a search for common pleasures: CURATING THE CITY

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

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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 academic award; the content of this 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.
Shortly after the completion of my Masters of Architecture degree at RMIT I embarked upon a lecture tour to disseminate the research. I would be travelling to seven countries on four continents, and I wanted a project to do. I would only be staying in some of the places for a short time, so I needed to use a medium that was quick and portable; I decided upon photography. Some of the places I had visited previously, some I had not. Generally when I go to a new city I ask for the location of a good hardware store. (Taipei has the best hardware [and plastics] district which is probably why I fell in love with the place.) They are generally in the older parts of the city – and certainly well away from the ‘legitimate’ tourist destinations – where people actually live and conduct their daily rituals. It’s amazing, for instance, to note how many different ways there are to hang out the washing. I always prefer to understand how a place works, rather than to see how it looks. Prior to this trip however, I had become increasingly aware of discussions of differences amongst people: political differences, religious conflicts, cultural differences, the cultural cringe. I can’t remember what was in the news at the time, or the particulars of the local Melbourne architectural debate, but it all felt so negative. Why don’t we ever start with what we have in common? I decided to invert the argument in my project, and look for things that we shared, instead. I thought of food (we all need to eat) and then tried to think of something I imagined you could find anywhere: oranges. The search for oranges was a bit more happenstance than the search for hardware stores, and superficially more banal. (It was a long time before I told anyone about it.) The oranges have become a powerful metaphor for me, for the PhD, of my pursuit of knowledge (and the search for common pleasures). The collection of oranges continues.

Sand Helsel, May 2009
to my father (and my mother)
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# Chapter 1

## Proposition

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INTRODUCTION

reflection upon past work

The PhD starts where my Masters of Architecture at RMIT University concludes. In “Architecture in the Expanded Field”¹ I reviewed the work of the Land Artists of the 1960s and 70s and established that questions relevant to architecture could be asked in another discipline. Through my installation projects, atlas² and the Freeway Reconfigured,³ I found that architecture could comfortably and valuably incorporate methods and concerns from an expanded field of disciplines as diverse as fine art, landscape architecture, engineering, and urban design.⁴ The divisions between these disciplines seemed counterproductive in dealing with many of the issues that contemporary society faces, such as larger urban contexts, infrastructure projects, globalisation, and a sustainable agenda. I remain firmly committed to the “expanded field” and cross-disciplinary practice, though, thanks to this research, I now broaden the scope of the research from the question of how one establishes a dialogue between disciplines, to include the meaningful engagement of a larger group of users (and designers).

I have reflected upon the specific conclusions that I articulated in the Masters.⁵ Some aspects have been adopted as good practice and continue to be developed and refined in my teaching, project work and writing. Others pose new questions, alternative responses, and trajectories for further areas of research in the PhD.

Firstly, I espoused a non-formalist approach where process is privileged over the object imposed on the site. Instead, the work reveals concealed site phenomena – reading the land; architectural speculation begins from what is there. A selective renegotiation of the working methods of the land artists (and related disciplines) speculates from the particular – the specific material conditions of time and place.⁶ These criteria form the basis of my evolving design and representation methods and have the status of one of the few ‘rules’ in my teaching practice. In the PhD, I test these methods in new laboratories: in urban environments and overseas, which enables me to see the city differently and incorporate additional readings of “land” into the definition of site. The “conditions” remain specific to time and place, but I now include invisible systems alongside the “material” – social, political, economic, and environmental, for instance – as necessary for understanding place. Although I continue to eschew any initial abstractions or generalisations, I realise there is much more to consider about the design process in the coming to form or fruition. A shift in focus evolves from the previously posed question of method – how we might intervene? – to include why we might intervene? the question before the question.

⁵ Leon van Schaik, 2005. Mastering Architecture. West Sussex: Wiley-Academy. The RMIT PhD (by project) is predicated upon reflective practice. Some of my reflections have occurred during the writing of this document, but others have
Secondly, in the Masters, I determined that the field was not a mathematical or formal construction, but a conceptual one. I had perversely placed a grid onto the particular (site), Adelaide’s Torrens Riverside Park, in atlas, which provoked “intuitive, erratic, and accidental responses.” I realise that the charged field consists of nuanced slippages, gaps and overlaps that allow for multiple readings that enable others to see, use, appreciate and engage with the project meaningfully. (I have become fascinated with things that might be out of my control.) This encourages me to speculate about issues of authorship and to clarify my working and teaching methods. I establish this as the way I choose to operate.

Thirdly, I searched for a common practice amongst the disciplines, and reconsidered the methods of architectural practice, such as the conventions of scale and representation, to be used as a language that could cross disciplinary boundaries rather than reinforce them – a search for common ground. A quote from David Greene’s review of The Freeway Reconfigured continues to resonate:

This original collage of methods is what gives the work its primary significance since the procedural aspects then become the raw material for other readings, other combinations, generating new ideas from a common spectrum of facts by other disciplines. So rather than these other disciplines being co-opted to explain or justify one person’s concept, they become powerful creative forces for determining the trajectories of future environmental design.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This new research reveals the possibilities of extending Greene’s “powerful creative forces” beyond those professionals who work in the built environment. How can I engage a broader range of “others” (students, clients, users) in ways of seeing and acting in a meaningful way? The Freeway Reconfigured, installed in the Storey Hall Gallery, started this dialogue in the Masters with an interdisciplinary and community consultation installation that anyone could play. It was designed to pose questions and encourage debate – not to find solutions; the solution (or proposed Eastern Freeway extension) was already there. (The subtitle of The Freeway Reconfigured was “the answer may be an eight-lane freeway, but what was the question?”) The project was a critique of perfunctory and condescending community consultation (and design) processes. For the most part, questions are asked of the community to justify decisions or answers that have already been made by the experts or authorities. As I begin to question what a “meaningful engagement” might be, I consider how I might design design processes that involve others in the making of the work.

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7 ibid. These not only included unexpected user responses such as safe spaces to leave belongings or shoes, but also engendered a (physical) dialogue with agencies that had interests on the site: the electricity board spray-painted their service lines blue; the Health and Safety officers specified public safety requirements which became major design features.
8 ibid.
9 David Greene is a founder member of Archigram, recipient of the RIBA Gold Medal, Professor of Architecture at the University of Westminster, and past unit master at the Architectural Association School of Architecture (AA).
10 ibid., 179.
11 Helsel, text from The Freeway Reconfigured installation.
The Freeway Reconfigured reflected the conversations that had taken place amongst us design professionals in the Metroscape project.\(^\text{12}\) Through numerous discussions, we found that whilst we could be seduced by the sinuous night lights of the highway from the air, we could also be horrified by its impact on adjoining backyards.\(^\text{13}\) We, as individuals, did not fit neatly into our respective disciplinary categories; each one of us was simultaneously an architect, engineer, artist, community activist, environmentalist, etc. – we were citizens as well as designers. The players in the design project are immediately extended by this awareness of our multiple roles. Thus, it seems possible, and logical, to include additional voices, or a “broader range” of participants, in this context.

This provokes a further question of what my role (or multiple roles) is as a designer in the built environment. The original title of the PhD was “an architecture of enabling”, which I feel over-asserts the authority of my role (or the architect’s) in the process. Although the agenda of the work continues to grant authority to, or enables multiple voices to be heard, I become increasingly wary of the so-called expert. As I re-evaluate my activities throughout the course of the PhD, I realise that I can both create frameworks (with expertise) and also participate (on an equal footing with others) in the design process. I initially define this territory as common ground. “Common ground” however, implies compromise and obligation; “common pleasures”\(^\text{14}\) are about possibilities and positive desires.

**curating the city**

In 1999, I was invited to the first Urban Flashes workshop.\(^\text{15}\) Six architects came from the UK, six from Asia, joined by three Austrian artists and filmmakers. (I was delighted to be considered an Asian architect.) We arrived the night before the workshop to a minimal briefing: our site was a large derelict brewery; Taipei City Council and the local arts community were our hosts (and oppositional stakeholders); and 100 Taiwanese students would be arriving in the morning. A few of us got together to discuss what we were going to do since it became apparent that we were going to have to generate the program ourselves. The stakes were quite high, and this was the first workshop many of us had done, and the first trip to Taipei for most. We realised that, had we been of the previous generation of architects,\(^\text{16}\) we would have had sketched a masterplan on the back of an envelope on the plane coming over and used the students to (ostensibly) draw it up. We opted against the masterplan idea. Was it because we were inexperienced or incompetent, or did we feel it was inappropriate or unethical? At the time we were unsure whether we were acting out of fear or integrity.

\(^{12}\) The participants in Metroscape II included: Peter Connolly (landscape architect), Peter Felicetti (engineer), Louise Forthun (painter), Eli Giannini (urban designer), John Gollings (photographer), and Sand Helsel (architect).

\(^{13}\) Some examples of this “seduction” include John Gollings, *Melbourne, 4500 feet*, 7:30 pm, 12 April 1996 in *Metroscape II*, 24-27; and Louise Forthun, *Black*, 1996, and *Pink*, 1996, in ibid., 14-15. I collaborated with Gollings to exaggerate the lights, lines, scale and form of Melbourne’s freeways in his night-time aerial photographs; Forthun produced beautiful paintings of the underside of freeways.

\(^{14}\) The British academic Mark Cousins (Director of History and Theory at the AA) came up with this phrase while eating dozens of oysters when he visited me for lunch in Melbourne. I am unsure whether he was talking of the food, or my PhD, or both.

\(^{15}\) Urban Flashes (1) design workshop and exhibition, 5 -10 April 1999, Washang Arts Centre and IT Park Gallery. Ti-Nan Chi founded Urban Flashes (at this time) and he and Nicholas Boyarsky invited the original workshop participants; see “1999 Workshop,” in Ti Nan-Chi, ed., 2001. *Urban Flashes*. Taipei: Human Environment Group, 121-33.
Both the Masters and the PhD begin with a critique of architectural practice. In the Masters I had been critical of conventional architectural methods such as orthogonal drawings and conventional scales that lead to restricted and predictable outcomes (or buildings). In the PhD I begin from speculating about the masterplan, which is often an oversimplified, reductive response, laden with generalisations and the ill-considered overlay of inappropriate models. It implies that the city is an object or a collection of objects; I feel that our obsession with buildings is hindering the city. I don't believe we need more innovative architecture; instead, I question how I might provide innovative architecture, landscape and urban structures and systems. Are there alternatives to the view from above, the bird’s eye view at a distant scale? Can the city be generated from the individual? And is the generational a constructive alternative to design? Is this a viable alternative (or antidote) to the masterplan, or, as the question becomes refined through the course of the study, a complementary activity?

My Asian work, described in Chapter Two, gives me insights into some of these questions, and valuable laboratories for testing ideas and methods. Of necessity, I question the appropriateness of western planning methods in Taipei, in a city with few easily readable urban structures, and where my expertise can be questioned in respect of local knowledge. It fuels my criticism of the architect as expert, operating from on high. On the positive side, I collect evidence of the entrepreneurship of citizens – the way traders artfully and expediently arrange merchandise for sale (see Stacks in Chapter Two), and the unlegislated methods of negotiating with neighbours – and wish to engage them in a meaningful co-partnership in the design process. I misquote Joseph Beuys’ maxim that “everyone is an artist” by substituting the word ‘architect’. This causes me to rephrase my earlier question about my role as a designer to ask what can and should an architect be doing in the design of our cities. I believe we, as designers, need to move into this territory. Through the course of this study, I determine a role for the architect, as differentiated from a designer, as a curator of the built environment. I conclude that this is, amongst other things, an ethical position.

THE PhD DOCUMENT

This volume documents a body of work undertaken during the course of the PhD by Project. Seven projects have been selected to respond to the research questions. Some were designed intentionally for this purpose, such as Five Walks, an installation commissioned for the Melbourne Festival. Some were serendipitous, such as the entry and winning of the Australian National Korean

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16 WILL ALSOP, For example, masterfully directs his student workforce in his international workshops (and clients such as the Peckham residents) to believe that they design the project solutions he prepares well in advance. From personal acquaintance and co-teaching at the Architectural Association; also see Kenneth Powell, 2001. Will Alsop, Book 1. London: Lawrence King.


18 Joseph Beuys used this phrase often in lectures from 1973 onwards; it first appeared in English print credited to a 1974 Institute of Contemporary Arts exhibition catalogue by Caroline Tisdall, Art into Society, Society into Art, 48.


War Memorial competition, and the unexpected opportunities to work in Taipei. My reflection has occurred in parallel with my production, though this has not been a linear process, or one based upon cause and effect. This is primarily due to the overlap of the dissemination of the project outcomes and the start of new work. For example, the *Taipei Operations* project evolved over three years in the varied forms of a collaborative design studio and conference, exhibitions, lectures, and the accompanying book. Halfway through the book project, I was in Busan (whilst testing my ‘walks’ for the Melbourne Festival in a workshop with Korean students) where I subtitled the Taipei lecture I was preparing to deliver: “Curating the City”. This became the seminal moment in the PhD. (Both the walk projects and the Taipei projects directly benefited from this insight.) I recognised the parallels between my teaching, research, and professional practice. I was able to articulate the types of engagement I sought. And it has made me conscious of the importance of dissemination for reflection.

I consider all the above practices included in the PhD – teaching, installation, exhibition, and publication – to be research. They each offer a particular focus or framework for investigation, yet, I find the space for significant reflection – for seeing things afresh – in the slippages between them. I thus develop my responses to the research questions thorough an examination across the projects in the continuation of this introduction in Chapter One. Firstly, I reflect upon my (design) methods, such as the collection, and numeration, and consider their value in my own practice and how they might resonate with others. I identify devices or strategies that recur in the work: how I use the walk, the ephemeral, and the small. These can be viewed as the architecture of my projects – the armatures or structures – an alternative to typologies. They clarify issues of authorship and establish modes of engagement. The city, the design studio, and the art space are the sites of engagement in this selection of projects and provide the laboratories for experimentation. Although there are particular issues germane to each project, I focus on how I operate within their contours, to develop the notion of curation as an alternative to design. I conclude this overview with the dissemination of the work – through exhibition, and print – which offers opportunities for reflection, and a direct engagement with a broader public.

The seven individual projects appear chronologically in Chapter Two. Three suites of projects chart the refinement of and the responses to the research questions. I consider the Australian National Korean War Memorial (constructed competition winning entry) and the Australian Service Nurses...
National Memorial (competition entry)\(^{27}\) to be the `designed' outcomes of my Masters. They reflect my desire for a non-formalist approach, and offer a physical interpretation of the field. The Korean War Memorial causes me to dramatically reconsider the collaborative project and how I work with others (both colleagues and clients). The Nurses Memorial shows me the potential of an ephemeral architecture, of considering the design project over an extended time frame, with place-making that becomes out of my control.

“This is a Map of the World” (the Oranges lecture and exhibition piece)\(^{28}\) leads the second suite of projects for the Melbourne Festival. I overlay the images of oranges I had quietly been collecting with a narrative text. This becomes a private manifesto, by identifying my search for common pleasures, and establishing the foundations of an ethical awareness in my practice. I begin to trust the legitimacy of my methods, and thus articulate them more clearly, and test them more consciously. I understand how I look, and see, and how this allows me to speculate. I use the commissioned urban installation Five Walks\(^{29}\) as an opportunity to test these ways of seeing (my ideas) on others, or some of the expected 100,000(?) people who would attend the festival. I become conscious of my `voice' or authorship in the narrative audio texts, and the role of curator. I define a good city as being “capable of supporting an infinite number of narratives”\(^{30}\).

Stacks and the Taipei Operations design studio, exhibition, and book form the final series of projects. The laboratory is particular to the Asian city, but also serves as an opportunity to consolidate the previous experiments with methods and to test the outcomes. It focuses on process as opposed to content. I question my role as the expert in a ‘foreign’ context, and how to best collaborate with my academic peers in a joint design studio. I design design methods for the studio participants that require us to look carefully, present the findings as `fact' and then open a dialogue that can embrace difference. We start from the small, the urban diary, and discover that indeed, the masterplan can be generated from the individual or small scale. The exhibition celebrates the multiple voices of the students, and the slippages across them, and the gaps in the work. We design the exhibition to encourage the contributions of the visitors. We are unapologetic that it is an incomplete picture.

The scope of the literature and project review is selective and deliberately broad, reflecting the congruencies I identify across my projects outlined above. The subject areas I refer to include: masterplanning and community consultation models; Asian urbanism, radical urbanism, and micro-urbanism...
strategies; representation and collection precedents in art practice; and a review of architectural dissemination through print and installation. I continue with what David Greene identified in my Masters as an “original collage of methods” with the varied sources of my references for my work – or at least the projects I admire. I weave these references throughout the body of this text to more accurately register how they inform the slippages in my practice. (I have always been critical of projects that ‘extrude’ theory, or use it to justify a formal outcome.) Notwithstanding, I document the specific references in the *Five Walks* installation in “Walk Five: the Philosophers Walk” in Chapter Two.

Instead of focussing on the gaps in the models, which is conventional in a review of this kind, I find it more relevant to my practice to identify practitioners who work in a similar vein – my community of scholarship. The problem with inter- or cross-disciplinary practice is that it remains just that, a marginal activity. I have been fortunate to make two such affiliations during the course of the PhD. The initial Urban Flashes workshop in Taipei has evolved into a group of artists, architects, and academics who share the similar strategy of starting small in (Asian) urbanism. Locally, Leon van Schaik invited a group of PhD candidates with an interest in ‘ephemeral architecture’ to form a mutual support group, and participate in The Unused group installation for the Melbourne Festival. I cite the shared sensibilities and recurring themes across both bodies of work, and reflect on future prospects in the conclusion.

The following sections in the introduction refer to examples across the seven projects located in Chapter Two: Australian National Korean War Memorial, Australian Service Nurses Memorial, “This is a Map of the World”, Five Walks, Stacks, *Taipei Operations exhibition* and *Taipei Operations*. You may wish to familiarise yourself with these projects at this time.

**METHODS**

A consideration of design methods continues to be important in my work. It is critical to my teaching practice, where I attempt to create a learning space. If I provide a structure, or method, then I feel that I can leave the individual student free to determine the content of their project, and their position relative to it. This is made clear to me at the onset of the first Urban Flashes workshop where I realise that my expertise is the pedagogical structure (that I offer) since I have no local knowledge; the Taiwanese students are the ‘experts’ on Taipei. I enable them to see their city with fresh eyes, and thus make proposals for improvements. I make parallels between my teaching practice and my built work. My engagement mediates the built environment and how people create...
meaning. My methods attempt to create ways of seeing and understanding that engage others (including me) with their environment in a new way to provide opportunities for action.

the collection

The collection is my primary design method. (Anyone can do it.) I employ this technique as an observation tool, or a way of seeing. It is a primary source of raw data, awaiting an overlay of meaning. It is inherently neutral at its onset, and exists to be added to, deleted, rearranged, and reclassified; the hierarchies can and do change. The collection implies duration, or the passage of time, which affords the space (and moments) to reflect. I was an avid collector of postcards in my twenties. I have been collecting oranges for the past ten years, and stacks of things for even longer. I feel that anything in quantity can be useful. It takes the onus off the individual artefact or object, and reveals patterns and systems.

How material is collected is important to me, and is something that I stress in my teaching practice. The collection of data is from primary sources, by observation; the importance is in ‘being there’, to avoid generalisations and pre-conceptions. I have always favoured Captain Cook’s method of exploring to that of Sir Joseph Banks. Cook drew only what he saw of the coast of Australia; he left gaps in the map. Banks drew up his charts in advance and plugged in evidence to substantiate his assumptions. Knowledge is a journey.33

In the Taipei Operations workshop the RMIT students started their first exercise by researching the city on the internet. (I questioned why we had bothered to come to Taipei.) I subsequently ban access to the computer labs, and require the students to actively engage with their subject matter, by recording events that are specific to time and place. Through the process, they begin to trust that their personal observations are a primary source and can have as much, if not more, authority than a secondary source.

Careful observation (looking and listening) is the genesis of Five Walks, the result of many hours, and a forensic search for clues (of what I should do for my installation?) in the series of small laneways behind Storey Hall Gallery. It forms a collection of narratives or stories about a place. Stacks start as isolated images snapped overseas and are expanded upon and refined to become a visual inventory of entrepreneurial inventiveness. (Both The Freeway Reconfigured and atlas had used textual inventories and lists.) The Oranges are snapshots and are intended that way: they are records of a journey and a search. There is no editing or reformatting so as to allow for all the accidents that might occur.

32 Paul Carter, 1988. The Road to Botany Bay. London: Faber and Faber, xxiii. I have found that many prefaces and introductions reiterate this theme, but Carter’s is a particularly good example.
(The artist Juan Cruz noted that these images include all the bits that others try to avoid.)\textsuperscript{34} None of the collections are end products, but rather invitations to reflect.\textsuperscript{34}

When I was a second year student at the AA, I resisted “gluing down” my vast array of photographs, drawings and maps onto pages in my portfolio. Upon increasing pressure from my tutor I relented. We were both amazed to see how static they had become. They were no longer useful.\textsuperscript{35}

It is in the arrangement that the collection gains meaning and becomes significant, and this is another project or process to the initial documentation. I have come to realise that the arranged collection does not become a (static) object but instead marks a strategic moment in time where the work can switch from a personal observation to become objectively assessed, by both the author and his or her audience. This is when dialogue begins. There is potentially an infinite set of possibilities in the arrangement of a collection, and one of the challenges is to recognise their relative values. Originally I had arranged my postcards typologically: staircases, stadia, beach scenes, jewellery, and food – with variations in location, history, style, etc. When I regrouped the same images as ‘round things’, Chambord’s staircase sat next to the Houston Astrodome, an aerial view of beach umbrellas on the Cote D’Azur, a 3-D postcard with plastic hoop earrings attached, and a giant peach from Georgia. I became very excited; new life was given to this collection. The more banal the classification, I have found, the more potential there is for speculation. I am always trying to surprise myself and see things a different way, and have extended this strategy to afford students and users of the city similar opportunities.

The types of arrangement vary. The documentation becomes the ‘form’ of the piece which shifts the focus from the object in the collection to the structure (or process). The Stacks are simply collated, shuffled and stacked. Their quantity and variety become a phenomenon as opposed to a one-off occurrence when the images are divorced from their original contexts and are collected as a group. The Oranges’ initial intent (a search) becomes articulated and expanded in “This is a Map of the World”\textsuperscript{36} when accompanied by a text that weaves them into a narrative.

The collection defers authorship, until its arrangement. In Five Walks I become explicit (and somewhat literal) about the curatorial role in my practice. I collate the series of fragments I collect in the lanes, and link them as walks using the language of the gallery – annotated plaques, maps, and audio tours. My voice

\textsuperscript{34} Juan Cruz in the panel discussion, Walking in the Way of Metaphor, October 2001.

\textsuperscript{35} David Greene was my unit master from 1977-1978.

\textsuperscript{36} Sand Helsel, Oranges, 1999-present, photographs; “This is a Map of the World,” 2001, lecture; and exhibition piece, 2002. Conscious reflection transforms this initial collection of images into a lecture and exhibition piece. I become aware that the dissemination of my work is an important process in the development of my practice.
is now present, my authorship imposed. I reflect upon the expert. The voice of
the curator, in this case, is not authoritative or singular – there are five, one in
each of the walks; it acts a guide to help others to see. One soon realises that
the carefully scripted audiotapes are clearly an individual’s voice; it invites other
individual voices to respond. This resonates with the spirit of the cabinet of
curiosities, and populist enjoyment. In the Museum of Jurassic Technology, the
curatorial practice becomes wonderfully blurred; over time and after perusing
numerous exhibits and their explanatory texts, one begins to wonder if the
curator is making it all up, and if anything is ‘real’.37 One questions the curator’s
authority; is he an ‘artist’, or an ‘expert’ bolstered by the legitimacy of history?

**frameworks and datum lines**

Individual items need a framework to become a collection. The formats of
the collection become both my tools and rules of engagement, and form the
structure in my work. I find these considerations can work at a range of scales.
Some of these are conceptual, such as a similarity in content; others are
material, and might rely upon a consistency in image size, or more classical
compositional structures such as arrangement in a line. These frameworks
can be seen in the representation and the presentation of the work. There is a
space between the conceptual and material structures of the collection that form
another gap from where a voice can be heard, similar to that in the arrangement
of the collection. These spaces give me opportunities to comment and to
articulate my authorship.

I first became interested in the datum line through the works of the Land Artists,
such as Andy Goldsworthy and Richard Long.38 Both use the framework of
Euclidean geometry – circles, rectangles and lines – to rearrange natural
elements within the landscape. These clearly man-made marks help us to look
and notice what is already there; they frame our views and make us look twice.
This use of geometry has parallels with my long-standing interest in maps and
mapping; the overlay of a grid unifies disparate elements and enable us to see –
in relation to other things. I used this device in *atlas*, as an underlay, to integrate
the narratives of the curator, myself and the other exhibitors, by physically
marking the grid with holes across the kilometre-plus site. In the Korean War
Memorial I charge the regular grid of stainless steel poles with four granite
boulders to encourage the desire paths of the visitors to become marked in the
gravel surface.

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Hudson; and Andy Goldsworthy, 1988. *Mountain and Coast; Autumn into Winter.*
Nagoya: Gallery Takagi.
The charging of the field is a technique that encourages the viewer to become engaged. My authorship occurs in the initial move, the establishment of the datum line or framework, armed with the knowledge that it will not remain neutral, especially when given a nudge. After that, the responses are out of my control; I can contribute to the outcome, though on an equal footing – as a player rather than author – with my audience. The uniform gridded photographs of stacks gain authority through quantity and consistency. They are neutral yet invite the viewer to privilege one over the other. I clearly have not differentiated between the images, yet that is inevitable. Similarly, the datum or the repetition of (foregrounded) oranges gives me a constant that allows me to see other things (such as background), or the differences between them.

The colour ‘orange’, too, has (serendipitously) become an identifiable thread: the fencing in atlas and the surveying tapes in *Five Walks*. They imply “notice me” and again one looks twice at the everyday sights that have been brought to attention. I have found that text does this well. The museum labels in *Five Walks* give authority to prosaic objects or spaces. There is a slippage between the object and the description that makes us notice, then re-look and re-consider. Robert Smithson made us rethink the industrial wasteland on the outskirts of New York when he titled his series of Polaroid snapshots *Monuments of Passaic*. Text allows one to apply the laws of rhetoric (or inversion).

I am more conscious now that there are two stages in this process; the seeing or observing, which is a personal act, is followed by the representation or documentation that disseminates this material to others, and where meaning occurs and authorship is attributed. This two-staged process is clearly identified in the design stages of the Taipei workshop. Students are initially asked to select an object or a place, something small. The choices are personal or intuitive (such as the purchase of a handbag or the arrival of a garbage truck). Through the process of documentation – when frameworks and datum lines are established – the observations attain an objective status even though they reflect the bias of the author. They are then open for reinterpretation as they became part of the public domain; everyone has a point of view (staff and students alike) and is encouraged to express it. (For instance, I thought the garbage collection ritual in Taipei was marvellously poetic; the [student] authors of the piece felt the opposite and orchestrated its change.)

I am interested in establishing both these opportunities to look and to see, and the methods that then allow others to reinterpret these observations. This provides a model both for my own work and my teaching practice – one that requires me to lead for a
I have never understood this, and ironically do not offer that information. (This was a student question.) My study tours to Barcelona were called “no-fact-danger-tours” by a colleague since I based our understanding of the city from experiencing places such as (the then non-gentrified) Plaza Real as opposed to knowing the dates of iconic buildings and events.


We ran three studios in the 2001 Taipei Operations workshop (originally titled Mobility): Ti Nan Chi; Y.C. Roan; and K.C. Bee and Sand Helsel. In order to maintain continuity across the groups without compromising our pedagogical interests and techniques, we established a “specificity in time and space” as our common ground.


moment, and then allows me to play the game like everyone else. My voice has a finite authority.

**numeration**

I question the issues of authority in the role of the expert, and my alternative, the curator. What legitimises a particular point of view or activity? Numbers to do that; they award the status of ‘fact’. A qualifying history or pedigree helps to make something ‘real’. They also seem to allow us to better understand phenomena: figures are offered for the height of mountains and death tolls in war. They allow us to compare and value: the weight of babies for instance, and difference in salaries. Data and statistics use numbers or facts to substantiate positions or individuals’ points of view. Numeration can both clarify and abstract. I find it interesting that the quantitative belies the qualitative implications. This slippage, or inversion, creates an ambiguous territory that I operate within.

My interest in dates and time started with the desire for site specificity – for ‘being there’. The work of many of the Land Artists was particular to time and place. We apply this as a structure for exploring the city for the Taipei Operations workshop students. I want to ensure that we avoid the generalisations made of most Asian cities. Interestingly, in becoming particular, the students’ subjective readings of the city become more apparent, which brokers an additional set of responsibilities. In *Oranges*, I am literal; I write the place, date and time at the bottom of each image to appropriate the form of a travel diary. I was surprised by the visual status this textual addition gave to the ordinary snapshot (of a personal journey). I invert this authority in “Walk through the Ages,” the first of the *Five Walks*; I deem events of everyday life as historic – a man reading the sports page – by marking the moment in a brass plaque with the time and the date.

When I read the brief for the Australian National Korean War Memorial competition, I am haunted by the fact that 339 people died. That number is so specific: small enough to be able to understand – perhaps even to remember most of the names – yet large enough to have an impact. It is a number you can visualise, which we do in a field of stainless steel poles. They are arranged a body’s width apart, so you have physical contact with each pole, but visually they read as a forest when seen at a distance. I have always been intrigued by the Avenues of Honour in small Victorian country towns, where the planting of an oak for each fallen soldier far surpasses the size of the town – a poignant reminder of the scale of the loss. *Maya Lin’s Vietnam War Memorial* is a simple list, a collection of the names of the deceased, etched into the framework.
of a black granite wall. The work is abstracted by the relentless scale and severity of the funereal wall, yet honours each individual (soldier and visitor) named and reflected in the polished surface.

There is currently a vogue for numeration in architecture – in datascapes and in bold numbers emblazoned across photos in stylish volumes that imply insight. Portefaix and Gutiérrez seduce with the latter in their comparisons of Hong Kong and Vienna. I applaud them for their thoroughness – the collection and categorisation is impressive – yet it remains abstract and surprisingly general; we are no closer to being there or understanding the sense of place. MVRDV designs with their data – the facts – which is why I think their eccentric architectural proposals appear so feasible; one believes that the high-rise Pig City is a logical architectural (and agricultural) solution to providing food for a large population on a small land mass, solely because the maths show us the impossibility of production in the conventional way. They demonstrate that speculation is possible through numeration. I have a great deal of sympathy for this aspect of their work. However, although they test their propositions through to the particular at the small scale (in this case, of the pig), they start from the abstraction (or large), rather than from what they observe. I espouse starting small (from observation), so that design proposals can be generated from their original contexts.

The slippage between the particular and the abstract is important to my architectural project. In my exploration of scale in the Masters, I argued that the architectural project exists ‘somewhere’ between 1:1 and 1:100,000; this assertion reminds me never to pre-determine the architectural outcome as a building, or at a conventional scale. I established that best practice requires that we work at a series of scales simultaneously, which I adhere to in my projects and use as a method and a structure in my design studios. Through the course of the PhD, I recognise that 1:1 and 1:100,000 need to be read simultaneously in the design of cities. The masterplan provides a valuable abstraction or overview, of a system rather than an object, but we must not lose sight of the individual’s perception and occupation. How can these individual views and voices be multiplied? What form does this take? This seems to be the challenge when we design our cities.

**DEVICES and ARMATURES**

In this research, I question the architecture of my projects – the devices I use, and the forms that result. I have always eschewed an architectural style, which I realise is a result of my critique of formalism. Similarly, when talking about the

Orange is not part of the original concept design for atlas or Five Walks, but is a result of “accidents of site”.

I am surprised that my recent work has become more and more minimal in its size and materiality; the frameworks are more subtle and the fragments more ephemeral. This is a “problem” that we have noted when we present the work of X_Field (to be discussed in Chapter Three). We find that the use of multiple overlapping images of our collective work best represents our practice. This was an intentional strategy in the Taipei Operations exhibition, and used in this instance to encourage exhibition visitors to participate.

city I have problems with typologies since too often they refer to buildings (as objects) or arrangements of buildings (or patterns made from objects). They are generally static and preclude the invisible systems, ephemera (like the weather) and the actions of the inhabitants. Typologies tend to be overlaid rather than evolve.

I realise however, that the architecture of my projects, though not preoccupied with form, is recognisably mine – due to the methods and techniques I use, and the regular splash of the colour orange. There is rarely a heroic image in my work, or one that encapsulates the idea, or a masterplan, where everything fits neatly together. The work is generally composed of small things, mostly fragments, which make an incomplete picture. I am interested in connections (such as the walk) and the systems and networks that make the city work, and their physical consequences, in that order. I am concerned about how things operate, and less interested in how they look. That is the nature of process-led design, but in addition I strive to find openings where others can engage in the process, finish it off, or rearrange the findings. This is where accidents can happen, and where the unexpected things that are out of my control can arise and give the project its power.

the small, the fragment

During these periods of reflection I have gone way back into my past. I often wonder what makes me look at the world the way that I do. Maybe it has something to do with being born on the 23rd floor of a 22-storey building in New York, in a small apartment under the water tower. I am used to looking at the city from above, and understanding it as a set of interconnected systems. (All the cars and buses must have been about the same size as my toys.) I remember we used to read the shipping schedule that used to be published on the front page of The New York Times each morning. I would look forward to watching the ocean liners come into harbour and at an early age could name all the ships from the number and colour of their stacks.

The collection yields the small – the foregrounded oranges, the close-up stacks of wares – and the datum line provides the framework for visualising them (and for making them more significant). My previous installation work in the Masters reflected my interest in the potential for the 1:1 scale to maintain a direct physical engagement with my subject matter, a lesson learned from the Land Artists. The Land Artists had circumvented the gallery which displaced the work from the site, and also the artist from the viewer. A new relationship was formed between the artist and both the site and the audience.
I use installation as a method for students to engage with site and not to lose sight of their subject matter or their relationship to it through abstraction by the drawing board or computer. I had clarified that best practice is to work at a series of scales simultaneously: from 1:1 to 1:20,000, with the more readily identifiable (albeit unspecified) architectural scale somewhere in between, and set design studios that work between these scales.

In Taipei, however, we start small, with looking rather than making. A specific object is selected (such as a counterfeit Louis Vuitton handbag) and the question is posed: how big is the object and how long is its time frame? The object is immediately re-contextualised by questioning where it came from and where it is sold; the impact of its physical form is minimised in the process. This satisfies my desire to divert attention away from objects or buildings towards the processes and systems that I believe define our cities. The investigation becomes a forensic search for clues or traces, as opposed to the superimposition of imported and known models. Entire systems – social, economic, environmental etc. – are revealed in Taipei from looking at a hawker stall and the journey of a bag of rubbish; these offer numerous possibilities for a broad range of interventions. The development of the student work over the semester demonstrates that indeed one can make large scale or conventional marks at an urban scale using this method of starting small, and then re-test them at the small scale, at the site of discovery.\textsuperscript{56}

Even though we are able to address big issues and make big marks in the Taipei Operations workshop, I realise that we had not made a masterplan. This approach does not yield the big picture or the authoritative view; the overview is far from complete. Our offerings are full of contradictions, subtle differentiations, and reveal as many gaps as they fill. When we design the exhibition, we chose to celebrate these fragments, and intensify the slippages, holes and overlaps. Each student’s work is specific, but leaves gaps (or things not seen or experienced, like Cook’s map). The projects displayed together are, in reality, just thirty-three individual voices and this leaves gaps in the gaps. We invite the visitors to the gallery to include their own stories of their city in these spaces, and to overlay their points of view.

In \textit{Taipei Operations}, I call these individual perspectives ‘urban diaries’\textsuperscript{57} – stories of the city. They are personal readings, but act as emblems; everyone and everything has a story to tell, and the city is capable of accommodating the writing of many more. (In \textit{Five Walks} I am specific about describing these as narratives, and invite everyone to participate.) I realise that there is another role

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\textsuperscript{56} Deniz Sun, “Ambiguous Thresholds,” in Helsel, \textit{Taipei Operations}, 102-15 \\
\textsuperscript{57} Lim Hui Yuan and Hung Jia Xin, “Postboxes in Ta-an District,” in ibid., 10-12; Ho Sook Yan and Hung Jia Xin, “Two Louis Vuitton Handbags,” ibid., 172-77.
\end{flushright}
in the design of our cities – that of the curator – to collect, structure and arrange these voices and stories, much like one might collect and prepare the paintings of others for an exhibition. I see this as an act of enablement of others rather than as design in a conventional sense (of objects or buildings). I can design the opportunities for the narratives, but do not need to control their content. I become a collector of others’ voices, and a curator of traces; my goal is to give this activity authority. I use my ‘expertise’ to give them status, and then enable them to take form. I design the opportunities and then the environment (the context) in which they can be heard (and seen).

**the walk**

The walk is another narrative form that maintains a direct engagement with site and subject matter that is specific to time and place. The city can be understood by the temporal movement of the body through space. This way of observing or seeing differs from the “small” and the “fragments” that depend upon the collection or frameworks to reveal larger structures. The walk has its own structure in the narrative, which is often linear. The walk is, in itself, empowering; when one walks in the city, one designs a unique city each time: the city is curated through the narrative of the walk. A good city offers numerous such routes and numerous narratives for each of its occupants. The walk allows for personal authorship.

I use this device in several of my projects. In the Busan workshop, it is a structure to enable the Korean students to see the city afresh; a guide for how to look, what to look for and a tool to document the findings; it requires that the students make direct personal engagement. My hunch at the time was that we could begin to get a rich story of the city from the contributions of eighteen students; we could begin to see what the layering of narratives upon narratives might yield.

I use this workshop as a preliminary test for the *Five Walks* installation where my agenda is to ‘educate’ non-design professionals, visitors to the Melbourne Festival, so they might realise how much control they can have in the design of their city. I am always conscious that I am tainted as an authority figure as a lecturer, and I am keen to suppress that role in this project. I establish and design the structure of this walks with authority, but in writing the audio scripts (or taking the walk), I discover that I am playing the game (much like the visitor) and have become a citizen like everyone else. That is when I realise that these are two different design activities – curation and design – and that and that I can switch between the roles of expert and one of the multiple voices.
The walk offers many spaces for speculation. The engagement appears to be more physical in the walk than in the “small” or the “fragment” – seeing and looking seem abstract in comparison to walking – but the walk itself is ephemeral and leaves no traces or marks. This is well demonstrated in Robert Smithson’s *Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan*. Smithson’s travel (a drive as opposed to a walk) includes the temporary installation of mirrors at each of his nine stops. These “displacements” mark the ephemera of place. His accompanying narrative finds parallel slippages in time. He interweaves mythical accounts with the new narrative he is writing: “a simultaneous reading and writing of place.” This becomes a model for my practice.

**the ephemeral and the accidental**

I concluded in the Masters that “the accidents of site are drawn into the land art work”, and that “a renewed attention to the relationship between work and viewer (audience) allowed land art to move beyond the critique of the limitations of formalism into a project in its own right”. I focus on how my work is ‘ephemeral’ in conversations with my peers in the FMRL study group Leon van Schaik assembles. I knew I wasn’t interested in objects or buildings for their own sake (my critique of formalism). Many of my design studios deal with weather as the main protagonist in the design project – an uncompromising ‘client’ – and I have always considered light and shadow as important a building element as bricks and mortar. I use my installation for the Melbourne Festival as an opportunity to harness the unpredictability of users (audience) in the city (site) to question the means of engagement of other people with my work, or in a broader sense, the architectural project. The *Five Walks* installation requires other people (or phenomena) to fill in the gaps I reveal (in the city) in order to allow for accidents, or things that are out of my control.

In *atlas* I credited the Health and Safety at Work Officer with the design of the project. I had dug 900 x 900 x 600mm holes in the ground and had specified a line of 10 x 10 x 40mm gardening stakes to delineate the boundaries of my proposed maintenance instructions. His request was for 90mm high fencing around the holes, and for all structural members including the garden stakes to be 50 x 50 x 90mm. I complied with these safety precautions and (in addition) coloured them bright orange. This dramatically changed (and improved) the visual appreciation of the project but not the concept or operation. In *Five Walks*, I extend my team of ‘designers’ to include the visitors to the Festival. In two of the four walks I make no site markings at all; visitors leave traces with the
provided chalk and orange surveyor’s tape which accumulate throughout the lanes over the three weeks’ duration. My marks are equally minimal; thirty-eight 20 x 100mm brass plaques and ten postcards on steel rods become absorbed in this accretion.

In the PhD I reflect upon the methods of collaboration in my projects, from The Freeway Reconsidered consultation process, and my unlikely co-designer in atlas. I begin to appreciate the difference between instruction and design, and the opportunities the former affords. In the Nurses Memorial proposal, the disposition of the project is determined by the maintenance regime of others over an extended period of time. In contrast, the Korean War Memorial competition entry was too designed, and too complete, thus limiting opportunities for constructive negotiation with the veterans, or indeed my colleagues. I develop my methods to encourage these gaps, or spaces for dialogue where other voices may be heard (and accidents can occur). I shift my role as author in the process. When I apply this to the city I begin to question what a design strategy that is “out of the architect’s control” might be. Or one generated from the individual. Is it possible to develop a non-deterministic architecture that is all about accidents? Will there be delight in seeing the unexpected? (When students ask me what I want, I always answer “something I can’t imagine”.)

LABORATORIES

The city, the design studio and the art space or gallery are the sites of my practice included in this document; I consider these laboratories for experimentation. Although each has very specific issues, requirements and parameters (as discussed in the projects in Chapter Two), here I reflect upon how the practices inform each other, and what they share in common. They make me consider my role as author of the work, and question the role of design. In each case I am conscious that I am not alone in this endeavour and I start by developing a dialogue with my clients, constituents, or students (and my scholarship community). This is incredibly important in my teaching practice. My role there is to design a learning environment, to pose relevant questions, and to offer tools that enable each student to answer as an individual. In the Asian urban projects, I am conscious that I am not an expert, and need to find the means to see clearly and work constructively with those who have local knowledge (and command of the language). In my gallery and installation practice, I respect the nature of the public forum and need to determine how to act responsibly within it.

teaching practice
Study tours were very important at the AA when I taught there. We didn’t have designated studios (or even offices) so it was an opportunity for staff and students to bond, as well as to set the agenda of the studio. I took a group to Chicago and Detroit in the beginning of one year. I was concerned that the students were being voyeurs of the terrible poverty and devastation that we saw in Detroit by taking photographs from the safety of our moving cars. I set an exercise to physically intervene on site in contradistinction. (I believe this was the first installation project I had set.) Two students selected a site in the slums and went off armed with sledgehammers, shovels, wire-cutters, acid, weed killer etc. When we reconvened to see everyone’s work that evening, we discovered that they had planted a sunflower patch. Apparently they had met some of the local residents and decided that they wanted to grow something rather than to add to the destruction. After returning to London, I presented their work-in-progress as part of a lecture I gave at the University of North London. I described the scenario, and said I was not sure what it meant, yet. A staff member asked me how I could responsibly set a project if I didn’t know the outcome. I thought for a moment and replied that I knew what the question was, and what the conversation was about, but if I knew what the answer was, it wouldn’t be education.

This design studio is the site for empowerment of the students, which I also address with the audience (or users) of my projects. My role in the process is to design a constructive learning environment: one that takes responsibility for both skilling and conceptual development, as well as stimulating healthy debate. I have outlined the methods I encourage, best practice garnered from my research and honed through the teaching: specificity of time and place, and working at a minimum of three scales, and in three different mediums. This process of seeing, reflecting and proposing has a parallel series of stages for discussion or critique. I alter the focus and tone of these sessions so that I am less a judge – the one giving the marks – but more the facilitator of a dialogue.

In the *Taipei Operations* workshop, for example, we structure our initial discussions around a SWOT-type analysis at the whiteboard. We discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each observation – assumed to be ‘fact’ when presented and documented within the framework of the public forum – from the congestion on the streets, illegal structures, to the collection of rubbish. No answer is wrong. It becomes interesting when we discover that some items are found in both columns, both strengths and weaknesses. This reflects our personal opinions, and thus opens opportunities for individual action or authorship. We all have our preferences and biases. I had discovered that it is necessary (and desirable) to establish (and declare) a “point of view” in *The Freeway Reconfigured* to have any valid discussion or dialogue, or indeed, to
I have refined these techniques in my recent studio teaching at RMIT in collaboration with Melissa Bright.

There has been only one exception to my request to establish a point of view. At the University of Texas at Austin in 2003, I set a companion project to one I had previously set in Melbourne. I asked the students to take a position on the brief to modify a large hydroponic tomato facility: would they approach the project as an environmentalist, or with an interest in Mexican workers’ rights, or to frame the scale and beauty of the West Texas landscape? Worryingly, they found this to be an unreasonable request (and complained); they wanted me to tell them what they needed to do to pass. The RMIT students embrace similar requests positively.

I expand upon this approach to include students in the roles of judge and expert in the process of critique to ensure that points of view other than my own are consistently heard. Some of my techniques include the ‘competition style crit’ where each student places a sticky label on the drawing that they believe is the ‘best of’ according to specified categories, and then justify their selection to the group: one person, one voice, one vote. In a further variation in the later stages of the project development, I articulate my criteria for final assessment and then each student undertakes the responsibility for searching for evidence of that achievement in the other students’ work. I am always delightfully surprised at how conscientiously they assume these roles, and how considered and sophisticated their questions and responses become. Not only do the assessment criteria become (clear and) demystified by this process, the students thrive with the responsibility and prove often to be better critics than many ‘experts’ by considering the individual (student) author’s point of view instead of overlaying a pre-formulated position of their own.

In the PhD the synergies between my design studio teaching and my research practice become clearer. My model is to look and listen rather than overlay an expertise from (the heights of professor) above. I become more conscious of how I operate as a teacher in my desire to shift the hierarchy between student and teacher (learning and teaching). I am forced to articulate my role (which I realise are multiple roles) so that I may integrate students more meaningfully into the process. The design of the design studio (or the design process) is not dissimilar to the curatorial processes I have discovered and described. By posing the questions rather than supplying the answers, I may be the author of the studio polemic and the method of investigation, but I clearly shift the onus of project authorship onto the students at an early stage. I become a facilitator to enable them to assume (individual) authorship of their work. The design studio thus becomes a research laboratory for testing multiple responses or points of view. This approach yields a collection of (student) voices which echo the richness and complexity of the multiple narratives of the city.

(Asian) urbanism

The laboratory of the (Asian) city provides fertile ground for exploring some of the recurring themes in my work developed during the PhD. It raises issues of how one operates outside of one’s cultural milieu – or indeed of how one might operate in any situation – and perhaps makes me more self-conscious about
my role (as designer, educator, expert) than had I been working within a familiar context. I reflect upon This is a Map of the World (the Oranges images and text) which sets the tone for my Asian projects; as a result of this investigation, I believe I can make a contribution through a belief in shared values and “common pleasures”. When I question my expertise and my dissatisfaction with the cliché that the Asian city is dense, chaotic, rapidly developing, and needs to be tamed with a masterplan, I know I need to learn how to look and discover the hidden structures and systems so I can operate from within the system as opposed to outside of it.

I first visited Melbourne with Diane Lewis in 1988 to lead a workshop for the Centre for Design at RMIT. We were inundated with interviews from the press asking us what we would “do to” the city. (Apparently an expensive report commissioned from some U.S.-based urban design consultants had just been released that concluded that the skyscrapers needed “hats”.) I was bemused at first, and deflected the question politely by saying that I had only been in the city for a few days and had no idea how to answer that question (or why it was even being asked). Our host, Leon van Schaik, eventually answered for us by stating that we were not that type of ‘expert’ and that the reason that we had been invited is because we wouldn’t “do” anything, but we might be able to show Melbournians how to look at their city (and make their own conclusions).

I develop some strategies working with Taiwanese students in the first Urban Flashes workshop. I recognise that they have local knowledge, and that I can offer a framework of how to look: physically from above, below and to four sides at ten metre intervals; in time, through the processes of growth and decay; at the ephemera of light, shadow, noise and smell; by collecting traces of occupancy found on the site; through philosophical musings and emotions felt. These multiple readings begin to capture the richness of Taipei, and I realise that this model has potential applications for all (good) cities. In the later Taipei Operations workshop my academic colleagues and I question how we can maintain our individual research interests in the design of our studio briefs and still establish a meaningful dialogue amongst ourselves and between the students. We start with a strategy (instead of a syllabus): a common practice of starting small, and with a rule that all investigations are particular to time and place.

Through our close observation we make extraordinary discoveries. I am particularly impressed with the entrepreneurship that I see in Taipei: ingenious mobile kitchens and hawker stalls; the (often illegal) appropriation of marginal sites; the complex negotiation between merchants, pedestrians, motorbikes and cars for space on streets and footpaths; an ambiguity between the public

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71 I worked in a combined group with Steve McAdam of the University of North London (later joined by Clive Sall of the Royal College of Art and FAT) and 24 students from across Taiwan, including a baker and some marketing students.

72 See Helsel, Five Walks: “a good city has an infinite number of narratives.” Some cities are one-liners or over-planned so as not to encourage nuance or individual expression; this is my criticism of New Urbanism and some heritage and conservation overlays.

I find this an interesting contrast to the Land Art project where artists bypassed the gallery to enable the audience to have a direct engagement with the subject matter – the landscape. I have inverted this and use the gallery as the site of engagement between artist and audience.

and private realms; and underlying all this is a clear respect for neighbours and fellow citizens. We use the model of how we operate (with students, amongst the academic staff) in the curation of the exhibition of workshop outcomes. We lead by example; the students' work leaves enough gaps or space to allow other voices to be heard, and we encourage the gallery visitors to see their city afresh and contribute to its design – and they do. (We do not offer the singular omnipotent masterplan, or composed finished panels of student proposals.) It becomes further evident with this broadening of public engagement that as a curator one can design the city by shifting the mindset of those who are designing and devising policy, and those who live within it.

the gallery

Working within the gallery and art practice framework takes me out of my comfort zone. I need to develop alternative forms of depiction (from the architectural norms) when working within this context and outside the disciplines of architecture and design. (Most people do not understand our stock-in-trade plans and sections that unfortunately serve to exclude many from the discourse on architecture and urbanism.) I use this forum as a laboratory for direct engagement with what I call a broader audience, and refine my views on what a common practice might be. Through the (actual) curation of exhibitions, I see this as a positive model for how I might operate and thus redefine my role as a designer.

Installation affords me a 1:1 scale contact with my site and my subject matter. During the PhD, I shift the focus to privilege my “audience’s” role in the relationship and use the gallery as the laboratory for engagement. We realise that we need to re-invent the architectural exhibition when we present the Taipei Operations workshop in art galleries in Taipei and Melbourne. We do not want to arrange the show by individual authors (say, by an A1 panel each) but prefer to show the body of the work as a whole – to foreground the city as opposed to the authors. This is the conceptual vehicle that allows others to engage; all Taiwanese have knowledge of their city, and opinions as valid as ours; it is our desire to let them express these. We devise several strategies: first, that the images are small, hand held and perused intimately (at an examining table); secondly there is one image per sheet so connections can be made between and across the 700-odd plates, allowing for “gaps in the map”. Velcro grids line the gallery walls so that the collection of images can be categorised and rearranged by the viewers. The visitors are able to ‘design’ the exhibition, in a similar manner to how I believe they can design their city.
I explicitly reference the language of the gallery in the Five Walks installation in Melbourne’s lanes – I curate the city. Curation and classification are intrinsic to my methods as well as to the content of the project. I use the gallery infrastructure (maps, audio tours, and information panels) to provide the armature for my installation. Here, I use the authority of the museum typology and the expert curator (and his/her actual voice through the audio tours) to give the audience a recognisable structure or framework through which to experience the lanes. The visitor is asked to look intently at things often taken for granted (or not understood). In the process the audience shifts from passive recipients to become active participants in the (design of) their city. Upon reflection, I discover I assume multiple roles in relationship to the visitors and the city within this framework: I can be both expert and fresh-eyed participant. I realise that curation and design are different modes of operation (in the city) and that I undertake both in varying stages of my working process.

**DISSEMINATION**

Given my concerns about the engagement of a broader audience, the dissemination of the research outcomes becomes critical to the project. Exhibition and installation provide both a conceptual framework for the work as well as a venue where I can physically engage. Lecturing is a staple of my teaching career, and offers me numerous opportunities for reflection prior to presenting the work. I realise that words and text become increasingly significant (as the voice of the author and to set the tone) and that the books I produce are more than mere documentation and become projects in their own right.75

**exhibition and installation**

During my Masters I produced atlas, in the group show Ruins of the Future for the Adelaide Festival of the Arts.76 Our installation stretched the length of the one-kilometre Torrens Riverside Park site in the heart of Adelaide. We mapped the curator’s (extensive) brief onto the site by a line of orange stakes to delineate the parts of the site that had not been ‘designed’ by the curator’s text and images, and set maintenance instructions so that this space remained untouched in order to generate its own narrative. (We felt the project brief left little space for speculation or action by the artists/architects or visitors.) Though this installation was originally conceived as my homage to the Land Art project, it resonates more clearly to me in the context of the PhD as a critique of curatorial practice, of the authority we yield, and of the opportunities we give others in the interpretation and design of their environment.

I have used the gallery as a method for testing my ideas of engagement with an
audience and participants. (This has not been monitored in terms of feedback questionnaires, or behavioural studies methods; I prefer to be the activist and lead by example rather than standing back and observing.) My curatorial role has been to provide the framework for the initial engagement without precluding the design outcome. After that, I am free to engage or design, as a citizen, like everyone else.

The models of engagement evolve. The Freeway Reconfigured’s community consultation board, flip cards, and stacks of questionnaires required a physical engagement with the piece, implying that a conceptual engagement in the freeway debate was the issue. It was rhetorical rather than an attempt to get any real or useful feedback. In the Taipei Operations exhibition we design the installation as an offering to the citizens of Taipei. It reflects the tone of how we want our studio outcomes received: we want to establish an equal footing with the visitors, and try to erode the status of the gallery as a distancing device that privileges the artist or author as having an expertise to be admired. It feels more like an intimate passing around of snapshots – the work is not precious and is picked up and perused while sitting around a table. In Five Walks I plan for a different type of engagement by empowering the visitors to become active participants in the design of their city by adding to the accretion of marks, and marking their presence in the space. This is what I believe makes a good city, and in turn, good citizens.

**lectures**
My image files are the personal accumulation of objects, people and moments that inspire me and make me think and question. In their raw state they have the characteristics of a collection, poised to be connected and juxtaposed in an infinite number of ways. I prepare a lecture similarly to the way I use the collection. The images become sorted and rearranged into categories; a narrative text provides the underlay for this (albeit) linear format and becomes the vehicle to turn private musings into a public offering – to give them a voice. This is an interesting discipline: it fixes moments in time and charts a development; it demands that I reflect. It sometimes seems that I give repeat lectures – I never do. (I would miss the opportunity to discover something new.) I often use the same images, but always speak about them in different ways.

I give variations of the “Taipei Operations” lecture over several years, and observe the immediacy of the workshop give way to memory and reflection. I speak to the projects with either an educational agenda, or as a contribution to the debate on the Asian city. The relatively consistent datum of images enables
me to see the overlaps and reinforces the parallels between my teaching and research and design practice. I deliver my lecture in Busan in the context of a keynote address at the start of a two week student design workshop for the SA Summer School.77 I was the first outsider invited to participate in this annual study of Korean towns and cities. (Guyon Chung, one of the organisers, had heard me lecture on Taipei in Linz and said he thought I understood Asia better than he did!79) I was keen to present my perspectives on both education and the Asian city to the 30-strong academic and professional team and 200 students. This was the first time I had combined both the urban and pedagogical agendas in one lecture. I subtitled the talk “curating the city” because I felt it was the best way to describe how I operated both as an educator (in allowing students to find their own voices) and as a designer (in enabling the entrepreneurship of the citizens [of Taipei] to be incorporated in the design of their cities). This is a significant moment in the PhD and clarifies many of my questions of authorship, and how I operate.

books

A collection of lecture images becomes one of my first books. I had been showing Land Art slides for many years before I used the Masters to more fully understand their importance to my architectural project. I “glued” the collection down in 99 Postcards79 under the categories of the position of the artist (or architect), a specificity in time and place, and scale. This served to fix some of the elements I consider critical to my design practice and I continue to use these as my methods and rules. The PhD expands upon the “position of the artist” with my questions about how I operate, and my authorship as designer and curator; “specificity in time and place” becomes common ground amongst the academics in the Taipei Operations workshop, and a ‘rule’ for the students.

Whilst the 99 Postcards had perforated bindings so that they ostensibly could be detached and regrouped as a collection and thus be rearranged, atlas was designed as a folio with sixteen 300 x 300mm plates that were clearly stated to be “non-sequential” where the page number would have been. (Oddly, I always made sure they were in order.) My desire in this case was to produce a non-finite document that could accept additional contributions from my co-artists and architects. I had, in effect, undertaken to produce a type of exhibition catalogue within my budget and as part of my installation, again to form an underlay – an inclusionary structure – as an alternative curation of the group of installations I feared would become stand-alone objects or singular voices. Perhaps I would have shuffled these multi-authored plates to find congruencies and synergies to

77 The SA [Seoul Architecture] School was founded by Guyon Chung and nine colleagues who had studied internationally and were critical of the educational system in Korea. The SA School runs a summer school open to architecture students from all over Korea to study a different Korean town or city each year. Thirty academics and practitioners ran fifteen studios in the Re-citing the City workshop in Busan from 3-10 August 2002.

78 Guyon Chung elaborated that I appeared to have an overview of many Asian countries (through the various backgrounds of our students at RMIT, my travels and workshops). He states that most Asian countries operate as monocultures with little opportunities to move within the region to study or work. Australia had a unique edge in respect of developing a pan-Asian discourse and exchange, but this is swiftly being addressed through forums such as ARCASIA (the Asian branch of the UIA [International Union of Architects]).

79 Helsel, 99 Postcards. I do not seem to have overcome the fear of “gluing down” (see page 18 of this text); the postcards have a perforated binding so ostensibly they can be rearranged.

80 I studied many books to determine how to escape a linear format. (This seemed to be a popular concern at the time.) Cj Lim’s volumes are particularly elegant in the way they negotiate varied media and sources, primarily due to
his superlative graphic design skills and his singular hand; see cj Lim, 2000 Sins + Other Spatial Relatives London: Studio 8 Production; and cj Lim, 2002. Water. Chichester: Wiley-Academy. Although Kilim Liem (RMIT student) ultimately reformatted all the original artwork in Taipei Operations for graphic legibility and continuity, I was conscious of maintaining the students’ authorship and did not want to overwhelm their work with another designer’s sensibility and content.

Charles Anderson showed a complex matrix of how all his projects were interconnected in the FMRL PhD presentations at the RMIT Graduate Research Conference, Spring 2006. He constructed digital links to respond to the diagram; the projects and images appeared in a variety of sequences. Although this was very elegant technically, it did not explore the nature or content of the connections which I believe to be the issue; these became overlooked by the technology.

And more importantly this is the point of the Reflective Practice PhD. Leon van Schaik, Mastering Architecture, 2005.

In the exhibition catalogue for Sophie Calle’s exhibition, M’as-tu vue, held at the Centre Pompidou in Paris the images of her exhibition installations are included as “tear-away” inserts within the main narrative unfolding of the projects within the book. Sophie Calle, 2003. Munich, Berlin, London, New York: Prestel Verlag.

create a dialogue between us, but alas, the only plates produced were mine.

In the Taipei Operations workshop, the book follows the curation and design of the exhibition which is our original and primary method for disseminating the work. We design the plates for the exhibition (210 x 210mm) as an economical print format and suitable for a single image per sheet; I assume, at the time, that I can make a book by simply arranging the plates and adding some essays and a Chinese translation. (Not true.) It proves difficult to capture the spirit of the exhibition – the multiple readings, lack of hierarchy, and the gaps or space for speculation – in the linear format of the book. I arrange the book by the “issues” cited in the exhibition as chapter headings. It is somewhat possible to read the book by location, by following the leads from an annotated map. Our identifying icons (deleted in the final copy) fail to stimulate an arrangement by program. True to the exhibition, we tell our stories of Taipei through our combined voices; to read the book by individual author one follows the project narrative at the back. We hope we have left enough gaps for the reader; this is not intended to be an authoritative volume.

During the writing of the PhD, I speculate whether a web page is the more appropriate vehicle for cross-referencing these text and image collections such as Taipei Operations and this PhD book. The links might become physically more apparent (and certainly more direct) but I sense that the projects risk becoming singular objects while the links remain mechanical – unseen and undefined. I realise that these gaps between the projects are the spaces that I am interested in foregrounding, where one can discover hidden structures and attempt to design a framework through which they can be revealed.

Sophie Calle’s work has been an inspiration during this PhD reflection: her walks, collections and presence as author in her work. Her practice resonates more in her books than on gallery walls which transform her narratives into suites of framed objects, or a series of stills. The book is suited to her subject matter – intimate like a journal or a diary – with a narrative flow from turning the pages. The book seems appropriate to the nature of my practice. The hand is appropriately scaled to the size of the book; the fragments or pages can be rearranged (conceptually) with dextrous fingers. Turning the pages allows space for speculation.

text

i have long admired Robert Smithson’s eloquent description of place in Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan 1969, where photographs of a series of (ephemeral) mirror installations are read in conjunction with a text of the journey,
accompanied by an (unseen) map. Each medium does something different, and they are all necessary for the project. Each element is incomplete on its own; we (the audience) inhabit the slippages between them to muse alongside the artist (author). The use of “multiple forms of media” is a ‘rule’ alongside my “multiple scales” rule in my teaching and design practice; I believe this is necessary with a non-formalist approach which precludes the singular heroic image of an object-building.

In *atlas* I incorporate maps, text and references in the folio plates as part of the installation. Here, I am conscious of the visitor or viewer of the piece, and use the gamut of text (from postcard captions, first person stories, to theoretical musings) to cater to a broad range of visitors’ literary persuasions. I become conscious of my multiple voices when I write my Masters, “Architecture in the Expanded Field”. Some text is pure description (of fact); some is anecdotal, such as a memory from the past or a personal musing; and some is theoretical. I use different typefaces to distinguish between them. The text for “This is a Map of the World” signals a turning point for me and a consciousness of not only how I use words, but of the authority of my own voice. Here, I am unabashedly the author within the context of an artist’s talk. The text incorporates all my voices (description, theory and narrative) in one; it seems a very personal statement.

I question the voice of authority when I write texts in the guise of museum audio guides in the *Five Walks* installation. (I spend many hours listening to models at the National Gallery of Victoria and become fascinated by their structure and phrasing.) Here I mimic the experts: the museum guide, curator, tour operator, and game show host. Instead of reading about the journey, people are taking it along with me (in their ears). The subjective nature of the texts reinforces my authorship but challenges the viewer to do better; I have demonstrated a way to see, but I invite the participants or the reader to think for themselves.
There is a considerable amount of text that was written concurrently with each project found in the following chapter. The two memorials include the majority of the report that accompanied the competition entries. The text for “This is a Map of the World” is integrated with the timing and sequence of the slides in the artist’s talk. In Five Walks the audio scripts are located adjacent to their relative tags; the introductions and maps are transcribed from the “visitor’s guide” (attached), as is a CD of the audio recordings heard through the headsets. The Taipei Operations exhibition includes the instructions from the gallery walls and text from the catalogue flyer (with additional descriptive text marked by italics). Taipei Operations is Volume Two in the submission; I have written all text and captions that are unattributed to another author. The introductory and reflective texts for each project have been written after the production of the projects as part of the PhD book and are marked with follow-on page numbers should you choose to read them as a continuous overview, without the interruption of the projects.
chapter 1
proposition

8  Introduction
9  Research Questions
11 PhD Document
14  Methods
20 Devices + Armatures
25 Laboratories
30 Dissemination
introduction

reflection upon past work

The PhD starts where my Masters of Architecture at RMIT University concludes. In “Architecture in the Expanded Field”1 I reviewed the work of the Land Artists of the 1960s and 70s and established that questions relevant to architecture could be asked in another discipline. Through my installation projects, atlas2 and the Freeway Reconfigured,3 I found that architecture could comfortably and valuably incorporate methods and concerns from an expanded field of disciplines as diverse as fine art, landscape architecture, engineering, and urban design.4 The divisions between these disciplines seemed counterproductive in dealing with many of the issues that contemporary society faces, such as larger urban contexts, infrastructure projects, globalisation, and a sustainable agenda. I remain firmly committed to the “expanded field” and cross-disciplinary practice, though, thanks to this research, I now broaden the scope of the research from the question of how one establishes a dialogue between disciplines, to include the meaningful engagement of a larger group of users (and designers).

I have reflected upon the specific conclusions that I articulated in the Masters.5 Some aspects have been adopted as good practice and continue to be developed and refined in my teaching, project work and writing. Others pose new questions, alternative responses, and trajectories for further areas of research in the PhD.

Firstly, I espoused a non-formalist approach where process is privileged over the object imposed on the site. Instead, the work reveals concealed site phenomena – reading the land; architectural speculation begins from what is there. A selective renegotiation of the working methods of the land artists (and related disciplines) speculates from the particular – the specific material conditions of time and place.6 These criteria form the basis of my evolving design and representation methods and have the status of one of the few ‘rules’ in my teaching practice. In the PhD, I test these methods in new laboratories: in urban environments and overseas, which enables me to see the city differently and incorporate additional readings of “land” into the definition of site. The “conditions” remain specific to time and place, but I now include invisible systems alongside the “material” – social, political, economic, and environmental, for instance – as necessary for understanding place. Although I continue to eschew any initial abstractions or generalisations, I realise there is much more to consider about the design process in the coming to form or fruition. A shift in focus evolves from the previously posed question of method – how we might intervene? – to include why we might intervene? the question before the question.

5 Leon van Schaik, 2005. Mastering Architecture. West Sussex: Wiley-Academy. The RMIT PhD (by project) is predicated upon reflective practice. Some of my reflections have occurred during the writing of this document, but others have
been cumulative. My lecture tour to disseminate the Masters work in 1999-2000 (referred to in the “Preface”) at the
Universities of British Columbia, Texas (at Austin), North London, Westminster, Hong Kong; SciArc, IT Park
Gallery (Taipei) and AAAsia (Singapore) allowed me to review the hierarchies and see new possibilities in my work.


7 ibid. These not only included unexpected user responses such as safe spaces to leave belongings or shoes, but also engendered a (physical) dialogue with agencies that had interests on the site: the electricity board spray-painted their service lines blue; the Health and Safety officers specified public safety requirements which became major design features.

8 ibid.

9 David Greene is a founder member of Archigram, recipient of the RIBA Gold Medal, Professor of Architecture at the University of Westminster, and past unit master at the Architectural Association School of Architecture (AA).


11 Helsel, text from The Freeway Reconfigured installation.

Secondly, in the Masters, I determined that the field was not a mathematical or formal construction, but a conceptual one. I had perversely placed a grid onto the particular (site), Adelaide’s Torrens Riverside Park, in atlas, which provoked “intuitive, erratic, and accidental responses”.7 I realise that the charged field consists of nuanced slippages, gaps and overlaps that allow for multiple readings that enable others to see, use, appreciate and engage with the project meaningfully. (I have become fascinated with things that might be out of my control.) This encourages me to speculate about issues of authorship and to clarify my working and teaching methods. I establish this as the way I choose to operate.

Thirdly, I searched for a common practice amongst the disciplines, and reconsidered the methods of architectural practice, such as the conventions of scale and representation, to be used as a language that could cross disciplinary boundaries rather than reinforce them – a search for common ground.8 A quote from David Greene’s9 review of The Freeway Reconfigured continues to resonate:

This original collage of methods is what gives the work its primary significance since the procedural aspects then become the raw material for other readings, other combinations, generating new ideas from a common spectrum of facts by other disciplines. So rather than these other disciplines being co-opted to explain or justify one person’s concept, they become powerful creative forces for determining the trajectories of future environmental design.10

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

This new research reveals the possibilities of extending Greene’s “powerful creative forces” beyond those professionals who work in the built environment. How can I engage a broader range of “others” (students, clients, users) in ways of seeing and acting in a meaningful way? The Freeway Reconfigured, installed in the Storey Hall Gallery, started this dialogue in the Masters with an interdisciplinary and community consultation installation that anyone could play. It was designed to pose questions and encourage debate – not to find solutions; the solution (or proposed Eastern Freeway extension) was already there. (The subtitle of The Freeway Reconfigured was “the answer may be an eight-lane freeway, but what was the question?”)11 The project was a critique of perfunctory and condescending community consultation (and design) processes. For the most part, questions are asked of the community to justify decisions or answers that have already been made by the experts or authorities. As I begin to question what a “meaningful engagement” might be, I consider how I might design design processes that involve others in the making of the work.
The Freeway Reconfigured reflected the conversations that had taken place amongst us design professionals in the Metroscape project.\(^{12}\) Through numerous discussions, we found that whilst we could be seduced by the sinuous night lights of the highway from the air, we could also be horrified by its impact on adjoining backyards.\(^{13}\) We, as individuals, did not fit neatly into our respective disciplinary categories; each one of us was simultaneously an architect, engineer, artist, community activist, environmentalist, etc. – we were citizens as well as designers. The players in the design project are immediately extended by this awareness of our multiple roles. Thus, it seems possible, and logical, to include additional voices, or a “broader range” of participants, in this context.

This provokes a further question of what my role (or multiple roles) is as a designer in the built environment. The original title of the PhD was “an architecture of enabling”, which I feel over-asserts the authority of my role (or the architect’s) in the process. Although the agenda of the work continues to grant authority to, or enables multiple voices to be heard, I become increasingly wary of the so-called expert. As I re-evaluate my activities throughout the course of the PhD, I realise that I can both create frameworks (with expertise) and also participate (on an equal footing with others) in the design process. I initially define this territory as common ground. “Common ground” however, implies compromise and obligation; “common pleasures”\(^{14}\) are about possibilities and positive desires.

**curating the city**

In 1999, I was invited to the first Urban Flashes workshop.\(^{15}\) Six architects came from the UK, six from Asia, joined by three Austrian artists and filmmakers. (I was delighted to be considered an Asian architect.) We arrived the night before the workshop to a minimal briefing: our site was a large derelict brewery; Taipei City Council and the local arts community were our hosts (and oppositional stakeholders); and 100 Taiwanese students would be arriving in the morning. A few of us got together to discuss what we were going to do since it became apparent that we were going to have to generate the program ourselves. The stakes were quite high, and this was the first workshop many of us had done, and the first trip to Taipei for most. We realised that, had we been of the previous generation of architects,\(^{16}\) we would have had sketched a masterplan on the back of an envelope on the plane coming over and used the students to (ostensibly) draw it up. We opted against the masterplan idea. Was it because we were inexperienced or incompetent, or did we feel it was inappropriate or unethical? At the time we were unsure whether we were acting out of fear or integrity.

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\(^{12}\) The participants in Metroscape II included: Peter Connolly (landscape architect), Peter Felicetti (engineer), Louise Forthun (painter), Eli Giannini (urban designer), John Gollings (photographer), and Sand Helsel (architect).

\(^{13}\) Some examples of this “seduction” include John Gollings, *Melbourne, 4500 feet*, 7:30 pm, 12 April 1996 in *Metroscape II*, 24-27; and Louise Forthun, *Black*, 1996, and *Pink*, 1996, in ibid., 14-15. I collaborated with Gollings to exaggerate the lights, lines, scale and form of Melbourne’s freeways in his night-time aerial photographs; Forthun produced beautiful paintings of the underside of freeways.

\(^{14}\) The British academic Mark Cousins (Director of History and Theory at the AA) came up with this phrase while eating dozens of oysters when he visited me for lunch in Melbourne. I am unsure whether he was talking of the food, or my PhD, or both.

\(^{15}\) Urban Flashes (1) design workshop and exhibition, 5-10 April 1999, Washang Arts Centre and IT Park Gallery. Ti-Nan Chi founded Urban Flashes (at this time) and he and Nicholas Boyarsky invited the original workshop participants; see “1999 Workshop,” in Ti Nan-Chi, ed., 2001. *Urban Flashes*. Taipei: Human Environment Group, 121-33.
Will Alsop, for example, masterfully directs his student workforce in his international workshops (and clients such as the Peckham residents) to believe that they design the project solutions he prepares well in advance. From personal acquaintance and co-teaching at the Architectural Association; also see Kenneth Powell, 2001. Will Alsop, Book 1. London: Lawrence King.


Joseph Beuys used this phrase often in lectures from 1973 onwards; it first appeared in English print credited to a 1974 Institute of Contemporary Arts exhibition catalogue by Caroline Tisdall, Art into Society, Society into Art, 48.


Both the Masters and the PhD begin with a critique of architectural practice. In the Masters I had been critical of conventional architectural methods such as orthogonal drawings and conventional scales that lead to restricted and predictable outcomes (or buildings). In the PhD I begin from speculating about the masterplan, which is often an oversimplified, reductive response, laden with generalisations and the ill-considered overlay of inappropriate models. It implies that the city is an object or a collection of objects; I feel that our obsession with buildings is hindering the city. I don’t believe we need more innovative architecture; instead, I question how I might provide innovative architecture, landscape and urban structures and systems. Are there alternatives to the view from above, the bird’s eye view at a distant scale? Can the city be generated from the individual? And is the generational a constructive alternative to design? Is this a viable alternative (or antidote) to the masterplan, or, as the question becomes refined through the course of the study, a complementary activity?

My Asian work, described in Chapter Two, gives me insights into some of these questions, and valuable laboratories for testing ideas and methods. Of necessity, I question the appropriateness of western planning methods in Taipei, in a city with few easily readable urban structures, and where my expertise can be questioned in respect of local knowledge. It fuels my criticism of the architect as expert, operating from on high. On the positive side, I collect evidence of the entrepreneurship of citizens – the way traders artfully and expediently arrange merchandise for sale (see Stacks in Chapter Two), and the unlegislated methods of negotiating with neighbours – and wish to engage them in a meaningful co-partnership in the design process. I misquote Joseph Beuys’ maxim that “everyone is an artist” by substituting the word ‘architect’. This causes me to rephrase my earlier question about my role as a designer to ask what can and should an architect be doing in the design of our cities. I believe we, as designers, need to move into this territory. Through the course of this study, I determine a role for the architect, as differentiated from a designer, as a curator of the built environment. I conclude that this is, amongst other things, an ethical position.

THE PhD DOCUMENT

This volume documents a body of work undertaken during the course of the PhD by Project. Seven projects have been selected to respond to the research questions. Some were designed intentionally for this purpose, such as Five Walks, an installation commissioned for the Melbourne Festival. Some were serendipitous, such as the entry and winning of the Australian National Korean
War Memorial competition\textsuperscript{21}, and the unexpected opportunities to work in Taipei.\textsuperscript{22} My reflection has occurred in parallel with my production, though this has not been a linear process, or one based upon cause and effect. This is primarily due to the overlap of the dissemination of the project outcomes and the start of new work. For example, the Taipei Operations project evolved over three years in the varied forms of a collaborative design studio and conference, exhibitions, lectures, and the accompanying book.\textsuperscript{23} Halfway through the book project, I was in Busan (whilst testing my 'walks' for the Melbourne Festival in a workshop with Korean students)\textsuperscript{24} where I subtitled the Taipei lecture I was preparing to deliver: “Curating the City”. This became the seminal moment in the PhD.\textsuperscript{25} (Both the walk projects and the Taipei projects directly benefited from this insight.) I recognised the parallels between my teaching, research, and professional practice. I was able to articulate the types of engagement I sought. And it has made me conscious of the importance of dissemination for reflection.

I consider all the above practices included in the PhD – teaching, installation, exhibition, and publication – to be research. They each offer a particular focus or framework for investigation, yet, I find the space for significant reflection – for seeing things afresh – in the slippages between them. I thus develop my responses to the research questions thorough an examination across the projects in the continuation of this introduction in Chapter One. Firstly, I reflect upon my (design) methods, such as the collection, and numeration, and consider their value in my own practice and how they might resonate with others. I identify devices or strategies that recur in the work: how I use the walk, the ephemeral, and the small. These can be viewed as the architecture of my projects – the armatures or structures – an alternative to typologies. They clarify issues of authorship and establish modes of engagement. The city, the design studio, and the art space are the sites of engagement in this selection of projects and provide the laboratories for experimentation. Although there are particular issues germane to each project, I focus on how I operate within their contours, to develop the notion of curation as an alternative to design. I conclude this overview with the dissemination of the work – through exhibition, and print – which offers opportunities for reflection, and a direct engagement with a broader public.

The seven individual projects appear chronologically in Chapter Two. Three suites of projects chart the refinement of and the responses to the research questions. I consider the Australian National Korean War Memorial (constructed competition winning entry)\textsuperscript{26} and the Australian Service Nurses

\textsuperscript{21} Sand Helsel, Les Kossatz, Augustine Dall’Ava, David Bullpitt, Australian National Korean War Memorial, competition entry, June-October 1998

\textsuperscript{22} Urban Flashes (I), 1999, led to a series of other Urban Flashes workshops, conferences, and exhibitions that I participated in: Taipei, 20-23 January 2002; Linz 12-14 April 2002; see also Chi, Urban Flashes.


\textsuperscript{24} Sand Helsel with Jaewon Cho, Walking in Busan, 2002, in Reciting the City, group exhibition, Sunraya Gallery, Seoul, and also in the Busan International Biennale for the Arts.

\textsuperscript{25} That is when I had, what is euphemistically called in RMIT’s Research by Project (Invitational Stream), “my PhD moment”. I apologise to Leon van Schaik for being an unbeliever, and mocking his diagram that cuts across all of one’s practice as “the upside down martini glass with the swizzle stick.”
National Memorial (competition entry)\textsuperscript{27} to be the ‘designed’ outcomes of my Masters. They reflect my desire for a non-formalist approach, and offer a physical interpretation of the field. The Korean War Memorial causes me to dramatically reconsider the collaborative project and how I work with others (both colleagues and clients). The Nurses Memorial shows me the potential of an ephemeral architecture, of considering the design project over an extended time frame, with place-making that becomes out of my control.

“This is a Map of the World” \textsuperscript{28} leads the second suite of projects for the Melbourne Festival. I overlay the images of oranges I had quietly been collecting with a narrative text. This becomes a private manifesto, by identifying my search for common pleasures, and establishing the foundations of an ethical awareness in my practice. I begin to trust the legitimacy of my methods, and thus articulate them more clearly, and test them more consciously. I understand how I look, and see, and how this allows me to speculate. I use the commissioned urban installation \textit{Five Walks}\textsuperscript{29} as an opportunity to test these ways of seeing (my ideas) on others, or some of the expected 100,000(?) people who would attend the festival. I become conscious of my ‘voice’ or authorship in the narrative audio texts, and the role of curator. I define a good city as being “capable of supporting an infinite number of narratives”.\textsuperscript{30}

\textit{Stacks} and the \textit{Taipei Operations} design studio, exhibition, and book form the final series of projects. The laboratory is particular to the Asian city, but also serves as an opportunity to consolidate the previous experiments with methods and to test the outcomes. It focuses on process as opposed to content. I question my role as the expert in a ‘foreign’ context, and how to best collaborate with my academic peers in a joint design studio. I design design methods for the studio participants that require us to look carefully, present the findings as ‘fact’ and then open a dialogue that can embrace difference. We start from the small, the urban diary, and discover that indeed, the masterplan can be generated from the individual or small scale. The exhibition celebrates the multiple voices of the students, and the slippages across them, and the gaps in the work. We design the exhibition to encourage the contributions of the visitors. We are unapologetic that it is an incomplete picture.

The scope of the \textit{literature and project review} is selective and deliberately broad, reflecting the congruencies I identify across my projects outlined above. The subject areas I refer to include: masterplanning and community consultation models; Asian urbanism, radical urbanism, and micro-urbanism.
strategies; representation and collection precedents in art practice; and a review of architectural dissemination through print and installation. I continue with what David Greene identified in my Masters as an “original collage of methods” with the varied sources of my references for my work – or at least the projects I admire. I weave these references throughout the body of this text to more accurately register how they inform the slippages in my practice. (I have always been critical of projects that ‘extrude’ theory, or use it to justify a formal outcome.) Notwithstanding, I document the specific references in the Five Walks installation in “Walk Five: the Philosophers Walk” in Chapter Two.

Instead of focussing on the gaps in the models, which is conventional in a review of this kind, I find it more relevant to my practice to identify practitioners who work in a similar vein – my community of scholarship. The problem with inter- or cross-disciplinary practice is that it remains just that, a marginal activity. I have been fortunate to make two such affiliations during the course of the PhD. The initial Urban Flashes workshop in Taipei has evolved into a group of artists, architects, and academics who share the similar strategy of starting small in (Asian) urbanism. Locally, Leon van Schaik invited a group of PhD candidates with an interest in ‘ephemeral architecture’ to form a mutual support group, and participate in The Unused group installation for the Melbourne Festival. I cite the shared sensibilities and recurring themes across both bodies of work, and reflect on future prospects in the conclusion.

The following sections in the introduction refer to examples across the seven projects located in Chapter Two: Australian National Korean War Memorial, Australian Service Nurses Memorial, “This is a Map of the World”, Five Walks, Stacks, Taipei Operations exhibition and Taipei Operations.

METHODS

A consideration of design methods continues to be important in my work. It is critical to my teaching practice, where I attempt to create a learning space. If I provide a structure, or method, then I feel that I can leave the individual student free to determine the content of their project, and their position relative to it. This is made clear to me at the onset of the first Urban Flashes workshop where I realise that my expertise is the pedagogical structure (that I offer) since I have no local knowledge; the Taiwanese students are the ‘experts’ on Taipei. I enable them to see their city with fresh eyes, and thus make proposals for improvements. I make parallels between my teaching practice and my built work. My engagement mediates the built environment and how people create
meaning. My methods attempt to create ways of seeing and understanding that engage others (including me) with their environment in a new way to provide opportunities for action.

the collection
The collection is my primary design method. (Anyone can do it.) I employ this technique as an observation tool, or a way of seeing. It is a primary source of raw data, awaiting an overlay of meaning. It is inherently neutral at its onset, and exists to be added to, deleted, rearranged, and reclassified; the hierarchies can and do change. The collection implies duration, or the passage of time, which affords the space (and moments) to reflect. I was an avid collector of postcards in my twenties. I have been collecting oranges for the past ten years, and stacks of things for even longer. I feel that anything in quantity can be useful. It takes the onus off the individual artefact or object, and reveals patterns and systems.

How material is collected is important to me, and is something that I stress in my teaching practice. The collection of data is from primary sources, by observation; the importance is in ‘being there’, to avoid generalisations and pre-conceptions. I have always favoured Captain Cook’s method of exploring to that of Sir Joseph Banks. Cook drew only what he saw of the coast of Australia; he left gaps in the map. Banks drew up his charts in advance and plugged in evidence to substantiate his assumptions. Knowledge is a journey.33

In the Taipei Operations workshop the RMIT students started their first exercise by researching the city on the internet. (I questioned why we had bothered to come to Taipei.) I subsequently ban access to the computer labs, and require the students to actively engage with their subject matter, by recording events that are specific to time and place. Through the process, they begin to trust that their personal observations are a primary source and can have as much, if not more, authority than a secondary source.

Careful observation (looking and listening) is the genesis of Five Walks, the result of many hours, and a forensic search for clues (of what I should do for my installation?) in the series of small laneways behind Storey Hall Gallery. It forms a collection of narratives or stories about a place. Stacks start as isolated images snapped overseas and are expanded upon and refined to become a visual inventory of entrepreneurial inventiveness. (Both The Freeway Reconfigured and atlas had used textual inventories and lists.) The Oranges are snapshots and are intended that way: they are records of a journey and a search. There is no editing or reformatting so as to allow for all the accidents that might occur.

33 Paul Carter, 1988. The Road to Botany Bay. London: Faber and Faber, xxiii. I have found that many prefaces and introductions reiterate this theme, but Carter’s is a particularly good example.
(The artist Juan Cruz noted that these images include all the bits that others try to avoid.) None of the collections are end products, but rather invitations to reflect.

When I was a second year student at the AA, I resisted “gluing down” my vast array of photographs, drawings and maps onto pages in my portfolio. Upon increasing pressure from my tutor I relented. We were both amazed to see how static they had become. They were no longer useful.

It is in the arrangement that the collection gains meaning and becomes significant, and this is another project or process to the initial documentation. I have come to realise that the arranged collection does not become a (static) object but instead marks a strategic moment in time where the work can switch from a personal observation to become objectively assessed, by both the author and his or her audience. This is when dialogue begins. There is potentially an infinite set of possibilities in the arrangement of a collection, and one of the challenges is to recognise their relative values. Originally I had arranged my postcards typologically: staircases, stadia, beach scenes, jewellery, and food – with variations in location, history, style, etc. When I regrouped the same images as ‘round things’, Chambord’s staircase sat next to the Houston Astrodome, an aerial view of beach umbrellas on the Cote D’Azur, a 3-D postcard with plastic hoop earrings attached, and a giant peach from Georgia. I became very excited; new life was given to this collection. The more banal the classification, I have found, the more potential there is for speculation. I am always trying to surprise myself and see things a different way, and have extended this strategy to afford students and users of the city similar opportunities.

The types of arrangement vary. The documentation becomes the ‘form’ of the piece which shifts the focus from the object in the collection to the structure (or process). The Stacks are simply collated, shuffled and stacked. Their quantity and variety become a phenomenon as opposed to a one-off occurrence when the images are divorced from their original contexts and are collected as a group. The Oranges’ initial intent (a search) becomes articulated and expanded in “This is a Map of the World” when accompanied by a text that weaves them into a narrative.

The collection defers authorship, until its arrangement. In Five Walks I become explicit (and somewhat literal) about the curatorial role in my practice. I collate the series of fragments I collect in the lanes, and link them as walks using the language of the gallery – annotated plaques, maps, and audio tours. My voice

Juan Cruz in the panel discussion, Walking in the Way of Metaphor, October 2001.

David Greene was my unit master from 1977-1978.

Sand Helsel, Oranges, 1999-present, photographs; “This is a Map of the World,” 2001, lecture; and exhibition piece, 2002. Conscious reflection transforms this initial collection of images into a lecture and exhibition piece. I become aware that the dissemination of my work is an important process in the development of my practice.
is now present, my authorship imposed. I reflect upon the expert. The voice of the curator, in this case, is not authoritative or singular – there are five, one in each of the walks; it acts a guide to help others to see. One soon realises that the carefully scripted audiotapes are clearly an individual’s voice; it invites other individual voices to respond. This resonates with the spirit of the cabinet of curiosities, and populist enjoyment. In the Museum of Jurassic Technology, the curatorial practice becomes wonderfully blurred; over time and after perusing numerous exhibits and their explanatory texts, one begins to wonder if the curator is making it all up, and if anything is ‘real’. One questions the curator’s authority; is he an ‘artist’, or an ‘expert’ bolstered by the legitimacy of history?

**frameworks and datum lines**

Individual items need a framework to become a collection. The formats of the collection become both my tools and rules of engagement, and form the structure in my work. I find these considerations can work at a range of scales. Some of these are conceptual, such as a similarity in content; others are material, and might rely upon a consistency in image size, or more classical compositional structures such as arrangement in a line. These frameworks can be seen in the representation and the presentation of the work. There is a space between the conceptual and material structures of the collection that form another gap from where a voice can be heard, similar to that in the arrangement of the collection. These spaces give me opportunities to comment and to articulate my authorship.

I first became interested in the datum line through the works of the Land Artists, such as Andy Goldsworthy and Richard Long. Both use the framework of Euclidean geometry – circles, rectangles and lines – to rearrange natural elements within the landscape. These clearly man-made marks help us to look and notice what is already there; they frame our views and make us look twice. This use of geometry has parallels with my long-standing interest in maps and mapping; the overlay of a grid unifies disparate elements and enable us to see – in relation to other things. I used this device in *atlas*, as an underlay, to integrate the narratives of the curator, myself and the other exhibitors, by physically marking the grid with holes across the kilometre-plus site. In the Korean War Memorial I charge the regular grid of stainless steel poles with four granite boulders to encourage the desire paths of the visitors to become marked in the gravel surface.

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The charging of the field is a technique that encourages the viewer to become engaged. My authorship occurs in the initial move, the establishment of the datum line or framework, armed with the knowledge that it will not remain neutral, especially when given a nudge. After that, the responses are out of my control; I can contribute to the outcome, though on an equal footing – as a player rather than author – with my audience. The uniform gridded photographs of stacks gain authority through quantity and consistency. They are neutral yet invite the viewer to privilege one over the other. I clearly have not differentiated between the images, yet that is inevitable. Similarly, the datum or the repetition of (foregrounded) oranges gives me a constant that allows me to see other things (such as background), or the differences between them.

The colour ‘orange’, too, has (serendipitously) become an identifiable thread: the fencing in *Atlas* and the surveying tapes in *Five Walks*. They imply “notice me” and again one looks twice at the everyday sights that have been brought to attention. I have found that text does this well. The museum labels in *Five Walks* give authority to prosaic objects or spaces. There is a slippage between the object and the description that makes us notice, then re-look and re-consider. Robert Smithson made us rethink the industrial wasteland on the outskirts of New York when he titled his series of Polaroid snapshots *Monuments of Passaic*.39 Text allows one to apply the laws of rhetoric (or inversion).40 I am more conscious now that there are two stages in this process; the seeing or observing, which is a personal act, is followed by the representation or documentation that disseminates this material to others, and where meaning occurs and authorship is attributed. This two-staged process is clearly identified in the design stages of the Taipei workshop. Students are initially asked to select an object or a place, something small. The choices are personal or intuitive (such as the purchase of a handbag or the arrival of a garbage truck).

Through the process of documentation – when frameworks and datum lines are established – the observations attain an objective status even though they reflect the bias of the author. They are then open for reinterpretation as they became part of the public domain; everyone has a point of view (staff and students alike) and is encouraged to express it. (For instance, I thought the garbage collection ritual in Taipei was marvellously poetic; the [student] authors of the piece felt the opposite and orchestrated its change.)41 I am interested in establishing both these opportunities to look and to see, and the methods that then allow others to reinterpret these observations. This provides a model both for my own work and my teaching practice – one that requires me to lead for a


40 Nigel Coates promoted the use of the laws of rhetoric (inversion, exaggeration, repetition, etc.) as design tools during tutorial sessions when I was a student in Diploma Unit 10 at the AA (1980-1). His reference was Victor Burgin, 1974. “Photographic Practice and Art Theory,” *Studio International Journal of Modern Art*, London, 39-51. In my teaching practice, I often recommend similar techniques to my students.

I have never understood this, and ironically do not offer that information. (This was a student question.) My study tours to Barcelona were called “no-fact-danger-tours” by a colleague since I based our understanding of the city from experiencing places such as (the then non-gentrified) Plaza Real as opposed to knowing the dates of iconic buildings and events.


We ran three studios in the 2001 Taipei Operations workshop (originally titled *Mobility*): Ti Nan Chi; Y.C. Roan; and K.C. Bee and Sand Helsel. In order to maintain continuity across the groups without compromising our pedagogical interests and techniques, we established a “specificity in time and space” as our common ground.

When I read the brief for the Australian National Korean War Memorial competition, I am haunted by the fact that 339 people died. That number is so specific: small enough to be able to understand – perhaps even to remember most of the names – yet large enough to have an impact. It is a number you can visualise, which we do in a field of stainless steel poles. They are arranged a body’s width apart, so you have physical contact with each pole, but visually they read as a forest when seen at a distance. I have always been intrigued by the *Avenues of Honour* in small Victorian country towns, where the planting of an oak for each fallen soldier far surpasses the size of the town – a poignant reminder of the scale of the loss. Maya Lin’s *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* is a simple list, a collection of the names of the deceased, etched into the framework...
of a black granite wall. The work is abstracted by the relentless scale and severity of the funereal wall, yet honours each individual (soldier and visitor) named and reflected in the polished surface.

There is currently a vogue for numeration in architecture – in datascapes and in bold numbers emblazoned across photos in stylish volumes that imply insight. Portefaix and Gutiérrez seduce with the latter in their comparisons of Hong Kong and Vienna. I applaud them for their thoroughness – the collection and categorisation is impressive – yet it remains abstract and surprisingly general; we are no closer to being there or understanding the sense of place. MVRDV designs with their data – the facts – which is why I think their eccentric architectural proposals appear so feasible; one believes that the high-rise Pig City is a logical architectural (and agricultural) solution to providing food for a large population on a small land mass, solely because the maths show us the impossibility of production in the conventional way. They demonstrate that speculation is possible through numeration. I have a great deal of sympathy for this aspect of their work. However, although they test their propositions through to the particular at the small scale (in this case, of the pig), they start from the abstraction (or large), rather than from what they observe. I espouse starting small (from observation), so that design proposals can be generated from their original contexts.

The slippage between the particular and the abstract is important to my architectural project. In my exploration of scale in the Masters, I argued that the architectural project exists ‘somewhere’ between 1:1 and 1:100,000; this assertion reminds me never to pre-determine the architectural outcome as a building, or at a conventional scale. I established that best practice requires that we work at a series of scales simultaneously, which I adhere to in my projects and use as a method and a structure in my design studios. Through the course of the PhD, I recognise that 1:1 and 1:100,000 need to be read simultaneously in the design of cities. The masterplan provides a valuable abstraction or overview, of a system rather than an object, but we must not lose sight of the individual’s perception and occupation. How can these individual views and voices be multiplied? What form does this take? This seems to be the challenge when we design our cities.

**DEVICES and ARMATURES**

In this research, I question the architecture of my projects – the devices I use, and the forms that result. I have always eschewed an architectural style, which I realise is a result of my critique of formalism. Similarly, when talking about the

Orange is not part of the original concept design for atlas or Five Walks, but is a result of “accidents of site”.

I am surprised that my recent work has become more and more minimal in its size and materiality; the frameworks are more subtle and the fragments more ephemeral. This is a “problem” that we have noted when we present the work of X_Field (to be discussed in Chapter Three). We find that the use of multiple overlapping images of our collective work best represents our practice. This was an intentional strategy in the Taipei Operations exhibition, and used in this instance to encourage exhibition visitors to participate.

City I have problems with typologies since too often they refer to buildings (as objects) or arrangements of buildings (or patterns made from objects). They are generally static and preclude the invisible systems, ephemera (like the weather) and the actions of the inhabitants. Typologies tend to be overlaid rather than evolve.53

I realise however, that the architecture of my projects, though not preoccupied with form, is recognisably mine – due to the methods and techniques I use, and the regular splash of the colour orange.54 There is rarely a heroic image in my work, or one that encapsulates the idea, or a masterplan, where everything fits neatly together.55 The work is generally composed of small things, mostly fragments, which make an incomplete picture. I am interested in connections (such as the walk) and the systems and networks that make the city work, and their physical consequences, in that order. I am concerned about how things operate, and less interested in how they look. That is the nature of process-led design, but in addition I strive to find openings where others can engage in the process, finish it off, or rearrange the findings. This is where accidents can happen, and where the unexpected things that are out of my control can arise and give the project its power.

the small, the fragment

During these periods of reflection I have gone way back into my past. I often wonder what makes me look at the world the way that I do. Maybe it has something to do with being born on the 23rd floor of a 22-storey building in New York, in a small apartment under the water tower. I am used to looking at the city from above, and understanding it as a set of interconnected systems. (All the cars and buses must have been about the same size as my toys.) I remember we used to read the shipping schedule that used to be published on the front page of The New York Times each morning. I would look forward to watching the ocean liners come into harbour and at an early age could name all the ships from the number and colour of their stacks.

The collection yields the small – the foregrounded oranges, the close-up stacks of wares – and the datum line provides the framework for visualising them (and for making them more significant). My previous installation work in the Masters reflected my interest in the potential for the 1:1 scale to maintain a direct physical engagement with my subject matter, a lesson learned from the Land Artists. The Land Artists had circumvented the gallery which displaced the work from the site, and also the artist from the viewer. A new relationship was formed between the artist and both the site and the audience.
I use installation as a method for students to engage with site and not to lose sight of their subject matter or their relationship to it through abstraction by the drawing board or computer. I had clarified that best practice is to work at a series of scales simultaneously: from 1:1 to 1:20,000, with the more readily identifiable (albeit unspecified) architectural scale somewhere in between, and set design studios that work between these scales.

In Taipei, however, we start small, with looking rather than making. A specific object is selected (such as a counterfeit Louis Vuitton handbag) and the question is posed: how big is the object and how long is its time frame? The object is immediately re-contextualised by questioning where it came from and where it is sold; the impact of its physical form is minimised in the process. This satisfies my desire to divert attention away from objects or buildings towards the processes and systems that I believe define our cities. The investigation becomes a forensic search for clues or traces, as opposed to the superimposition of imported and known models. Entire systems – social, economic, environmental etc. – are revealed in Taipei from looking at a hawker stall and the journey of a bag of rubbish; these offer numerous possibilities for a broad range of interventions. The development of the student work over the semester demonstrates that indeed one can make large scale or conventional marks at an urban scale using this method of starting small, and then re-test them at the small scale, at the site of discovery.56

Even though we are able to address big issues and make big marks in the Taipei Operations workshop, I realise that we had not made a masterplan. This approach does not yield the big picture or the authoritative view; the overview is far from complete. Our offerings are full of contradictions, subtle differentiations, and reveal as many gaps as they fill. When we design the exhibition, we chose to celebrate these fragments, and intensify the slippages, holes and overlaps. Each student’s work is specific, but leaves gaps (or things not seen or experienced, like Cook’s map). The projects displayed together are, in reality, just thirty-three individual voices and this leaves gaps in the gaps. We invite the visitors to the gallery to include their own stories of their city in these spaces, and to overlay their points of view.

In Taipei Operations, I call these individual perspectives ‘urban diaries’57 – stories of the city. They are personal readings, but act as emblems; everyone and everything has a story to tell, and the city is capable of accommodating the writing of many more. (In Five Walks I am specific about describing these as narratives, and invite everyone to participate.) I realise that there is another role
in the design of our cities – that of the curator – to collect, structure and arrange these voices and stories, much like one might collect and prepare the paintings of others for an exhibition. I see this as an act of enablement of others rather than as design in a conventional sense (of objects or buildings). I can design the opportunities for the narratives, but do not need to control their content. I become a collector of others’ voices, and a curator of traces; my goal is to give this activity authority. I use my ‘expertise’ to give them status, and then enable them to take form. I design the opportunities and then the environment (the context) in which they can be heard (and seen).

**the walk**

The walk is another narrative form that maintains a direct engagement with site and subject matter that is specific to time and place. The city can be understood by the temporal movement of the body through space. This way of observing or seeing differs from the “small” and the “fragments” that depend upon the collection or frameworks to reveal larger structures. The walk has its own structure in the narrative, which is often linear. The walk is, in itself, empowering; when one walks in the city, one designs a unique city each time: the city is curated through the narrative of the walk. A good city offers numerous such routes and numerous narratives for each of its occupants. The walk allows for personal authorship.

I use this device in several of my projects. In the Busan workshop, it is a structure to enable the Korean students to see the city afresh; a guide for how to look, what to look for and a tool to document the findings; it requires that the students make direct personal engagement. My hunch at the time was that we could begin to get a rich story of the city from the contributions of eighteen students; we could begin to see what the layering of narratives upon narratives might yield.

I use this workshop as a preliminary test for the *Five Walks* installation where my agenda is to ‘educate’ non-design professionals, visitors to the Melbourne Festival, so they might realise how much control they can have in the design of their city. I am always conscious that I am tainted as an authority figure as a lecturer, and I am keen to suppress that role in this project. I establish and design the structure of this walks with authority, but in writing the audio scripts (or taking the walk), I discover that I am playing the game (much like the visitor) and have become a citizen like everyone else. That is when I realise that these are two different design activities – curation and design – and that and that I can switch between the roles of expert and one of the multiple voices.

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59 Our studio outcomes were exhibited and presented as a huge ‘map’ composed of individual, though interconnected, stories. It was interesting to note that half of the fifteen workshop groups similarly started “small” in this large urban context; the remainder developed masterplans with large initial moves to regenerate the port and waterfront areas.
The walk offers many spaces for speculation. The engagement appears to be more physical in the walk than in the “small” or the “fragment” – seeing and looking seem abstract in comparison to walking – but the walk itself is ephemeral and leaves no traces or marks. This is well demonstrated in Robert Smithson’s *Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan*. Smithson’s travel (a drive as opposed to a walk) includes the temporary installation of mirrors at each of his nine stops. These “displacements” mark the ephemera of place. His accompanying narrative finds parallel slippages in time. He interweaves mythical accounts with the new narrative he is writing: “a simultaneous reading and writing of place”. This becomes a model for my practice.

**the ephemeral and the accidental**

I concluded in the Masters that “the accidents of site are drawn into the land art work”, and that “a renewed attention to the relationship between work and viewer (audience) allowed land art to move beyond the critique of the limitations of formalism into a project in its own right”. I focus on how my work is ‘ephemeral’ in conversations with my peers in the FMRL study group Leon van Schaik assembles. I knew I wasn’t interested in objects or buildings for their own sake (my critique of formalism). Many of my design studios deal with weather as the main protagonist in the design project – an uncompromising ‘client’ – and I have always considered light and shadow as important a building element as bricks and mortar. I use my installation for the Melbourne Festival as an opportunity to harness the unpredictability of users (audience) in the city (site) to question the means of engagement of other people with my work, or in a broader sense, the architectural project. The *Five Walks* installation requires other people (or phenomena) to fill in the gaps I reveal (in the city) in order to allow for accidents, or things that are out of my control.

In *atlas* I credited the Health and Safety at Work Officer with the design of the project. I had dug 900 x 900 x 600mm holes in the ground and had specified a line of 10 x 10 x 40mm gardening stakes to delineate the boundaries of my proposed maintenance instructions. His request was for 90mm high fencing around the holes, and for all structural members including the garden stakes to be 50 x 50 x 90mm. I complied with these safety precautions and (in addition) coloured them bright orange. This dramatically changed (and improved) the visual appreciation of the project but not the concept or operation. In *Five Walks*, I extend my team of ‘designers’ to include the visitors to the Festival. In two of the four walks I make no site markings at all; visitors leave traces with the

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provided chalk and orange surveyor’s tape which accumulate throughout the lanes over the three weeks’ duration. My marks are equally minimal; thirty-eight 20 x 100mm brass plaques and ten postcards on steel rods become absorbed in this accretion.

In the PhD I reflect upon the methods of collaboration in my projects, from *The Freeway Reconsidered* consultation process, and my unlikely co-designer in *atlas*. I begin to appreciate the difference between instruction and design, and the opportunities the former affords. In the Nurses Memorial proposal, the disposition of the project is determined by the maintenance regime of others over an extended period of time. In contrast, the Korean War Memorial competition entry was too designed, and too complete, thus limiting opportunities for constructive negotiation with the veterans, or indeed my colleagues. I develop my methods to encourage these gaps, or spaces for dialogue where other voices may be heard (and accidents can occur). I shift my role as author in the process. When I apply this to the city I begin to question what a design strategy that is “out of the architect’s control” might be. Or one generated from the individual. Is it possible to develop a non-deterministic architecture that is all about accidents? Will there be delight in seeing the unexpected? (When students ask me what I want, I always answer “something I can’t imagine”.)

**LABORATORIES**

The city, the design studio and the art space or gallery are the sites of my practice included in this document; I consider these laboratories for experimentation. Although each has very specific issues, requirements and parameters (as discussed in the projects in Chapter Two), here I reflect upon how the practices inform each other, and what they share in common. They make me consider my role as author of the work, and question the role of design. In each case I am conscious that I am not alone in this endeavour and I start by developing a dialogue with my clients, constituents, or students (and my scholarship community). This is incredibly important in my teaching practice. My role there is to design a learning environment, to pose relevant questions, and to offer tools that enable each student to answer as an individual. In the Asian urban projects, I am conscious that I am not an expert, and need to find the means to see clearly and work constructively with those who have local knowledge (and command of the language). In my gallery and installation practice, I respect the nature of the public forum and need to determine how to act responsibly within it.

teaching practice

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*I was a unit master at the AA from 1988-1993, initially with Will Alsop and Bruce McLean, continually with Bill Goodwin, and with tutorial assistance from Angie Pascoe, Jamie Campbell, and Sandy Sempliner.*
Study tours were very important at the AA when I taught there.\textsuperscript{64} We didn’t have designated studios (or even offices) so it was an opportunity for staff and students to bond, as well as to set the agenda of the studio. I took a group to Chicago and Detroit in the beginning of one year. I was concerned that the students were being voyeurs of the terrible poverty and devastation that we saw in Detroit by taking photographs from the safety of our moving cars. I set an exercise to physically intervene on site in contradistinction. (I believe this was the first installation project I had set.) Two students selected a site in the slums and went off armed with sledgehammers, shovels, wire-cutters, acid, weed killer etc. When we reconvened to see everyone’s work that evening, we discovered that they had planted a sunflower patch. Apparently they had met some of the local residents and decided that they wanted to grow something rather than to add to the destruction.\textsuperscript{65} After returning to London, I presented their work-in-progress as part of a lecture I gave at the University of North London.\textsuperscript{66} I described the scenario, and said I was not sure what it meant, yet. A staff member asked me how I could responsibly set a project if I didn’t know the outcome. I thought for a moment and replied that I knew what the question was, and what the conversation was about, but if I knew what the answer was, it wouldn’t be education.

This design studio is the site for empowerment of the students, which I also address with the audience (or users) of my projects. My role in the process is to design a constructive learning environment: one that takes responsibility for both skilling and conceptual development, as well as stimulating healthy debate. I have outlined the methods I encourage, best practice garnered from my research and honed through the teaching: specificity of time and place, and working at a minimum of three scales, and in three different mediums. This process of seeing, reflecting and proposing has a parallel series of stages for discussion or critique. I alter the focus and tone of these sessions so that I am less a judge – the one giving the marks – but more the facilitator of a dialogue.

In the Taipei Operations workshop, for example, we structure our initial discussions around a SWOT-type analysis at the whiteboard. We discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each observation – assumed to be ‘fact’ when presented and documented within the framework of the public forum – from the congestion on the streets, illegal structures, to the collection of rubbish. No answer is wrong. It becomes interesting when we discover that some items are found in both columns, both strengths and weaknesses. This reflects our personal opinions, and thus opens opportunities for individual action or authorship.\textsuperscript{67} We all have our preferences and biases. I had discovered that it is necessary (and desirable) to establish (and declare) a “point of view” in The Freeway Reconfigured to have any valid discussion or dialogue, or indeed, to

\textsuperscript{64} Raymond Brinkman and Nicos Kostaros were the authors of this extraordinary piece of work as part of my Agency studio, AA Intermediate Unit 5, 1990-1991. Projects Review, 1991, London: Architectural Association School of Architecture, 33-36.

\textsuperscript{65} Sand Helsel, “Work in Progress” lecture, 1991, University of North London (now London Metropolitan University) School of Architecture and Design.

\textsuperscript{66} Interestingly, many of the Australian students wished to encourage the entrepreneurship they found (the illegal structures and the mobile hawker stalls), while many of the students with Asian backgrounds who had been studying at RMIT preferred the order of Melbourne and decided to tame the city. I have previously cited Ho Sook Yan’s and my different responses to the garbage collection ritual.

\textsuperscript{67} Step One in the ‘consultation process’ was for the gallery visitor to tick one or more boxes on the pile of “Point of View” flyers: architect, environmentalist, artist, engineer, community representative, other, etc.; see Helsel, “Architecture in the Expanded Field,” 180.
I have refined these techniques in my recent studio teaching at RMIT in collaboration with Melissa Bright.

There has been only one exception to my request to establish a point of view. At the University of Texas at Austin in 2003, I set a companion project to one I had previously set in Melbourne. I asked the students to take a position on the brief to modify a large hydroponic tomato facility: would they approach the project as an environmentalist, or with an interest in Mexican workers’ rights, or to frame the scale and beauty of the West Texas landscape? Worryingly, they found this to be an unreasonable request (and complained); they wanted me to tell them what they needed to do to pass. The RMIT students embrace similar requests positively.

I expand upon this approach to include students in the roles of judge and expert in the process of critique to ensure that points of view other than my own are consistently heard. Some of my techniques include the ‘competition style crit’ where each student places a sticky label on the drawing that they believe is the ‘best of’ according to specified categories, and then justify their selection to the group: one person, one voice, one vote. In a further variation in the later stages of the project development, I articulate my criteria for final assessment and then each student undertakes the responsibility for searching for evidence of that achievement in the other students’ work. I am always delightfully surprised at how conscientiously they assume these roles, and how considered and sophisticated their questions and responses become. Not only do the assessment criteria become (clear and) demystified by this process, the students thrive with the responsibility and prove often to be better critics than many ‘experts’ by considering the individual (student) author’s point of view instead of overlaying a pre-formulated position of their own.

In the PhD the synergies between my design studio teaching and my research practice become clearer. My model is to look and listen rather than overlay an expertise from (the heights of professor) above. I become more conscious of how I operate as a teacher in my desire to shift the hierarchy between student and teacher (learning and teaching). I am forced to articulate my role (which I realise are multiple roles) so that I may integrate students more meaningfully into the process. The design of the design studio (or the design process) is not dissimilar to the curatorial processes I have discovered and described. By posing the questions rather than supplying the answers, I may be the author of the studio polemic and the method of investigation, but I clearly shift the onus of project authorship onto the students at an early stage. I become a facilitator to enable them to assume (individual) authorship of their work. The design studio thus becomes a research laboratory for testing multiple responses or points of view. This approach yields a collection of (student) voices which echo the richness and complexity of the multiple narratives of the city.

(Asian) urbanism

The laboratory of the (Asian) city provides fertile ground for exploring some of the recurring themes in my work developed during the PhD. It raises issues of how one operates outside of one’s cultural milieu – or indeed of how one might operate in any situation – and perhaps makes me more self-conscious about
my role (as designer, educator, expert) than had I been working within a familiar context. I reflect upon *This is a Map of the World* (the *Oranges* images and text) which sets the tone for my Asian projects; as a result of this investigation, I believe I can make a contribution through a belief in shared values and “common pleasures”. When I question my expertise and my dissatisfaction with the cliché that the Asian city is dense, chaotic, rapidly developing, and needs to be tamed with a masterplan, I know I need to learn how to look and discover the hidden structures and systems so I can operate from within the system as opposed to outside of it.

I first visited Melbourne with Diane Lewis in 1988 to lead a workshop for the Centre for Design at RMIT. We were inundated with interviews from the press asking us what we would “do to” the city. (Apparently an expensive report commissioned from some U.S.-based urban design consultants had just been released that concluded that the skyscrapers needed “hats”.) I was bemused at first, and deflected the question politely by saying that I had only been in the city for a few days and had no idea how to answer that question (or why it was even being asked). Our host, Leon van Schaik, eventually answered for us by stating that we were not that type of ‘expert’ and that the reason that we had been invited is because we wouldn’t “do” anything, but we might be able to show Melbournians how to look at their city (and make their own conclusions).

I develop some strategies working with Taiwanese students in the first Urban Flashes workshop. I recognise that they have local knowledgwe, and that I can offer a framework of how to look: physically from above, below and to four sides at ten metre intervals; in time, through the processes of growth and decay; at the ephemera of light, shadow, noise and smell; by collecting traces of occupancy found on the site; through philosophical musings and emotions felt. These multiple readings begin to capture the richness of Taipei, and I realise that this model has potential applications for all (good) cities. In the later Taipei Operations workshop my academic colleagues and I question how we can maintain our individual research interests in the design of our studio briefs and still establish a meaningful dialogue amongst ourselves and between the students. We start with a strategy (instead of a syllabus): a common practice of starting small, and with a rule that all investigations are particular to time and place.

Through our close observation we make extraordinary discoveries. I am particularly impressed with the entrepreneurship that I see in Taipei: ingenious mobile kitchens and hawker stalls; the (often illegal) appropriation of marginal sites; the complex negotiation between merchants, pedestrians, motorbikes and cars for space on streets and footpaths; an ambiguity between the public

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71 I worked in a combined group with Steve McAdam of the University of North London (later joined by Clive Sall of the Royal College of Art and FAT) and 24 students from across Taiwan, including a baker and some marketing students.

72 See Helsel, *Five Walks*: “a good city has an infinite number of narratives.” Some cities are one-liners or over-planned so as not to encourage nuance or individual expression; this is my criticism of New Urbanism and some heritage and conservation overlays.

I find this an interesting contrast to the Land Art project where artists bypassed the gallery to enable the audience to have a direct engagement with the subject matter – the landscape. I have inverted this and use the gallery as the site of engagement between artist and audience.

and private realms; and underlying all this is a clear respect for neighbours and fellow citizens. We use the model of how we operate (with students, amongst the academic staff) in the curation of the exhibition of workshop outcomes. We lead by example; the students’ work leaves enough gaps or space to allow other voices to be heard, and we encourage the gallery visitors to see their city afresh and contribute to its design – and they do. (We do not offer the singular omnipotent masterplan, or composed finished panels of student proposals.) It becomes further evident with this broadening of public engagement that as a curator one can design the city by shifting the mindset of those who are designing and devising policy, and those who live within it.

the gallery

Working within the gallery and art practice framework takes me out of my comfort zone. I need to develop alternative forms of depiction (from the architectural norms) when working within this context and outside the disciplines of architecture and design. (Most people do not understand our stock-in-trade plans and sections that unfortunately serve to exclude many from the discourse on architecture and urbanism.) I use this forum as a laboratory for direct engagement with what I call a broader audience, and refine my views on what a common practice might be. Through the (actual) curation of exhibitions, I see this as a positive model for how I might operate and thus redefine my role as a designer.

Installation affords me a 1:1 scale contact with my site and my subject matter. During the PhD, I shift the focus to privilege my “audience’s” role in the relationship and use the gallery as the laboratory for engagement. We realise that we need to re-invent the architectural exhibition when we present the Taipei Operations workshop in art galleries in Taipei and Melbourne. We do not want to arrange the show by individual authors (say, by an A1 panel each) but prefer to show the body of the work as a whole – to foreground the city as opposed to the authors. This is the conceptual vehicle that allows others to engage; all Taiwanese have knowledge of their city, and opinions as valid as ours; it is our desire to let them express these. We devise several strategies: first, that the images are small, hand held and perused intimately (at an examining table); secondly there is one image per sheet so connections can be made between and across the 700-odd plates, allowing for “gaps in the map”. Velcro grids line the gallery walls so that the collection of images can be categorised and rearranged by the viewers. The visitors are able to ‘design’ the exhibition, in a similar manner to how I believe they can design their city.
I explicitly reference the language of the gallery in the Five Walks installation in Melbourne’s lanes – I curate the city. Curation and classification are intrinsic to my methods as well as to the content of the project. I use the gallery infrastructure (maps, audio tours, and information panels) to provide the armature for my installation. Here, I use the authority of the museum typology and the expert curator (and his/her actual voice through the audio tours) to give the audience a recognisable structure or framework through which to experience the lanes. The visitor is asked to look intently at things often taken for granted (or not understood). In the process the audience shifts from passive recipients to become active participants in the (design of) their city. Upon reflection, I discover I assume multiple roles in relationship to the visitors and the city within this framework: I can be both expert and fresh-eyed participant. I realise that curation and design are different modes of operation (in the city) and that I undertake both in varying stages of my working process.

DISSEMINATION

Given my concerns about the engagement of a broader audience, the dissemination of the research outcomes becomes critical to the project. Exhibition and installation provide both a conceptual framework for the work as well as a venue where I can physically engage. Lecturing is a staple of my teaching career, and offers me numerous opportunities for reflection prior to presenting the work. I realise that words and text become increasingly significant (as the voice of the author and to set the tone) and that the books I produce are more than mere documentation and become projects in their own right.75

exhibition and installation

During my Masters I produced atlas, in the group show Ruins of the Future for the Adelaide Festival of the Arts.76 Our installation stretched the length of the one-kilometre Torrens Riverside Park site in the heart of Adelaide. We mapped the curator’s (extensive) brief onto the site by a line of orange stakes to delineate the parts of the site that had not been ‘designed’ by the curator’s text and images, and set maintenance instructions so that this space remained untouched in order to generate its own narrative. (We felt the project brief left little space for speculation or action by the artists/architects or visitors.) Though this installation was originally conceived as my homage to the Land Art project, it resonates more clearly to me in the context of the PhD as a critique of curatorial practice, of the authority we yield, and of the opportunities we give others in the interpretation and design of their environment.

I have used the gallery as a method for testing my ideas of engagement with an
audience and participants. (This has not been monitored in terms of feedback questionnaires, or behavioural studies methods; I prefer to be the activist and lead by example rather than standing back and observing.) My curatorial role has been to provide the framework for the initial engagement without precluding the design outcome. After that, I am free to engage or design, as a citizen, like everyone else.

The models of engagement evolve. *The Freeway Reconfigured’s* community consultation board, flip cards, and stacks of questionnaires required a physical engagement with the piece, implying that a conceptual engagement in the freeway debate was the issue. It was rhetorical rather than an attempt to get any real or useful feedback. In the Taipei Operations exhibition we design the installation as an offering to the citizens of Taipei. It reflects the tone of how we want our studio outcomes received: we want to establish an equal footing with the visitors, and try to erode the status of the gallery as a distancing device that privileges the artist or author as having an expertise to be admired. It feels more like an intimate passing around of snapshots – the work is not precious and is picked up and perused while sitting around a table. In *Five Walks* I plan for a different type of engagement by empowering the visitors to become active participants in the design of their city by adding to the accretion of marks, and marking their presence in the space. This is what I believe makes a good city, and in turn, good citizens.

**lectures**

My image files are the personal accumulation of objects, people and moments that inspire me and make me think and question. In their raw state they have the characteristics of a collection, poised to be connected and juxtaposed in an infinite number of ways. I prepare a lecture similarly to the way I use the collection. The images become sorted and rearranged into categories; a narrative text provides the underlay for this (albeit) linear format and becomes the vehicle to turn private musings into a public offering – to give them a voice. This is an interesting discipline: it fixes moments in time and charts a development; it demands that I reflect. It sometimes seems that I give repeat lectures – I never do. (I would miss the opportunity to discover something new.) I often use the same images, but always speak about them in different ways. I give variations of the "Taipei Operations" lecture over several years, and observe the immediacy of the workshop give way to memory and reflection. I speak to the projects with either an educational agenda, or as a contribution to the debate on the Asian city. The relatively consistent datum of images enables
me to see the overlaps and reinforces the parallels between my teaching and research and design practice. I deliver my lecture in Busan in the context of a keynote address at the start of a two week student design workshop for the SA Summer School. I was the first outsider invited to participate in this annual study of Korean towns and cities. (Guyon Chung, one of the organisers, had heard me lecture on Taipei in Linz and said he thought I understood Asia better than he did!) I was keen to present my perspectives on both education and the Asian city to the 30-strong academic and professional team and 200 students. This was the first time I had combined both the urban and pedagogical agendas in one lecture. I subtitled the talk “curating the city” because I felt it was the best way to describe how I operated both as an educator (in allowing students to find their own voices) and as a designer (in enabling the entrepreneurship of the citizens [of Taipei] to be incorporated in the design of their cities). This is a significant moment in the PhD and clarifies many of my questions of authorship, and how I operate.

books
A collection of lecture images becomes one of my first books. I had been showing Land Art slides for many years before I used the Masters to more fully understand their importance to my architectural project. I “glued” the collection down in 99 Postcards under the categories of the position of the artist (or architect), a specificity in time and place, and scale. This served to fix some of the elements I consider critical to my design practice and I continue to use these as my methods and rules. The PhD expands upon the “position of the artist” with my questions about how I operate, and my authorship as designer and curator; “specificity in time and place” becomes common ground amongst the academics in the Taipei Operations workshop, and a ‘rule’ for the students. Whilst the 99 Postcards had perforated bindings so that they ostensibly could be detached and regrouped as a collection and thus be rearranged, atlas was designed as a folio with sixteen 300 x 300mm plates that were clearly stated to be “non-sequential” where the page number would have been. (Oddly, I always made sure they were in order.) My desire in this case was to produce a non-finite document that could accept additional contributions from my co-artists and architects. I had, in effect, undertaken to produce a type of exhibition catalogue within my budget and as part of my installation, again to form an underlay – an inclusionary structure – as an alternative curation of the group of installations I feared would become stand-alone objects or singular voices. Perhaps I would have shuffled these multi-authored plates to find congruencies and synergies to

77 The SA [Seoul Architecture] School was founded by Guyon Chung and nine colleagues who had studied internationally and were critical of the educational system in Korea. The SA School runs a summer school open to architecture students from all over Korea to study a different Korean town or city each year. Thirty academics and practitioners ran fifteen studios in the Re-citing the City workshop in Busan from 3-10 August 2002.

79 Guyon Chung elaborated that I appeared to have an overview of many Asian countries (through the various backgrounds of our students at RMIT, my travels and workshops). He states that most Asian countries operate as monocultures with little opportunities to move within the region to study or work. Australia had a unique edge in respect of developing a pan-Asian discourse and exchange, but this is swiftly being addressed through forums such as ARCASIA (the Asian branch of the UIA [International Union of Architects]).

79 Helsel, 99 Postcards. I do not seem to have overcome the fear of “gluing down” (see page 18 of this text); the postcards have a perforated binding so ostensibly they can be rearranged.

80 I studied many books to determine how to escape a linear format. (This seemed to be a popular concern at the time.) Cj Lim’s volumes are particularly elegant in the way they negotiate varied media and sources, primarily due to
create a dialogue between us, but alas, the only plates produced were mine.

In the Taipei Operations workshop, the book follows the curation and design of the exhibition which is our original and primary method for disseminating the work. We design the plates for the exhibition (210 x 210mm) as an economical print format and suitable for a single image per sheet; I assume, at the time, that I can make a book by simply arranging the plates and adding some essays and a Chinese translation. (Not true.) It proves difficult to capture the spirit of the exhibition – the multiple readings, lack of hierarchy, and the gaps or space for speculation – in the linear format of the book. I arrange the book by the "issues" cited in the exhibition as chapter headings. It is somewhat possible to read the book by location, by following the leads from an annotated map. Our identifying icons (deleted in the final copy) fail to stimulate an arrangement by program.80 True to the exhibition, we tell our stories of Taipei through our combined voices; to read the book by individual author one follows the project narrative at the back. We hope we have left enough gaps for the reader; this is not intended to be an authoritative volume.

During the writing of the PhD, I speculate whether a web page is the more appropriate vehicle for cross-referencing these text and image collections such as Taipei Operations and this PhD book. The links might become physically more apparent (and certainly more direct) but I sense that the projects risk becoming singular objects while the links remain mechanical – unseen and undefined.81 I realise that these gaps between the projects are the spaces that I am interested in foregrounding, where one can discover hidden structures and attempt to design a framework through which they can be revealed.82

Sophie Calle’s work has been an inspiration during this PhD reflection: her walks, collections and presence as author in her work. Her practice resonates more in her books than on gallery walls which transform her narratives into suites of framed objects, or a series of stills. The book is suited to her subject matter – intimate like a journal or a diary – with a narrative flow from turning the pages.83 The book seems appropriate to the nature of my practice. The hand is appropriately scaled to the size of the book; the fragments or pages can be rearranged (conceptually) with dextrous fingers. Turning the pages allows space for speculation.

text

i have long admired Robert Smithson’s eloquent description of place in Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan 1969, where photographs of a series of (ephemeral) mirror installations are read in conjunction with a text of the journey,
accompanied by an (unseen) map. Each medium does something different, and they are all necessary for the project. Each element is incomplete on its own; we (the audience) inhabit the slippages between them to muse alongside the artist (author). The use of “multiple forms of media” is a ‘rule’ alongside my “multiple scales” rule in my teaching and design practice; I believe this is necessary with a non-formalist approach which precludes the singular heroic image of an object-building.

In atlas I incorporate maps, text and references in the folio plates as part of the installation. Here, I am conscious of the visitor or viewer of the piece, and use the gamut of text (from postcard captions, first person stories, to theoretical musings) to cater to a broad range of visitors’ literary persuasions. I become conscious of my multiple voices when I write my Masters, “Architecture in the Expanded Field”. Some text is pure description (of fact); some is anecdotal, such as a memory from the past or a personal musing; and some is theoretical. I use different typefaces to distinguish between them. The text for “This is a Map of the World” signals a turning point for me and a consciousness of not only how I use words, but of the authority of my own voice. Here, I am unabashedly the author within the context of an artist’s talk. The text incorporates all my voices (description, theory and narrative) in one; it seems a very personal statement.

I question the voice of authority when I write texts in the guise of museum audio guides in the Five Walks installation. (I spend many hours listening to models at the National Gallery of Victoria and become fascinated by their structure and phrasing.) Here I mimic the experts: the museum guide, curator, tour operator, and game show host. Instead of reading about the journey, people are taking it along with me (in their ears). The subjective nature of the texts reinforces my authorship but challenges the viewer to do better; I have demonstrated a way to see, but I invite the participants or the reader to think for themselves.
There is a considerable amount of text that was written concurrently with each project found in the following chapter. The two memorials include the majority of the report that accompanied the competition entries. The text for “This is a Map of the World” is integrated with the timing and sequence of the slides in the artist’s talk. In Five Walks the audio scripts are located adjacent to their relative tags; the introductions and maps are transcribed from the “visitor’s guide” (attached), as is a CD of the audio recordings heard through the headsets. The Taipei Operations exhibition includes the instructions from the gallery walls and text from the catalogue flyer (with additional descriptive text marked by italics). Taipei Operations is Volume Two in the submission; I have written all text and captions that are unattributed to another author. The introductory and reflective texts for each project have been written after the production of the projects as part of the PhD book and are marked with follow-on page numbers should you choose to read them as a continuous overview, without the interruption of the projects.
chapter 2
projects

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introduction

This first suite of projects in the PhD follows the completion of my Masters degree. The two competition entries are chronological; the construction of the Korean War Memorial runs concurrently with later projects. I consider these projects as the ‘designed’ and ‘built’ outcomes of my Masters degree; “Architecture in the Expanded Field”: the war memorial typology falls within the framework of the “expanded field” of sculpture, architecture and landscape; both projects were done in collaboration with others.

The Australian National Korean War Memorial Competition was a limited two-stage competition held by the National Capital Authority (NCA) for one of the key sites on Anzac Parade leading to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. The sculptor Les Kossatz was one of twelve participants shortlisted for the competition based upon an Expression of Interest submission. He invited me to work with him on the next stage; we respectively approached Augustine Dall’Ava (sculptor) and David Bullpitt (RMIT Architecture graduate) to assist.

The brief was full of details about the war, but surprisingly vague about the requirements for the memorial except for the size of the site (15 x 30m) and the composition of the red gravel forecourt; there was no mention of disabled access or other relevant legislation. Submission requirements included plans and sections at 1:100 and a report. The jury consisted of retired service personnel who had served in the Korean War, a distinguished sculptor, and the arts patron, Jeanne Pratt. We produced a design proposal (see following pages) and were invited to enter the second stage of the competition with three others teams. We won the second stage, and the project was constructed – with great difficulty on both accounts (to be discussed in the Reflection).

The Australian Service Nurses National Memorial Competition was an open competition with a similar site, brief and requirements to the Korean War Memorial; I collaborated with Fiona Donald, a RMIT Architecture graduate of the same generation as David Bullpitt. Although this was a more healthy collaboration (and perhaps a more interesting proposal), we were not invited to compete in the second stage and the project remains unbuilt.

(PhD text continues on page 50)
Australian National Korean War Memorial
(design competition and built work)
(in collaboration with Les Kossatz, Augustine Dall’Ava, David Bullpitt [the ANKWM team])
Stage 1+2 Competition:
June and October 1998
Australian National Korean War Memorial Opening Ceremony:
18 April 2000

Australian Service Nurses National Memorial
(design competition)
(in collaboration with Fiona Donald)
Stage 1 Competition: January 1999
The memorial acknowledges and honours the sacrifice and committed service of the Australian armed forces in the Korean War, 1950-1953.

The memorial is monumental in scale and ceremonial in plan. It is legible to the passing motorist on Anzac Parade yet maintains an intimacy at the pedestrian scale. It can be appreciated for its differing qualities for a range of occasions: commemorative services and ceremonies or, times of reflection.

Three distinct spaces are formed by the disposition of the elements: a landscape, a contemplative space, and a plaza.

The ceremonial axis’ classical design – obelisk, monumental wall, and the Commonwealth Division badge sloped plinth – creates the venue for both large and small scale commemorative services and ceremonies.

Wreath laying becomes a highly dramatic event, an extended ceremonial walk along a central granite-paved walkway to the granite boulder from the Korean battlefields housed within the wall.
The **memorial landscape** is a living memorial for those who gave their lives. It allows for meandering routes across the site. It honours those Australians who died by acknowledging the specific individuals by 339 stainless steel poles.

The locations of the granite boulders in this ‘forest’ allow for spaces and moments of reflection. The major clearing, the sloped plinth is a space for collective reverence. A contemplative space is hollowed into the monumental wall.
A 15 metre high obelisk, emblazoned with the symbols from the flags of the United Nations and Republic of Korea protrudes into the gravel forecourt and is highly visible to the passing motorist.

An inclined plinth in the shape of the Commonwealth Division badge is articulated by a level area for speeches backed by three flagpoles, with “Korea” etched in the foreground. This element will be visible from the air.

A cobbled granite path in the plinth leads to the monumental wall, 13 metres in length. The ribbon of countries of the United Nations forces and insignia of the Army, Navy, Air Force and support organisations on this surface is symbolic of the alliances formed during the war, and provides inspiration for the future.

The interior of the wall, a contemplative space, is, by its intimate scale, a contrast to the heroic ceremonial axis.

The dedicated inscription along with the Korean symbol of peace is punched in the shiny stainless steel walls of this elliptical space behind the boulder and is dramatically backlit. Two alcoves provide space for studying the etched text: diary entries of servicemen describing the cold, and photographic records of other significant events – a synopsis of the war.

6 obelisk
7 inclined plinth
8 ribbon
The gift of the **granite boulders** by the Korean government is considered to be a significant act – one to be honoured and treasured as an important symbol. The vertical boulder assumes a position of honour in the contemplative space at the end of the ceremonial axis, as is a tradition in Asian temples. It is the focus and location for wreath laying, set against the dedicated inscription and Korean symbol of peace lit naturally from behind.

An **oculus** allows weather and the passage of natural light to articulate its surface.

The contemplative space is lit by a **roof** in the form and grid of the United Nations’ symbol. This is the symbolic umbrella of the project.
Three hundred and thirty-nine stainless steel poles on a 880mm grid commemorate the 339 that died. The image of this great loss appears as an extension of the trees along Anzac Parade, a low growth to shield the memorial from the adjacent housing – a symbolic reforestation. We understand that (similar) projects of planting were undertaken on the battlefields of Korea after the war.

The grid of poles allows for two readings. The ceremonial Anzac Parade elevation reads the order of straight rows; from within the garden the poles are viewed obliquely, as a forest.

The landscape responds to the climate. On a cold Canberra winter’s afternoon, the poles will cast long shadows and be icy to the touch, reminding us of how the troops must have felt in Korea. On a windy evening, the poles will sway slightly, clang and whistle, reminiscent of the bleak environment. This is a sensual environment that responds differently in the seasons and times of the day, accessible to the able and disabled alike.

The location (and subsequent discovery) of the four granite boulders in clearings in this ‘forest’ allow for spaces and moments of private reflection.

(End of project text)
11,12 forest of poles
13 wreath laying in the memorial landscape
The memorial is in memory of those Australian service nurses who died and in honour of those who served and suffered in the wars and conflicts where Australian service personnel have served in the past 100 years.

The memorial communicates an inspirational message representing the tradition of nursing which is timeless.

The memorial symbolises in form and character the values that make this brand of nursing distinctive and noble, which embody the antithesis to the death and destruction of war: human dignity and worth, dedication, commitment, hope, courage, compassion and fortitude.

The brief for the Australian Service Nurses National Memorial differs in content from many of the memorials along Anzac Parade which cite particular historical events or moments in time. Although the specific conflicts and wars are noted within the memorial, the key theme is that of the tradition of nursing, which implies a continuum in time similar to the continuing care of the wounded when victory is declared. This is reflected in its formal disposition: landscape as opposed to monument, growth in lieu of death.

The nature of the service of nursing, of commitment beyond self, implies a status that makes recognisable icons, like statues on plinths, seem inappropriate in terms of the nature of the complexity and richness of the Service Nurses’ activity. The urban strategy of Anzac Parade’s plan, the regular overlay and the finite perimeters of the gravel forecourts and sites are singular overlays on the land. The memorial proposal cites a tradition of multiple overlays of weaving, knitting, and stitching, aggregating to bind the site.

A third interpretation of the brief highlights nurses as healers and life givers representing the antithesis to the death and destruction of war. Nursing requires a commitment to others which must be sustained over a long period. One can only hope to communicate this as an inspirational message and representative of noble values and hope for a future (without war) with Australian Service Nurses continuing in their humanitarian capacities. This is manifest primarily in the symbol of care, of a monument that changes and requires maintenance and nurturing, one that is not made entirely from immutable materials destined to last hundreds of years, permanent reminders of a long gone event.

This is a living and growing memorial.

The memorial is generated from the landscape elements of Anzac Parade as opposed to the urban design elements. It is composed of a series of strategic overlays, corresponding to the described themes that form a series of individual experiences and opportunities for reflection and education within the context of a larger coherent image.
The topography of the treed area is modified within the proposal, with reference to the variety of subtle level changes along Anzac parade. Two hills are formed to 1.0 and 2.0 meters above existing grade along the north/south axis respectively and low transversable ground cover forms their surface. The taller south hill, the 'memorial hill' addresses the vehicular visibility from along Anzac Parade. Its form provides a visual and acoustical barrier to the houses along Anzac Park East.

These hills frame and enclose a valley, representative of the fertility or optimism to be found near a source of water within a barren landscape. The existing white cross is relocated in this area in a field of white flowers. It is ambiguous where the site begins and ends, representing the timeless, wide-embracing aspect of service nursing.

The topography is contained or formed by a series of retaining walls embedded into the land. Visually this network appears as a delicate weaving, suturing, stitching or knitting – of fragments, memories, hopes and losses embedded in the landscape. The white cross is the generator of the pattern. Physically these series of parallel walls are the foundations to hold great masses of earth. They are based in sound practice (as is the nature of nursing) of soil nailing and breakwater technology.
They are intentionally visible – a man- (or woman- ) made element, a mark on the land. They define areas of paths, of flower beds, of platforms for speech making. Their upper surface treatment changes from roughened granite to zinc, materials both matte and reflective, coloured and in natural materials, inscribed in some areas, overgrown with ground cover in others – a series of narratives within a larger immediately readable image.

Several pairs of walls are extruded to a height of 2.2 meters, which contain the dedicated inscriptions, the visual and personal reminders of service from the last 100 years. These provide opportunities for reflection and education, and form the background for commemorative services.

The walls and the topography are both physically and visually interrelated and form a seamless boundary to the existing context of Anzac Park.

The overlay of these elements forms a series of complexities and apparent contradictions. The hills represent strength and endurance within a long historical tradition, yet their presence holds a subtle power within this parkland setting. The delicate patterning of the retaining walls is contrasted by their physical capacity. A forceful, generally unseen foundation is made visible.
The prehistoric iconography of the hills is contrasted by the daily and seasonal play of light along the surfaces of their north/south orientation similar to the way the quotidian practice of nursing exists within a timeless tradition. This timelessness is further demonstrated in the nature of the materials; permanent foundations are contrasted by surfaces and vegetation that require maintenance and care. A human presence should be felt within the site; the memorial is not perceived as an immutable monument without the need for nurturing. Service Nursing has, and will be a continued valued activity, not an isolated historical event.

The memorial encourages visitors in all seasons; The planting will vary seasonally. Maintenance, or a duty of care (for the memorial) is a critical symbolic aspect of this proposal and the process of maintenance, annually and over the years, may become a part of the ceremony.

(End of project text)
BUILDING THE MASTERS: a reflection (PhD Text)

When I reflect upon these two projects, I consider their conceptual underpinnings less as embarkations upon new trajectories, but more as tests of the research I had undertaken in the Masters. They build (upon) the conclusions I had reached from reflecting upon atlas, 99 Postcards and The Freeway Reconfigured: primarily the “non-formalist approach” (where no object is imposed on site and there is a renewed attention to the relationship between the viewer and the work); and “a common practice” (where a breaching of disciplinary boundaries redefine the collaborative project). These competition projects encourage me modify my position about both.

the non-formal (and the user)

Although the Korean War Memorial is formal in its disposition – symmetrical along an axis defined by a processional route between the obelisk and contemplative space – it is a critique of the object-nature memorials along Anzac Parade. I am surprised to discover only representations of battle scenes or singular symbolic objects mounted atop plinths or flights of (un-climbable) stairs when I first visit Canberra. The only engagement afforded to the visitor is to view or to read and perhaps lay a wreath (but only if able-bodied). We design, in contradistinction, a series of spaces – rather than an object – to accommodate a broader range of events and visitors: spaces for individual contemplation and a meandering walk; a reading (of the dedicated inscription) room that holds up to six; and a plaza for the staging of large-scale services (or a snapshot view). The “audience” become users, active participants in these events. (Wreath-laying is an important design ritual in our project; I am delighted that the visitors at the opening discovered so many places to lay their offerings to the fallen.) The spaces become defined by use.

The Nurses Memorial differs from other war memorial commemorations in that it honours a continuing tradition rather than an event – a period of time rather than a singular moment. Our proposal develops its own history over an extended time frame; our marks on the site provide trajectories for further actions by others. The memorial gets its form from the action (or non-action) of those who tend it. We move the earth into mounds on the site, and then anchor it with linked pairs of retaining walls which may shift slightly over time – in drought, or through the lack of vegetation or care. These robust granite and zinc-lipped beams are etched with names and texts, yet in contrast we imagine them overgrown with delicate ground cover unless trimmed away. These “regimes of care,” so intrinsic to nursing, are an anathema to memorial design, apparently; the maintenance manual (outlining the desired minimum maintenance

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1 Ian Hamilton-Findlay similarly marks his gardens with neoclassical inscriptions to valorise history and challenge the present in projects such as Revolution, n., 1996.
3 Sue Anne Ware, 2005. “Memorials: Re-thinking the Landscape of Memory.” Unpublished thesis, School of Architecture and Design, RMIT University, Melbourne. Ware produces “anti-memorials” for those people and events that are generally marginalised and forgotten in The Anti-Memorial to Heroin Overdose Victims, 2000; or deal with ephemera such as the planting and burning of wildflowers in The Road-as-Shrine, 2003.
requirements) is a key document in both submissions. This acts to freeze the typology into static symbols that preclude engagement with the ephemera of weather and use.³

Weather⁴ provides the counterpoint for the seemingly immutable elements in the Korean War Memorial. The stainless steel poles are a body’s and wheelchair’s breadth apart. One’s hands go out to touch them – hot in summer and icy in winter; casting long shadows at sunset,⁵ with wind whistling through them in storms. I want visitors to return to a new experience each time. This seasonal change prompts a longer consideration of time in the Nurses Memorial: the growth of a garden. I am interested in the shift my work takes from the Land Art-inspired installations of my Masters in these memorials: from the specificity in time to duration – that of landscape in the Nurses; and from the specificity of place to urbanism – or the disposition of objects to form multiple spaces in the Korean. (I find that I am keeping Rosalind Krauss’ disciplinary poles intact and enriching each through the adjacencies or slippages between them. In the Masters I had considered these disciplinary boundaries to be counterproductive.)⁶ Both projects shift my role from being the sole author of the piece to one that embraces unpredictability over a much larger time frame and more complex sites.

**collaboration**

I had met the sculptor, Les Kossatz at a long lunch just prior to his learning that he had been shortlisted for the Korean War Memorial competition. He needed an architect (grudgingly, I now believe) and rang me that evening with the news and the invitation to collaborate. Neither of us knew each other’s work. We start our discussions through models. Les and Gus (Dall’Ava) prepare some preliminary ideas on a foam-core base with the insignias of the United Nations and the Army, Navy and Air Force mounted on six small blade walls, laid symmetrically onto the base in the shape of the Commonwealth Division Badge. There is an obelisk to the street. Les’ reading of the brief is the need to provide information and to educate visitors about the war, to which he responds with an illustrative surface treatment. I am struck by the specificity of the numbers of the dead – 339. I wonder what this number would look like if depicted and if it could scale the site and create a sense of space. I punch 339 satay sticks into the foam-core model that had been passed onto us, and David (Bullpitt) and I ramp the badge towards the rear of the site to create a raised plinth. What appears to be a fruitful dialogue among the four of us begins.⁷ The project is further developed by research; Les collects images of the battlefields, texts, and
symbols, and arranges wonderful meetings with veterans from the war. Their description of the cold and their ill-preparedness in wearing their Australian-issued summer uniforms in the Korean winter moves me, and this focus on weather helps me develop our material palette of stainless steel and hard icy whites. David and I bring (plastic) poles to our site visit to Canberra, to test their height, scale and spacing. We discover the temporary memorial of five large granite boulders from one of the battlefields, sent by the Korean people years before. They look forlorn in their present context – seemingly dumped on the site – yet still remain poignant and powerful. (They had been casually photographed but unmentioned in the briefing documents!) I incorporate them into the project, as part of our memorial landscape; they help break the symmetry and orthogonality of our scheme.

In preparing for the Stage One submission Gus makes the model (which is documented by his photographer wife); David produces the drawings and he and I lay out the panels; I write the text and produce the report. Les returns from an overseas residency in time to glue his ribbons and insignias onto the model’s wall. It should have been obvious to me at this stage that this was not collaboration, but more an “insipid compromise” or division of labour based upon statutory requirements. When we win the two competition stages and the project progresses to being built, the situation worsens. We never breach our (stereotypical) disciplinary boundaries or the (clichéd) conflicts between them. I am always the (controlling) architect, forced to assume that role amongst (uncompromising) artists seemingly immune to the world of contracts and work stages. And in addition, despite my experience in my discipline, I am surprisingly ill-prepared to negotiate with our clients.

**design by committee**

For the opening ceremony of the Australian National Korean War Memorial they built a stage with tiered VIP seating in the red gravel forecourt instead of using the gathering spaces we had designed. It felt like there should have been one of those red velvet ropes around the memorial like you get in museums, to keep people a safe distance away from the artwork. (They let us walk around after the speeches.) I remember thinking at the time that we should have provided a “how-to-use” instruction manual for the project, in addition to the maintenance report. Later, I started chatting to a military historian from the Australian National University who was sitting behind me in the stands across the road. War memorials were his research specialty, and he was in the process of writing a book about how they are designed – by committee. It all made sense to me then, but I really wished I had known it before.

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8 See David Greene’s referee comments on page 11 of this document.

9 It appears to me that many artists work in a linear process, which might have something to do with the mechanics of paint drying, and then varnishing, etc. This contrasts with how architects work with overlapping timelines and complex phasing of work; in practice we are in the conceptual stage of one project and then on site working out details on another. (I had a similar frustratingly “linear” experience working with a painter on The Freeway Reconfigured.)

10 The memorial was opened on Tuesday, 18 April 2000 at 10am, by the then Prime Minister John Howard and attended by the office-holders at the time: Governor-General Sir William Deane, the Leader of the Opposition Kim Beazley, parliamentarians, representatives from the Australian military, South Korean embassy and other allies. The ceremony was broadcast live on the ABC.

11 I give “instructions” in later projects such as in the Taipei Operations exhibition poster and in the “the guide to Five Walks”.

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We hear that we won the competition by telephone; I do not believe it was ever formally announced. We arrive in Canberra weeks later at the behest of the veterans on the judging panel who will not approve the competition result or let the commission until we incorporate bronze statues of servicemen in battle-dress with guns at the ready. (Jeanne Pratt and the sculptor had already resigned from the jury in protest at this request to redesign a work of art). Les produces little toy soldiers to position in the model, and we (unsuccessfully) argue our case against their inclusion. Our proposal does not accept the soldiers gracefully: representational elements in a non-representational project, bronze with steel, etc. Their introduction makes the memorial into a tableau of a battlefield – a scene not a space – similar to those I had been so critical of, but on a much larger scale. (Since the soldiers are made at one-and-a-quarter full scale [the norm for statues according to Les] they change the scale of the other elements of the project such as the 'field of poles' and 'monumental wall' which feel quite domestic as a result.) There is little re-design despite this major change. (You will note that all of my photos edit out the soldiers and insignia, and privilege my contributions to the project.)

I resign after continuing difficulties with the National Capital Authority, the veterans and my colleagues. Contract negotiations are unduly protracted, and I am not interested in designing my way out of these changes to the brief like an architect normally does; I realise that the major problem with the project is at its inception, with how we deal with our clients, in addition to each other. I clearly misunderstand the process and language of negotiation, by producing a completed scheme (or artwork?) that is too well designed: too resolved in both its concept and form that it leaves no room to move, evolve, or allow others to engage (except negatively). And although the memorial is non-formal in its use by visitors when built, it presents itself like an object-building to those who participate in this critical preliminary stage of the design process.

reflection

If I had known that war memorials were designed by committee, I would have approached the project in an entirely different way: to leave room for the contributions of others (including the client) in the design phase, in a similar manner to how I afford the users the opportunity for different experiences of the built object. This realisation that I must design the design process before I (or others) design is a critical shift in my work, and the PhD. This begins to define what I consider to be good teaching practice, both in writing the design studio brief and in ensuing discussion, and is a conscious starting point for projects.
such as the Taipei workshops which are then allowed to develop their own trajectories. I later call this ‘curation’.

My experience with the Korean War Memorial challenges my views of collaboration as an equal partnership with a non-hierarchical structure. (In the early stages I had proposed that the four of us share the project credits and any prize money or fees, which was agreed.) This is challenged by the group dynamic. Les is always going to be the leader (or front man). David is clearly an assistant, offering little to the conceptual underpinning of the project, though he is a good critic and able to understand and implement the design strategies. I now understand that hierarchies are inevitable, though they can and should shift during a project’s development. I begin to consider my role as ‘author’, or ‘expert’ in this process, which generates the research questions in the next suite of projects and identifies that I have multiple voices. (I am clearly unhappy with the conventionally-defined role and expectations of the architect.)

Despite the difficulties with the team, it is an interesting result – one that never would have eventuated if I had done the project on my own. The initial sketch model establishes a common ground and language; additions and deletions from passing it between us provide a dialogue. The key elements remain a product of their individual authors and makers, but they read as a whole: the ‘obelisk’ (Gus); the ‘stainless steel ribbon and insignias’ on the monumental wall (Les); and the ‘poles’ and the ‘boulders’ (Sand). I describe the proposal as an urban design scheme – one that offers a series of spaces for a range of uses, and is (generally) built over time by a variety of people – as opposed to a sculpture. I realise that I facilitate this reading by providing what I called an ‘underlay’ in 

Although my ‘underlay’ of a grid of holes and lines of orange stakes in 

provided some continuity along the length of the kilometre-long site, it never really engaged with the other projects. In fact, one of my colleagues removed the stakes near her installation during the photo session.

14 Although my ‘underlay’ of a grid of holes and lines of orange stakes in atlas provided some continuity along the length of the kilometre-long site, it never really engaged with the other projects. In fact, one of my colleagues removed the stakes near her installation during the photo session.

1 1¼ scale bronze soldiers
2 project including bronze soldiers and granite markers (both additions to the project and rarely shown by this author)
In the second suite of projects (from late 1999 to 2002) I find myself supported by a like-minded group of artists, architects and designers – a community of scholars. I see my work evolve when I shift the description of my engagement with others from collaboration to common pleasures. I realise this phrase when I write the text of “This is a Map of the World” which becomes a significant moment in the development of the PhD.

The Oranges begin as a private collection of photographs (described in the Preface) until I mention them in passing to Juliana Engberg, the Visual Arts Director of the Melbourne Festival and curator of the festival’s Artists’ Talks series. I had been invited to speak and participate in the panel discussion, Walking in the Way of Metaphor, with the artists exhibiting during that current festival; I would exhibit in the following year. She encourages me to show the images, and I prepare a text to accompany them: “This is a Map of the World”. I later transcribe this ten-minute lecture into two ‘maps’ which are exhibited in a group show with my Urban Flashes colleagues in Taipei. (This group is discussed in Chapter Three.)

I become a part of another collegial group organised by Leon van Schaik: the artists, architects and landscape architects in Ephemeral Architecture were all enrolled in the PhD by project at RMIT with the intention of being part of an eponymously-titled group installation. (This group is discussed in Chapter Three.) The exhibition eventuates under the stewardship of Juliana Engberg as The Unused, in a series of back lanes behind Storey Hall and RMIT Gallery. Four of the original group participate; my installation Five Walks incorporates text in the form of audio tapes, a guide with maps, and interventions in the lanes. Here I collaborate with the festival visitors.

I use an invitation to conduct a workshop in Korea’s port city as an opportunity to trial my impending Five Walks installation. I ask eighteen students to design walks as a way of understanding the city, in the hope of seeing afresh. In this work in Busan, I consciously combine my teaching, lecturing and research. In this second suite of projects, and upon reflection, I recognise further synergies in my practice (described in Chapter One) – my methods of collection and numeration; the devices of the fragment, the walk and the ephemeral; the laboratories of teaching, the city and the gallery; and the dissemination through exhibition, installation, (small) books, and text. Each practice overlaps to inform and enrich the other, yet maintains the slippages that I enjoy and which leave me space for further speculation. I find the need to name this – I call it curation.

(introduction continues on page 132)
Oranges
(photographs)
1999 to present

“This is a Map of the World”
(artist’s talk and panel discussion)
In Walking in the Way of Metaphor, Artists’ Talks,
Melbourne Festival
Capitol Theatre, Melbourne:
October 23, 2001
(curated by Juliana Engberg)

This is a Map of the World
(2No. 630x964mm digital prints on paper)
Exhibited in Urban Flashes 2 group exhibition
First Site Gallery, Taipei, Taiwan:
January 22 - 27 2002

Five Walks
(urban installation)
In the The Unused group installation,
Melbourne Festival
Bowen Lane, Melbourne:
15th October - 2nd November 2002
(curated by Juliana Engberg after a concept of Leon van Schaik)
This is a Map of the World (or more precisely): Hong Kong @ 11:15am on Nov 15, 1999; 15 Jan 2000; in the market

has haunted me for many years. I can’t remember the particular mosque in Istanbul that was being described, but the brilliant orange

inverting the foreground and background I completely changed my reading and memory of the image. I am not surprised that London
in Cannes in the South of France on the morning of the last Friday before Christmas; in New York City on December 12th, @ 1:45pm is so predictably gray. It has become clear to me, that there are other

Caribbean – for good measure. And the map is still growing. A slide from a lecture delivered by Mark Prizeman at the AA in London on the 12th of December @ 1:45pm is so predictably gray. I was surprised to discover that Istanbul was such a gray city. I was surprised that by
ways to look at, catalogue, and curate our cities; colour is one, and seems as good as any other. I strive to find ways that keep me

for a variety of reasons: to create the shortest route; to ‘tick off’ the most monuments deemed to be of historical and cultural

is capable of supporting infinite itineraries. And good journeys require good maps. Architects make maps all the time, so-called accurate

impossible for an architect to make a map of Hong Kong oranges.) We know from Robert Smithson and Herman
continually surprised. Travel becomes the metaphor for the journey (and the pursuit of knowledge). Maps and itineraries are provided

significance; or can be determined at random – say by the departure of the next train. A good city, like a good journey,

plans of buildings and cities, generally looked at from above, properly measured, to scale – quantitative documents. (It is almost

de Vries that maps lie, and are distortions that reflect the biases of the mapmaker. I am a biased mapmaker.
My journey foregrounds similarity rather than difference, eschewing the notion of the foreign, yet hopefully promoting the exotic. Food have been slipped in.) A journey needs a map and a map needs a datum – the orange is my datum. Grids, longitude and latitude recognise things that you don’t already know. I’m suspicious that oranges are not orange in Trinidad (or not one off the Rue D’Antibes, though several months (and a season) apart. Map symbols produce an inventory
A search for common pleasures

satisfies that. I figured that you can find oranges anywhere, and I appear to be correct. (I apologise to purists that some mandarins

locate points relative to each other in space: a Malaysian shopper in a side street in KL sits adjacent to

of significant events. The key sets the tone of the map. A good map offers space for speculation. Gaps in the map allow you to

on the 6th of Jan). And why is Texas so obviously Texas, (or Austin, to be precise)? And why can’t I take

this is a map of the world 63
photographs in 7-11s (which don’t sell oranges anyway)? And where did that armed guard come from in that supermarket in KL?

motorcycle, pavement kitchen, and basketballs, in a basket, no less. And I find it unsettling that the only oranges I’ve seen growing have

(or Tobago, off the coast) from a distance, while my Asian shots are all taken up

formats are portrait and include the ‘bits’ most people tried to avoid. I can never resist rearranging and reconfiguring this expanding
Imagine my delight in stumbling upon a perfect Taipei still-life (21 Aug 2001):

been in Californian backyards. I am asked to question how I look at the world: why do I photograph America close? (I always seem to include more of the latter because they’re more fun to look at.) The artist Juan Cruz noted that most of my collection. There is always something new to be discovered, another story to unfold. And most importantly, I continue
to get great pleasure when I share in the resourcefulness I see, and the fact that indeed “everyone is an artist”, or at least certainly can design. And I am encouraged to continually question what an architect can, and should be doing.

(end of project text)
**five walks: “the guide” introduction**  
*(project text)*

**Walks 1 to 4 include:**  
**map and guide; audiotape and headset; site markings**

The five walks describe the same part of the city in five different ways. The guide at the beginning of each walk describes the content of the walk, the duration, and the degree of difficulty. Each walk caters for a different type of visitor to the Melbourne Festival.

Some visitors may choose to undertake all five walks, or portions thereof. Upon selecting the walk after perusing the guide, insert the appropriate audiotape in the headset. (‘Fast Forward’ the tape and then flip it over it if it is not at the beginning). The map keys the audio to the site markers that locate the ‘Stop’ positions for tape synchronisation.

The walks use the language of the museum – audio guides, brass plaques and postcards – as the vehicle to frame the reading of the city. A status is consequently given to Bowen Lane and the adjacent marginal spaces, formed by the backs of buildings and similar accidents. They become worthy of our inspection.

These spaces are formed by accretion, the continual layering of outbuildings, pipes, storage, signage, etc. onto the built fabric over time. The site markings ascribed to each walk continue this tradition. Several of the walks involve the active participation of the festival visitors in this process.

The aspiration is to enable those who inhabit the city to become active generators of their environment – to overlay their own stories. The city is dense, and is capable of supporting an infinite number of narratives. As citizens (and architects), I believe we ‘curate’ our cities from this rich material. I am interested in this process as differentiated from design.

The walk has the ability to transform the perceptions of those who know how to look. It has a similar structure to the narrative; it is a simultaneous reading and writing of the space.

The walk has the ability to fill a space with meaning rather than things.
interactive vest

- headphones
- tape recorder
- piece of chalk
- 7 fluorescent orange tapes
- map & guide
- 4 cassette tapes
walk 01

“walk through the ages”

a historical walk

Duration: 15-20 minutes
Degree of Difficulty: easy
Markers: brass plaques

Walk 1: guide

38 brass plaques, engraved with times and dates, are located around the lanes. They commemorate two different types of history that are recorded on the audiotape. The sequence can be followed on the map adjacent.

‘Voice One’ lists the names of significant buildings and events that are normally afforded the status of record such as the Historic Building Register, police logs, and Parliamentary archives. The opening of Building 8 by Prime Minister Paul Keating, for example, is noted on this walk.

‘Voice Two’ interjects with the activities of everyday life, the daily routines and fleeting moments that generally leave no permanent traces. These stories become part of the oral history of the site, an urban diary to immortalise the seemingly banal.

The brass plaques join the other accretions that are part of the evolution, and graceful ageing of the city – the signs of additions and demolition, traces of human presence, and other marks of commemoration.

Both histories are considered to have equal status in this walk, and in the life of the city and its inhabitants.
01. 5th of July 1995
02. 7:03-7:31pm, Tues 27th Aug
03. 3:33am, 13th August 2002
04. Wednesday, 2 November 1887
05. 1995 (late 1970’s)
06. 8:39am, 25th September 2002
07. 9:29am, 26th September 2002
08. mid-1880’s
09. 7 August 2000 (21 June 1998)
10. 6:42pm, 31 July 2002
11. 11:00pm-12:00am nightly
12. March and September 2001
14. 2:22pm, 19th September 2002
15. 3rd of January 2001
16. 10:30am, 24th November 1998
17. 23-05-2007
18. 11:35pm, Saturday 13th July 2002
19. week of 19-23 February 2001
20. 1995; 1958; 1884-1887
21. 9th of September 2000
22. 02:00-05:30, 23 May 1958
23. 4:09pm, Tuesday 25th July 2002
24. 23rd-29th November 1997
26. 5:25-5:35pm, 26th August 2002
27. 10:47pm, 2nd October 2002
28. 23rd May 1998; 25th May 1998
29. 1978-1979
30. 11:15-11:47pm, 20th July 2002
31. 1:15pm, Friday 19th July 2002
32. 6th-10th July 2002
33. 1:45pm, 6th September 2002
34. 11:32am, 11th October 2002
35. 1888
37. 1983; 1993
38. 15th October-2nd November 2002
Walk 1:

“Walk through the Ages:
a historical walk

(audiotape script;
cd enclosed)

Narrators:
Voice 1 (history) talks in an art-historian-type voice with very crisp diction and not much inflection, but in a very polite manner that is quite conscious of the microphone.
Voice 2 (history) talks in a casual voice, slightly laconic and laid back, as if talking to a friend.

Text: 39 sections including the introduction, approximately 10 seconds each

Sound effects: the toll of a bell (i.e. Big Ben) or a gong at the end of each section (cue by ‘narrative’ or ‘history’ headings)

100: Introduction

We are delighted that you have selected to join us on our “Walk through the Ages”.

We invite you to follow the sequence of 38 brass plaques located in your guide, while you meander down Bowen Lane and the adjacent passageways. Key events will be described when you press the ‘Play’ button of your audio guide. By depressing the ‘Stop’ button after each tone, you will be able control the pace of your stroll down memory lane, whilst you wend your way to the next plaque.

And now without much further ado, I suggest we set off on our way.
On the 5th of July 1995, Prime Minister Paul Keating officially opened RMIT Building 8 in the presence of honourable members of State and Federal parliament and assorted university dignitaries.

At 7:03 pm on the evening of the 27th of August, a woman checked her watch. She checked it again at approximately five-minute intervals, until she eventually gave up on the person she was waiting for.

Graffiti appeared on this wall at about 3:33am on the 13th of August, 2002. Whatever it said must have been hot because it was gone before morning.

The building, now known as Storey Hall, was named in honour of John Storey, well known businessman, industrialist, and benefactor. It was officially opened as The Hibernian Hall, on Wednesday the 2nd of November, 1887, by the Archbishop of Melbourne. Over its long history, it has been the home of the Australasian Catholic Benefit Society, The Central Zion Tabernacle, and the Women’s Political Association, a left-wing feminist organisation formed in 1903. In addition, it has been the venue for cinema, dances and
104. Wednesday, 2 November 1887
exhibitions, and the Wrestling Championship of Australasia in 1911.

105 (history)

In 1995, the wall before you was painted yellow upon instruction of the architects Ashton Raggatt McDougall, in deference to the Robertson-Swan sculpture Vault. This icon, (more commonly known as The Yellow Peril) had been unceremoniously displaced from its position in the City Square in the late 1970s. There is a similar tribute inside the building.

106 (narrative)

Two workmen wearing blue overalls arrived by van at 8:39 am. They unloaded a heavy red box with ‘Hilty’ written on it in big white letters, and some coils of rope, and then hung around for a while.

107 (narrative)

A brilliant ray of sunshine fell upon this wall at 9:29 on September 26th.

108 (history)

Had you stood in this spot in the mid-1880’s, you would have been able to see straight through to Franklin Street. Many realised and aborted urban design strategies have seen the block transformed from an government reserve within a speculative grid city to the more complex and confused model that evolved
with the construction of Storey Hall in 1886 and the original Working Man’s College from 1886-1891.

109 (history)

On the 7th of August 2002 the *Nothfagus Cunninghamii* in the centre of this space was planted to replace a tree of the same species that had been planted approximately a year earlier.

110 (narrative)

A tall blonde American woman smoked a cigarette in this spot at exactly 6:42pm on the 30th of July, 2002. She was trying to figure out what she was going to do for her installation.

111 (narrative)

RMIT Security patrols this space at least twice an hour, after 11pm each night. You may notice that security cameras are currently being installed on the wall above you.

112 (narrative)

A fly struggled in a spider’s web, and a butterfly flapped its wings, in March and September, respectively.

113 (history)

On 17th of March, 1998, and for some considerable time prior to that, the area around this plaque was used as a builders’ yard, and was dominated by a large skip.

114 (narrative)

Daniel and Sand struck up a conversation at 2:22pm on the 19th of September 2002.
111. 11:00pm-12am nightly

112. March and September 2001
He was on his break from the café; she was sticking up masking tape where the brass plaques were going to go. They talked about the relative merits of their brands of rolling tobacco, amongst other things.

115 (narrative)

This plant died on the 3rd of January, as far as I can tell.

116 (history)

At 10:30am on the 24th of November, at a meeting attended by the architect and his assistant, the RMIT Property Services Manager and his administrator, and a representative of the University Architect, it was decided that the trial of the specially commissioned tiles before you had been a success, and would therefore be used across the campus. The meeting was duly minuted, and copies were sent to all involved.

117 (history)

By the 23rd of May 2007 this building will have been demolished in the next phase of architect Peter Elliot’s refurbishment works for RMIT.

118 (narrative)

An apparently intoxicated man relieved himself here at 11:35 on the night of the 13th of July. He didn’t realise he had been observed, apparently, or maybe he just didn’t care.
No smoking signs were posted in this space during the week of the 19th of February 2001. It is ambiguous whether they refer to the inside or the outside of the buildings.

In 1995, the staircase before you was installed to bring the auditorium inside, up to current fire and building regulations. Disabled access was also provided to the building. The architects Ashton Raggatt McDougall were awarded the RAIA Victorian Architecture Medal, the William Wardell Award, and the Marion Mahoney Award for the renovations and expansion.

The last refurbishment had been undertaken in 1958, when the building was renovated as a modern assembly hall, and renamed Storey Hall, as has been cited earlier.

The original building, Hibernian Hall, was designed between 1884-1887 by the architects Tappin, Gilbert & Dennehy.

Syringe disposal units were located at various points around the lanes from the 9th of September 2001 onwards.

Sometime during the early hours of the morning of the 23rd of May in 1968, a break-
in occurred which involved a shattered window and a forced security grill. According to police records, no one was hurt and nothing was taken.

123 (narrative) Some very strange noises were heard coming out of the ceramics studio on the afternoon of the 25th of July.

124 (history) Between the dates of the 23rd and the 29th of November, scores of pipes were buried as part of a major infrastructure rationalisation programme. The undercroft is now completely full.

125 (narrative) In the late afternoon, on the first of July, a young plumber stood back to admire his handiwork on his first day on the job.

126 (narrative) From between 5:25 and 5:35pm, 23 people walked past this spot. 14 of them were men, 9 were women. 19 were under 30. 5 were in a hurry.

127 (narrative) Two young lovers were locked in a passionate embrace here at 10:47pm on the 2nd of October. It looked like they were planning to stay there for a while.
On the 23rd of May, 1998, pipes were laid to water the tree.

On the 25th of May it was discovered that RMIT owned no hoses or watering cans.

The mural entitled “RMIT Started as the Working Man’s College” was painted by the team of artists listed on the side of the mural, from between 1978 and 1979. It is unknown why the work was not dated.

I sat on this bench from 11:15 to 11:47pm on the 20th of July. During this time I heard: several doors opening and closing, air-conditioning hum, the sound of water running through pipes, distant traffic, shouts from a basketball game, footsteps on a metal staircase, and snippets of gossip about what happened last Saturday night. It felt a bit like I was eavesdropping.

A man wearing a navy-blue pinstripe suit, with a white shirt and a gray and yellow striped tie, placed his half-eaten roast beef and salad sandwich here, at 1:15pm on Friday the 19th of July, as he perused the sports section of the Age.
132 (narrative)  
A Coca-Cola can sat on this ledge for days from the 6th of July. A plastic bag blew in the wind for hours on the 8th, and the cigarette butts seem to come and go.

133 (narrative)  
At 1:45pm on the 6th of September, a routine fire drill evacuated the top two floors of Building 8. 343 people congregated in this space before the all clear was given.

134 (history)  
This plaque reading 11:32am, 11th October 2002 was installed at 11:32am on the 11th of October 2002, exactly.

135 (history)  
Architects Ravenscroft and Freeman designed Forester’s Hall in 1888. The first floor was originally the meeting hall of the Grand United Order of Foresters, and the ground floor contained the administrative office and the office of the building’s architects.

Forester’s Hall is on the Register of the Heritage Council of Victoria, the Register of the National Estate, and is Classified by the National Trust of Australia.

136 (narrative)  
From July 1995 to January 1996, this lift entrance was barred, as it appears it was the means of escape for numerous computers, televisions, and...
Undisclosed security measures have subsequently been installed, and the lift is now operational again.

RMIT building 8 was constructed in two stages. The first 4 levels were built by the architect John Andrews in 1983, and are noted for their large expanse of glass brick, which soundproofed the building from Swanston Street traffic.

Levels 5 to 12 were designed by Edmund and Corrigan architects. Building 8 was completed in 1993, and was awarded the RAIA Victorian Architecture Medal, the Walter Burley Griffin Award and the RAIA Award of Merit in 1995.

From the 15th of October to the 2nd of November 2002, installations by Charles Anderson, Richard Black, Sand Helsel and Jenny Lowe were viewed in these laneways by approximately 100,000 aficionados of the visual arts, as part of an exhibition entitled “The Unused” at the Melbourne Festival of the Arts. You have just become part of history.
five walks


138. 15th October - 2nd November 2002
walk 02

“the grand tour”

Duration: 15 minutes
Degree of Difficulty: easy
Markers: postcards

Walk 2: guide

Stand behind the 10 postcard views mounted on the striped steel stands to locate the best viewing spots for the audio tour. These are located in sequence on the adjacent map.

In the style of a tour guide or travel documentary, the narrator describes some well-known monuments and institutions from around the world while you look at the backs of some seemingly insignificant buildings in Bowen Lane. For example, a series of exposed plumbing and gas lines evokes images of the Alaskan Pipeline; Chartres Cathedral, the QE2, the Coliseum in Rome, and the Bridge of Sighs can also be found on the site.

This walk capitalises upon the gap between description and reality. It asks us to suspend belief, to daydream, fantasise, and speculate; and allows us the opportunity to make connections with places that we know, or have seen before, or have always imagined. It is about memory, and desire.

Status and value are given to our individual experiences and the way that each of us sees the world (or city). It is hoped that a collective experience may be discovered or generated.
key >>>

Postcards
01. **Southampton;** QE2
02. **Paris;** café scene
03. **Rome;** Coliseum
04. **Paris;** L’Opera
05. **New York;** Chelsea warehouses
06. **Alaska;** oil pipeline
07. **Venice;** Bridge of Sighs
08. **New York;** fire excapes
09. **Chartres;** stained glass window
10. **Hong Kong;** Kowloon Walled City

Map of the World

| 5 | 10 | 15 | 20 thousand km’s |

five walks 93
Walk 2: The Grand Tour

(script)

Narrator: cheerful, chirpy voice with a habit of over-pronouncing foreign words

Text: each block is approximately 45-60 seconds’ duration; total texts: 11 (including introduction)

Sound effects: travel based and particular to each selection

200: Introduction

sound effect: airport clicker board, and announcements “calling BA Flight 12 to London Heathrow, ready to board…” fading to…

Welcome to the Grand Tour. My name is Vejay and I will be accompanying you on your journey. I hope you are wearing sturdy shoes because we have a lot of ground to cover: eight cities, on three continents, in ten minutes! That has to be a record!

But first, let me explain how this tour will be conducted. The ten planned visits on this itinerary are marked by ten postcards, which locate the best viewing spots – just perfect for those Kodak moments! Follow the route marked on Map Number 02, and when you reach each destination, press the ‘Play’ button, and I will be right back with you to describe one of the extraordinary sites we have selected for your enjoyment. When the travel sound signals, it is time to press ‘Stop’ to give you time to linger or move on at your own pace.

Talking about moving on – we have a big journey ahead of us, so let’s get on our way! Bon voyage, and see you soon!

sound effect: train station: man's voice: “All aboard” and a train whistle
Now this is the way to travel! The ship’s horns will blast shortly to signal our departure. Champagne corks are popping, and streamers are flying from the decks. Take a deep breath of that sea air!

The QE2 is the last of the great trans-Atlantic super liners and was a showcase of art, design, and technology at her launch in 1969. She’s the embodiment of luxury – a floating city of 1400 passengers and 1000 crew, with restaurants, theatres, a casino, spa, and four swimming pools. And not forgetting of course, the moonlit decks that have spawned a myriad of shipboard romances.

(Less poetically, she consumes 1000 tons of water and creates 10 tons of garbage per day.)

From the first sight of her trademark black hull and the striking funnel of red with a black stripe, the QE2’s arrival is eagerly anticipated in every port-of-call.

*sound effect: two blasts of a ship’s horns (when they leave port)*

I apologise for the early start, but you haven’t been to Paris until you’ve watched the dawn break. The bars have long since closed, but if you listen, you can hear the streets coming alive… there – the clatter of a roller shutter, ahhh…and the smell of freshly baked croissants.

The cafés are just about to open, and here on the left is my favourite, just off the Place de la Contrescarpe in the heart of the Latin Quarter. They’ll be putting out the tables and chairs soon, so if we wait a few minutes we can sip a café au lait on this typical, quaint cobbled street. I have a feeling its going to be a brilliant sunrise!

*sound effect: birds chirping (early morning sounds)*
201: Southampton: QE2

202: Paris: café scene
203: Coliseum in Rome  
site: rear of Storey Hall Gallery

The Coliseum is the largest Ancient Roman amphitheatre in the world, inaugurated in 80 AD. Just catch your breath for a moment and look at the magnificent travertine façade with its unforgettable impression of massiveness. It’s 527 meters round and 57 meters high, with three levels composed of 80 arches each. The attached columns start at the lower level with the rather plain Doric order, followed by the more elegant Ionic, and culminate with the luxuriously decadent Corinthian on top.

Fabulous spectacles including gladiatorial contests, combat with wild animals, and mock battles and naval displays were watched by crowds of up to 50,000 in its heyday. Be sure to let me know if you spot Russell Crowe.

*sound effect: crowd scenes, or swordplay or music from the film soundtrack “Gladiator”*

204: The Paris Opera  
site: fire escape stair to Storey Hall

*sound effect: a little something operatic from La Boheme, which recedes into the background and then increases in volume at the end.*

Isn’t this a simply breathtaking scene? Its opening night and *tout le monde* is decked out in their finery. And there’s no better place to be seen than on this opulent grand staircase at L’Opera in Paris, built in the Second Empire style by Charles Garnier, from 1862 to 1875.

Did you know that the staircase is one of the oldest building elements in architectural history, and that its design changes with each architectural movement? It is a showcase to express the talent and ingenuity of the architect, somewhat like a signature. And where would *Sunset Boulevard* and Busby Berkeley be without staircases?

I digress. I should stop talking so you can prepare yourself for some glorious music, or better yet, for the intermission – which is the whole point of it, after all.

*sound effect: continuation of La Boheme.*
203: Rome: Coliseum

204: Paris: L’Opera
We’re in the heart of Chelsea, one of the trendiest parts of New York currently, and the new home to many of the cutting-edge galleries that have abandoned Soho for marginally cheaper rents and larger factory and warehouse spaces.

It hasn’t totally been gentrified – yet. The trucks still rumble through, and industry exists side-by-side with some of the newer arrivals. In fact, when Richard Serra was installing the opening show at the Gagosian Gallery last year, some of the local kids thought one of his ‘Tilted Arcs’ was abandoned scrap metal and turned it into a makeshift skateboard ramp. Serra was apparently furious.

This is one of the latest clubs straight ahead of us – no name and no address – the best kind. It won’t get going ‘til after midnight, so some of you might want to come back later. Make sure you dress the part though; the door policy is pretty tough. Ever since Samantha from Sex and the City moved in, the neighborhood’s gone downhill!

On the right you will see a portion of one of the great engineering feats of our times – the Alaskan pipeline. Designed to bring oil from the frozen north of the American continent to the ice-free port of Valdez – from whence it is shipped to the lucrative markets in the south – this 1.2 metre diameter pipe measures 1262 kilometres in length. Half of it is located above ground, to avoid melting the delicate permafrost, and to minimise possible rupturing under earthquake stress. Crossing points are provided for the caribou and other large animals.

Despite these considerations, it’s been a hot environmental issue since the discovery of oil here in 1968. Of course the 1989 oil spill from the tanker Exxon Valdez didn’t help. Incalculable damage was inflicted upon the area’s marine ecology and local economy. But you still have to marvel at the sheer audacity and the scale of it, though.
205: New York; Chelsea warehouses

206: Alaska; oil pipeline
Right in front of us now you can see the Bridge of Sighs – the most famous of Venice’s 400 bridges. It is a short covered passageway that crosses the Rio di Palazzo, just off the Grand Canal and St. Marks Basin.

On the left-hand side is the Doge’s Palace, an exemplary piece of architecture in the Gothic style. The light and delicate Portico and Loggiato on the lower levels support the heavier walls above – a gravity-defying structure that became the model for all subsequent Venetian architecture.

In the 16th century the prison within the palace was transferred to the annex that you can see on your right. In those days this presumably wasn’t a romantic place; the air was filled with the cries (and sighs) of prisoners being led over the bridge to their fates. These days however, the most common sound is a gondolier’s rendition of an operatic air. My, how times change.

The cast iron fire escape above you is quintessentially New York. Along with the cylindrical water towers that are dotted across the rooftops (most recently commemorated in resin by British artist Rachel Whiteread), these constitute the true streetscape for the natives. Forget the skyline – that’s for the tourists and suburbanites, the proverbial bridge-and-tunnel people. Die-hard New Yorkers never leave the city unless under duress.

These spaces are the closest thing that most New Yorkers have to a garden, or balcony for that matter. They’re the place to put your potted plants, or sip a beer and strum a guitar on a hot summer’s evening, accompanied by the hum of an orchestra of air conditioners. They’re the last bastions for the handful of remaining smokers. And presumably they come in handy in the event of a fire.
207: Venice: Bridge of Sighs

208: New York: fire escapes
209: Chartres Cathedral  
site: stained glass to the rear elevation of Bldg 8  
(to be delivered in whispered tones)

Now let’s be silent for a moment as we draw our eyes upward and soak up the atmosphere of this symphony of light. (pause)

It goes without saying that we are standing before the splendid North Rose Window of Chartres Cathedral, the epitome of stained glass artistry that achieved its height in the first half of the 13th century.

And as we stand here and bask in the glow of this masterpiece, we will note a seemingly endless spectrum of changes, changes wrought by the inherent qualities of natural light. Oh, that we could stand here long enough to experience the arrival of light from the east, drawing our gaze upon its luminosity, whilst the other windows slumber in the mock-twilight. The setting of the reddened late afternoon sun turns the west windows’ ruby glass into a fiery blaze. Oh, a passing cloud has dimmed this radiance before us, perhaps so we might best appreciate the splendour of these brushstrokes created by the hand of the sun. Now, the yellows come alive to….(fade out)

210: Hong Kong Walled City  
site: above the stairs between Bldgs 6 & 8  

You can’t really talk about cities without including Hong Kong, and the Walled City in front of us is the densest part of one of the most vibrant cities in the world.

Notice how the streets or passageways become extremely narrow here. Light barely filters through the gaps between the buildings. Any potential glimpse of the sky is blocked with a forest of pipes and cables. There are only two standpipes providing water to the entire community, and please don’t ask me about the sewage.
209: Chartres:
stained glass window
This is a totally illegal development you realise – a high rise squatter settlement 14 storeys tall covering a vast city block. It was able to develop because of anomalies of jurisdiction between Britain and China. I describe it as a vertical souk, and because of its labyrinth of streets it has become the perfect hideout for gangs like the Triads. It is also where unlicensed practitioners tend to set up shop, so I’d think twice about having some cheap dental work done, and suggest you do your shopping in some of the more conventional outlets that I will be happy to recommend.

*sound effects: airplane clicker boards*

This is the end of our tour, and I will be leaving you now, I’m sorry to say. But before I go I would be happy to assist you with your onward travel arrangements. Should you wish to plan another tour with one of my colleagues, simply select one of the other five walks from your guide and insert the appropriate tape. If you are leaving us here, please remember to return your headsets.

I hope you have had a pleasant journey. I know that I have!

*sound effects: man’s voice as in the beginning “Final call for BA Flight 10 to Melbourne ready for immediate departure”…clicker board and fade out.*
210: Hong Kong: Kowloon Walled City
walk 03

“let's get walking”
self-directed walk

Duration: 10-15 minutes
Degree of Difficulty: moderate
Markers: orange flagging tape

Walk 3: Guide

The walk is modeled on a scavenger hunt, and invites audience participation.

The game show host on the audiotape delivers seven tasks; the challengers respond by tagging appropriate locations with orange ribbon flags accompanying the audio kit. The adjacent map delineates the game’s boundaries, and lists the challenges. Melbourne Festival visitors will determine the location of the flags.

Key issues that affect the city are alluded to in a lighthearted manner: conservation and preservation, safe streets, community consultation, civil liberties and civic responsibility. What do we do with the left over or marginal spaces in our cities? Do we attempt to gentrify them, or make them safe, or even disappear? Or should allowances be made for the homeless, the skateboarders, the young lovers, et.al. to claim these unused territories.

The walk invites you to actively engage with (the design of) your city, to reflect on your position and to begin to pose your own questions of what the city could be. These are activities that are beyond the author’s (or urban designer’s) control.
Locate the following places and tag them with orange flagging:

- Something that you’d like your grandchildren to see
- A place that reminds you of somewhere else
- A trace of someone’s presence on the site
- A site for an illicit activity
- A place that you want to pass through quickly
- Something that surprises you
- Something that you would like to get rid of

key >>>

Bowen lane to Bowen street

Caffeine (café)

Building 28

Building 24

Building 8

Building 6

Building 4

Building 2

Storey Hall

Swanston Street

Building 28

collect headsets here

Caffeine (café)
Walk 3: “Let’s Get Walking!”
(script)

Narrator: male game show voice, full of catch-phrase rhythms and emphasis

Texts: 7 including introduction and conclusion; approximately 30 seconds each

Sound effects: game show music lasts for approximately 30 seconds to a minute after each text, increasing in intensity and speed towards the end of each segment. A ticking clock can be substituted. A buzzer may signal the end of the segment.

300: Introduction

Welcome, to “Let’s Get Walking” one of the city’s most popular game shows. It’s lovely to be here, on location, in the back lanes of Melbourne.

We’re going to try something a bit different on our show today. The producers have decided that there have been too many ‘experts’ leading these walks so far, and that it’s about time we had more participation from our viewers at home, so now it’s your chance to “come on down”. Yes, you’ve got it, my friends; you will be designing your city. So, how about a round of applause from our studio audience.

sound effect: applause

And for the rest of you who are watching at home, why not try it in your local suburb.

But first of all, let’s remind ourselves of how the game works. It’s simple. I will nominate seven categories and you will respond to each one in turn... just like those scavenger hunts you used to play when you were a kid. But this is where it gets interesting. Every answer is the right one on our show and when you start asking the questions, then you’re really onto a winner...and I’m out of a job!!

I’m sure you know the rules by now: just stay within the Festival area as noted on the map, and when I finish speaking at the end of each section, take out one of your orange tapes and go tag a bit of the city. But you better be quick, because the time runs out quickly (unless you press the ‘Stop’ button of course).
The grand prize for all our contestants today is that you can tell everyone back home that you’ve had a piece of work in the Melbourne Festival. Now that’s right folks…everyone is an artist – or make that an urban designer!

Now, if you’re ready… “let’s get walking!”

*sound effects: 10 sec+ of game show music*

### 301
Now we’ll start off the proceedings with a category that I’m sure you’re all familiar with: preservation. We all have had plenty of goes about it in the comfort of our own homes, haven’t we? All those NIMBY’s in the audience raise their hands; *(laugh)* not in my backyard, to you too, mate. Now, the twist is, how will you respond in unfamiliar territory?

Your first challenge is to “locate something that you’d like your grandchildren to see”. Now that can be anything that you don’t want to see changed. Don’t be shy when you’re out there placing your orange flag. You’ve got to remember that one person’s trash is another person’s treasure. And everyone is a winner on our show today.

*sound effects: 30 sec+ game show music*

### 302
Welcome back. Did you run out of time? Pause for a moment to catch your breath. You’ll soon know this place like the back of your hand, but in the meantime some of you may choose to use your eyes rather than your legs.

Those of you have been on the “Grand Tour” may feel you have a bit of an edge in this next category, which is: “find a place that reminds you of somewhere else”. But be aware, those other selections have come from a rival network, and I don’t need to tell you how the ratings work. This one requires a little imagination, just perfect for those daydreamers among us. For those of you hidebound in reality, I suggest you try a different tactic. How about squinting your eyes, turning your head upside down or clicking your ruby slippers if all else fails. Happy hunting!

*sound effects: 30 sec+game show music*
Now this next category will be sure to bring out the detective in you. Joining us now are all those people who have been here before you. No, this isn’t our twenty-first anniversary show or anything like that. I’m talking about people who have come and gone through this space, and have left traces of their presence behind – and I’m not just talking rubbish. Act like a forensic scientist. You can tag these traces, like they do on CSI, so that you can come back later and decipher the stories they tell. Or you can use the orange flagging as a sign in itself. Hey, maybe you can even start up a secret conversation with the person who put all those yellow arrows out here. Now that could get interesting!

Get a move on, Sherlock.

*sound effects: 30 sec + ticking clock*

Well done there, I can see you are getting the hang of this. So let’s try something maybe a little more interesting. *(dirty laugh)* I want you to find a place where an illicit activity can take place. Now I don’t want to hear what it is, this is a family show, you know! Just show me where it is and I’ll let my imagination do the rest, if you know what I mean. *(dirty laugh)*

*sound effects: 30 sec + ticking clock*

Alrighty. The city is filled with lots of these marginal places, and I’m sure you’ve imagined all sorts of goings-on. Most of the time we pass through these accidental, and unused places without noticing them. They seem to offer nothing to catch our eye. Maybe that’s where we’ve been getting it wrong. For your next challenge, if you choose to undertake it, I want you to tag “a place to pass through quickly”. Why don’t you stop? Does it bore you, or frighten you? Hurry up now. I can hear menacing footsteps coming up right behind you, and it sounds like they’re gaining ground.

*sound effects: 30 sec + ticking clock*
Well, you’ve become an old hand at this. Walking up and down these lanes must be as familiar to you by now as the trip to work, school, or the supermarket. Well, I’d even bet you could do it with your eyes closed. No, that isn’t the next challenge – this is. “Find something that surprises you.” Come on. I know you have it in you. You can do it. Surprise me. Better yet, surprise you.

*sound effects: 30 sec + ticking clock*

And now for our grand finale. We’re planning to go out with a big bang, metaphorically speaking, I hope. How many of you have wanted to get rid of that eyesore you’ve hated, for once and for all? I know I have. Well, now’s your big chance. Blowing up buildings is pretty politically incorrect these days, so how about placing an orange flag on something you’d like to remove? And why don’t you check back after the show to see how many people have agreed with you. That’s community consultation if you ask me!

And while we’re on the subject of coming back later, I’ll say my fond farewells as we’ve run out of time. I might meet you again on another walk, but if not, please remember to return your headsets. And from all of us here, it was great having you on the show, and in the city. So until next time...

I’ll leave you with our theme tune to complete your last task. And don’t forget: “let’s get walking”!

*sound effects: game show music to close*
walk 04

“mystery tour”
*a random walk*

**Duration:** indeterminate  
**Degree of Difficulty:** it depends  
**Markers:** chalk

**Walk 4: Guide**

Random connections are made between 99 banal commands (such as “walk straight ahead for ten steps”, “turn right at something red”, etc.) by pressing ‘Fast Forward’ on the audio set. The number of selections made is determined by the Festival visitor, which in turn establishes the duration of the walk.

There are also instructions to engage with other people and things on the site, (i.e. “smile at a stranger”) and to make marks with the chalk provided in the interactive vest (“trace your footprints in chalk”).

It is a game of chance that will take you to parts of the site that neither you nor I can predict. (The map to the left is a sample of one such walk that we have taken earlier.) You will be making your own map of the site, as you take your unique walk.

The audio tape asks if you will see or do something unexpected. This is the hope. By liberating ourselves from the daily routines such as going to work, school or the supermarket we can become aware of the world (or city) around us.
Ask a likely person for directions to Paris

Ask strangers for a piece of chewing gum until you are successful

Find another person carrying chalk and play noughts and crosses with him or her

Make your next move while hopping on your left foot

W a l k  i n  a  z i g z a g  f o r  6  m o v e s .  C h a n g e  d i r e c t i o n  w h e n  y o u  h i t  a  w a l l

^ ^

Stand beside one of the installations and pretend you are the artist

W a n d e r  a i m l e s s l y  f o r  30  s e c o n d s

W a n d e r  a i m l e s s l y  f o r  30  s e c o n d s

Try to get lost

Deliver a deep moan

Try to peer into the first window that you see

Find the first stranger that you see until you are discovered

Follow the first stranger that you see until you are discovered

Walk briskly to a metal that you see

Touch the first piece of metal you see

Try to get lost

Deliver a deep moan

Try to peer into the first window that you see

Return your headsets immediately

Stand in this spot for 60 seconds

Change direction each time the ground surface changes

Try to get lost

Deliver a deep moan

Try to peer into the first window that you see

Return your headsets immediately

Stand in this spot for 60 seconds

Change direction each time the ground surface changes

Try to get lost

Deliver a deep moan

Try to peer into the first window that you see

Return your headsets immediately

Stand in this spot for 60 seconds

Change direction each time the ground surface changes

Try to get lost

Deliver a deep moan

Try to peer into the first window that you see

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Stand in this spot for 60 seconds

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Deliver a deep moan

Try to peer into the first window that you see

Return your headsets immediately

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Change direction each time the ground surface changes

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Deliver a deep moan

Try to peer into the first window that you see

Return your headsets immediately

Stand in this spot for 60 seconds

Change direction each time the ground surface changes

Try to get lost

Deliver a deep moan

Try to peer into the first window that you see

Return your headsets immediately

Stand in this spot for 60 seconds

Change direction each time the ground surface changes

Try to get lost

Deliver a deep moan

Try to peer into the first window that you see

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Stand in this spot for 60 seconds

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Deliver a deep moan

Try to peer into the first window that you see

Return your headsets immediately

Stand in this spot for 60 seconds

Change direction each time the ground surface changes

Try to get lost

Deliver a deep moan

Try to peer into the first window that you see

Return your headsets immediately

Stand in this spot for 60 seconds

Change direction each time the ground surface changes

Try to get lost
Walk 4: Mystery Tour

Narrator: male voice with no inflection; sentences are short and to the point; read straightforwardly rather than authoritatively

Texts: 100 in total including introduction

Sound effects: buzzer or electronic tone after each entry

300: Introduction

This walk is not located on the map. You will be making your own map.

The piece of chalk may be useful.

Each tour will be unique. The walk will be designed by chance.

By your audio set.

After the tone, press ‘Fast Forward’ for as long as you want.

Listen to the instruction.

After the tone, press ‘Fast Forward’ again.

And continue to do so.

The number of selections will determine the length of the walk.

Turn over the tape if you run out of words.

You are in control.

You may choose not to obey some of the commands. You may wish to add some of your own.

No one will know.

Pause after each instruction.

Will you see or do anything unexpected? Maybe. Maybe not.

If you go beyond the Festival area you may wish to turn around.

Some instructions may cause you to bump into walls. Please don’t.

There is no formal conclusion to this walk, but this is the end of the introduction.

sound effect: electronic tone or buzzer, and then after each selection to the end. (99 texts)
1. sit down
2. lean back
3. look skyward
4. take a long slow breath
5. relax
401 Take 10 steps forward.

402 Turn right at something red.

403 Chalk the number 3 in someplace conspicuous.

404 Sit on a bench and close your eyes for 1 minute. Listen carefully.

405 Turn around quickly and stare at the first thing you see.

406 Tilt your head 45 degrees upward.

407 Stop at the 4th orange tape that you come across.

408 Draw a chalk circle around a piece of rubbish on the ground.

409 Stand next to the first person you see wearing headphones. Look intensely at what they are looking at.

410 Trace your next five moves with the piece of chalk provided.

411 Take 7 steps backward.

412 Smile at a stranger.

413 Wander aimlessly for 30 seconds.

414 Turn to your left.

415 Look at the ground.

416 End the walk after 2 more selections.

417 Tag the spot you are in.

418 Stand beside one of the installations and pretend you are the artist.

419 Go smell a brick.

420 Follow the first stranger that you see, until you are discovered.

421 Walk briskly to a destination.

422 Walk straight ahead for 10 steps.

423 Touch the first piece of metal that you see.

424 Try to peer into the first window that you see.

425 Return your headsets immediately.

426 Stand in this spot for 60 seconds.

427 Change direction each time the ground surface changes.

428 Take a series of steps in a progression of prime numbers. Change direction each time.

429 Walk like you are drunk for a while.
430 Try to find a toilet.

431 Place something from your pocket or handbag in a prominent place.

432 Walk backwards until you are frightened about bumping into something.

433 Make your next three selections staring at the ground.

434 Only look at things on your right hand side.

435 Make your next move while hopping on your left foot.

436 Stand beside the first door that you see and pretend you are waiting for someone.

437 Place 5 chalk crosses at your next 5 locations.

438 Ask a likely person for directions to Paris.

439 Pick up a piece of garbage and put it in a bin.

440 Run towards the wall straight ahead of you. Stop abruptly and stare intently.

441 Take 10 steps to your left.

442 Make a piece of pavement chalk art. We apologise that you have only one colour.

443 Ask for directions to someplace that you know.

444 Turn left at the next intersection.

445 Stay where you are for 2 minutes.

446 Write your next instruction in chalk for someone else to follow.

447 Focus your gaze on something 1 meter away.

448 Take 5 steps backwards.

449 Write “chalk” in chalk.

450 Walk through the whole installation without stopping.

451 Turn right and walk as far as you can.

452 Make a chalk circle 1 meter in diameter where you are standing.

453 Turn right when you see something round.

454 Shuffle to the right as far as you can.

455 Focus your gaze on something 10 meters away.

456 Design a walk for someone else. Write the instructions on a wall.
457  Change direction any time you see someone talking on a mobile phone.

458  Stop someplace that grabs your attention. Ask yourself why.

459  Turn left and walk 20 paces.

460  Make up your own instruction and write it in chalk.

461  Walk determinedly into what you think is a dead end.

462  Draw a chalk game that a seven-year-old girl would enjoy.

463  Rush to the third entrance you see while you mutter “I’m late”.

464  Try to bump into the third person you see.

465  Draw a line to connect 2 spots of your choice.

466  Try to get lost.

467  Focus your gaze on something 100 meters away.

468  Turn 90 degrees to the left.

469  Write the first word that you think of in chalk.

470  Ask strangers for a piece of chewing gum until you are successful.

471  Turn left every time you hear a woman’s voice.

472  Find something growing. Say “aaahhhh” softly to yourself.

473  Write the number 17 on the 17th brick that you find.

474  Stand where you are and chalk the number of people who pass in 2 minutes.

475  Look up at the third floor.

476  Turn right every time you hear a man’s voice.

477  Look for a bird, animal or insect. Don’t stop until you find one.

478  Write your name someplace only you can find it.

479  Close your eyes and spin yourself around at the next intersection.

480  Rub you hand along something made of wood.

481  Walk towards an intriguing noise.

482  Sit on a bench and stare straight ahead, intently.

483  Find another person carrying chalk and play noughts and crosses with him or her.
Find a good spot to smoke a cigarette. Light up if you smoke. If you don’t, pretend.

Trace your footprints in chalk.

Walk in a zigzag for 6 moves. Change direction when you hit a wall.

Find something you would like to smell. Smell it.

Write six Tattslotto numbers in a conspicuous place.

Move in a circle for two and a half revolutions.

Find a quiet spot.

Chalk your route for the rest of your walk.

Deliver a deep moan.

Walk an identical route three times. Look at the floor, then straight ahead, and then at the sky.

Chalk a mathematical equation outside a classroom.

Walk towards a road. Draw a line when you can hear the traffic noise.

Ask people for a light, even if you don’t smoke.

Turn left every time you see something yellow.

Chalk a star on a door and write your favourite movie star’s name underneath.

Chalk a note to the author of this piece.
walk 05

“the philosopher’s walk”

Duration: continuing
Degree of Difficulty: quite
Markers: none

Walk 05 has no map, no site markings, and no audiotape. (This walk can be undertaken in a café, or on route to the next stop on your journey.)

This walk has a tradition in literature, art and radical urban theory as a means of inscribing the body into space. It is how we position ourselves in the world. It allows us to discover the aptitude for self-determining our environment, and life.

The journey and itinerary involves naming and categorisation, which positions the city according to our own frames of reference (see “Walk 03”). The walk has political overtones. We have the power to subvert authority by choosing alternative routes. (“Walk 04” is a homage to the Situationist International antidote to the tank-monitored boulevards in Paris). We have the ability to write our own histories (see “Walk 01” and Robert Smithson’s Monuments of Passaic). And Italo Calvino inspires us to be citizens of the world. (Every city can be discovered in Venice in Invisible Cities, and “Walk 02”.)

Now it’s your turn to design your own walk, draw your map, and determine your own relationship to the environment.

(end of project text)
walk 04

“mystery tour”
a random walk

Duration: indeterminate
Degree of Difficulty: it depends
Markers: chalk

Walk 4: Guide

Random connections are made between 99 banal commands (such as “walk straight ahead for ten steps”, “turn right at something red”, etc.) by pressing ‘Fast Forward’ on the audio set. The number of selections made is determined by the Festival visitor, which in turn establishes the duration of the walk.

There are also instructions to engage with other people and things on the site, (i.e. “smile at a stranger”) and to make marks with the chalk provided in the interactive vest (“trace your footprints in chalk”).

It is a game of chance that will take you to parts of the site that neither you nor I can predict. (The map to the left is a sample of one such walk that we have taken earlier.) You will be making your own map of the site, as you take your unique walk.

The audio tape asks if you will see or do something unexpected. This is the hope. By liberating ourselves from the daily routines such as going to work, school or the supermarket we can become aware of the world (or city) around us.
Ask a likely person for directions to Paris

Ask strangers for a piece of chewing gum until you are successful

Find another person carrying chalk and play noughts and crosses with him or her

Make your next move while hopping on your left foot

W al k  i n  a  z i g z a g  f o r  6  m o v e s .  C h a n g e
d i r e c t i o n  w h e n  y o u  h i t  a  w a l l

S t a n d  b e s i d e  o n  e  o f  t h e  i n s t a l l a t i o n s  a n d  p r e t e n d  y o u  a r e  t h e  a r t i s t

Tu r n  t o  y o u r  l e f t

W a n d e r  a i m l e s s l y  f o r  3 0  s e c o n d s

_  _  _L o o k  a t  t h e  g r o u n d

E n d  t h e  w a l k  a f t e r  2  m o r e  s e l e c t i o n s

Ta g  t h e  s p o t  y o u  a r e  i n

W a l k  a n  i d e n t i c a l  r o u t e  t h r e e  t i m e s .  L o o k  a t  t h e  f l o o r,  t h e n
s t r a i g h t  a h e a d ,  a n d  t h e n  a t  t h e  s k y

F i n d  a n o t h e r  p e r s o n  c a r r i n g  c h a l k  a n d  p l a y  n o u g h t s  a n d  c r o s s e s  w i t h  h i m  o r  h e r

Go smell a brick))))))

Follow the first stranger that you see until you are discovered

Chalk a star on a door and write your favourite movie star’s name underneath

Deliver a deep moan

Try to get lost

Walk briskly to a metal that you see

To u c h  t h e  f i r s t  p i e c e  o f  m e t a l  y o u  s e e

R e t u r n  y o u r  h e a d s e t s  i m m e d i a t e l y

S t a n d  i n  t h i s  s p o t  f o r  6 0  s e c o n d s

C h a n g e  d i r e c t i o n  e a c h  t i m e  t h e  g r o u n d  s u r f a c e  c h a n g e s

Wander aimlessly for 30 seconds

****** Turn to your left

_  _  _L o o k  a t  t h e  g r o u n d

End the walk after 2 more selections

Tag the spot you are in////////

S t a n d  b e s i d e  o n  e  o f  t h e  i n s t a l l a t i o n s  a n d  p r e t e n d  y o u  a r e  t h e  a r t i s t

G o  s m e l l  a  b r i c k  ))))))

Follow the first stranger that you see until you are discovered

Walk briskly to a metal that you see

To u c h  t h e  f i r s t  p i e c e  o f  m e t a l  y o u  s e e

R e t u r n  y o u r  h e a d s e t s  i m m e d i a t e l y

S t a n d  i n  t h i s  s p o t  f o r  6 0  s e c o n d s

C h a n g e  d i r e c t i o n  e a c h  t i m e  t h e  g r o u n d  s u r f a c e  c h a n g e s

Wander aimlessly for 30 seconds

****** Turn to your left

_  _  _L o o k  a t  t h e  g r o u n d

End the walk after 2 more selections

Tag the spot you are in////////

S t a n d  b e s i d e  o n  e  o f  t h e  i n s t a l l a t i o n s  a n d  p r e t e n d  y o u  a r e  t h e  a r t i s t

G o  s m e l l  a  b r i c k  ))))))

Follow the first stranger that you see until you are discovered

Walk briskly to a metal that you see

To u c h  t h e  f i r s t  p i e c e  o f  m e t a l  y o u  s e e

R e t u r n  y o u r  h e a d s e t s  i m m e d i a t e l y

S t a n d  i n  t h i s  s p o t  f o r  6 0  s e c o n d s

C h a n g e  d i r e c t i o n  e a c h  t i m e  t h e  g r o u n d  s u r f a c e  c h a n g e s

Wander aimlessly for 30 seconds

****** Turn to your left

_  _  _L o o k  a t  t h e  g r o u n d

End the walk after 2 more selections

Tag the spot you are in////////

S t a n d  b e s i d e  o n  e  o f  t h e  i n s t a l l a t i o n s  a n d  p r e t e n d  y o u  a r e  t h e  a r t i s t

G o  s m e l l  a  b r i c k  ))))))

Follow the first stranger that you see until you are discovered

Walk briskly to a metal that you see

To u c h  t h e  f i r s t  p i e c e  o f  m e t a l  y o u  s e e

R e t u r n  y o u r  h e a d s e t s  i m m e d i a t e l y

S t a n d  i n  t h i s  s p o t  f o r  6 0  s e c o n d s

C h a n g e  d i r e c t i o n  e a c h  t i m e  t h e  g r o u n d  s u r f a c e  c h a n g e s
Walk 4: Mystery Tour

(script)

Narrator: male voice with no inflection; sentences are short and to the point; read straightforwardly rather than authoritatively

Texts: 100 in total including introduction

Sound effects: buzzer or electronic tone after each entry

300: Introduction

This walk is not located on the map. You will be making your own map.
The piece of chalk may be useful.
Each tour will be unique.
The walk will be designed by chance.
By your audio set.
After the tone, press 'Fast Forward' for as long as you want.
Listen to the instruction.
After the tone, press 'Fast Forward' again.
And continue to do so.
The number of selections will determine the length of the walk.
Turn over the tape if you run out of words.

You are in control.
You may choose not to obey some of the commands. You may wish to add some of your own.
No one will know.
Pause after each instruction.
Will you see or do anything unexpected? Maybe. Maybe not.
If you go beyond the Festival area you may wish to turn around.
Some instructions may cause you to bump into walls. Please don't.
There is no formal conclusion to this walk, but this is the end of the introduction.
sound effect: electronic tone or buzzer, and then after each selection to the end. (99 texts)
1. sit down
2. lean back
3. look skyward
4. take a long slow breath
5. relax
401 Take 10 steps forward.
402 Turn right at something red.
403 Chalk the number 3 in someplace conspicuous.
404 Sit on a bench and close your eyes for 1 minute. Listen carefully.
405 Turn around quickly and stare at the first thing you see.
406 Tilt your head 45 degrees upward.
407 Stop at the 4th orange tape that you come across.
408 Draw a chalk circle around a piece of rubbish on the ground.
409 Stand next to the first person you see wearing headphones. Look intensely at what they are looking at.
410 Trace your next five moves with the piece of chalk provided.
411 Take 7 steps backward.
412 Smile at a stranger.
413 Wander aimlessly for 30 seconds.
414 Turn to your left.
415 Look at the ground.
416 End the walk after 2 more selections.
417 Tag the spot you are in.
418 Stand beside one of the installations and pretend you are the artist.
419 Go smell a brick.
420 Follow the first stranger that you see, until you are discovered.
421 Walk briskly to a destination.
422 Walk straight ahead for 10 steps.
423 Touch the first piece of metal that you see.
424 Try to peer into the first window that you see.
425 Return your headsets immediately.
426 Stand in this spot for 60 seconds.
427 Change direction each time the ground surface changes.
428 Take a series of steps in a progression of prime numbers. Change direction each time.
429 Walk like you are drunk for a while.
Try to find a toilet.

Place something from your pocket or handbag in a prominent place.

Walk backwards until you are frightened about bumping into something.

Make your next three selections staring at the ground.

Only look at things on your right hand side.

Make your next move while hopping on your left foot.

Stand beside the first door that you see and pretend you are waiting for someone.

Place 5 chalk crosses at your next 5 locations.

Ask a likely person for directions to Paris.

Pick up a piece of garbage and put it in a bin.

Run towards the wall straight ahead of you. Stop abruptly and stare intently.

Take 10 steps to your left.

Make a piece of pavement chalk art. We apologise that you have only one colour.

Ask for directions to someplace that you know.

Turn left at the next intersection.

Stay where you are for 2 minutes.

Write your next instruction in chalk for someone else to follow.

Focus your gaze on something 1 meter away.

Take 5 steps backwards.

Write “chalk” in chalk.

Walk through the whole installation without stopping.

Turn right and walk as far as you can.

Make a chalk circle 1 meter in diameter where you are standing.

Turn right when you see something round.

Shuffle to the right as far as you can.

Focus your gaze on something 10 meters away.

Design a walk for someone else. Write the instructions on a wall.
457 Change direction any time you see someone talking on a mobile phone.

458 Stop someplace that grabs your attention. Ask yourself why.

459 Turn left and walk 20 paces.

460 Make up your own instruction and write it in chalk.

461 Walk determinedly into what you think is a dead end.

462 Draw a chalk game that a seven-year-old girl would enjoy.

463 Rush to the third entrance you see while you mutter “I’m late”.

464 Try to bump into the third person you see.

465 Draw a line to connect 2 spots of your choice.

466 Try to get lost.

467 Focus your gaze on something 100 meters away.

468 Turn 90 degrees to the left.

469 Write the first word that you think of in chalk.

470 Ask strangers for a piece of chewing gum until you are successful.

471 Turn left every time you hear a woman’s voice.

472 Find something growing. Say “aaahhhh” softly to yourself.

473 Write the number 17 on the 17th brick that you find.

474 Stand where you are and chalk the number of people who pass in 2 minutes.

475 Look up at the third floor.

476 Turn right every time you hear a man’s voice.

477 Look for a bird, animal or insect. Don’t stop until you find one.

478 Write your name someplace only you can find it.

479 Close your eyes and spin yourself around at the next intersection.

480 Rub your hand along something made of wood.

481 Walk towards an intriguing noise.

482 Sit on a bench and stare straight ahead, intently.

483 Find another person carrying chalk and play noughts and crosses with him or her.
Find a good spot to smoke a cigarette. Light up if you smoke. If you don’t, pretend.

Trace your footprints in chalk.

Walk in a zigzag for 6 moves. Change direction when you hit a wall.

Find something you would like to smell. Smell it.

Write six Tattslotto numbers in a conspicuous place.

Move in a circle for two and a half revolutions.

Find a quiet spot.

Chalk your route for the rest of your walk.

Deliver a deep moan.

Walk an identical route three times. Look at the floor, then straight ahead, and then at the sky.

Chalk a mathematical equation outside a classroom.

Walk towards a road. Draw a line when you can hear the traffic noise.

Ask people for a light, even if you don’t smoke.

Turn left every time you see something yellow.

Chalk a star on a door and write your favourite movie star’s name underneath.

Chalk a note to the author of this piece.
Cheap drinks $3-
$5

Dear author: You are mad!
**walk 05**

*the philosopher’s walk*

**Duration:** continuing  
**Degree of Difficulty:** quite  
**Markers:** none

Walk 05 has no map, no site markings, and no audiotape. (This walk can be undertaken in a café, or on route to the next stop on your journey.)

This walk has a tradition in literature, art and radical urban theory as a means of inscribing the body into space. It is how we position ourselves in the world. It allows us to discover the aptitude for self-determining our environment, and life.

The journey and itinerary involves naming and categorisation, which positions the city according to our own frames of reference (see “Walk 03”). The walk has political overtones. We have the power to subvert authority by choosing alternative routes. (“Walk 04” is a homage to the Situationist International antidote to the tank-monitored boulevards in Paris). We have the ability to write our own histories (see “Walk 01” and Robert Smithson’s *Monuments of Passaic*). And Italo Calvino inspires us to be citizens of the world. (Every city can be discovered in Venice in *Invisible Cities*, and “Walk 02”).

Now it’s your turn to design your own walk, draw your map, and determine your own relationship to the environment.

*(end of project text)*
notes & observations
COMMON PLEASURES: a reflection (PhD text)

The guide to “Walk 05: The Philosopher’s Walk” is left virtually blank; it has neither audio tape nor map. I had originally intended to explain the theoretical background of the project to cater for the ‘serious’ art-lover who might attend the installation. (I had done something similar with the explanatory text on the folio plates in atlas which provided the conceptual underpinnings of the project as a counterpoint to a quick view through the postcards and their captions.) However, in the recording studio it seems pretentious to record this walk;¹ the theory is implicit ² in the content of the scripts of the other four walks even though the tone remains light-hearted and sometimes amusing. (I try to cover the spectrum.) I am determined not to underestimate my audience. I prefer, instead, to allow space for reflection and speculation, and thus invite the festival visitors to find their own voices and construct their own narratives.

finding my voice

I have often used multiple voices in discussing my work (see page 36 of Chapter One). In the Masters I switched between the personal, the descriptive and the theoretical as my role shifted between reflection, curation and provocation. In this document I change the hierarchies and use the footnotes for additional information, often facts – so as not to distract from the argument: I incorporate the reflections on my past within the body of the text, rather than a side column. The personal voice moves to the foreground in this suite of projects. In “This is the Map of the World” I am initially wary about this shift. It is the first time I use narrative text rather than critical writing in a lecture, and certainly the first time that the way that I see the world is exposed so nakedly. (Ironically, this personal voice is what I encourage students to express – a ‘point of view’ – yet I seem to question my own advice.)³ I refine this in Five Walks; my audio narratives are written so that I will not be viewed as the expert, merely a fellow citizen articulating what she sees. This sets a new tone in my work, and becomes a method for me to engage with a broader audience on an equal footing.

In making my private collection of Oranges public, I frame how I look, see, read and speculate. This conscious definition of my design process becomes a model for the increasing clarity that I develop in my design studio teaching briefs. The lecture becomes a moment of reflection and articulation – a manifesto of sorts – that incorporates my ongoing lessons from Land Art and mapping to define new trajectories: the search for what we have in common. “Everyone is an artist” was an aspiration, and now I see it can become a reality; I become determined to discover how I can make a more robust contribution to further enable this process, and thus redefine my collaborators. Five Walks

¹ This is a post-rationalisation, and serendipitous; however, it becomes a significant omission as it leaves the “gap” that becomes increasingly important to me. In truth, I ran out of funds to pay for additional recording time in the studio, and the script as it stood would have needed quite a few takes to perfect it. It is included in the “walk” section of this text.

² This is a legacy of my time at the AA (1977-1981) where theory was implicit, or informed the work; one did not extrude it to give form or meaning to an architectural project, which was a trend in other universities at the time, and subsequently. I still subscribe to this in my teaching and writing, and prefer to absorb content rather than quote it.

³ Deniz Sun had to be cajoled into believing that her cultural dilemma about what she should and should not photograph in the exposed (private) lives of residents in Taipei was a valid starting point for a project; Sun, “Ambiguous Thresholds,” 102-15.
The Taipei Operations workshop and exhibition were reviewed in the Taipei Times, and I gave a series of lectures and workshops on our research to the Urban Design Department at Taipei City Council in 2001.

I was a student at the Architectural Association School of Architecture from 1977-1981.


invites and appreciates additional narratives of the city. I further formalise this approach (with students) when I name our studies of Taipei ‘urban diaries’, and disseminate it (to planners and the press). These personal stories of those living in and designing for the city not only give a greater status to the individual (citizens), but also serve to animate the city itself, as if it too, had its own stories to tell – if only we would look and listen.

the collection

My travels – literal and metaphoric – have never focussed upon discovering the new or extraordinary, but are more about understanding and interpreting what is already there. I realised early in my architectural career at the AA that one can either invent new forms (or in those days technologies) or that one could reinterpret the existing. I consciously chose the latter route. The Oranges celebrate the ordinary and the everyday.

I bought a Eurail Pass when I spent a summer in Europe before going to university; with this, I could board trains at will – without having to pay. Sometimes I might have an idea of my next destination and plan and schedule accordingly; when it became hot I just headed north; and once or twice I boarded the next train departing. I probably had a map, but certainly no guidebook. When I arrived in a new town or city I would examine the postcards in the station (and occasionally buy one to add to my collection started at the age of ten). Then I would head off in search of local monuments knowing that I would be distracted by something much more interesting along the way.

The act of collecting takes me to unknown places. Though the search might be serendipitous, I believe in rules and rigour (and demand it of my students.) In the Oranges travelogue, the photographs are uncropped, and become consistently vertical in format (after Juan Cruz’ observation). They are a form of automatic photography, and I find that when I shift my authorship away from the initial framing of the image, I am forced to look more carefully and critically upon review – after the event. This necessitates reflection; by shifting my focus away from the taking and the site of the event, I can look again. Consequently, this gives my interpretation of the image equal status to anyone else’s, as the process is identical and concurrent. I keep the photographs specific to time and place by recording the data. When I format the exhibition piece to include these numbers and names, I am amazed at the authority this gives the images (as seen on the cover and frontispieces); they transcend the snapshots that they ostensibly are.
The collection is how I see: patterns, connections, repetition, similarity and difference. It is the tool that allows me to question, to reconfigure and rearrange. I often find that the more ordinary the subject, the more extraordinary the outcome. The collection, though generally of a series of objects, prompts me to understand the systems or frameworks behind them. It is the paradigm for the fluid state of my work, a practice that relies on the gradual accretion of observations and knowledge. The interpretation of the collection becomes coloured and informed by my particular interests or inquiries at the time; it is ongoing research, with data that can be re-used. Patterns and structures emerge: at the moment, the *Oranges* reflect my ongoing fascination with Asia; they remind me that if I am able to look more carefully I might understand more, and they propel me to celebrate the skill and care people take (in arranging the humblest of wares).

*Five Walks* is also about ways of seeing; the close observation of seemingly non-descript urban lanes reveals layers of meaning that have developed over time. I capture these discoveries as fragments. This collection of moments or clues alludes to larger patterns and systems in the city that I need to decipher. Again, I use a narrative text in this process; each walk is a framework that allows the collection to expand and contract, and in this case this is done by others alongside me – the visitors to the festival. The walk requires them to physically (and mentally) engage with the site, and the city; thus their authorship becomes imposed on the site. I relate my journey through the tapes, but their voyages are different and unique.

**the city and the gallery (and curators)**

I am originally reticent about producing another installation when the FMRLs are invited to participate in the Melbourne Festival. When I finished my Masters, I felt that I hadn’t ‘designed’ anything. Although I had built two (albeit temporary) installations that addressed architectural issues, they remained embedded in the context of art practice and the art space, isolated from many of the constraints of design practice. The projects responded to site conditions, but there was no intrinsic programmatic engagement between the user and the project to consider, other than as a visitor to an installation. In *atlas*, 1996, for the Adelaide Arts Festival, I had won the commission through competition where I produced a folio of drawings and text. At the time, I remember asking myself why one would build a conceptual project (especially in the 40 degree heat and with minimal funds). The finished product succeeded in dematerialising the (art) object and addressing issues of site through its critique of the folly.
as intended, but I was more delighted by the accidents that occurred: the unnoticed vistas that were framed; the materiality wrought by regulations and authorities; and the curious ways it was being discussed and used.

I consider these accidents to be phenomena, like the weather: things that are out of my (as the architect’s) control. I aspire to enable more of them, to design the process or framework that will provide their trajectory; consequently I review my definition of design. I begin to read the city as a process of growth and decay, with a time scale like landscape which continues long after the designer has gone. I develop this research in discussions about ‘ephemeral architecture’, and accept the commission in The Unused group show as an opportunity to design an engagement with the festival visitors (and the city) as opposed to designing an artwork. This time I ‘collaborate’ with a larger group (of participants) instead of my colleagues; I expect “things that are out of my control” will occur by this inclusion. The art space (as well as the city) is redefined as a laboratory, as opposed to a showcase, shifting the nature of the practice as well as the outcome. When we curated the Taipei Operations exhibition a year earlier in 2001, I had discovered that the gallery can be more than just a means for disseminating our research; we not only design the exhibition of the work, but also consider how the citizens of Taipei could interact with or contribute to our studies.

Although I have an approach to the brief that engages the user, I still privilege the site in my design process. I spend a lot of time in the lanes behind Storey Hall trying to establish what I am going to produce for the installation (as documented in the script of “Walk 01”, plaque 110). By observing, I begin to notice traces and patterns that prompt me to question and speculate about the city. I decide to share my discoveries, and unashamedly use the model of the museum and the context of the visual arts program to structure the installation. I present my ideas to Juliana Engberg, the curator, and Geraldine Barlow, the project co-ordinator. They listen and encourage. Juliana refers me to the work of Janet Cardiff; little of her work is published at the time but Juliana describes her audio walks. Geraldine suggests that I read Mercier and Camier. Their prompts provide a springboard for a raft of further thinking and research. It is the first time I work with curators – excellent ones at that – and I am fascinated by the process. I recognise the value of their listening (which I interpret as another form of what I have been calling looking). It resonates with how I operate with my students in tutorials and crits, and how I plan to realign my design practice; I will produce “prompts” for the visitors to my installation.
design and curation
I had never taken a museum tour before as I prefer to use my eyes to come to my own conclusions; I often feel that gallery groups have missed the best works. I question the voice of authority that implies there is a right way to see. As a result, I design five tours through the same space to avoid the singular viewpoint. “Walk 01” counters the requisite historical facts with tales of everyday life. “Walk 02” is designed to foster the imagination and take one’s mind to faraway places, while “Walk 04” provokes us out of normal routines. “Walk 03” debates urban design issues in an unusual format. I had worried that I had been somewhat didactic in my presentation of the project concepts in my earlier work.15 In Five Walks I find a way to imbed the issues about the city through the introductions to the thematic structure of the walks. After that I am free to play the game along with everyone else. The walks are great fun to write. As a rule, and a necessity due to time, I restrict myself to references that I have in my library or my head. This insures that they remain personal. (I had played a similar game in the Freeway Reconfigured where I produced flip cards that demonstrated how I used the community consultation board I had constructed.) The more ephemeral nature of the audio tapes is more successful by permitting the visitor to experience the process, as opposed to just viewing the results of my effort. This is when I articulate that my design method has two distinct stages: the design of the design process and the coming to form or fruition. I realise that I can and do perform both. I differentiate between them as ‘curation’ and ‘design’, though I consider them both design.

Five Walks is primarily about looking and learning how to look. (I have been reminded of the importance of this in learning how to operate in a new city like Taipei.)16 The materiality of my installation is even more minimal than normal, but I have a regained confidence that this is indeed design, and that the heroic mark is not always necessary or desirable. I observe the city as a process – not an object or a collection of objects – the accretion of marks over a long period of time. I simply add to that collection. Some marks are made by others (orange flagging tape and chalk) and stay a limited time. The brass plaques are permanent, and mark the festival in the history of the site,17 in the hope they will provoke future discoveries.18 Though the elements themselves are small – as a technique to dematerialise the object – they cover a large ground. I realise that my fragments now act less as an ‘underlay’ to provide a context for others; they are my marks, but more importantly they denote that there is space for others – I am leading by example. There is a welcome accident in this piece, and again it is orange. When the promised MP3 players fail to materialise, forcing me to

15 The concepts underpinning atlas were stated explicitly and separated in text boxes; an adjacent narrative text compensated by describing a different sort of journey through postcards and diaries to address a different type of festival visitor.


17 This is a legacy from my atlas installation where the brass setting-out point for the map remains set in the asphalt path, and the brass plaques denoting the contents of the holes are buried for a future generation (or a metal detector).

18 Helen Duong, an ex-student of mine, produced a short mapping project for Richard Black in a later design studio at RMIT. She had discovered my remnant brass plaques from Five Walks in Bowen Lane, and overlaid a new narrative. Upon discovering they were from my piece, she said she should have known.
revert to more cumbersome cassette tapes and recorders, orange vests are made (from plastics bought in Taipei) to carry the additional gear. The festival visitor becomes readable as part of the piece.

In this document, I use Five Walks as a demonstration of my design research process; the design inception and development is propelled by a range of methods and references. Sources from art, poetry, literature and radical urbanism are outlined in the following “Philosopher’s Walk”. Some books and projects are specifically sought for this particular line of inquiry; most I have long admired and which I reassess. They support the conceptual underpinnings of the project; become models for the frameworks of the walks (“Walk 04” is inspired by the Situationist derive); or are quoted in the scripts in homage. (The instruction number 412, “smile at a stranger”, is a variation on one that Sophie Calle receives from Paul Auster in her Gotham Handbook, 1994.) To write the scripts, I consult encyclopaedias and general reference books for facts; I watch daytime TV and don audio-headsets to mimic game-show sound effects and museum-speak; I visit galleries and look at the labels instead of the art.

“the philosopher’s walk” (modified from the un-recorded audio script)

The aspiration of Five Walks is to enable the inhabitants of the city to become active generators of their environment and to overlay their own stories, needs and desires. A good city is capable of supporting an infinite number of narratives. There are many ways of reading a city, and operating within it. It becomes critical that we realise we have that power. The walk is a mark of free movement and will and can determine how and where we position ourselves in the world, and in relation to others; it provides the individual with the opportunity for direct, unfiltered engagement. The walk has a tradition in literature, art, and urban design theory. It is the inscription of the (artist’s) body in space. Through a review of artists’ walks, we might question how we might become active participants in the city. There are variations on the walk (or journey) and in the nature and quality of engagement that the artist establishes with the viewers of the piece. The walk has the ability to fill a space with meaning rather than things.
The walks fall into four broad categories; they are both a physical and philosophical journey. Firstly, there are artists who walk and then ask others to witness the result of the walk, or the documentation; walking is the practice for artists like Hamish Fulton and Richard Long. In Land Art, landscape is no longer mediated by the studio or the gallery; the artist maintains a direct engagement with his or her subject matter. For some artists this is a critique of the art world, or the authority of maps in the case of Herman de Vries and Joseph Beuys. Walter de Maria’s *Mile Long Drawing*, 1968, brackets the scales from the abstraction of the map to the physical presence of the artist: the photographic documentation of the piece shows the artist lying prone in the desert at the end of his long chalk lines. The walk often leaves ephemeral traces on the landscape, such as in Richard Long’s early morning lines and circles made by his feet on the dewy grass, or in Robert Smithson’s series of “Mirror Travels”, where the mirrors record fleeting phenomena before they are removed from the site. Natural materials found on the site are often arranged in lines or circles on the site in Long’s and Andy Goldsworthy’s work. In most cases it is clear that the documentation is not the work; multiple forms of representation are required to explain the event: photography, maps, text, naming of places and phenomena, and mythology and history, in examples from Long and Smithson. When transposed to the gallery, the material presence of elements brought from the site becomes an emblem or a fragment of the larger work or event. The artist’s presence encourages the viewer to see the landscape alongside him or her; through this unmediated relationship with site.

In a second model, a journey is conducted by the artist and this experience is then related to others. Much of poetry and literature falls into this category. In *Invisible Cities*, Marco Polo uses the different characteristics of one city (Venice) to describe a series of cities (in China) in his dialogues with Kublai Khan. We understand that any city contains numerous stories and is many cities in one; Venice, thus, becomes all cities, and all cities can be found in Venice. Alain Robbe-Grillet uses the genre of the detective story as a vehicle for a forensic description of the passage through a city’s streets in *The Erasers*. Samuel Beckett’s *Mercier and Camier* highlights the complexity of a simple rendezvous, when the element of time is linked to place, and is exacerbated by an umbrella, raincoat, and a sack. And Robert Smithson’s *Monuments of Passaic*, 1967, demonstrates how the guided tour, albeit by bus and with an Instamatic camera, can give the industrial outskirts of New York the status and recognition of a European capital. When the flâneur wanders the streets in Baudelaire’s Paris
his internal thoughts and subconscious become indistinguishable from the external reality. Walking in the city
allows us to muse, imagine, and speculate.

In the third category, the focus shifts from the artist's description or the documentation of the walk; the artist gives the walk (to others) as an instruction. The nature of the place becomes inextricably linked to the act of being engaged with the place. Much of this work has political or activist overtones and is often a critique of urban planning, or again, the art world. Randomness is used in Dada and Surrealist walks as a critique of authority or rules. The Situationist International use the more structured devices of the derive and the detour to subvert prescribed routes delineated by urban planners, and invent new ways of traversing the city. In effect, the city is redesigned in this context and the citizen is empowered by this opportunity. There is an element of community implied through these individual acts. The multiplication of such actions has the potential to subvert the tyranny of the civic image (and institution) created by the urban planner. Stalker invites others to be part of their loosely defined collective that espouses walking as a transformative process. Their circular forays around cities such as Rome, Paris, Milan, etc, reveal patterns of voids as a fundamental part of every city and a phenomenon they encourage others to identify and occupy.

The records of the outcomes in many of these examples, are rarely used in the depiction of the work. The Surrealists and Dadaists avoid documenting the work to further distance their practice form the art world, and although the Situationists produced maps of some of their cities, their instructions (and writings) become a form of manifesto, and the more powerful document of the project.

The final category continues some of these practices, and is perhaps most clearly dedicated to the engagement of others with the work; they are co-opted in the making of the piece and form a type of collaboration with the artist. As in the latter example of the Situationists, the content of the work is clearly beyond the artist's control. The construction of the situation, or the structure of the walk is the author's domain, while the final outcome is not. Sophie Calle embarks on a series of walks in her work. In To Follow..., 1979, her routes through Paris are determined by strangers she follows in the street; in Suite Venitienne, 1981, this expands into a journey as she follows (and loses and finds again) an unknowing acquaintance to Venice. These journeys are documented in dated journals with a narrative text and attached photographs. Again, it appears that the event that is the work; the documents are fragments that capture moments of a much larger activity. In The Detective, 1981, she inverts the structure of her

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39 This scenario has a similar feel to Beckett's Mercier and Camier.
walk, hiring a detective to follow her and document her daily activities. Sophie Calle’s presence is never removed from her work; although the work is clearly self-referential, she is the vehicle for, not the subject of the work. Her journeys reveal distinctive narratives of the city and highlight the citizens that write them. Through the process she becomes a citizen, like everyone else she meets in her travels. She gains no special status, and her walks become readily absorbed into a much larger urban diary – of the life of a city.

The five walks I have designed attempt to bracket some of these levels of engagement with the city. The degree of difficulty cited for each, depends on the level of active participation, not physical exertion. The subtext is to avoid passivity, or deference to experts who will make your decisions for you. One might choose to be an armchair traveller, almost from the safety of your own home as in “Walks 02” and “03”; or be out on the streets with the intensity of engagement that is encouraged and required from “Walk 04” or, for example, an Asian city. The main point, however, is that all positions are valid.

The content of the walks attempts to offer a variety of ways of seeing the city, with the potential to find a resonance with your own point of view, be it an attitude towards history or the relevance of story-telling, whatever you might find important. The impact of the authority of the historian, the tour guide, the urban designer, and the architect is lessened by the cacophony of other voices. Ideally you are given the tools enables you to do it yourself. (Some selections on these walks are so deliberately perverse at times that they must prompt the belief that you can do better yourself, with your own imagination.)

Lastly, the walk epitomises the shared experience, a community formed by an infinite number of equal stakes in the city. It has been my personal desire to find that community, and discover a means for constructive dialogue that I feel is essential for any practitioner in the built environment. (end of “The Philosopher’s Walk” text)

**the walk**

The categories identified above structure the individual walks, but my overarching concern in this installation is most closely aligned with the question raised by the final category: how can I co-opt others in the making of the piece (and ultimately in the making of the city)? Firstly, by helping people to see (which I credit to the Land Artists), and inspiring them to form an opinion (where my sympathies lie with the Situationists). Although I would like to consider my work to be activist, I think that initially citizens need to have the tools to be able to identify and then work within (or fight against) the structures that exist. The
The subtext of the piece is about how I wish to operate, and subsequently enable others to operate – by leading from example. I am a pluralist by nature, and feel that a range of experiences is appropriate to the broader spectrum of “audience” I wish to engage with. I am also finding my multiple voices or roles through this work. I am impressed with Sophie Calle’s ease in combining her personal authorship with an ability to disengage.

After the conclusion of my *Five Walks* project, I review Janet Cardiff’s walks. The catalogue documentation of her walks includes photographs, audio scripts, the occasional map, and explanatory text from the artist, critic, and visitor. The audio scripts heard through headphones include instructions, descriptions of feelings, smells, memories; conversations between characters and the author and the walker; sounds coming from the site or from the walk such as birds chirping, bells ringing, footsteps, breathing. There is often a plot overlaid: hints of a love story in *Drogan’s Nightmare: The Walk*, 1998, or a detective story in *The Missing Voice (Case Study B)*, 1999. The texts are made of fragments that blur reality and fiction, memory and perception; they appear in stream of consciousness.

The headphones make the viewer an active participant; the walk to positions the visitor in specific locations in the site. She pursues “the audience’s identification with her work through a double strategy. First of all, she grounds us in the location by heightening our sense of being in that specific place through adding sounds that could presumably be there. Secondly, she evokes ‘personal’ memories and narratives that are vague or sketchy enough to be anyone’s. The audience can partly create their own stories and project their own personal history onto the experience.”

There are obvious parallels in Cardiff’s and my walks, though her audio recordings are technically more sophisticated, and have a theoretical basis in her work. We have similar intentions in the selection of our devices; by their nature, headphones and the guided tour engage the viewer. But engage the viewer with what? Cardiff’s walks seem less concerned with revealing the characteristics of site (or the city in my case) and more about developing a personal experience and relationship between the viewer and the artist. “This method (of recording) causes the listener to feel as if the recorded body and voice are almost inside the listener’s body, and creates an intimate connection. Subconsciously participants begin to breathe and walk in synch with the virtual body on the tape, blurring the distinction between self and other.”
I appreciate the critique of the gallery as mediator, creating distanced and differentiated relationships between the artist and the viewer, but I use the gallery to engage visitors with my subject matter, the city. I wish to minimise my presence as author. I challenge the mediation of the expert – the artist, architect or urban designer – and strive to broker a direct relationship between the viewer and the built environment. My installation is not so much a work, as it is a strategy; the gallery space is my laboratory. Though I borrow my techniques from art practice, my main agenda is to equip myself (and others) with tools to better understand the city (and landscape) and how to design within it. This becomes a conscious focus in the next suite of projects, when my laboratory shifts to the Asian city; by being outside my comfort zone it requires me to re-examine what I know and how I might operate as a practitioner, and an educator.

Whereas Cardiff endeavours to bridge the gap between the artist and the viewer, the Land Artists’ agenda is slightly different again, in the desire for the artist to have an unmediated relationship with the landscape, their subject matter. This is not fully extended to the viewer unless one visits the generally remote projects. (The extraordinary directions to Michael Heizer’s *Double Negative*, 1969, made me experience the landscape as never before: I checked in at Overton Airport [in case I got lost] and drove up a vertical slope to the top of a mesa to follow topographical ‘clues’ before I found the piece.) I hope to broker the relationship between the viewer and the subject matter – the city.
introduction

The city (Taipei) is the site of the third suite of projects (from 2001-2004) which I introduce with another collection – Stacks, 1999-present. I am inspired by the artistry that I see in the sale of everyday items, and the entrepreneurship I discover in the citizens. I find evidence of similar activity in my subsequent travels (and at home) and am reminded of our common pleasures; this dispels any fears of my ‘foreignness’ and my ability to contribute to the Asian city.

I fall in love with Taipei when I participate in the first Urban Flashes workshop (1999), and resolve to study it further. I subsequently apply for and am awarded a UMAP grant (University Mobility in the Asia Pacific) to return to Taipei with sixteen RMIT students for a joint studio with Tamkang University. Associate Professor K.C. Bee and I co-direct the Taipei Operations workshop. We are joined by the multi-disciplinary practitioners Ti-Nan Chi and Y.C. Roan (architects, artists, writers, and curators) for a twelve-week intensive design studio. I re-evaluate my teaching practice when I realise I have no local knowledge, and will need to collaborate with my Taiwanese students and colleagues; I question the role of the expert, or masterplanner in this relationship and when we catalogue the inventiveness that we see on the street.

We exhibit the Taipei Operations studio outcomes in a prestigious, experimental Taipei art gallery. This is an unusual venue for a student architecture show and it requires us to consider our audience, both for this event, and in what we have produced for the city. We realise that our offerings are fragments of a total picture. We curate the exhibition so that the visitors might offer what we consider to be their equal and relevant contributions, as citizens of Taipei.

The book Taipei Operations is published three years after the event which offers considerable time for reflection and cross-fertilisation by lectures I deliver about the workshop and concurrent projects such as Five Walks. In this volume I coin the phrase ‘urban diaries’ which gives authority to the personal narratives of the city that I begin to find so important. I discover that I curate these voices in my practice: the students’ voices in the design studio; the audience’s voices that join these in the exhibition. I speculate that if I scale this to an urban level, I can curate the city, which seems a viable alternative to masterplanning. (I continue my relationship with like-minded practitioners in Urban Flashes and am encouraged that this is a valid approach to urban design.)

(The introduction extends over the following pages to describe the Taipei Operations workshop, which is not specifically addressed in the “Project” section.)
Stacks
(photographic series)
1999-present

(Taipei Operations Workshop)
(joint RMIT + Tamkang University workshop)
(co-directed with K.C. Bee)
(studio leaders: Y.C. Roan, Ti-Nan Chi, K.C. Bee + Sand Helsel with Amanda Kimmins)
Taipei: June-September 2001

Taipei Operations
(exhibition)
(co-curated with K.C. Bee)
Taipei: IT Park Gallery, 7-14 September 2001
Melbourne: First Site Gallery, 26 Feb-8 March 2002

Taipei Operations
(book)
Taipei: Human Environment Group, 2004
Issues of mobility (the theme for the 1st Dutch Architecture Biennale) provide the armature for our urban design investigations and proposals in the Taipei Operations workshop. “Mobility” is also significant at another more literal level — going there. It is the first overseas trip for many of the Australian students, and for some, the first time living away from home. Apartments are rented in the city centre; landlords, utility bills, suspicious plumbing and wiring, and domestic chores are negotiated along with the work. RMIT’s international students flower in their roles as regional ambassadors with their much-valued fluency in Mandarin although some, surprisingly, are dismissive of the lack of perceived order in the Asian city, having totally acclimatised to Melbourne. A significant appreciation of the local culture is gained from the students and staff at Tamkang University, fostered through joint projects, shared studio space, seminars, field trips, meals and parties. ‘Being there’ becomes a design method; observation and direct experience are established as valid research tools and as an antidote to the plan-driven approach of much urban design. Discovering the city on the back of a motorbike is encouraged over research on the internet. Primary sources such as the exuberant 24-hour street life, the weather (hot with typhoons), the food (delicious), garbage disposal (DIY with musical trucks), and the traffic provide opportunities for the students to examine, speculate and project. Interventions are made from within this context, instead of being imposed from above of afar. Urban design strategies are generalised following a focussed study of local conditions.

The professors from the participating universities — Kuang-Chien Bee, Ti-Nan Chi, and Ching-Yueh Roan from Tamkang University; and Sand Helsel and Amanda Kimmins from RMIT — negotiate and share the teaching of the joint twelve-week summer semester conducted in English. (Bee and I combine a studio to avoid language problems.) Two public lecture series support the design studios: comparative urban studies with Beijing, Hong Kong and Mumbai are delivered by historians, practitioners, and urban planners; local culture is interpreted by practicing artists, writers, curators, architects, and interior designers. Student-led seminars elaborate on issues of mobility arising from their design projects. Though the three studio offerings respond to the theme of mobility, they represent the research interests of the individual lecturers: the celebration of the rituals and ordinariness of everyday life (Roan), the exploration of the hidden systems that shape the city (Chi), and the assessment of the impact of large-scale infrastructure on the urban landscape (Bee and Helsel). We maintain our autonomy, yet establish common ground at the project inception to maintain a dialogue and a point of critique: all projects

1 The Mobility Studio was initially planned to represent RMIT at the 1st Dutch Architecture Biennale in 2002. The theme was subsequently changed, so the project was not submitted. Taipei Operations was the title of the exhibition, and thus I subsequently have renamed the workshop for clarity and consistency.

2 The names of the contributing lecturers and critics can be found on pages 286-87 of Taipei Operations, along with biographies of the studio leaders.
must be specific to time and place. We start small: with a walk, or an object, or the trace of a system. (Examples of these observational and mapping techniques can be seen in Chapter 0 of *Taipei Operations*, attached.) These studio divisions become blurred during the workshop, further in the exhibition, and virtually disappear in the editing of the book.³

We conclude the workshop with a series of public symposia and an exhibition at IT Park gallery, one of Taipei’s oldest and most experimental galleries. We not only summarise and disseminate the outcomes of the workshop in this venue, but also attempt to capture its spirit. Individual images from each student project are printed on a series of identical 210 x 210mm plates that are placed on an ‘examination table’ in the centre of the gallery. The installation reflects how the students perceive Taipei, as a series of specifically located moments with strong identities and character. These observations build up, as do the piles, to reveal a complexity of issues, attitudes and responses that range in scale and types of strategic intervention – a type of forensic study. (The student projects can be found in the attached *Taipei Operations* book.)

The exhibited plates can be read as a series of individual projects – such as an improved system or rubbish collection that generates new programs and definitions of a community;⁴ or a fascination with watching the traffic that culminates in a radical re-arrangement of illegal structures and subsequent street patterns⁵ – or as an urban plan developed from moments or fragments. We invite (or ‘consult’ with) the visitors to become participants in the ‘curation’ of the exhibition (and their city): to examine the work and then reconfigure and recontextualise these fragments by affixing them according to categories on the Velcro-covered walls. The most potent observation (and proposition) for the city is revealed when the work of the studio is read as a whole, made possible by the length of the table and the installations on the gallery walls; the resultant overlaps, contradictions, similarities, and tensions within the student work underscores the fact that there are many readings of a good city, and that anyone can contribute.

³ If there are issues of attribution in the individual studio work in *Taipei Operations*, the majority of Roan’s studio is in Chapter 4, “Real Time”, and Chi’s students are represented in Chapter 3, “Invisible Systems”. The “Introduction” includes a cross-section of work; most of the remaining chapters can be attributed to Bee and me.


(PhD text continues on page 174)
Stacks
Taipei City has been used as a laboratory to examine contemporary urban design issues. The question of mobility generated a range of responses – from the physical to the virtual and ephemeral. The agendas of the contributors from RMIT University, Melbourne and Tamkang University, Taipei, can be read linearly through the individual projects, which are described in the flyer and arranged on the examining table.

However, there is another way to experience the city (and this exhibition). The richness of the phenomena we have found in Taipei reveals a series of associations, adjacencies, and juxtapositions when read as a whole. By providing a context to reconfigure the work, multiple narratives – stories and moments – can exist simultaneously, one of the marks of a good city. This is not without contradictions: at times, similar observations can be variously interpreted as strengths or weaknesses, opportunities or threats.

We invite you to curate your city, to be a participant rather than a visitor. We trust that your experience will result in new adjacencies to produce unexpected findings, conceptual maps, and additional readings of Taipei.

Method

01. Select a topic that is of interest to you from the wall installation (issues, locations, activities, media, your favourite image, or your own contribution).

02. Choose a key card from the installation and locate it in the designated position (for example: photography, on the media board).

03. Peruse the examining table at your leisure, and select the images you would like to exhibit. (Note: the images are arranged by individual project and are identified by numbers that correspond to the descriptions in the flyer.)

04. Affix your selected images to the wall.

05. Repeat as desired.
01  Wall Installation (Arrange by Location)
02  Key Cards
03  Examining Tables and Plates
04  Instruction Poster
05  Flyers
The examining table is the centrepiece of the exhibition and presents the outcomes of our forensic studies of Taipei. Individual images from each student project are mounted on a series of plates and placed in corresponding piles on the table. They are scaled to be held in the hand. The gallery visitors are invited to peruse the plates at leisure and select Velcro-backed images of their choice to mount on the walls. As the piles and projects become rearranged the slippage of images offers continuing possibilities for new associations and juxtapositions to be made amongst the work and in the city.

The seating is local to each city. These stools are found in any night market or hawker stall in Taipei. Milk crates are used as makeshift seats and tables and can be found in most Melbourne lanes.
Examining table

Table consists of:
- Table tops: 18-20mm MDF sheet, 2 pieces @ 485 x 2420mm, 1 piece @ 485 x 2304mm
- Legs: 18 x Ø30mm dowel @ 600mm lengths
- Connection (leg and table): 18 x FH 5/8 x 5/16" Whitworth Thread Vertical Leg Plates & 5/16" Whit x 63mm Furniture Studs or similar attachment
- Table top divisions: 98 x Ø25mm dowel @ 70mm lengths (counter sunk 10mm)

examing table working drawing
Flyer

The workshop has created a series of common points of interest that have been interrogated and interpreted through numerous techniques. Initial impressions of the workshop are of a single body of work that upon further inspection reveals its internal fragmentation. This relates to a view of Taipei as a series of parts that each have strong and unique identities and qualities. While potent as individual moments, they often draw more from their contextualisation to form a broader proposition.

Each project identifies certain issues and opinions related to specific locations and moments in Taipei. These are presented here in the work for discussion and debate. Project descriptions and attribution are included in the flyer and the plates can be identified by a corresponding project number.
01 Complete project

This is the first wall installation that the visitor sees. It exhibits a complete project constructed from plates gathered from the examining table. The name of the project, the author and a project description can be found in the accompanying flyer. The project is changed daily by the guest curator (the student author) who is available to answer questions about the project, the workshop and the exhibition.

These are the only images on the wall each morning at opening. They demonstrate the procedure for mounting the Velcro backed plates, and describe what we have done.

The remainder of the exhibition is curated by the gallery visitors.
The reconfigured wall installation is created by the visitors from plates selected from the examining table. In this case, the Velcro squares are laid out in a random pattern which encourages the juxtapositions and adjacencies that we have found in the workshop and in the city.

The following six wall installations are arranged by category so that slippages can be seen across the projects: different propositions within a neighbourhood, or groupings according to issues identified, or drawn in similar media, or selected because they are liked. These all form part of an active consultation process with the gallery visitor, or citizen.
03 Select Activities

select a key card:

- Shopping
- Housing
- Storage
- Stray Dogs
- Homeless
- Transport
- Cars
- Motorcycles
- Highways
- Markets
- Rubbish Collection
- Parking
- Entertainment
- Theatres
- Restaurants
- Leisure
- Parks
The illegal structures in Taipei rely upon mobile technologies. The hawkers of pirated goods, for example, need to pack up quickly to avoid arrest; illegal industrial buildings in Lu Tzo are constructed from easily demountable, disposable materials; kitchens and merchandise spill onto the pavement from shopfront interiors. These activities and installations are controversial. They can be perceived as a threat to order – promoting congestion and chaos; conversely they can be seen as emblems of the vitality and resourcefulness of the citizens of Taipei. The city continually transforms itself; all precious space is utilised. (Even the planners recognize the illegal structures in their maps of Taipei.)

Recent trends in the food industry provide an alternative to the proliferation of fast food chains. Slow food takes time and care to produce, uses local seasonal ingredients, and is savored at leisure. It can be seen as a symptom of a lifestyle shift that is generated by some of the possibilities of IT. The ability to work from home affords the opportunity to escape the city: to the mountains or the beach; to walk rather than commute by car or public transportation. The implications to urban design become significant. Does major infrastructure – highways and telecommunication systems – become obsolete or dramatically different? Is there a change in the types of facilities we might require: larger restaurants with more comfortable chairs? New leisure programs to augment the growing numbers of spas and natural therapies? The focus shifts from the global and city-centered, to the local or neighborhood. A new sense of community can arise.

The servicing of the city needs to be considered holistically as a central urban design concern, in strategic, formal and social terms. Dense populations place a significant strain on the environment: rubbish, wastewater and sewage, emissions from cars and factories are produced in great quantities at a daily rate. Huge resources and energy production are required to allow a city to function. Shifting some of the responsibility (and consciousness) to the individual, for example, as the recycling movement has done, may provide alternatives to the traditional use of large facilities on the periphery. Rethinking how the city might work, encouraging more self-sustaining communities for instance, would reduce the movement of goods and people and the subsequent impact on road use. Whilst many of the environmental controls are large-scale pieces of infrastructure that have a substantial visual impact on the built environment, such as dikes, sewage and power plants, roads and highways, the invisible structures or systems are equally significant.
• Marginal Landscapes

Marginal landscapes or ‘terrain vague’ are found in most urban environments: left over spaces, abandoned sites, or those in which property ownership is ambiguous – spaces beneath or beside major infrastructure such as highways, for example. They accommodate people or programs often considered to be at the margins of society: the homeless, stray animals, illicit activities. These areas are considered to be important to the richness of the life of the city, both socially and visually, by some contemporary theorists and practitioners. This view is not often shared and these spaces (and occupants) generally become the first candidates for urban renewal (or eviction).

• Infrastructure

Infrastructure (highways, bridges, transportation systems, roads, etc.) has been traditionally the domain of the engineer; rarely do we consider them ‘designed’ despite their large scale and significant visual impact on our cities. The implications extend far beyond the pragmatic movement of vehicles and goods. Environmentally they can pose opportunities by their adjacencies to some activities, yet can threaten others; spaces and qualities that are formed underneath, beside, and above are all too often neglected as being incidental to their purpose. Infrastructure is most significant in affecting how the city works (or doesn’t). Traditional neighborhoods can be divided by the insertion of a wide boulevard; the relationship of pedestrians to cars has always been critical in determining the character of a place and the types of public life that are generated. Much contemporary infrastructure is invisible and offers additional or alternative possibilities for communication.

• Urban Activities

The city generates a series of programs that support the lives of its inhabitants: living, work, commercial and service spaces. The range and locations of these activities become characteristics that make a city unique. A city can become a cultural capital with a proliferation of visual and performing arts; a financial district is created by a concentration of corporate headquarters. The perception of institutions is affected by their architecture and their location within the urban fabric; street life is generated not only by the scale and design of the infrastructure, but also by the activities that line it. Centralised programs differ strategically from those evenly distributed; shopping malls are not local markets though their goods may be the same. Neighborhoods remain intact when they have a wide range of facilities to support their inhabitants: the social and economic mix is varied with respect to the breadth of the activities. hybrid and cross programming can create vitality in the city.

• Invisible Systems

It is a paradox that the invisible systems in our cities make the most significant impact on how they operate. New forms of infrastructure such as mobile telephone and communications networks, the internet and the abstractions of money movement, make few physical marks on the landscape, in contrast to those made by highways, dams and bridges, yet their influence is more pervasive. Political systems make their mark in surreptitious ways. A boulevard can be seen as a tree-lined thoroughfare or as a means of exerting control – through prescriptive routes, or surveillance control. An anarchist’s map privileges the back lanes and alleys. The most pervasive network of the city however is the connections between its inhabitants, as neighbors, through transactions, in service. The complexity of this infinite layers of connections is seen by some to be the real fabric that holds our society together.
05 Choose Media

select a key card:

- Drawing
- Diagram
- Photograph
- Rendering
- Model
- Map
- Text
- Plan
- Section
select a key card:

- Hsi Men
- Highways
- Lu Tzu
- Taipei
- Hwa Shan
- Ta An
- Mountains
- Taiwan
- The World

the Director of Urban Planning visiting the exhibition in Taipei
Today’s Image

select from examining table:
To recontextualize our operations on the city we would appreciate your opinions... Please SKETCH, WRITE or DIAGRAM any responses to the following and place on the blackboard next to your selection.

**SURVEY | MOBILITY: TAIPEI OPERATIONS**

A. DESCRIBE YOURSELF:

**ARTISTIC & CREATIVE**

B. RESPOND TO THE EXHIBITION:

Need a magnifying glass

C. DESCRIBE YOUR PERCEPTIONS OF THE CITY:

CROWDED
CRAZY
CHAOTIC
Hidden History with Urban Trash Superimposed
Where are the Old People? Youth Reigns.

THANK-YOU
Taipei Operations book cover: (start of project: see volume 2)
A type of forensic study reveals the exuberance and spirit of Taipei—a search for common pleasures. This response to the Asian city offers an alternative to Western-based planning models. An imaginative series of urban investigations range from the particular to the general to reveal phenomena that are relevant to all cities: mobility, the environment, infrastructure, invisible systems, the marginal. Surgical incisions offer an antidote to the masterplan in homage to the entrepreneurship of the citizens of Taipei.

(end of project)
The Asian city defies most conventional (western) urban analysis – identifiable structures and street patterns, or an easily traceable historical lineage – which often prompts generalist descriptions such as ‘dense’, ‘rapidly developing’, ‘chaotic’ and ‘ad hoc’. *Taipei Operations* provides an alternative model for examination, speculation, and projection, which is based upon an intimate connection to the material at hand – the city – as opposed to the imposition of a formalist overlay from above or afar. This is not a language of hyperbolic qualifiers: extra-large or mega-Dutch; it is an opportunity to question our methods of engagement and provide an alternative to the masterplan.

Whilst it is often considered a problem to work outside one’s cultural milieu for fear of a lack of understanding or misinterpretation, we use this as an opportunity for discourse. The work strives to find common pleasures within the city and to accommodate different readings; the seemingly banal is reconsidered. This dialogue becomes a paradigm for the city; the issue is that of negotiation, for different voices to be heard and to allow for multiple narratives and complexity. The architect and urban designer can assist in this act of curation.

**the unfamiliar**
Taipei reminds me a little of Paris when I first visit; its hierarchy of streets and magnificent tree-lined boulevards protect the smaller grain of the interior of the blocks. The buildings decrease in height as the streets narrow to a network of lanes. What the plan doesn’t tell you is how the city is used – of the quantities of motorbikes laden with all sorts of goods, or the time when the car got wedged in the lane. 7-11’s are ubiquitous – globalisation at work – but where else would you find fairy lights 24-hours a day? Taipei has adopted the chain as its own (town hall); you can pay your bills and parking tickets there as well as buy snacks. It’s when you get up close that the city is really revealed: the way they stack goods, the smell of the food. How does one reconcile these two extreme scales? And how can one avoid becoming seduced by the image.

I am naturally drawn to the market areas of this Asian city to soak in the colour and capture the exotica. However, I soon realise that my collection of *Stacks* are not random shots on my roll of tourist snaps but a phenomenon I need to understand. I am amazed that the exchange in the dry goods and Chinese medicine district is so architectural. Goods spill from shops into the streets and arcades; there are several tiers of pedestrian access; cars and motorbikes share the systems. Though the arrangement seems to upend the structure and hierarchies of most western models, there seems to be an underlying sense of order in this apparent chaos.

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1. This is an expanded version of my introduction to *Taipei Operations*, which is a reflection on the workshop and the exhibition. See Sand Helsel, 2004. *Taipei Operations*. Taipei: Human Environment Group. Note that all further references to this book will refer to page numbers only, as the book is a “project” in this section of the document.


4. One could mistake 7-11 for a Taiwanese corporation. Professor Chi-Wen Liu of Tamkang University believes that Taiwanese culture and society is sufficiently robust to withstand the pressures of globalisation, and in fact tends to appropriate and modify international imports to its own specification. From “Taipeilization”, a lecture given during the Taipei Operations workshop on 17 August, 2001.

5. Scantily-clad betel nut girls in their neon-lit glass kiosks have become an unofficial emblem of Taipei, appearing on numerous book covers.
On the smaller scale of the market stalls, I read the bags and sacks that hold the goods as skins or building envelopes. The contents themselves are not only the wares on display, but also become the structure or mass that give the containers their form. This system is both expedient and beautiful. I consider this to be design and note that everyone seems able to do it. I find evidence of similar activity in future travels and consider these ‘common pleasures’. I photograph the evidence for further review. Although the image content is ‘accidental’, the Stacks have rules, a framework or datum line, like my other collections. If items are laid on a table or the street, the photographs are shot in landscape format (above eye height with the lens parallel to the ground). If the goods are stacked or hung vertically, then a portrait format is used.

These urban rituals are undertaken by those who have an intimate relationship with their subject matter (or wares) and seem to thrive without an architect or designer. This makes me question the role of the expert and more specifically what I might have to offer as a practitioner in this context, or as an educator in the Taipei Operations workshop. I structure the studio so we can develop our own intimacies with Taipei to avoid an overlay of preconceived ideas.

methods

Observation is the operative process; all responses to the city are considered valid. The mapping of our individual preoccupations is rigorous, often obsessive – a type of forensic study in the search for clues that reveal hidden phenomena. The studies flip between small and large, from a personal reading to a universal understanding. A specificity of time and place is required in order to avoid generalisation and simplification. Issues become identified, and patterns are revealed from within the system.

Urban diary: “The World Famous Mango Ice Store.” A 24-hour ‘stake-out’ by the authors reveals not only the entrepreneurial spirit in the (illegal) appropriation of the public space of the street, but also a social code in the system of negotiation with adjacent businesses. The structure opens at 11am and begins to gradually unfold onto the adjacent lot and footpaths: tables and chairs, service stations, the overflow from the kitchen. The popularity of this fruit and ice treat grows throughout the day; the crowds build, and illegally parked cars and service vehicles expand deep into the neighbourhood. By 6pm when the queues get long, an employee from the ice store arrives to establish an unobstructed frontage to the Japanese restaurant next door. This grass-roots response appears to provide a viable alternative to the systems of legislation and planning.

The ‘urban diary’ is a summary of our methods. We start small. An object, event or a district is selected and located specifically in time and place. From there we ‘zoom out’ to locate the investigation within a larger space and longer time.
frame to determine the site or context of the work, and how 'big' the idea is – the issues arising. (In my view, the architectural project exists somewhere between the scales of 1:1 and 1:100,000 and should be considered within the time frames of a moment and a minimum of 100 years.) All observations start from the personal reading, and rely upon our ‘being there’. We make catalogues, stay in one spot (over time), trace routes, see things in motion, compare them to where we have come from, and position them within the map of the world. The data is broken down, edited, analysed – compiled as a list, arranged by colour, categorised, and seen over time in order to reveal the particularities of Taipei.¹⁰

Through representation and critique, the observations of the existing conditions are evaluated; the particular becomes general as the (larger) issues emerge, allowing others to engage in dialogue. In the urban diary “Original vs. Piracy,”¹¹ two Louis Vuitton handbags are interrogated from the detail (of their stitching) to the map of the world (the paths of production and distribution). We recognise the critical difference when we compare the points of exchange (the pavement and the department store) in the same space of time. (We cite these pairs of images in our competition-style judging of effective representation techniques.)¹² Taipei can be described as ‘dynamic’ but this visual evidence is much more compelling and useful to a designer. All opinions are acknowledged and respected in this process. In some instances the phenomena can be considered both positively and negatively. I, personally, remain charmed by the following diary of rubbish collection:

Urban diary: The garbage truck arrives in the park near my house at 7:30pm on Monday nights. It plays a digitised version of Mozart’s “Für Elise” to herald its arrival. The neighbourhood gathers together to place their assortment of garbage directly into the back of the truck. Generally some kind person offers to help if your load is too heavy. The recycling truck follows closely behind. A man stands inside and sorts the plastic, metal and glass into separate bags. Some of my rubbish is valuable, apparently, and gets whisked away by entrepreneurs prior to collection. Raw food gets made into compost; cooked food is binned for the pigs. Garbage tax is charged on the official blue bags that you can buy at the local 7-11; no other bags are accepted. Apparently the garbage trucks in Taichung are teaching their citizens to speak English – a new digitised phrase each day. By 8:00pm the trucks leave and the village meeting is over. The park is empty again.¹³

The authors of an alternative proposal for rubbish collection in the Yong Kung District¹⁴ realise that this ‘ritual’ poses a nuisance to those with large families, during a monsoon, and for the elderly or handicapped. (They are less romantic than me, and not seduced by the image.) They pose questions that avoid an

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¹⁰ See examples of these methods in the introduction to *Taipei Operations*, 10-33.
¹¹ Ho Sook Yan and Hung Jia Xin, “Two Louis Vuitton Handbags,” 172-77.
¹² This is one of the techniques to engage students in the process of critique; each student gets a vote for projects that best satisfy the criteria in a range of categories and then they justify their choices.
¹³ Ho Sook Yan and Shih Fan Yun, “Garbage: An Independent Community Recycling System,” 232-3; Yan and Fan took the photographs and I wrote the text.
over-simplification of the problem(s) and thus expedient response. Their strategy – to create neighbourhood recycling centres instead of dumping waste on the city’s periphery – not only maintains the community spirit and minimises transport, but also ensures a continuing economic mix with the introduction of additional local employment. Abandoned historic Japanese houses are co-opted and recycled in the process; urban typologies such as the shophouse and the light-industrial unit maintain their relevance in the face of impending high-rise development. This is far from a preservationist position, yet it enables the urban fabric to remain intact. By dealing with the complexity of the site phenomena at both the local and city scales, and over a period of time, they create a truly sustainable project with its requisite breadth of concerns.

**testing the research**

The process of depiction or making the map is undertaken consciously; it is not a neutral activity. All maps lie, to paraphrase Robert Smithson\(^{15}\), and reflect the bias of the mapmaker: one set of data is privileged over another; the means of representation selected offer some possibilities for interpretation and exclude others. The construction of the map is the construction of the city – the design of the site of speculation – and the initial intervention. Propositions thus flow seamlessly from the analysis of what is already there.

The position of the author is reflected in the bias of the map, and it is only through a considered social and political agenda that meaningful contributions can be made within the built environment. This is demonstrated in the work of Deniz Sun who is uncomfortable with the lack of clear distinctions between the public and private realms.\(^{16}\) What could she photograph? How does one determine the public space of the street where on one hand a shop’s merchandise blocks the footpath while next door domestic rituals take place in full view? How could she reasonably operate in an environment without a full understanding of the culture? A series of drawn delineations of her perceptions reveal the nuances of occupation she discovers in her walks. She applies this method to the two city blocks of the suburban bus ‘terminal’: an informal congregation of private companies serviced by small ticketing areas (rented shops) and bus parking and waiting areas (appropriated from the public footpaths and streets). She increases the program (with a hotel and tourist facilities) with the same language of occupation she observes, and produces alternative (and more accurate) plans to the indifferent documents issued by most cities which only register property ownership and buildings.\(^{17}\)

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\(^{14}\) ibid., 234-41.


It becomes apparent that starting with the particular does not preclude the scale of the proposal. A fascination with traffic flows and motorcycle culture – the scale of a pedestrian with the speed of a car – starts with time-lapse photography from a bedroom window and concludes with the redevelopment of the movement systems within an entire district. The coexistence between these scales – ‘being there’ and the masterplan – becomes the issue (and opportunity) as does the varying and often contradictory needs of the population. Zoning and pedestrianisation are deemed to be oversimplified solutions in this context. By using the language of the ‘legal’ and ‘illegal’ appropriation of public space, a physical process of negotiation is established by reordering the existing; nothing is qualified or removed – only rearranged. Surgical incisions and the subtle addition and subtraction of hawker stalls, kiosks, small structures, stairways, balconies, and rooftops provide an alternative to the heavy demolition and construction of most infrastructure projects. An evolutionary process is set in place, over a much larger time frame – like a landscape.

curating (taipei)
The explorations by the individual authors (as outlined above and graphically throughout the book) become part of a larger body of work on the city – and a composite map of Taipei. The specificity of these fragments becomes abstracted into patterns when the work is seen as a whole. The 1:1 scale is read simultaneously with the map at 1:10,000; the phenomenological coexists with the physical. Taipei is perceived as a series of specifically located moments with strong identities and character. These observations build up, as does the work, to reveal a complexity of issues, attitudes and responses that range in scale and types of strategic intervention.

An installation of the work in Taipei and Melbourne disseminates the outcomes of the workshop and summarises its spirit – of discovery and discourse. A series of identically-sized folio plates are placed on an ‘examining table’ in the centre of the gallery. They can be read as a series of individual projects, by negotiating the piles. The loose plates, by their nature, have no hierarchy; they become rearranged, reconfigured, added to, or deleted. Velcro installations on the gallery wall invite the visitors, as well as the authors, to ‘curate’ the city by affixing the plates by issue, by location, by program, by project, by media, by accident, and by desire. Overlaps, adjacencies, comparisons, contradictions and tensions amongst the plates underscore the fact that there are many readings of a good city and that anyone can and should be encouraged to contribute. The discussion around the table is more dinner party chatter than museum whisper.
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18 Lim Hui Yuan and Hung Jia Xin, “Sliding: Local Communities and Traffic Congestion,” 48-69.
Curation best describes our activities in Taipei. Who needs a designer in the face of such inventive entrepreneurs? And what is the role of the planner when neighbours can negotiate? And who are we (whether foreign or local) to swan in from high with our bird’s-eye views? Our traditional spheres of operation as architects, at 1:200 scale in plan and section for instance, are of little use for the growing complexity that practitioners in the built environment are faced with today, such as the scale of a highway or the time frame of a sustainable agenda. When working at a larger scale we are often distanced from our subject matter and create the sorts of disenfranchisement that are addressed by ‘urban agitators’ such as the Situationists in Paris and Stalker in Italy. Questions of authorship, and the responsibility that this entails, remains clear in our practice, but we need to remember the common pleasures we share as citizens. It is our responsibility to enable and empower our constituents in the curation of their cities.

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19 These groups empower the individual in the city through the walk (and a critique of the map) – specifically the ‘derive’ of The Situationist International and ‘zonzo’ of Stalker, as outlined in Francesco Careri, 2002. Walkscapes. Barcelona: Editorial Gustavo Gili.
chapter 3
trajectories

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189 Urban Flashes
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TRAJECTORIES

The PhD starts with trajectories developed from my Masters’ work. These form the research questions that I address through my practices of installation, exhibition, teaching, writing, and design. In reflecting upon this work, I chart what I have learned, and in conclusion, I map trajectories for future projects and ongoing research. I find increasing clarity in my design processes and my methods; I note overlaps across the various practices and realise that each form of inquiry compliments the other and reveals something different. I discover similar slippages across my research questions: both the search for common pleasures and critique of the masterplan address the issues of how a designer in the built environment operates.

When I question the masterplan and the reading of the city as an object or a collection of objects through my installation and teaching, I find alternatives: a bottom-up approach, a collection of fragments, an incomplete picture. When I search for common pleasures and question how I can engage a broader range of ‘others’ in the architectural project I identify the author, the viewer, the audience, my collaborators, the community, and citizens as likely participants. The former question starts with a critique, the latter with a positive desire. The role of the expert and the voice of authority is questioned; this is directed both to my practice (as a result of the reflection required of the PhD by Project) and to fellow practitioners. I respond by proffering a new role – the curator – who has both expertise (in the design of design processes) and can afford common pleasures by enabling others to participate in the design of the city.

I position my work within cross-disciplinary practice – which is, by its nature, marginal – and instead of locating gaps in the model or the sources of difference, I find practitioners who share my sensibilities and common pleasures.¹ I join two communities of scholars in this process: Urban Flashes is the umbrella for my continuing research on the Asian city; I name and clarify my practice in X_Field and generate new laboratories for research.

discovery (and knowledge)

In my first international workshop I set a studio that looked at urban infrastructure at the two extreme scales of 1:20 and 1:20,000+ to bypass the standard architectural scales of 1:100 and 1:200. I asked the students to reconcile the immediacy of a light switch with the abstraction of the national power grid. The ‘architecture’ would be somewhere in between. One student studied the postal system, and turned his smaller scale investigation to the letterbox and the scenario of anticipating an unemployment check. He documented the postman’s route and timing in parallel with the recipient’s anxious pacing of the floor and glances out of the window before the familiar clatter and thud of the envelope. He poetically reconfigured the front of the house to better accommodate this ritual he

¹ This is my approach to the literature and projects review which is consistent with my approach outlined in the “Preface.”
I “discover” things of perhaps similar significance through this body of work: for instance, that I do ‘bottom-up urbanism’. Although I am familiar with the literature and have colleagues who have long been proponents of this method of working, I traced my lineage from art practice (Land Art) and working directly with and privileging the site. I now realise the resonances between these two approaches; in *Five Walks*, I see the city similarly to landscape, subject to processes of growth and decay and the accretions that build over time. Additionally, I include the user as an “accident of site” or an (ephemeral) agent of change. I extend the artist’s engagement with the site and his/her audience by identifying the ‘user’ as an active participant in the city as opposed to remaining the more passive ‘viewer’.

I rediscover the figure-ground drawing, amongst other tools, which I previously would have dismissed as an exemplar of western urban masterplanning techniques and oppositional to my questioning of architectural representation and the need for direct experience. Does it make a difference when it is called a “swollen rice drawing” and used to explain the “clogging” and “unclogging” of illegal structures on Taipei streets (on pages 56-9 of *Taipei Operations*)? Though the PhD starts with a critique of the masterplan and the expert, I realise that both approaches, from the bottom and the top, can, and should coexist.

The plan of Taipei produced by the Department of Urban Design is an extraordinary document. Building lines and city blocks are delineated; streets and pavements are drawn. However, this is where convention stops. Only the hatched buildings exist legally, with approvals from the statutory authorities and in accordance with the masterplan. All crossed-hatched structures are illegal in this context, and have been constructed according to the rules of some other system. Laneways are filled in, or become internal courtyards; footpaths disappear completely at times. New typologies are created: arcade kitchens, doughnut buildings, and wrap-around commerce. Any open bit of land is up for grabs. The authority of the map is challenged by the entrepreneurship of the inhabitants. The planners recognise (and draw) this dilemma; they are both rule-makers and citizens who, too, delight in the amenities available any time and everywhere, which they cite as the spirit of Taipei. (The map is on page 60 of *Taipei Operations*.)

One can come to the same conclusions by different routes and with different intentions. It is the process that interests me and the sense of ownership, or authorship, when you discover it on your own terms. I do not believe we would

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2 Essy Baniassad, then Dean of the School of Architecture at the Technical University of Nova Scotia (TUNS, now Dalhousie University) where the workshop took place in summer 1987. I never knew if the comment was facetious or not.


have ever fully appreciated or understood the Taipei City Planners' map had we not amassed a catalogue of evidence prior to view. We certainly would not have witnessed the civic responsibility demonstrated in the grassroots negotiations between neighbouring shopkeepers over appropriated public space at the “World Famous Mango Ice Shop” had Peter and Fan not held a 24-hour stake-out (on page 141 of *Taipei Operations*). And my discussions about this map with Taipei’s Director of Planning⁵ confirm that we need to play multiple roles in the design of our cities – by being both expert and citizen simultaneously.

Perhaps what is more significant is *why* I make these discoveries. My reflections upon the Taipei work mirror the lessons I learn during this PhD. From the onset of the research, I am conscious to dismiss any preconceived notions I might have, and thus avoid the overlay of western analysis and models. I try to see with fresh eyes and not succumb to the seduction of the exotic (or an aesthetic). I wish to be a good guest (and collaborator) and respect the ideas and protocols of my hosts – colleagues, students and citizens. I am privileged to be able to exhibit our work in a respected art gallery and review how I communicate (to those from a non-architectural background). I discover that considerations such as these are critical in my professional capacity as an architect, educator and urban designer. This new-found consciousness of my role addresses how I should operate in an ethical manner (the responsibility of the expert) and engage with others (in affording common pleasures). I must undertake this act of ‘curation’, a duty of care, before I can act – or design.

**a learning environment**

My teaching in Taipei highlights this duty of care, and through this reflection I consider how I curate the design studio to construct the opportunities to make discoveries. In the past, I concentrated on formulating the content of the studio (or the discussion – as opposed to the outcome).⁶ Now I focus on designing the learning environment (or the framework for discussion and debate). This is in response to the lessons I learn from the Korean War Memorial where I conclude that I need to design the design process before fruitful collaboration, or common pleasures, can take place. I apply this to my relationships with both my Urban Flashes and Taipei Operations colleagues and with my students.

Fairly recently ‘learning’ was added to my academic job description to become ‘teaching and learning’.⁷ Students are no longer the passive recipients of knowledge; traditional hierarchies give way to an equal partnership between students and teachers, with the responsibility this entails. Usually I maintain a healthy cynicism about the corporatisation of education with its requisite

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⁵ Chung-Chieh Lin, Senior Specialist, Department of Urban Development.
⁶ See Detroit study tour on page 25.
⁷ The American academics who invented the phrase have now reversed the wording to be ‘learning and teaching’ lest there be any implication of authority asserted.
buzz-words, but I immediately recognise this as the ‘educational model’ that I espouse. I create a ‘learning environment’ which offers space for speculation which I consider a key component of research.

The inquiries in my studios and practice do not presuppose that a building is the answer. Representation is not used for accuracy, or to illustrate the object or building; it is an investigative tool that generates processes, not form. Such an anti-formalist agenda appears at odds with architectural education and is not without its critics who claim that it does not yield ‘visionary’ results. True, it does not precipitate the singular or heroic image, but that is not necessarily a bad thing. Why limit ‘design’ to the making of buildings when its definition can expand to include frameworks and systems? When did ‘process’ get hijacked to become a formulaic generator of exotic shapes as opposed to actions?8 ‘Pluralism’ does not cite the lack of a theoretical position but marks the acceptance of many. And though the ‘concept’ as embodied in art practice “emphasises the thinking processes almost exclusively”,9 this seems entirely appropriate in education.

In Taipei, I adapt my pedagogical methods10 because, as I note from the Stacks, the city is as much about the user as it is about the place. I start with a strategy (since I am unfamiliar with the issues and the districts) and extend the investigations over a larger time period and to the map of the world.11 My students have the local knowledge; I offer them the tools to see their city in a new light. I am delighted that this method produces projects that move seamlessly across the scales from our starting point (small) to produce large urban projects that don’t lose sight of the particulars of the site or event. I attribute this both to the design process and to the students’ and my genuine desire to understand and to be sensitive to the local condition.

This reassessment of my teaching methods, combined with my curatorial desire to encourage things that will be out of my control, provide trajectories in designing my current, and developing, design studios. I find this approach to be appropriate for the sustainable project, whereby intervening in the processes rather than focussing on the solutions (or the technological ‘fix’) can shift the agenda and challenge current design thinking.12 My concern with the specificity of time as well as place – the consideration of the project at the moment and over a hundred years – is instrumental in determining the site and duration of design interventions and their long-term repercussions. I rework “discussion” into these new investigations under the banner of my work-in-progress project, ‘big’. As always, I try not to preclude the outcomes. Projects such as the design

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8 When he taught at the AA, the artist Bruce Mc Lean said (about a project set in another AA Intermediate Unit in the late 1980’s) that anyone can make something interesting from a block of wax, a ball of twine and a copper cylinder, but whose project is it anyway?


10 I had previously started my studios with full scale interventions or installations to engage directly with the site; in Extreme Weather, students designed apparatus to intensify existing conditions.

11 I will return to Taipei in 2010 as a visiting professor, and will be interested to discover how I structure my studio now that I have an understanding of the discourse.

12 This is similar to ‘emergence’ but uses different techniques and analysis.
of a 300,000m² abalone farm leave few architectural typologies to pull from a hat.\textsuperscript{13} The design of ‘Flower Towers’ (that double the density of the urban wholesale market to circumvent its move to the periphery) and ‘SUPERmarkets’ (that relocate food distribution networks to the urban centre in order to reduce transport) has expanded my ‘field’ even further to embrace logistics, industry, and agriculture.\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{When I was a student in David Greene’s unit\textsuperscript{15} we talked about things like how many electric razors and washing machines one might find on a suburban street, and what they might look like all in a line. It made me remember crawling through our six room New York apartment on hands and knees aged about nine, counting the number of things that had plugs. (I got to 147 in total. It was a good 60’s household that included such necessities as electric carving knives, facial saunas, foot spas and shoeshine machines.) Twenty years after the studio, I had to smile when I heard a PhD candidate in sustainability posit that apartment buildings could have communal laundries; any David Greene student would have figured that out in their first week, and every New Yorker knows that as reality. I still admire – and apply the principles of – the best tutorial I ever received, in which David drew a chart and suggested I organise my building into things that could be evenly distributed and those that could not.}

I start this reflection on my practice with a trajectory from Greene’s review of my Masters’ work and I acknowledge him now when I reflect upon how I learn. I am amazed that I remember some details so vividly from those early years of my architectural education. I am not surprised that I can’t recall David teaching me anything specific, certainly nothing along the lines of how to calculate a staircase or draw a perspective. But I will never forget learning that the way I look at the world has currency; for this reason I often credit David with everything I know.\textsuperscript{16}

I realise that I create learning environments for myself. Self-directed endeavours such as Stacks and the Oranges are structured to enable me to continue to “look at the world” and see things I might not normally notice; they encourage me to continue to question why things are the way that they are, and what they could be. I still make “charts” or frameworks to understand and organise this ‘data’ – to locate these observations and determine issues arising to provide trajectories for further investigations. I have “discovered” that my primary research source is my eyes, followed by listening and asking questions of colleagues.\textsuperscript{17} I acknowledge that my references have been built up over time\textsuperscript{18} and attribute to my collage of methods. I conclude that my pursuit of knowledge is a continuing journey – circuitous and repetitive at times as I re-test my hunches across various projects and practices.
My teaching practice allows me to hone my research methods alongside my students. I design the design studio as a laboratory for ideas and a space for discovery by independent researchers. I reflect upon the relationship that I have with these students. I find a positive shift in the traditional hierarchies: who is the expert in this situation? We, and the project, all benefit from our multiple viewpoints and contributions. Through the review of this aspect of my practice I add to the list of experts I must continue to challenge: the authoritative voice of the educator joins those of the architect and the masterplanner. As in the other cases, I question not only what we do or make, but how we operate – questions we must continue to pose. This is an ethical position.

**curating the city**

Jeremy Till discusses architectural ethics in a chapter called “Imperfect Ethics” in his recent book: “To assume an ethical stance means to assume responsibility for the ‘other’ …the diverse mix of users, occupiers and receivers of architecture, people whose political and phenomenal lives will be affected by the construction of a building and its subsequent occupation.”¹⁹ My ‘search for common pleasures’ is predicated upon encouraging “others’ to participate in the architectural project. I seek to give them a voice; thus I must learn how to listen.

Assuming an ethical position is a question of tone as much as responsibility. I use the word ‘author’ to insure personal responsibility – in order not to abstract, though not to wield authority. My critique of the expert is somewhat rhetorical. I believe designers are necessary and desirable and that the problem with many community and participatory projects is the lack of sophistication in the built outcome. There is clearly a role for the expert.

Similarly for the masterplan: the fragments and collections I espouse require frameworks and datums to have meaning; the masterplan should be used as a strategic device, an underlay for the stories of the city instead of the location of miniature buildings. There is a great leap of scale between the masterplan (at 1:1000) and the scale of the hawker stall (at 1:10) on the Taipei map and, thankfully, the planners appear to acknowledge the space between them. Till shares my criticism of the conventional architectural scale of 1:100 that abstracts all the “mess and uncertainty” of spatial occupation. He posits: “What if…1:100 is first considered a social scale? 1:100: one architect to one hundred citizens...In this light 1:100 as a social scale assumes an ethical dimension, facing up to one’s responsibility to others.”²⁰
I become fascinated with this space between (the scales and the expert and the citizen) when I view Sanford Biggers’ and Jennifer Zackin’s *a small world*..., 1999, at the 2002 Biennial Exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art. Two screens sit beside each other showing grainy home movies of ordinary middle class life: birthday parties, piano lessons, summer holidays, and festive occasions. The similarity between these parallel histories is heightened by a remarkable difference: he (Biggers) is African-American and Christian and she (Zackin) is white and Jewish. The ‘gap’ between these screens reverberates. The curator I have defined in my practice is well-positioned to negotiate these extremes by opening a similar space for dialogue.

I realise the potential of this role when we curate the Taipei Operations exhibition which affords us the first opportunity to see all the work together and reflect upon what we have done. We undertake this task within the same framework of open dialogue and negotiation that we established in the workshop.

The first decision we make is the obvious one: we will not pin up large panels of each student’s work with either a heroic image (there are very few) or a collage of architectural drawings, photos and text – which is the norm. The next decision is surprising: the students want their work to be seen as a whole to pay homage to the workshop experience and the city of Taipei instead of celebrating their individual achievements. They want to present “the laboratory for the exchange of ideas and culture between two groups of students which has resulted in the forging of new friendships and an interesting set of architectural examinations and propositions.” We extend this to the gallery space to include the visitors or citizens of Taipei. The resultant title of the show, Taipei Operations, refers as much to this laboratory as to our surgical incisions in the city.

The exhibition design decisions and the discourse flow from here. The “fragmentation and adaptation” that many students cite in their work become the model for designing an exhibition that will change (by rearranging the plates of the fragmented projects). The Velcro wall installations mirror our whiteboard discussions and the resulting “range of social and architectural issues that have been raised”. The examination table asks one to look very closely, much like we did in Taipei.

The exhibition is generous in spirit. Through their projects and the workshop experience, the students find their own voices and thus develop the “strong and unique identities and qualities” that they ascribe to Taipei. And through this process they realise that there is room for more voices. Theirs is not an ego-driven pursuit but a personal journey tempered by the need to take responsibility.
for their actions in the city and a desire to share them with others. I learn a lot from the design of this exhibition. I realise that it is as much an act of designing the physical installation as it is of setting the tone of engagement and framework for discourse. This is why I develop such a fondness for the word ‘curation’ and use it as a description of and aspiration for my practice.

**urban flashes**

I continue to develop my practice within two such frameworks for discourse: Urban Flashes and X_Field. Urban Flashes is a network of architects and artists inaugurated in 1999 by Ti-Nan Chi in “a move to generate situations where people engage, exchange, create and play together, which may eventually disturb and change urban development”.24 Chi’s description of the project sets the tone; there is no manifesto, just a gathering of like-minded individuals with the potential for action. A changing cast of ‘Flashers’ meet irregularly for events such as large student workshops and intimate conferences.25 My practice evolves with and is enhanced by this group of individuals.

We debate about producing a masterplan for the first Urban Flashes workshop on the Washang brewery site. None of us has worked on a project in this city, or of this scale before; most of us want to find an alternative approach to urban design and one that responsibly engages the recruited students in the process. When we arrive on site we realise we are right to eschew the view from above; the workshop is held in a dirt-floored shed in the midst of buildings cut with Matta-Clark-like holes (for the tanks) and the remnants of brewing apparatus reminiscent of a Kabakov installation.26 We work in this charged environment in direct contact with the site and collaboratively with our students.27 We create installations from the detritus of the industrial past and celebrate the traces of occupation in image and text28 while the artists play ping pong with passers-by. It is more of an urban happening than a masterplan and we are all immersed.29

In my group,30 the students map the poetic and pragmatic qualities of the brewery site into categories we have defined. These are presented as plates of text and images mounted in a 5 x 25m matrix: individual observations are read along the long axis; site characteristics build along the other. Through discussion, we find connections and contradictions amongst our data and cross-reference these with a maze of coloured twine. The wall installation becomes both a communications tool and the document of our conversations. It is a paradigm of the complex city we observe and the dialogue we had hoped to generate; it is the visual and operational opposite of the oversimplification found in most diagrams and masterplans.31
I am not surprised we are suspicious of the masterplan when I reflect upon the pedigree of our group. At the time of the workshop, Nicholas Boyarsky has recently published his book, *Action Research*, and is prescient in his comments on “urban actions: Things just happen. Parasitical growths around motorways. Illegal housing beyond the tracks. Industrial abandonment. Large sheds…How to operate in this field?” Robert Mull is developing design strategies for socially and economically depressed British cities based upon Situationsts’ writings in his studio at the AA. Steve McAdam is liaising with social science colleagues at the University of North London to implement a combined Master’s Degree in Urban Policy and Design; in his practice, Fluid, he is producing alternative community consultation processes and proposals. Meanwhile, I am setting architecture studios at RMIT that straddled extremes of scale and the disciplines of art and landscape architecture to challenge conventional practice, in addition to building installations and war memorials. Collectively, we are well placed to offer alternative strategies to the masterplan.

Urban Flashes meetings centre on work-in-progress lectures followed by discussion. I have found numerous congruencies with fellow Flashers in my presentations of some of the projects included in the PhD. I am told that Stalker ‘shares’ my slide collection when I present *atlas* and *The Freeway Reconfigured* in conjunction with my land art images; coincidentally, Careri’s *Walkscapes* is published the same year as *Five Walks* and proves to be a valuable synopsis. Marco Casagrande and I share notes on installations and I wonder if his activist work influences the content of some of my walks. In Urban Flashes 2002 in Linz, I clearly recognise ‘common pleasures’ – in Chi’s ‘micro-urbanism’ and Manray Hsu’s ‘informal’ in the architectural workshop called “How Small is the City?” that accompanies an art exhibition entitled “How Big is the World?”

The discussions over the three days of this conference produce additional affiliations and a new trajectory. Our European hosts are fascinated by our presentations on the Asian city and we discuss the possibility of applying eastern urban design ‘models’ to the European city. They cite western models as being unable to deal with the rapid changes occurring: Austria becomes a ‘giant cloverleaf’ and the Netherlands a ‘motorway verge’ as a result of opening the borders with the Eastern Bloc. I am fascinated by the implications of the inversion of this previously immutable canon. In response, I develop and curate an Asian architecture and urbanism course at RMIT for our new master’s degree. This is our primary urban design offering; we are learning from the east and are thus forced to question any models that overlay typologies. Our study...
of the city requires a forensic analysis and we employ methods of mapping and analysis used in Taipei in addition to other techniques that we are developing at RMIT.\textsuperscript{40} This is a venue for ongoing research about both the content and the model.

I have been personally enriched by my “engagements and exchanges” with my fellow Flashers, which continue to create opportunities for further research: lectures, workshops, consultancies, and visiting professorships. These trajectories pose further questions and are my measure of the success of reflection on my practice. When I consider the implications of our approach to the city and test whether we are generating situations which may eventually “disturb and change urban development” in response to the second clause in Chi’s statement, I review the history of our engagements with Taiwanese authorities.

We receive the full VIP treatment at the first Urban Flashes workshop sponsored by Taipei City Council and the British Council: the requisite formal opening and closing ceremonies with TV and press interviews between. We consider these time-consuming distractions from the challenges of the workshop and our commitment to the students. The awkwardness of our relationship with these dignitaries is visually manifest during the exhibition opening when their futile attempts to shake the factory dust from their dark blue suits appears to distract them from viewing the work.

I develop a more fruitful relationship with the Director of Urban Planning in the Taipei Operations workshop. We develop an ongoing dialogue about his department’s map. I express my excitement about how the actions of individuals can co-exist with the masterplan; he concurs that Taipei wouldn’t be the same without these (illegal) restaurants and hawker stalls that contribute to the character of his city, and that his role is merely to set limits. I consider this map to be an emblem of the sorts of ‘meaningful discussions’ legislators can have with the community as opposed to placatory consultation processes. We continue this conversation through a series of lectures, seminars and workshops I give to the planning department on the outcomes of our research: the qualitative and quantitative mapping techniques we have developed, our observations and analyses of specific Taipei districts, and our design strategies and proposals that compliment the spirit of their map.\textsuperscript{41}

Our approach to the city and the workshop event becomes increasingly recognised and appreciated.\textsuperscript{42} Most recently, we are commissioned by the Minister of Culture to participate in the opening of TADA (Taiwan Arts, Design
and Architecture Centre) in another derelict brewery site in Taichung. This is a typical Urban Flashes event with little briefing on content and an extraordinary demand: to ‘design’ the abandoned brewery site in Taichung as an arts centre in three days. Ti-Nan Chi rallies a multi-disciplinary team: two architects and an architect/curator lead the urban regeneration project; two artists make installations on site; Chi films the event; and seventy ‘conscripts’ assist. (In Taiwan it appears you can opt for cultural instead of military service.)

We recognise that the way we structure our workshops is ideal for an event such as this. We establish a fruitful dialogue with our local colleagues through our evening lecture series and are relaxed with our status of VIPs at the ceremonial opening. We work in a shed on the site and produce installations for the event and proposals for the future. I edit *Curating the TADA*: a guidebook to locate our interventions (since the site is huge), and a medium to disseminate our findings to the minister and his staff. This is another alternative to the master plan: a vehicle, or underlay that incorporates a number of individual contributions.

The document includes a text of our curatorial and design intentions; a photographic inventory of noteworthy site features (character that should be preserved); maps and drawings of design strategies; and a record of our installation and performance pieces. The book’s structure mirrors our proposal to design the interstitial spaces of the site to encourage multiple designers of the derelict buildings and promote use by the adjoining community; it is an incomplete picture: we are designing the margins or gaps. The book template becomes a similarly inclusive space for contributions from varied authors (and users), albeit with hierarchies dictated by the editor. *Curating the TADA* becomes a framework and a tool to for discussion, interpretation and action by others as opposed to a finite proposal to be built or dismissed. I realise that the role of a good editor is very similar to that of the curator.

**x_field**

X_Field is also composed of a group of individuals working across disciplines. Whereas Urban Flashers are rallied internationally for the specific laboratory of the (Asian) city, the focus of X_Field, is on defining the structures and practice of the cross-disciplinary model and to design the framework for collaborative processes. For the past decade, several of us have been operating under the banner of “Expanded Field” in the architectural design thesis at RMIT in order to promote our areas of expertise as potential supervisors and to develop techniques that enable the individual research projects of the students.

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41 We apply techniques that respond to the tri-polar scholarship model of ‘Expanded Field’, ‘Advanced Technologies’ and ‘Urban Environments’ in the School of Architecture and Design.


45 Nicholas Boyarsky is initially horrified that I am working on the ‘presentation’ when we don’t have a project. (I agree with his critique of the ‘heroic’ or overtly graphic images or books which often have very little substance.) He later apologises when he recognises the book’s strategic and curatorial potential.

46 Supervisors include: Richard Black, Marcus Baumgart, Melissa Bright, Melanie Dodd, Graham Crist, Anna Johnson, Rosalea Monacella. See Richard Black, Mel Dodd, Sand Helsel, and Anna Johnson. 2008. “Expanded Field,” in
The ‘Ephemeral Architecture’ (FMRL) research project of Paul Carter and Leon van Schaik, located within the PhD by Project at RMIT, provides us with a laboratory in The Unused exhibition for the Melbourne Festival. The installations are sites for individual experiments; the meetings of the FMRLs at the Graduate Research Conferences are opportunities for discussion with a community of scholars. Naming this group and creating this forum creates a sense of belonging that is surprisingly reassuring.

I reflect upon what I share with my Ephemeral colleagues. Although our research foci differ, we all start with close observation and experience of site: Jenny Lowe’s red earth, Gini Lee’s ‘Oratunga’ landscape, and Richard Black’s Murray River.47 We use mapping as a strategic first action; techniques vary from drawing with multiple lines (Black), the materials of the site (Lowe) and through video and time-lapse photography (Lee). Archiving, collecting and curating stories, memories, and history appear in the work of Lee, Black and Ware. At least one of the Land Artists (Smithson, Christo, Long) appears in every review. I am most interested in the tone of these PhD documents (many still in progress); they are intensely personal reflections: the record of tours, searches and journeys, written in the first person, and interspersed with narratives. The language is elusive yet engaging – “marginal”, with “gaps” and “space in between”; inclusive rather than exclusive: “curation”, “common pleasures”; circuitous and seemingly inconclusive: Lee’s “intention to notice”, Black’s “transitory” – yet appropriate to the nature of the inquiries.

‘X_Field continues in the spirit of this dialogue and reflection; I focus the expanding group on defining the project.48 Whilst we maintain the integrity of our individual practices and contribute to our respective disciplines, collectively there is a breadth of investigation, and opportunities for creative partnerships. What binds us however, is our common ground. We all work across a series of scales: from world economics, the Asian city, river systems and cycles of production to the minutaie of everyday life, the celebration of the banal, and a material thinking and presence. We share a fascination with the transitory and the ephemeral, the changeability of states, the fluidity of time and space – of memory, the passage of light, the movement of water, the actions of people, growth and decay, and things outside of our control.

We find solace in the margins of our professional standings, in the spaces in between – the physical fragments of a post industrial terrain, at the water’s edge, or the invisible social, political, and economic divides. We eschew formalism for processes, cycles, systems and forms of exchange, the dissolution of the figure
into the urban field. We design design methods to deal with the complexity of the world around us, some appropriated from other disciplines, techniques of consultation and participatory intervention, observational and analytical tools, and operative diagrams. We thrive in the realm of the speculative, where there is no right or wrong, only alternatives and possibilities to pose further questions.

The academy provides a valuable setting for our project and research-based activities. We develop a postgraduate research stream at RMIT under this banner in response to the increasing numbers of students and researchers we find who are alienated by the parameters and conventions of their professions; X_Field offers a forum and the collegiate environment that we so enjoyed in the FMRL project: a community of scholarship amongst peers. We approach the supervision collaboratively, and capitalise on our combined strengths in the process.49

We clarify our agenda (and negotiate our differences) when we prepare the course description, outlined below.50 The most striking document is the combined CV we choose to produce – three of our best in each of the conventional categories. It visually demonstrates the breadth and richness of this collaborative approach and yields a few surprises: I discover that collectively we have designed a disproportionate number of war memorials and despite my disdain for the word ‘expert’, I feel it might be applicable. Designing the cover for this volume reinforces one of the dilemmas of this approach to design. The search for a singular image (as prescribed) proves as allusive as the language we use to reflect on our practice. There are few snappy catchphrases and no heroic images.51

X_Field incorporates project-based design research across the disciplines of art, architecture and landscape architecture. Instead of focussing upon the differences between the disciplines, we capitalise on the common ground: the design methods, the scales and nature of engagement, the sites for action, and the methods of production and dissemination of the research. The project is inclusive rather than exclusive. An interdisciplinary practice can identify the gaps that conventional practice has marginalised – as fertile opportunities for intervention. Broad areas of research include art and public space; ephemeral architectures; social, political and economic infrastructures; and a lateral approach towards social and environmental sustainability and urbanism.

Conventional practice in the disciplines of art, architecture, and landscape architecture has clearly defined parameters and sites and scales of exploration. It is, all too often, object-driven on a tabula rasa with the practitioner positioned as the expert with a view from on high. We are critical of these assumptions and

49 John McGlade, an industrial designer who uses the ephemera of light and shadow to create form in the Australian landscape, thrived when he joined the fledgling X_Field stream; Professor Judith Brine, one of his MDes examiners, was delighted to finally see an industrial design thesis with poetry.

50 Portions of this text were written for the unpublished Square Book, 2007, which was intended to promote the School of Architecture and Design’s Masters and PhDs by Research (by Project).

51 This is a major pitfall of this type of practice; the work is best described in multiples or a series and generally needs a supporting text. I have not included the thumbnails I had intended to illustrate my references in this document; they offer no insight and are often misleading in describing the work of artists such as Sophie Calle, Janet Cardiff, and Robert Smithson.
seek to reconceptualise the physical and social context of our actions, and our role in the process. The project-based form of inquiry in this research affords us alternative sites and forms of production.

We pay homage to Rosalind Krauss’ matrix of sculpture, architecture, and landscape architecture in her seminal essay, “Sculpture in the Expanded Field”, but instead of reaffirming the distinctions between these disciplines, we are more interested in the spaces in between. We choose to operate at the edges and have identified these margins as places of becoming, transaction, negotiation, and improvisation. We privilege the question (what if?) over the solution and the process over the product.

The project foregrounds a direct engagement with the subject matter, of being there. The site-specificity of the work avoids generalisation and extends beyond the physical to include the social, political, economic and transitory. We rely upon close observation, analysis and critique to reveal the invisible systems that make things the way they are. We start small, with the minuitiae of everyday life, specific to time and place. Emerging patterns raise issues that delineate larger scales of investigation and action. Design methods and representation tools are invented to shift seamlessly between these scales, between the grit of the built and lived of the site, and the abstraction of the system.

I conclude with this framing of the X_Field project which is a synopsis of my reflections and a trajectory for future research. I believe it is an ephemeral moment that marks the end of this PhD project, yet one that provides firm ground on which to build my continuing practice. It is invaluable to be able to locate my academic and design research and reassuring to name it. Within this framework, I am guaranteed a continuing dialogue with a growing community of peers. And I am confident that the project can continue to expand with its inclusive rather than exclusive nature.

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52 My next project will be to literally and figuratively curate a touring exhibition of the work, and produce a cumulative catalogue. I intend to ‘expand the field’ to Asia to ‘collect’ the work of like minded practitioners and guest curators as it travels initially to Seoul (Jaewon Cho, my Busan workshop collaborator) and Taipei (Ti-Nan Chi amongst others). This will be a continuing act of curation that will be out of my control, and hopefully yield surprising additions, deletions, insights and common pleasures.
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exhibited at Guildford Lane Gallery, 21-28 May 2009.
Five tours through the PhD exhibition are presented. I use the device of multiple tours or walks to afford opportunities for additional readings and voices, and to enable others to engage with the work.

The tours chart my reflections on my practice – the projects, my methods, the materiality in the work and the dissemination of the research (in books) – across design, installation, teaching, exhibition, and publication. I am interested in the slippages across these practices, and consider them all research.

I address several research questions in “A Search for Common Pleasures: Curating the City”: how can I engage ‘others’ in ways of seeing and acting in a meaningful way within the built environment? In response, I consider how I might design design processes that involve others in the making of the work. (I become increasingly fascinated with things that might be out of my control.)

I criticise the masterplan as an often oversimplified, reductive and generalised response that implies that a city is an object or collection of objects or buildings. I question how I might provide innovative landscape and urban structures and systems: alternatives to the view from above, generated from the individual. I question the role of the architect operating from on high, and determine an alternative role – the curator – who allows multiple voices to be heard.

Through this reflection upon my practice, I question my role as a designer, and how I might operate as the author, the expert, the designer, the citizen. I realise that I can create frameworks (with expertise) and also participate (on an equal footing with others) in the design process. I call this activity curation.
The collection is how I see: patterns, connections, repetition, similarity and difference. It is the tool that allows me to question, reconfigure and rearrange. The Oranges and Stacks reflect my ongoing fascination with Asia; they remind me that if I am able to look more clearly I might understand more. They are a form of automatic photography, albeit with rules; they prompt me to reflect and understand the systems behind the immediacy of the objects.

Individual items need a framework to become a collection, such as a similarity of image size and format or relationship in a line. The time line of oranges locates the projects relative to time; the examining table begs us to make connections and comparisons. The format of the collection becomes the tools and the rules of engagement and forms the structure in my work; in addition it gives the collection its meaning.

My interest in time and place starts with the desire for site specificity – for ‘being there’; the Oranges are dated, and located in the map of the world. Numbers allow the images to transcend the snapshots they ostensibly are. In “Walk 1” of Five Walks, dated brass plaques give everyday narratives an equal status to historical fact. The 339 stainless steel poles of the Korean War Memorial contain both quantitative and qualitative information. The markers of the dead are cold to the touch in the Canberra winter.

A consideration of design methods is critical to my teaching practice where I create a learning space by providing structures or methods that then leave the students free to determine the approach and content of their individual projects. They find their own voices; a sense of their authorship is established.
The materiality of my work is exhibited on the *Five Walks* table. A laneway system is designed through fragments, some ephemeral, some material - *brass plaques, postcard stands, orange flagging tape, chalk* - but most importantly by the inscription of the body or the user, walking in the space (while wearing an *orange vest*, perhaps). These minimal marks provide gaps that allow space to speculate. The brass plaques join the other accretions that are part of the evolution and graceful ageing of the city.

The collection yields the *small*, to be held in the hand and perused up close. The MDF dowelled tables are frameworks designed to support these continually-changing accretions, initially for the Taipei Operations Exhibition and now for the *Stacks*. One is unable to grasp the contents of the original 7.2m length in one view; thus the viewer edits and reconfigures the work to make a new project.

My process does not yield the heroic image of an object / building or a masterplan that can be understood in one view. The large Korean War Memorial image of four *granite boulders* in a field of 339 four-metre *stainless steel poles* is less of a formal move and more of an underlay – to create a ‘clearing’ for ceremonies, to record the desire lines of visitors and to incorporate the contributions of my collaborators.

(The colour *orange* tends to mark the ‘accidental’ in my work. In *atlas* the orange bunting and stakes were ‘designed’ in response to the Health and Safety at Work Officer. The orange vests in *Five Walks* were a last-minute addition when the promised MP3 players failed to materialise and bulkier cassette tapes and recorders were substituted.)
The Oranges and Stacks set the tone for the PhD. The Stacks celebrate the entrepreneurship in the (Asian) city and demonstrate that indeed “everyone is an artist”. The Oranges record the search for “common pleasures” rather than differences. “This is a Map of the World”, an artist’s talk (the Oranges images and text), frames how I look, see, read and speculate.

The two war memorials build upon the lessons learned from my Masters where I establish the relevance of art methods to the architectural project, and the need to establish common ground among design practitioners. The collaborative project becomes tested in the Korean War Memorial when I realise that I must design the design process – or space for dialogue – before I, or others, can act.

Five Walks uses the language of the gallery – audio tours, placards, maps and guides – to engage a broader group of ‘others’ in the (design of) the city. The walk is empowering; when one walks in the city, a new city is designed each time. I curate five different walks through the same Melbourne lanes to recognise these multiple voices. A good city is capable of supporting an infinite number of narratives.

In the Taipei Operations design workshop I begin with a strategy to start small – specific to time and place; our direct engagement with the city avoids the generalisations so often applied to the Asian city. Observations and mappings moves seamlessly through the scales; we discover that the masterplan can and should exist alongside the lived and used. Our proposals form an incomplete picture; the exhibition of the narratives of the 33 individual students mounted on loose plates provides gaps in the map of Taipei, and invites the gallery visitors to participate in the design of their city (on the Velcro walls).
The forms of dissemination of the research (books, lectures, exhibitions, installations) become projects in their own right. They mark moments of reflection that affect ongoing and subsequent work. I sub-titled a lecture on the Taipei work “Curating the City” in the process of testing the Five Walks project in a workshop in Busan; this had a significant impact on the project as well as my subsequent practice. (My image files and library are another form of collection that is regularly ‘reconfigured’.)

The gallery and the art space are venues for testing my ideas of engagement with an audience and participants in Five Walks and the Taipei Operations exhibition. The “Guide to Five Walks” is written by the ‘curator’ and provides the structure of the walk; this affords the opportunity for a different voice in the audio scripts, which allows me to be a ‘participant’ (or designer).

The books “glue down” the collections and mark points in the journey. The books are hand held, privilege the ‘small’, and support the multiple images and narrative structure that best suits my practice. I start with the book in Curating the TADA which acts as an underlay for the contributions of the various workshop participants, a guide to the installations and important events on the site, as well as the document of our proposals. I discover that a good editor is similar to a good curator.

Text is an important part of this PhD, in establishing the tone of the research and more importantly in finding my own voice. I am reticent about using the narrative rather than critical text in my lecture, “This is a Map of the World”. I promote the articulation of the multiple voices of my students and the users, and have learned to recognise my own: as the author, expert, citizen, designer and curator in my reflection upon my practice.