and differences for comparison from an earlier location (Singapore) to another (Melbourne). Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Felix. Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Félix. A Thousand Plateaus. Trans. Massumi, Brian. London: Continuum, 2004. p. 96
some #1 set out exploring and documenting the process of balancing surprise and familiarity: treading between both by discussing various encounters, alternately, both in Singapore and Melbourne. The surprises were evidenced by differences in encounters between streets in both locations - for instance, the use of the grass slope in front of Melbourne’s State Library had no equivalent in terms of the use of public space in front of a landmark building in Singapore. For Italo Calvino, encounters within the space of the street are signs, repeated for the city to exist in our minds. This offered an interesting pattern from which to position the encounters within the street: representing the street in ways that would engage us to remember it. In some #1, the place and experience of both cities, Singapore and Melbourne, were compared for the kinds of spatial practices noticed within them.

Using the metaphor of a topographical surveyor, philosopher Jeff Malpas wrote on place and experience:

28. In the story of ‘Cities and Signs’, Calvino suggests the redundancy of memories and even of the actual city of Zirma. He writes, “The city is redundant: it repeats itself so that something will stick in the mind. [...] Memory is redundant: it repeats signs so that the city can begin to exist”, offering repetition as an alternative, taking over what is remembered of encounters within the streets. Calvino, Italo. ‘Cities & Signs’. In Invisible Cities. Trans. Weaver, William. Great Britain: Vintage Classics, 1974. p. 19
Only by measurement of distance and angle, by repeated triangulation and traverse, can a picture of the topography of the region be built up. For such a surveyor, there is nowhere outside of the region itself from which an accurate topographical picture can be obtained. It is thus precisely through the surveyor’s active involvement with the landscape that an accurate mapping is made.29

The topography of the street and its encounters can be understood in terms of their interrelations – evident from one’s repeated and active engagement from within it. Malpas’ idea of ‘active involvement’ denotes a condition of being immersed in the street with its terrain and the practices. Walking, as a form of active involvement, enables the walker to notice visual signs and distractions within street space. The position of a topographical surveyor cannot be static; only by repeated traversal can the surveyor understand the street in terms of the interrelations between its elements and spatial practices.30 In addition to this understanding, walking suggests a reading of the street in what de Certeau terms as its repetitively inventive and ‘constantly exploding’ state, offering an awareness of surrounding occurrences.31

The images used in some #1 – taken during walks in the streets of Singapore and Melbourne, were juxtaposed, with each spread alternately featuring images from each city. This juxtaposition flattened cultural, geographical and ethnographic hierarchies, allowing “new attachments [and relations] to spring up.”32 The phrase ‘too much surprise, and the novelty wears off’ was used in some #1 to describe the process of negotiating between wonder and familiarity to read ‘new relations’ into spatial noticings.33 Spaces that are continually re-presented in ‘new’ ways and engaged with are less likely

29. Malpas’ topographical surveyor is essentially a walker, described to ‘rely principally on theodolite and chain, a good eye and hand, and a strong pair of legs.’ Malpas, Jeff, E. Place and experience. A philosophical topography. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. p. 40

30. Ibid.
31. de Certeau draws our attention to the contrast between a person looking down on a city from the top of a skyscraper and the walkers of the city, which he terms the ‘ordinary practitioners’ of the city. de Certeau, pp. 91-93
32. Stafford, pp. 5-6
33. Regarding an inundation of encountered signs, architect Peter Smith writes of novelty becoming ‘surprisingly constant among a large consensus of the population’ as infinitely variable boundaries of encounters within the urban realm are ‘determined by experience and personality.’ It may be difficult to continue to be ‘actively involved’ with one’s surroundings when a viewer becomes accustomed to variability and change. The novelty of surprise, following Smith, can be sustained as other approaches are devised to continually engage with the space of the street. Smith, Peter, E. The Dynamism of Urbanism. London: Hutchinson, 1974, p. 43
to wear out the novelty of ‘surprise’. For example, room was moor spelt backwards, and with correspondingly opposite meanings to match. By deliberate attempts to juxtapose images, words and meanings to generate new connections, the layout of some #1 became a narrative of memories of Singapore and new noticings of Melbourne.
some #2: Personal Universe

To invite imaginings of inhabitation from the outside
148x105 mm
Paper, ink, inkjet printer, XD card, digital camera

some #2: Personal Universe was a montage of handwritten narratives from my childhood superimposed on the imagery of houses. This was inspired after reading Gaston Bachelard’s The Poetics of Space. This account of inhabited space was a highly personal one, based on the personal interaction and memories within it.34 some #2 experimented with the superimposition of fragments from my own childhood memories over images of houses (taken from the Melbourne suburb of Notting Hill) as a tactic to ‘inhabit’ them from the outside. This tactic of re-arrangement explored two things: first, the relationship between stories and place; second, the indeterminate nature of opportunistic temporal inhabitations.

34. Bachelard noted that in ‘writing or reading a room’, the reader who is reading the description of that room ‘leaves off reading and starts to think of some place in his own past.’ This can be related to de Certeau’s observation of how a text might be inhabited, ‘like a rented apartment ... borrowed for a moment by a transient’. As the reader’s interpretations begin to ‘slip into the author’s place’. See: Bachelard, Gaston. The Poetics of Space. Trans. Jolas, Maria. Boston: Beacon Press, 1969, p.14. See also: de Certeau. p. xxi
The cover of some #2 showed the front of someone's house; flipping over the cover revealed the first of the images, a postbox leading to someone's driveway.

Leading the reader past the driveway and into the space of the house just tantalizingly left out of the image, this invited the reader to 'inhabit' the space. Architect Stanley Abercrombie noted that approaching an interior implies an action “as a result of movement from outside to inside”, a stepping through an entrance. In this case, as the reader moved inwards from the ‘outside’ of the ‘zine, he/she would be repeatedly left outside for the entire length of some #2 with a collection of handwritten text depicting fragments of memories; there was not a single image with an interior of the houses shown. This tactic encourages the reader to imagine ways in which to inhabit the interior of the house pictured through the superimposed story of the text. By departing from the expectation of ‘leading inside’ the house, some #2 worked to set the reader off on a different trajectory to invite readings from the outside.
some #3: Us and The City
Place versus space: walking as a pedestrian’s immediate spatial practice
148x105 mm
Paper, ink, XD card, digital camera, photocopy machine

some #3: Us and The City worked through several issues: the notion of ‘place versus space’, meanings of a city and its streets to its users, and the idea of anonymity in exchanges within the crowded spaces of the city. With a mixture of handwriting, printed text and images, some #3 explored the pedestrian practices of walking in the city, questioning the qualities of the space as well as the anonymity afforded by the public city street. In some #3, I had observed that the differences between each person – given the anonymity offered by masses – were negligible as ‘in the city we are all the same’.

I had observed that ‘the city becomes a piece of real estate whose value is not merely in economics’, acknowledging the latent meaning beyond the services provided by the city. In some #3, the city was approached as a space that offers up possibilities for reading and re-interpreting various meanings. The term “vagabondage”, used by philosopher Edward Casey,
was borrowed as a fascinating term to describe the spatial practices of the street, proceeding in a "polyvocality of directions".

The main issue with wandering, walking as a pedestrian’s immediate spatial practice, and Casey’s term "vagabondage" was to highlight the multiple ongoing possibilities of negotiating a city’s streets. When pausing to notice, the experience of the walker is described by Fisher as a rearrangement within "a pattern that we feel confident that we know". As a space of noticing, the street continually re-presents itself to the walker suggesting meanings to be read and re-read into their surroundings.

36. Deleuze and Guattari wrote of the continual process of negotiation linking “smooth” and “striated” space: with one becoming the other. They wrote “nothing is ever done with: smooth space allows itself to be striated, and striated space re-imparts a smooth space”. Casey, following Deleuze and Guattari’s distinctions of smooth and striated spaces, went on to comment on "vagabondage", where smooth space allows “for wandering and drifting between regions instead of moving straight ahead between fixed points.” See: Casey, Edward S. The Fate of Place. A Philosophical History. Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1998. p. 304. See also: Deleuze, Gilles & Guattari, Felix. A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia. pp. 526-528

37. Rearrangements are often noticed by their discontinuity in expected patterns; for instance, encountering a candy-seller in the midst of a busy walkway. Fisher observes encounters of “momentary surprise [to be] extra ordinary, and unexpected”; to produce wonder. Fisher, Philip, Wonder, the Rainbow, and the Aesthetics of Rare Experiences. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998, p. 57
some #4: Ways to use a chair
Different ways of engaging with a common item
148x105 mm
Paper, ink, inkjet printer, XD card, digital camera,
foldable chair, flatmate as model

some #4: Ways to use a chair explored
the tension existing between the
intended and eventual use of a
common item of furniture. This
was then projected back into an
understanding of how a 'common
space' might also, as in the case of
the chair, be made use of in different,
unpredicted ways. As observed
succinctly by de Certeau, "what is
counted is what is used, not the ways of
using."38 In order to investigate other
uses for a plastic foldable chair, my
flatmate (a performance artist) and I
devised various characters that might
have very different impressions of how
a chair could function.

38. de Certeau, p. 35
This exercise was inspired by Russian theatre director Constantin Stanislavsky’s method for actors to repeat the same phrase, each time accenting a word differently to produce different meanings from the same phrase. In making use of the chair for purposes other than its ‘intended’ function of being sat on, the variations of uses accented the chair, articulating it by attaching fresh connotations to the meaning of a chair.

Stanislavsky encouraged the characterisation of a noun by accenting – “painting” the character in the accenting of the word. He went on to warn, though, that it is not in the way a word is said, as it is in “how others will hear and absorb it.” How might a space be accented by adding different meanings and uses to it? What kinds of new meanings could be produced by engaging with spaces in different ways?

In some #4, “different users, yet more uses” was used to describe an approach to making use of spaces in ways that privileged the user. The space (or item of furniture, in this case) with which the user engages no longer remains separate from the user. Projecting from de Certeau’s quote, what is counted is the space that is used, and not the ways of engaging with it. Ways to use a chair explored ways to engage in various different ways from what had been ‘intended’.

39. In the chapter titled ‘Accentuation: the expressive word,’ Stanislavsky wrote of an accent on words as “the third important element of speech” after pauses and intonations as “it serves up a word on a salver.” Stanislavsky described that a sentence would be of “no significance” if all the words were accented indiscriminately without a basis for the stress. Stanislavsky, Constantin. Building a Character. Trans. Hapgood, Elizabeth Reynolds. London: Methuen, 1981. Pp. 149-172.

40. Stanislavsky, p. 152
some #5: Inspiring Curiosity
Exploring spatial practices as ways to make others careful and inquisitive
148 x 105 mm
Paper, ink, inkjet printer, XD card, digital camera

some #5: Inspiring Curiosity presented spaces in Singapore, contrasting the value of unsanctioned activities such as the operation of street vendors against the highly organised and planned surroundings. This led to the notion of personal exchanges within a public domain; questioning the idea of exchanges on personal levels in contrast to the public-ness and impersonal nature of the streets in Singapore.

In order to ‘enliven’ the streets, the Singapore Government has only recently sanctioned street vending as a legal activity. As part of the Singapore Government’s intervention to clear the vendors off the street in the 1960s,
the clean environment of the ‘hawker centre’ was provided as a place where formerly unlicensed food vendors and their customers could congregate. 'Hawker centres' sprung up during the period of rapid urbanization in the 1950-60s. With amenities such as clean water from a tap, and fixed seats and tables, the hawker centre provided relatively hygienic food at inexpensive prices. These hawker centres gathered together formerly mobile food vendors and still serve as meeting points for many Singaporeans today. The public spaces of Singapore seem to be channeled towards 'community-building', where residents are drawn out of their homes to indulge in a process of 'exchange'.

43. For Liggett and Perry, spatial practice is situated as a generative approach in which a mixture of space, ideology and representation are implicated. Liggett, Helen & Perry, David these as means of actively engaging other street users to pause and notice out of curiosity.

In their collection of essays titled *Spatial Practices*, urban theorists Helen Liggett and David Perry approached the city as an entity transformed over time. Following sociologist Henri Lefebvre’s notion of social space as a social product, Liggett and Perry explored urban space as a mode of social production rather than as a social product. How might the practice of vending – licensed or otherwise, be understood as a mode of production rather than as a social product? How might the practice of vending – licensed or otherwise, be understood as a mode of production rather than as a social product?

To position curiosity as a force within spatial practices of the street, let us return to the title ‘Inspiring curiosity’: what kinds of responses might curiosity inspire? As a social space, the street is not designated, per se, for curiosity; rather, it is what the users – as practised traversers of street space, make of it that is able to inspire curiosity. To draw from the etymology of the word ‘curious’ meaning *careful and inquisitive*: what is the value of ‘being careful and inquisitive’ within a spatial practice? Or, deriving even further from its Latin root word ‘cura’ meaning care, the question could be asked in a clearer way: how might an interior practitioner work to cause others to care, or to be careful and inquisitive about the experience of an interior? The role of vending, as a spatial practice, is co-related to curiosity in the various kinds of engagements it enables, arranging in ways to flatten hierarchies to generate new connections.

44. The understanding of spatial practices in this research is based on urban theorist Helen Liggett’s definition, 'spatial practices have to do with the everyday social/spatial patterns of people in particular places'. Liggett, p. 249
some #6: Inhabitants of our city

Imagining spatial practices and engagements formed
148x105 mm
Paper, laser printer

The fictitious inhabitants of an equally fictitious city featured in *some #6: Inhabitants of our city* were characters inspired by architect John Hejduk's work in the Lancaster/Hanover Masque. How might spatial practices affect – or even unwittingly choreograph – the kinds of engagements that are formed within a space shared by various users? In his analysis of Hejduk's Masque, Van den Bergh projected the term 'chora' upon it, describing it as a “matrix […] in which things, prior to being determined have no identity or sense.”

The imaginary community of *some #6* explored the intertwining nature of spatial practices and the mobile relationships of the engagements they produced within space.

45. During the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, the Masque flourished as a form of festive, dramatic entertainment in Europe – held mostly at the courts of wealthy patrons. Also known as a masquerade, or a masked ball, it was an event that participants attended in costume, usually wearing a mask to hide their identity. Hejduk made use of this process of fabricated identity in his work, the Lancaster/Hanover Masque, as a means of investigating the quality and order within various forms of inhabiting within a given space. In his work, the point of departure is a Rural Farm Community, where Hejduk designed a series of autonomous architectural elements.
The idea of having characters within the city crossing paths, whether unexpectedly or otherwise, alludes to the kinds of unpredicted encounters within street space. In some #6, the notion of encounters, intertwining trajectories, and inhabitants within a space were investigated for the kinds of engagements within space, where characters and various situations of their encounters were imagined, and subsequently projected as a series of overlapping narratives. These became interdependent stories of spatial practices woven together as the reader engaged them in the space between pages.

Inhabitants of our city projected various spatial practices, and, as an engaging space, it engaged the reader’s imagination into the kinds of spaces formed and inhabited by its characters.
some #7: LinJiang Street
Engaging with daily spatial transformation
1189x841 mm
Paper, ink, inkjet printer, XD card, digital camera

some #7 explored ways of arranging to recount the daily transformation of LinJiang Street, Taipei, from its daylight hours incarnation to a night-market. Images were recorded with a time-stamp, and handwritten annotations accompanied each image to narrate the process of transformation.

The practice of telling stories was explored in some #7 as a means for arranging recollections for others to encounter. The difference, Benjamin distinguished, between a story and the impersonal dissemination of information, is in the preservation of its meaning to enable its release even after a long period of time.

How might a personal recollection be arranged in a way to produce engagement with an ongoing spatial transformation? Of the manner in which to retell stories, he goes on to suggest:

... that slow piling one on top of the other of thin, transparent layers […] constitutes the most appropriate picture of the way in which the perfect narrative is revealed through the layers of a variety of retellings.49

At A0-dimensions of 1,189x841 mm, some #7 was folded ten times into an A5 pocket-sized booklet (210x148 mm) reminiscent of a travel map. Like a palimpsest - stories, encounters, directions, places and meanings, both written and imagined - could be piled one on top of the other, inviting a reader to inhabit it temporarily “like a rented apartment”.50 Three aspects of some #7 existed simultaneously: as an original, a re-presentation, as well as a site for more imaginings.

By transporting cardboard props from one street to another in a box attached to his bicycle, the Japanese candy-vendor tells stories at various locations to sell his candy. The Kamishibai-shi fuses the practice of story telling to the practice of vendoring.51 Inspired by the practice of Kamishibai-shi, some #7 attempted to combine the practice of story telling to the idea of a journey by inviting readers to engage with the images and annotations to weave a story of daily spatial transformation. As an arrangement of space to engage, the map-like quality of some #7: LinJiang Street implicates readers to become storytellers. The reader becomes a participant in the production of space in which he/she is engaged – and of a space that has engaged him/her.

48. Benjamin, Illuminations, pp. 89-90
49. Benjamin, Illuminations, p. 92
50. The idea of meaning being read into a text, or image, or encounter is based on de Certeau’s description of a text as being “habitable, like a rented apartment”. He observed the reader to inhabit the text, “transforming another person’s property into a space borrowed for a moment by a transient,” where the reader’s world slips into the author’s place. de Certeau, p. xxi
51. "Kamishibai, or paper theatre" was an earlier tradition of visual storytelling. Kamishibai was particularly Japanese. [...] The kamishibai man would travel around the city on his bicycle, on the back of which he carried pictures mounted on cards. When he arrived at a suitable park or street corner, he would bang wooden blocks together to attract an audience. Then, as the children gathered, he would set up his cards and, with these pictures and his own artful narration, beguile his audience with ghost stories, fairy stories, samurai stories, structuring them like soap operas in that every episode ended with a cliff-hanger. A good kamishibai man always left his audience hungry for his next visit. [...] the real point of kamishibai was to sell sweets. The performer was primarily a candy vendor who used his stories to attract customers.” See: Carey, Peter. Wrong about Japan. New South Wales: Random House Australia Pty Ltd, 2004. pp. 83-84. The practice of the kamishibai-shi is on the verge of becoming obsolete within the streets of Tokyo. Another excellent article on one of the few remaining kamishibai-shi, in Japan today can be found online. See also: <http://pinmag.jp/2006/11/06/kids-love-you-story-telling-man/> viewed 20 April 2007.
Undulations explored the contribution of repetition, scale and length to an arrangement. At 4.7 metres, the length of Undulations was intended to draw the viewer forward, expressing the idea of the street as a conduit. While I walked faced forward, a sideway glance revealed a multitude of street vendors; this was re-presented in Undulations in the form of images of vendors repeated at random throughout its length. The images in Undulations were taken from Taiwan, where unplanned, small-scale economic exchange transformed the street into an impromptu marketplace.52

52. Historian Lewis
Mumford observed that the Sumerian ideogram for the marketplace was a ‘Y’ – indicating perhaps the idea that a market for handling local barter occurred at the juncture of traffic routes. This denoted a ‘proper’ place for encountering markets. Instead of a ‘proper’ place at the Y-confluence of traffic routes, chance meetings with vendors were curious and had to be chanced upon because they occurred elsewhere – outside of a sanctioned marketplace. Mumford, Lewis. The City in History. Great Britain: Penguin Books, 1961, p. 89
Inspired by the vendor-ly activity flanking both sides of the street I was walking through, Undulations investigated ways of inviting engagement by diminishing the boundary brought about by issues of scale. How might a change in scale attract attention? In stark contrast to the scale of surrounding office towers and large windows of departmental shopfronts, the 1:1 scale provided by vendors offered opportunities for exchange by engaging conversations, purchases or a walk over to have a look at the wares arrayed. For Bachelard, a smaller scale invited an “inversion of perspective”, engaging the viewer to discover the interior contained within. The repeated visual images of Undulations re-presented, on a smaller scale, encounters experienced within space; it “fulfils our desire to imagine as readers”. To draw viewers in for a closer look and engage the senses of viewers, repetitive use of images on a small scale were used to draw the viewer in, and to close the scale of space between the viewer and the object. Here, the small scale of the images invited the viewer to engage by crossing the space that lay between. Mounted at eye-level, hundreds of repeated images were arranged to draw the viewer in: the smallness of the images drew the viewer closer to scrutinize the details, while the quantity of images, simulating an explosion of ongoing activity, were arranged to increase the scale of the arrangement.

The array of repeated, small-scale images explored a roundabout way of engaging the viewer’s attention through the notion of the spectacle. Vendors’ activities were ‘spectacular-ised’ in Undulations through an arrangement of images to show, superficially, random practices visible within the street.56

53. Bachelard wrote that the “causality of smallness stirs our senses” by involving an “inversion of perspective” in order to understand the “contradiction … in the size of the space involved.” Bachelard, p. 149

54. Interestingly, the etymology of the word ‘imagine’ stems from the word imago, or image. Imaginaire was first recorded to appear circa 1340, referring to “the faculty of the mind which forms and manipulates images.” In Old French imaginer means the process to form a mental image of, while the Latin imaginar means “to form an image of, represent.” See: Bachelard, p. 175 See also: <http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=imagine>, viewed on 07 June 2007

55. Bachelard remarked on the ability of “distance […] to create miniatures”. Bachelard, p. 172

56. Of its lack of diversity, Debord critiqued the spectacle as an “affirmation of appearance”: our attention is focused on superficial appearances – what is visible – that may not necessarily present a true picture of the real practices within a space. Debord, Guy, Society of the Spectacle. Detroit: Black & Red, 1983. Para. 10 (This is a collection of writings in paragraphed sections – i.e. without page numbers, to be circulated freely.)
Allowing oneself to be drawn in, however, the viewer became engaged in the detail contained in each image. The varied ways in which street space is utilised by vendors – by way of distractions and ongoing activity, were made apparent.

The practice of interior making through vending is explored in *Undulations*: creating within street space – by repetition and arrangement, the conditions of an interior. Interior qualities such as boundaries, changes in scale and arrangement within space have been explored as ways to draw attention through the contrast they provide with the impersonal scale of the street.
Noticing how sounds could be utilised to engage others’ attention
Dimensions variable
Portable MP3 player/recorder

If one thinks of music what could be more immaterial, what could leave less trace in actual experience than music?

Daniel Libeskind, ‘Chamberworks’ 58

**Notating: Street cries** brought the aural aspects within street space to the foreground, notating them graphically. This method of re-presentation served both as a way to record the cries, and as a way to engage others to interpret them from the notation. Composer R. Murray Schafer encouraged us to regard the sounds unfolding around us ceaselessly as a “huge musical composition”; of this “soundscape” he considered us “simultaneously its audience, its performers and its composers.” 59


60. The human presence makes one aware of the space apparent for human error — as does attending a live performance of chamber music does, regardless of the degree of virtuosity of each performer. The 'extra', as discussed earlier with reference to Attiwill's Spacecraft, refers to 'a new meaning [happening] in the excess'; this is a space between the vendor and other pedestrians.

61. Schaefer noted that the salient sounds within the soundscape to be important 'because of their individuality, their numerosness or their domination'. Schaefer exhorted the soundscape analyst to discover the significant features of a soundscape by distinguishing between the background sounds (the word sound, rather than noise, is used here to emphasise their importance in suggesting the characteristic of the space and its inhabitants), signals (as foreground sounds that punctuate our consciousness), and soundmarks (as a form I had collected various vendors' street cries over time because they intrigued me; they drew my attention to the strange power wielded by the human voice over the already-cacophonous streetscape. The significance of a single human voice — as an essential 'extra' to the spatial inhabitation of street space, made apparent the human aspect of engagement within it. The cries of the street vendor were noticed as they punctuated my experience of the street. When I replayed my own recordings, the background sounds were, at first, a constant source of annoyance, obscuring the 'main' voice of the vendor I had intended to capture; yet upon reflection, the sounds in the background were found to play an indispensable role in situating the cries of the vendor, invariably, as occurrences of the street. Notating: Street cries explored intelligible and consistent notations that could contribute to an understanding of how sounds are used within the street to engage others.
Notes on interpretation

Size of image denotes intensity of sound.
Images gradually getting smaller = gradually getting less audible, i.e. *decrescendo*

Images separated by lines denotes intermittent sound.
The time between each sound is denoted by the relative width of each line.
Images separated by lines of the same line width = sounds at regular intervals

The *fermata*, meaning ‘hold’ or ‘pause’ in Italian, is an element of musical notation. It indicates that the duration of the sound is to be prolonged at the artistic discretion of the performer or the conductor. This interrupts the normal tempo of the work.
Developing a system of graphic notation to communicate the various lilts and intonations of the human voice could not be achieved in terms of traditional musical notation (i.e. with clefs, key signatures, the five-line staff and bar lines) – with which I was familiar and initially inclined to use. The images provided at the margin of each notation offered clues to the context of each street cry. But the notations did not explain the conditions under which the encounters took place; rather, they allowed viewers to be ‘detectives’ in the re-construction of the encounter by imagining the pitches, textures, and timbres of the sounds through interpretation of the notation and to re-produce the street cry themselves.

By engaging continual re-readings, Notating: Street cries adapted vendors’ cries as a means of attracting attention to offer ways for that particular cry to be re-interpreted elsewhere. It was an arrangement – projecting from interpretations of a score – to continually offer up new ways of engaging with a score. Could a spatial arrangement similarly engage continual re-readings? By arranging to leave the interpretation of the encounter to the viewer, the open-ended outcome of Notating: Street cries produced new spaces in which different interpretations recurred in the space between the encounter and the viewer.

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Arranging to invite engagement
140x70 mm, 20 pcs
Paper, inkjet plotter, digital camcorder,
VHS-C compact videocassette, FireWire

Between Frames was a series of flipbooks that originated from a desire not to use video projection as a medium to show a sequence of disparate encounters with vendors. The experience of the street as a space of ongoing activity around the viewer allows her/him to pause: to notice, to engage, and to turn around. Yet, a video could go on unrelentingly regardless of the changing conditions of a space. The interim solution to this was to place the re-counting of the encounter literally in the hands of the viewer in the form of small flipbooks.

As the interior contained in the successive images becomes animated, the flipbook is transformed into an event in progress. Each successive image appears static; in order to ‘see’ movement, the viewer stares at the same spot while he/she thumbs through the pages quickly: a process takes place between frames that carries on, in an ongoing manner, to convey the encounter. Between Frames was also a collection of what had been
noticed, re-arranged to generate new perspectives in each re-telling of the encounter. Each time I go through this collection, the various things that previously failed to capture my attention surprise me.

As a way of arranging, Between Frames explored the idea of the encounter as the main element within a space, drawing the viewer into the space of the event. Between Frames investigated scaling down and invitations to engage in order to re-animate as a processes for creating interiors that become propositions for pausing to encounter.

As a site for encounters, the size of each flipbook – pocket-sized, allows this encounter to be carried with the viewer, exploring relations to context by landing, spacecraft-like, anywhere, and enabling various connections to be formed.
The Plant played on two of the many meanings of the word ‘plant’: first, as a growth of vegetation, and second, as a person, placed in an audience, whose rehearsed reactions appear spontaneous to the rest of the audience. The space of a laneway was poached momentarily for this experiment. de Certeau observed the need for tactics – as a practice of those not in a position of power – to constantly invent its methods of operating by “poaching in countless ways on the property of others”. He elaborated to note the surprise that resulted from a tactic’s (“tactician’s”) “vigilant use of cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers” by appearing where they are “least expected.”

63. Tattersalls Lane is a laneway in the Melbourne CBD about 200m in length, and flanked on both sides by 2-4 storey buildings. It runs alongside two Chinese restaurants, one Indian restaurant, and an edgy outdoor café known as ‘Section 8’.
64. de Certeau, p. xii, 37
65. Ibid.

Poaching space to make apparent existing elements
Dimensions variable
9 rolls of masking tape (48 x 1600 mm), penknife
In response to the lack of vegetation in the laneway, leaves were cut from nine rolls of masking tape, and stuck to the walls in strips placed close together. To investigate an opportunistic way of practicing spatially, The Plant made use of masking tape as a 'familiar' material to be used in a different way; it set out to draw attention to itself by engaging other users of the laneway to notice the seeming incongruity. The choice of masking tape as a material was in its impermanence: washed off by rain within a span of days, its presence was ephemeral.

During the process of setting up, there had been unexpected participation from other street users. As a way of working in the possibilities offered, The Plant responded spatially to engage notice by shifting perceptions: embellishing aspects within a space rather than to implement inharmonious structures. The performative aspect of The Plant made apparent the simplicity of the material used (i.e. masking tape) to transform the space of the laneway. This informed my practice by offering ways to notice spatial possibilities within a space, and working to introduce by adapting from within. Poaching and embellishing provided an approach to re-engage users by way of arranging in layers, as ‘extras’, within space.

66. Though I was unable to keep track of the subsequent effect it had on passers-by, the performance of sticking the masking tape to the walls generated questions about ‘what I was doing’ and ‘why leaves’. With a short explanation of my intent, some passers-by expressed their curiosity and subsequent comprehension with photographs taken of the project. There were also comments about the beauty of the material and the simple clarity of the idea.
Collecting: Studies in concealment

Re-thinking ways to engage with familiar forms
Dimensions variable
Paper, paper bags, envelops, inkjet plotter, XD card, digital camera

Collecting: Studies in concealment made use of several approaches to examine the expected uses and ways of engaging with the form of a book: there were five studies made to explore concealing as a way to arrange. It was also a projection of ways to share the images collected in diverse ways, and to invite various ways of engaging to reveal what had been concealed.

As musical term, variation can be understood as "a form grounded in repetition [...] in which a discrete theme is repeated several or many times with various modifications".67

As a way to adapt to the form of the book with which I have become familiar, Collecting: Studies in concealment was a way for me to re-frame the expected means of engaging with this form. In this project, the practice of vending was given value in its continual attempts to reiterate and re-present space. Various tactile aspects were explored for the indications, or 'clues' they might leave for the viewer. By alluding to what had been deliberately left out, these clues amplified that feature.

In Part I – Envelopes, the window allowed the reader to glimpse the imaged, but to see it in entirety. While the backs of some envelopes were sealed, others were left open, permitting the reader to open it to pull out the image contained.

In Part II – Paper Bags the latter was a reference to the packaging used by vendors. Paper bags were used to conceal double-sided images of vendors. Red string was used as a visual means of drawing attention to the images stowed within the paper bag.

Part III – By the Page revealed a small portion of an image to the reader, but explored the idea of having to tear or destroy the page in order to view more of its content.
Part IV – Between Pages inverted expectations by hiding content from direct view. By encountering the white backings of the images – instead of the images themselves first, this investigated the relationship between the reader and the expected ways of engaging within space.

Part V – Light made use of opaque pages that became translucent with light, where light had to pass through the medium rather than to fall on it to enable its content to be read. In this way, it investigated a change of contexts in which to make use of a familiar element.

The possibilities offered by ways to conceal content re-presented ways of engaging within space; arrangement became a necessary tool to generate opportunities for connections to be made. The process of concealing, and engaging to reveal invited a direct relationship between the reader and the arrangements contained within the form of the book; this was explored for the diverse rearrangements it afforded, rather than its usual form of bound sheets of paper. To celebrate unexpected arrangements in order to generate different ways of engaging, Collecting: Studies in concealment investigated various ways to conceal content in ways to introduce new meanings of engaging with the contents within space.

As an approach to engaging space, Collecting: Studies in concealment provided a means of arranging in various degrees to conceal or reveal a space. These add layers of enclosure, inviting a user into its interior by engaging to reveal its contents.
Exploring height, scale and movement as a way of arranging to engage notice
Video projection

Noticing Distractions is a projection consisting of juxtaposed texts, (still) images and videos taken of vendors. It was arranged to be projected at a height just below eye level, in slow continuous motion around the walls of a space. The effect this achieved was a narrow ribbon sliding along the surface of the walls, drawing the viewer’s attention with its slow movement – as well as the movement contained within the frames containing video footage.

The text used was taken from Calvino’s Invisible Cities, appearing intermittently amidst frames of videos and still images of vendor-ly activity.

While the viewer’s attention might be focused on the happenings within one frame, the ongoing activity within another frame could draw his/her notice; while looking away, the previous frame had already moved, and another had taken its place. Noticing Distractions was inspired by the continual nature of activities within the street, “constantly exploding” to reinvent interiors within space in an ongoing manner.68 Noticing Distractions
Actually many of the blind men who tap their canes on Zirma's cobblestones are black; in every skyscraper there is someone going mad. All lunatics spend hours on cornices.

As a way to engage within space, \textit{Noticing Distractions} was projected on the surfaces of space as a medium for drawing attention. This deliberate intervention – at about 1.2 metres off the ground – explored ways in which arrangements at various heights could suggest a different way for a viewer to engage with what was shown. In addition, the scaled-down miniature of the frame of video footages, images and text provided a way to draw viewers in for closer scrutiny, thus inviting engagement.

Travelers return from the city of Zirma with distinct memories: a blind black man shouting in the crowd, a lunatic cornering on a skyscraper's cornice, a girl walking a puma on a leash. Actually many of the blind men who tap their canes...
At the beginning of my research, I had been interested in spaces, or spatial interventions that would engage a user’s curiosity. The first scale model I made during this research was a bench, made of corrugated cardboard, which could be slid into a wall that would conceal it. On the exterior of the wall, the imprint of the bench’s side profile functioned as a clue to potential participants, indicating the presence of a concealed implement. As I re-encounter this scale model now, it seems a poetic way of conveying my initial interest with spatial encounters that might engage and draw one in. This model represents a bench by suggesting ways to engage with it, rather than to present a bench simply as it is.

This research has investigated practices that defy any ability to be planned for – sometimes even defying spatial and social hierarchies. **Vendoring** is a practice of chancing upon and making use of space: it cannot be planned for, but is to be discovered and
engaged with in ephemeral encounters. Vendors undertake a spatial practice in small actions rather than large, overarching plans. *Vendoring* makes spatial arrangements that inspire curiosity precisely because they are improvised responses that are dependant on each situation. The focus of the research has been on an ongoing practice of arranging as a means to represent spaces to others. Publication is the means for ‘arranging to bring before the public’ that has been explored for its insights into various possible arrangements. The act of arranging has translated my vendor-inspired Noticings into the spatial arrangements of my research practice.

Throughout my research, I have been curious as to what I might learn, as an interior practitioner, from the spatial practices of street vendors. How might the adaptive methods of *vendoring* inform a design practice that engages with space? *Poaching*, inviting pauses, being mobile, and practicing in variations provide opportunity-dependent ways to engage with space.

**Poaching**

As a spatial practice, *vendoring* engages with space by insinuating itself into space.69 By poaching spaces in which to insinuate itself, *vendoring* suggests a method of practicing to inhabit spaces instantaneously. The process of interior-making – through a practice of *vendoring* – poaches on space by adapting its arrangements readily to suit various spatial conditions.

Poaching also denotes the lack of a ‘proper’ place; *vendoring*, as a system of adaptive arrangements, operates within spaces that have been poached, rather than in ‘proper’ intended places. *The Plant* was a project that explored the process of *vendoring* to produce temporal interiors in the space of a laneway. As a ‘way of using’ space, poaching – a motif of *vendoring* – works opportunistically to arrange in ways to suggest how temporal interiors might be produced.

69. de Certeau related poaching to consumption, where he described the latter to ‘insinuate itself everywhere [where it] does not manifest itself through its own products, but rather through its ways of using the products imposed by a dominant […] order’. de Certeau, p. xii-xiii
Inviting Pauses

Why are variant uses of space more intriguing than intended ones? Vendors have arranged themselves – their wares, and the position of their stalls in relation to a larger spatial context – to temporarily inhabit spaces, and attract others street users to notice and pause. It can be said the vendor’s success depends on his/her ability to create the need to pause within the movement evident within the street. In their variant uses of space, vending has been a practice that has generated invitations for others to pause; this is not only a way for the vendor to engage with space, their arrangements have also invited others to engage with the interiors they have produced.

The practice of vending, as spatial arrangements to suggest ways to engage with space, has offered my interior practice an understanding of how various arrangements could invite pauses. Undulations and Noticing Distractions have explored repetition, length, scale and movement as ways of arranging to invite pauses by providing various, sometimes shifting, points of focus within space. In Between Frames and Notating: Street cries, pausing and reviewing were used to enable variant readings into an arrangement. As unintended or unexpected spatial arrangements, the variant interiors produced engage spaces through the pauses they invite.

Being Mobile

The mobility of street vendors is dependent on arrangements that are adaptable to the opportunities offered by the moment. Vending implements tactical operations to engage with space. Michel de Certeau described a tactical operation to depend on opportunities, giving the space of the tactic “a mobility that must accept […] and seize on the wing the possibilities that offer themselves at any given moment.” As a means of arranging, mobility offers an instantaneous, temporal quality to the interiors produced. The transience of the makeshift stalls of street vendors is explored in somes together with Between Frames, as mobile arrangements – seizing on various ways of arranging to reflect on and convey encounters.

The mobile aspect of vending offers adaptive arrangements, engaging with space in spontaneous and opportunistic ways that involves a process of interior-making. The interiors produced in this manner, as with those of the pasar malam, have a sense of ephemeral temporality; various spatial qualities are made apparent with each temporary rearrangement as a way to engage with space.
Practicing in Variations

Variation is a means for adapting an arrangement to the spatial conditions offered. Within an interior practice, this can be framed as a continual production of arrangements to engage spatial transformations. Collecting: Studies in concealment explored varying degrees of enclosure to produce interiors that engaged an ‘extra’ in order to become revealed. ‘Extra’ was discussed earlier as a layer added to a space, engaging with space to offer variable meanings.

As such, variation can be seen as a way to adapt spatially by constantly adding on, manipulating, or highlighting to produce changes from within a collection. The practice of vending offers an interior practice ways to make apparent aspects of space by producing different arrangements from a given space.

The key aspects of vending have been arranged to follow the main research questions as a means to answer these questions by projecting from what has been noticed, produced and collected. As an interior practitioner, I have been mindful of the temporary interiors made of space, through vending, by considering various rearrangements within space. The projects undertaken have engaged space as a site for the interactive positioning of scales, repetitions and variations within spatial sequences, and juxtaposition of varying attributes of enclosure.

Prior to this research, I had assumed that interiors were unchangeable, static spaces that could be engaged in a limited range of ways. Engaging Space has informed my practice by providing vendor-inspired arrangements as a way to engage with space in temporal means. Interiors are understood to be made – rather than a given state. Vending, as a practice of arranging, offers to the discipline of Interior Design a range of opportunity-dependent ways to engage with space by poaching, inviting pauses, being mobile and practicing in variations. As such, vending can be contextualised, within an interior practice, as a method of production – to produce interiors from which new meanings could be made and remade. This enables adaptive arrangements for noticing, translating, interpreting and re-reading meanings into space, thereby offering different ways to inhabit spaces.

The practice of engaging space is not always a straightforward one – it draws on arrangements and rearrangements as ways of continually engaging a space and its users. The ephemeral nature and small scale of some of my interventions has risked being missed by inattentive users; however, this was a chance taken and celebrated in my research as a way to explore and engage with spaces to produce interiors. As I have been drawn to de Certeau’s description of the street as “constantly exploding” and re-inventing itself, my interior practice draws on vending as an adaptive method to engage with space in continual rearrangements to produce interiors.
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