BLUE-PRINT:
Human/Hydrokinetic
Drawing Projects

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(Fine Art)
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August 2009

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:

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Declaration

I certify that except where due acknowledgement has been made, the work is that of the artist alone. The work has not been submitted previously, in whole or in part, to qualify for any other academic award. The content of the ADR is the result of work which has been carried out since the official commencement date and the approved research.

James Geurts  
08.08.2009

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TITLE:
BLUE-PRINT: Human/Hydrokinetic Drawing Projects

SUMMARY OF THESIS/PROJECT:

The work is an inquiry into the relationships between land/place and thought. This inquiry employs an expanded field of drawing practice centering on spatial and time-based projects including: Land Art, installation, video, drawing, sound, photography, light and site-specific practices. It is informed by two paradigms: eco-poetics and psychogeography. Both of these are significant in terms of the role that art can play in discussions and responses to how climate acts upon nature and culture, and upon the imaginary geographies of the mind. It is proposed that a layered methodology, using several media in an expanded drawing practice, opens up new possibilities for an engagement with continually changing and unpredictable events of weather to explore their interplay with the human body/thought processes.

This art practice uses process in a particular way as a primary making methodology that it is continually reinvented given the situation/circumstances. My overall practice has taken drawing as the base from which to work. The works are conceptual and combinational. They are multi-layered and connective, they carry with them the traces of their making. They are based on a type of research that is slow, intense and composite.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

The research project that I am presenting, entitled Blue Print, is based on an expanded field of drawing practice, centering on a series of spatial and time-based projects at various bodies of water around the world. Blue-Print drawing projects set out to describe a language that articulates a human/hydrokinetic relationship. The work is an inquiry into the relationships between land/place and thought. It works between two paradigms: eco-poetics and psychogeography.

This investigation uses human engagement with moving bodies of water to generate drawings in a variety of ways, according to the specifics of each hydrokinetic system.
Light Drawing Currents

Light Drawing Currents: La Chambre Blanche, Quebec, 2009
The role of gesture and pressure are key mechanisms in the transmission drawings and clear tape transfer drawings. This interest in human/hydrokinetic relationships stems from my experiences as a surfer and surfing is one of the means with which I create drawing works within this investigation.

Through this investigation I explore ways of realizing and presenting abstract drawings derived from human/hydrokinetic relations. I am interested in the unique and dynamic complexity of hydrokinetics in each of the chosen locations and how this complexity of movement influences the drawing/recording process.

I am investigating the relationship of my body to water locations that are in evident states of flux. I have been developing a relationship between form and content that utilizes practices that are ephemeral, to reflect the fact that what I am imaging is in a state of flux. To emphasize this fact I have chosen water environments where that flux is very evident in relation to the human time scale, for example: a tidal river; a surf zone; a flooded salt lake; an artesian water system; a melting ice lake; a tidal inland sea. The possible drawing activities involve: surfing; rowing a boat; walking on ice; and flying in a light aircraft. I am interested in generating real-time drawing works from the particular intersection of: place; time; human/hydrokinetic activity; ecological forces at work and the specific ways in which these variables all affect the resultant form of abstraction. Further to this I am interested in exploring the capacity of abstraction to access, and refer to, psychological space more readily than naturalistic renderings of the landscape.

I have used a range of recording media to document the drawings including: sound recordings; drawings on paper; GPS drawings; kinetic sculpture; light drawings (drawing with electrical current); digital-sensor drawings; multi-exposure photography; hydrological data-transmission drawings and clear tape transfer drawings. The role of gesture and pressure are key mechanisms in the way that I work with all of these recording media. Working with gesture and pressure in this way emphasizes the qualities of a drawing practice, and the immediate impact that they have on the rendering of results. Aspects of gesture and pressure occur, and are recorded, in real-time in each environment.

For example the video process involves gesture and pressure on the circuit board in real-time, and the manipulating of the live-feed recorded image acts as a form of mark making. This relates to the way that I use gesture and pressure to generate sound drawings from the varying movements of the oars in the row-boat and the line of movement through the river. Gesture and pressure from paddling and surfing generate movement lines of my body through the varying waves, tide, wind and currents. Similarly, my gestures and the pressure of my weight on varying parts of a frozen lake create long crack lines, which act as drawings. All of these activities (and the recording media that they involve) are united by a common approach to the use of my body as a means to explore fluxing bodies of water, and the rendering of this exploration in extended forms of drawing practice.

Many artists have worked with the spatial dynamic of the land as a site for their inquiries. Marcel Broodthaers, Richard Serra, Robert Smithson, Richard Long and James Turrell, have all directly explored landscape and through their practices have left some kind of mark, physical trace or sculpture in the land. In the past the act of drawing itself has also been considered a form of performative action, notably in the practices of artists such as Joseph Beuys, Maryclare Foá, Monica Ross, Ana Mendieta, Rebecca Horn and Monika Weiss. Artists who use new technologies to map or draw human movement through spatial topography, and who are relevant to my own methodology, include Camille Utterback, Rhizome, The C5 Landscape Initiative and Daniel Belasco Rogers.

Whilst these artists focus principally on body/land based interactions, I aim to extend this body/Land Art inquiry further by focusing on environments that are in a constant state of perceptible flux to focus attention upon more ephemeral traces of human movement.

My approach to ephemerality in this work centers on the dynamic of flux in the water locations, and on my undertaking to emanate this fluxing through my enactment of extended forms of drawing practice. This research project is an attempt to try and embody and reflect the changing nature of these environments and their complex processes.

My objective is to create a series of drawings based on the movement of my body in various moving bodies of water in order to describe a relationship of the human body to certain hydrokinetic systems.

My aims are: to expand the vocabulary of drawing through human/hydrokinetic drawing projects; to experiment with the ways in which I generate drawings at each particular site; and to respond to the variations of the hydrological forces of each site. I set out to experiment with a broad range of media, to translate my body’s engagement with the water bodies into abstract imagery and sound drawings for exhibition. I will also experiment with specific hydrokinetic locations that have a variety of distinctive characteristics, such as: tidal influence, strength of currents and direction, rips, wave height, swell height, varying temperature, fluidity, underground water sources and salt levels.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

1. In what ways can human engagement with the movement of water be used to extend a vocabulary of drawing practices?

2. In what ways can drawing explore an understanding of dynamic human/hydrokinetic relations?

RATIONALE:

I have chosen to locate the drawing activities at these fluxing bodies of water to represent the broader ecological context of human/hydrokinetic relations. I am interested in the human body’s relationship to the broader global water system, which is a constantly changing - yet closed - system. Further to this, the project focuses on drawing upon the place of the human body within this system. It points to the finite amount of water on the planet that, through its perpetual flow, eventually travels through the human body. Focusing on the motion of my body amid the multi-layered motion of water allows me to explore the relationship between the two bodies and to create a language for it through expanded drawing practices. Fluxing water locations will allow me to evidence transformative human/hydrokinetic process more readily and create an arena to expand new forms of drawing practice.
METHODOLOGY:

This research project takes place over a period of two years, and in 4 stages. It results in video, sound, drawing, light, Land Art, installation and documentation that address human/hydrokinetic relations.

Through my research project I focus on abstract transmissions of these drawing activities through technological devices such as movement sensor devices, sound transmissions, aqua microphones and radio microphones, depth sounder drawing machines, kinetic sculpture installations, live-feed video transmissions, and time-based light installations.

Stage 1: (February 2007- July 2007)

Bibliography and visual research.
Define scope and boundaries of the research project.
Research existing references to studies, art practices and theories relating to the theme of Land Art, time-based drawing practices and hydrokinetics.
Research a variety of water environments that evidence flux and could be used for the drawing projects.
Look at water environments that have existing human/hydrokinetic relations.
Gather information about possible devices and instruments that would be appropriate to use for drawing practices.
Develop bibliography.

Stage 2: (July 2007- December 2007)

Gathering technology and locations.
Gather the information, materials and technologies necessary to develop a system for real-time analysis of rendering human movement in three-dimensional space.

Research:
Available GPS and sensor technology.
Map the water locations for field studies and drawing experimentation.
Accessibility of frozen lakes and the time of year when they are most in flux.

Locate:
Sites for the Tidal-Surf drawing study where I can record the data at one particular time, i.e. tide, wind, currents, swell, breaking waves, water temperature and beach gradation.
Site for the salt lake drawing study.
Access to a light aircraft in the area of study.
Sites for the inland sea drawing study.
Sites for the frozen lake drawing study.
Site for the tidal river drawing study and experiment with the appropriate drawing recording devices.
Start talking with appropriate galleries to show the research work.

Stage 3: (January 2008 - July 2008)

Primary production.
Experiment:
With the appropriate drawing/recording devices for each location and project.
With finding a way of recording the varied information through different meteorological and hydrographical sources.
With creating drawings for the full duration of an incoming tide.
With the multi-streaming live-feed data to create abstract video outcomes.
With different weather conditions at the site to record the variations and effects.

Develop:
Installation possibilities that will be informed from the results of the video experimentation and drawing.
Sound work that will respond to the movement in water as part of the drawing.
Hydrokinetic sculptures that echo the movement of water in the immediate geography.
Time-based works that record the movement and transformation of water.


Production of artwork.
Create Tidal-Surf Drawings at various locations around the world.
Create a final artwork of spatial time-based drawings and video.
Create the final video installation.
Finalize the work for exhibition and finalize documentation.
Final presentation of the artwork and documentation for assessment.
B. DOCUMENTATION OF PROJECTS:

Projects - Bodies of Water:

Project 1. Port Adelaide River (South Australia): Pages 9-22

Project 2. Coorong (Mouth of the Murray River, South Australia): Pages 25-30
Drawing Inland Sea: A dual-screen video installation based on landscape abstraction. "24th International Conference (SAHANZ)" 2007 'Good Evening Song #01/#02', Sound/drawing/video performance collaboration with Johannes Sistermanns (Cologne) and Dr Linda Marie Walker (Adelaide) Delicatessen Gallery, Adelaide; Project Space Gallery, Melbourne 2007

Project 3. Lake Frome (Flinders Ranges, South Australia): Pages 31-34
Salt Drawing Lake: An ephemeral Land Art drawing project, as video. Drawing a line across Lake Frome (a large salt lake) in a light aircraft. Lake Frome has a special luminosity, which allows it to be viewed from outer space. ‘Always Forever’, Adelaide International Film Festival at Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide 2007 'Drawing Field', Queensland Centre for Photography, Brisbane 2008.

Project 4. The Great Artesian Basin (South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland): Pages 35-40

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Project 6. Beachport Tidal Beach (South Australia): Pages 47-56

Project 7. Saint Lawrence River; Saint-Charles River (Quebec, Canada): Pages 57-82
Drawing Field #02: An in-situ artist's residency program, with site-specific weather works, relating to a gallery installation on human/hydrokinetic relations. Including Durational-installation, Living-Monochrome La Chambre Blanche, artist residency and exhibition, and La Piscine St-Roch, Quebec, Canada 2008-09

Project 8. San Diego; Venice Beach (California, USA) Ericeira Beach (Portugal, Europe) Porthmeor Beach (Cornwall, UK) Sandy Point (Victoria, Australia): Pages 83-92
Tidal-Surf Drawing Project: The use of a sensor device attached to my body while I surf results in a line rendered in three-dimensional space, mapping out my movement in the water, at different locations around the world. "The Alternative Space and Beyond", ARTspace, New Media, CAA Conference Los Angeles 2009
Mangroves and side of cargo ship in the Port Adelaide River.
Project 1.  Port Adelaide River (South Australia)

*Bridge Drawing Water*: A site-specific, drawing-sound performance

Port Adelaide Sunday 29 April. High Tide. 7:30pm. 2007. Row-boat, aqua microphones, radio microphones, drawbridge, radio transmitter, outdoor speakers, lighthouse, depth-sounder

Curated by Dr Linda Marie Walker 2007
‘There Forever’ is a public art project of a temporary nature that focuses upon the centre of Port Adelaide as a place with an intensely layered and complex past. The Port is presently in the midst of an unprecedented, highly planned future that will dramatically change both its external appearance and its internal condition.

Bridge Drawing Water is a drawing performance work; a drawing using sound and movement. This approach allowed the work to unfold through time and in response to a particular place, as well as the unfolding changes in a place, in much the same way as I approach my abstract drawing on paper, and through video.

There are particular elements of this working port which exist in a unique way to allow this work to happen: the Birkenhead drawbridge, the wharf, the lighthouse, and the local sailing club’s row-boat, all so close to each other, working together. The use of the row-boat created the impression that I had done the drawing in much the same way as I might do a drawing in a quietly private yet public space.

Bridge Drawing Water took place in a tidal port river. A large drawbridge opens for a small row-boat at high-tide, dusk. Aqua microphones are connected to the oars and project the sound of the rowing, in and out of the water, back into the port from a nearby lighthouse, through the use of radio transmitters.

The weather became part of the work; I wanted to find a way to let the weather in, to incorporate it into the piece, in all its aspects. It was a matter of finding a way to be in concert with the weather and the conditions of the location, as they happen, as they take place. This became clear. I composed a full drawing work and recorded the sound of physically moving through the river.

The opening of the bridge was achieved with the collaboration of the bridge controller in tandem with Transport SA. A depth-sounder drawing device recorded the movement of the row-boat through the river, the sound waves pulsed off the river floor, rendering the drawing on carbon paper.
A man on an open bridge

"A man walks halfway across a bridge
From a long way away someone sees a man walk halfway across a bridge
He stops to watch someone a long way away, across the water
he thinks someone is
watching him there
he thinks they see him
As a man standing on a bridge he thinks of a boat
in the water beneath him
He stops to look across from him, to slow down, to see the other
one he thinks he sees.
He hears around him what he has never heard before
it sounds like he is what he hears
that this is what he is, inside himself
He hears himself as a man on a bridge
Across the water someone hears what there is to hear that they have
never heard before.
It is the sound of a man on a bridge
They think of a boat in the water beneath him
It sounds to them like something they’ve heard before too, somewhere else
They take a photograph of him, they take a photograph of the sound of a
man on a bridge, a man they think they see on a bridge
He takes a photograph of someone he thinks he sees a long way away, inside the sound of himself, then
he walks back across the bridge
(everything else happens in the world)."

And the Open Bridge: Labour, Enchantment, There Forever
Dr Linda Marie Walker, 2007
"An expanding practice, where one thing leads to another – a proliferating practice that affects the relationship between things – everything for/to itself, gaps and separations exact places for thought … looping to the outside world, the way the body does (connecting to the air); the performance done … or not done…"

"The Bridge Watching Us The world comes into view; the things of the world come into view to be acted and touched upon, to be worked "with", in concert, so as to bring about through constellation, conjunction, intersection, something else again, slight, to the side, upward, or more centred, an image, a slowing of time, a bringing of silence, to listen, to make-out a figure, a boat, who/what that might or might not be, to feel it as oneself, as the self that brought that to its moment, movingly, the aspects, the stopping, the pausing, the resuming, our breath, our willingness, our sadness, our aloneness, and the extreme force of each aspect (a flash, like lightning) – the weight and mechanism of the opening bridge, the pleasure of the bridge-controller, the lights lining the bridge, the sirens and bells, the cars waiting, the rain, the deep currents, the lighthouse weirdly behind us, and the sound of the rower in the boat, passing, and (perhaps) seeing the tiny star-flash of the man on the bridge watching us watching."

Bridge Drawing Water 'There Forever'
Dr Linda Marie Walker, 2007
Project 2. Coorong (Mouth of the Murray River, South Australia):

Drawing Inland Sea: A video installation based on landscape abstraction
Two-channel video
6 minutes
Electronic sounds by Foton, Hans de Man and Peter van Hoesen (Brussels)

'24th International Conference (SAHANZ) Uni SA, Adelaide' 2007
'Living/Being in Between', Symposium, The American University, Girne, Cyprus 2008
'Tract', video installation, RMIT School of Art Gallery, Melbourne 2008
'Good Evening Song #01+#02' Sound/drawing/video performance collaboration with
Johannes Sistermanns (Cologne) and Dr Linda Marie Walker (Adelaide) Delicatessen
Gallery, Adelaide 2007; Project Space Gallery, RMIT Melbourne 2007
The video in conjunction with a paper titled "On the Side of Life: Writing in the Dream" by Linda Marie Walker, for the 24th International Conference (SAHANZ) Uni SA, Adelaide 2007
'Tract', RMIT School of Art Gallery, Melbourne 2008
The Drawing Inland Sea dual-screen video work was created at several site-specific locations around the Coorong, a place that is in the process of dying. The camera is set up at chosen sites and the circuit board is manipulated by pressure and movement from the hand, in much the same way that I would make a drawing in response to place. The process of recording is done as a form of video-drawing, and attempts to evoke the complexity of the layered hydrology systems moving into, and through, the two lagoons.

Drawing Inland Sea is an emulation of the abstract language that exists within the perpetual movement of water sources at this site: tidal flow, run-off, precipitation, evaporation, fresh water mixing with salt water, ephemeral lakes, soaks, ancient springs rising from artesian systems. All of these act like breathing - shifting, expanding, a fluidity which influenced the way that I worked with the live-feed manipulation. I work directly with the colour field that is present, exploring the abstraction of time, atmosphere, rhythm, micro, macro and movement. In this piece, I worked with two screens to extend the drawing of water from one source to another, and to convey varying water levels, due to barges set up in the Coorong.

The video was made in conjunction with a paper titled On The Side Of Life: Writing In The Dream by Linda Marie Walker, for the 24th Annual 2007 SAHANZ.

On The Side Of Life: is the third paper in a series that takes as its ground-of-writing a place called The Coorong. This place is said to be in 'terminal decline'. A state, condition, system, is changing is appearance, quality, livingness. There is here a shifting of 'the real' or the documentary into 'the unreal' or abstraction - one into the other, a sliding, merging; the abstraction drawn from 'the situations' into other appearances - colour spheres, montages, soundscapes, fictions, drawings.
“Good Evening Song #01+02”, Sound/drawing/video performance collaboration with Johannes Sistermann (Cologne) and Dr Linda Maria Walker (Adelaide)
Delicatessen Gallery, Adelaide 2007; Project Space Gallery, RMIT Melbourne 2007
Project 3. Lake Frome (Flinders Ranges, South Australia)

Salt Drawing Lake: An ephemeral Land Art drawing project, as video
Single-channel video
5 minutes, 30 seconds
Electronic sounds by Foton, Hans de Man and Peter van Hoesen (Brussels)

‘Always Forever’, Adelaide International Film Festival at Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide 2007
‘Drawing Field’, Queensland Centre for Photography, Brisbane 2008
Salt Drawing Lake draws a line across the vast salt skin of Lake Frome (an ephemeral salt lake) using a light aircraft. A door was taken off the aircraft to allow me to lean out and hold the camera into position, at a right-angle to the lake. The line is drawn by videoing the movement across the lake, pointing directly down at the surface at a locked zoom position.

An approaching sand storm created fluctuations of the weather and air pressure which pushed the light aircraft around during the flight. This varied the distance between the aircraft and the surface of the lake, creating soft optical illusion through the spatial variations and linear drifting. The salt on Lake Frome has a special luminosity, which allows it to be viewed from outer space. The residue of the water on the lake added to the luminosity in areas of the trajectory.
"This way of drawing (practicing the world, and gauging one's place inside a room, over a lake; the place of some-other-place, that is one's own place (solitary, hidden, exposed)) sends rhythms, tones... I am completely theirs, as if taken, lost with them, with the hand; following the record of a human life, without quite knowing what he does. He 'writes' them large, and free of representing this or that - he is here and there, time, 'being-in-time', appears, and is coloured and compressed, and pulled and pushed. The camera speeds over the earth-drawing, softening it, turning it like soil, inviting it to other vision (almost), time over time - the drawing disappears to reappear (as tissue, as scar). Transitory fields of lines and colours, offered; for passing-on, passing-into, passing-by, not-passing, slowing down. The drawings are in light of another kind (working-drawings/videos); maps for the living (or not). They are fields, allusive, and active (caught while transforming). Saying this, and that, at once, drawing and video, and alluding to writing too; the drawings exactly where they are, enticing, truly available in their intensity (expansive, as if music, or sound falling from the air): in place, gestured, a lingering, blur, blotch, and always 'the line'. The line that comes from elsewhere..."

To Keep On Going: drawing the field
Dr. Linda Marie Walker, 2007
(For full text: see section F, Critical Feedback)
Project 4. The Great Artesian Basin (South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland)

*Artesian: A site-specific multi-screen video project in the Great Artesian Basin region*
*Four-channel video*
*Various durations*

Funded by the Australian Film Commission and the Australian Council for the Arts
Producer, Julie Ryan; Instrumental Composer, Caerwen Martin; Electronic sounds by Foton, Hans de Man and Peter van Hoesen (Brussels)

‘24 Hour Art’, Darwin 2008
Artesian Basin: a geological structural feature in which water is confined under pressure.

Artesian Bore: a deep hole drilled to the aquifer of an artesian basin, through which water rises under hydrostatic pressure.

This project is an inquiry into the relationships between land/water and thought/imagination. It worked between two aesthetic and cultural paradigms: eco-poetics and psychogeography. Both of these are significant in terms of the role that art can play in generating creative responses to climate conditions, and the natural resources of a country, as well as upon the imaginary geographies of the mind. The continually changing, and unpredictable, events of weather suggest a working method that is layered and moving. As it unfolded over time (June 2003 - February 2006), the project was open to situations and events that arose in the course of travel and contact with each location.

This project was made at sites within The Great Artesian Basin region: at underground caves, and exposed springs at the surface of the desert. The video-works that make up the installation are an extension of a spatial-drawing practice, where an abstraction is formed in-camera, guided in real-time through pressure and gesture involving the camera's circuit board. The exposed circuit board was open to dust and extreme heat.
Project 5. Glacier (South Island, New Zealand)

Drawing Glacier: A site-specific drawing project


‘Findings’, An exhibition of experimental practice by Postgraduate Research Candidates in the School of Art. Curated by Associate Professor Lesley Duxbury and PhD Candidate Lisa Byrne. RMIT Gallery, Melbourne 2008
The Glacier that I worked with showed evident states of slow flux in the way that it suspended movement during the process of melting in the daytime, and freezing during the night. I experimented with ways to engage with this process and used the weight of my water body to create pressure at certain places on the ice to form crack lines, drawing through the surface layers. What struck me most about the formation of these lines were the high-pitch sounds that would burst and echo at different points around the frozen lake turning it into a giant speaker-system. This became a phantom event, a residue, continuing after the physical event has taken place; the perpetual manifestation or persona of that event, shifting the metaphysical qualities of that particular spatial dynamic. I am interested in how the event can continue to be present in a particular place well after it has physically left, as the lines underwent significant changes each day.
Project 6. Beachport Tidal Beach (South Australia)

*Drawing Tide: series of durational drawing events*

‘Line Drawing’, An interdisciplinary installation/performance/publication, engaging with notions of line, spatiality and drawing. Curated by Dr Linda Marie Walker

SASA Gallery, Adelaide 2008
Drawing Machine:
Drawing, Tide, Duration work #1
(21072018, High Tide 1814pm, 2.63m - Low Tide 0047am,
0.34m (Beachport Tidal Times)
7m Radio antenna, conduit, wooden stakes, radio wire, paper.
The works for ‘Line Drawing’ started from a tidal event at Beachport backbeach, involving a 7 meter radio antenna attached to several components as a drawing machine. The work was a proposition; it was premised on the creation of a machine to generate drawings from radio transmissions during an incoming tide.

I then acted as the transmission device, un-scrolling the 7 meter length of paper in front of me whilst I drew from the field of location. A series of works proliferated from this action into the ‘Line Drawing’ installation as Drawing, Tide; Duration works. A drawing event took place each consecutive Monday for four weeks, from Low Tide to High tide, alternately. The second in this series, Drawing, Tide; Duration work #2, took the duration of an incoming tide to install a fluorescent light installation in a cyclic forward motion, inverting the wiring circuit to create irregular pulses along the line, which slowed and faded over the four weeks.

‘Line Drawing’ engaged with notions of line, spatiality and drawing, from a range of interdisciplinary positions. Whilst working towards installation, performance and publication outcomes, this project focuses on process, generative interactivity and open-ended possibilities. The nature of the work was not predetermined and the artists involved explored connections and intersections across concepts and their art practices.
Wall Work Event:
Drawing, Tide, Duration work #2,
(07/07/2008, Low Tide 06:55am, 0.53m - High Tide 06:45am, 1.88m) (Outer Harbour Tidal Times)

Fluorescent tubes, electrical wires, intervened starters, electrical current.
Floor work

*Drawn Field; Multiple Series*

*2m x 2m x 8cm*

Works on paper, wood platforms, fluorescent tubes, electrical wires, electrical current.
Monitor 1:
Waves Feeding Waves.
Sound: drawing recording
Propped up by drawing books
4.40 min loop

Monitor 2:
Spatial Transmission Drawing.
Sound: location frequency
Propped up by drawing books
6.30 min loop
Event:
Drawing, Tide; Duration work #3.
(14072008, Low Tide 2134pm, 0.95m - High Tide 0339am, 1.42m)
(Outer Harbour Tidal Times)
White Perspex, white cardboard, tape, wooden pole, drawing materials.
Coinciding with Durational Piano event by: Domenico De Clario
Drawing In, Drawing Out (14072008, Moon Rise, 1719 hrs – Moon Set 0509hrs)

ARTIST BOOK:
Drawing, Tide; Duration work #4.
Photographic paper, cardboard cover.
7m x 10cm
(28072008, Low Tide 1132am, 0.98m - High Tide 1709pm, 1.46m)
(Outer Harbour Tidal Times)
Project 7.  Saint Lawrence River; Saint-Charles River
(Québec, Canada)

*Drawing Field #02*: An in-situ artist’s residency program, site-specific weather works, gallery installation. Including Durational-Installation, Living-Monochrome

La Chambre Blanche, artist residency and exhibition, and La Piscine St-Roch, Québec, Canada 2008-09
Located in Quebec City, the La Chambre Blanche artist residence is situated in the fork of two rivers: the Saint Lawrence River, a major, deep, working port river; and the Saint-Charles River, a smaller river that joins the Saint Lawrence. I chose to arrive at the very start of winter, to study and respond to the extreme transformations of these water bodies for a period of eight weeks.

For Drawing Field #02, the Quebec City area becomes the object of a psychogeographic and eco-poetic investigation. I worked with the essence of drawing to map the continuous movement and perceptual space of water transformations in the immediate area. My drawing books filled with traces of a receptive action, centered mainly on the bodies of water: the Saint-Charles and Saint Lawrence Rivers, the Montmorency waterfall that flows into the Saint Lawrence River, and the La Piscine St-Roch (an outdoor swimming pool, with three removable diving boards). With Drawing Field #02, I explored the parallels existing between the permanent circulation of the bodies of water worldwide, the rhythm of our body fluids and the flow of our senses.

These were shaped into several interrelated works that took place in the gallery and at La Piscine St-Roch, the location of site-specific works. Drawings took the form of an installation, combining: photography, video, sound, light, kinetic sculpture and the physical act of drawing. Artefacts and documentation from the site work found a way back into the gallery installation during the residency and proliferated into further works in the ensuing weeks.
Spatial Light Drawing:
The gaps left in the three window masks allowed for lines of light and moving shapes to move through the gallery for 30 minutes a day when the sun was out. This developed from Drawing Cyclic and Filter.
Drawing refraction: 100cm x 160cm
Architects tracing paper
A two-sided drawing on architecture paper, attached at the sides, to form a rectangle inflatable shape when placed on the fan of a slide projector. A black and a white fluorescent tube was placed under the kinetic sculpture. The projection involved a colour field spectrum relating to the refraction process of light and water molecules.

Filter: 120cm x 200cm
Fluorescent tubes, wood.
A line of (unconnected) fluorescent tubes represented a water filter passing on the Saint-Charles River at the point where the water level shifted and changed shape through a concrete corridor.

Drawing Cyclic:
A video work was fed through a DVD projector from Quebec and re-wired to create a flow of lines in response to Filter. It was reflected onto the roof. The gaps left in the three window masks, allowed for lines of light and forming shapes to move through the gallery for 30 minutes a day when the sun was out. The lines moving slowly on the wall overlapped and echoed the lines formed in this video incidently.
Psychogeography Project: Variable
Drawing on paper, cardboard, tape, chemical photographic processes.

What started as a series of drawings made from the geography of Quebec, then became low-relief sculptures, which then became a chemical photographs, allowing the conditions of the weather, climate and time in a particular place to effect the work. Then they became full wall video projections.
La Piscine St-Roch: Durational-Installation, Living-Monochrome. During many walks, during which I created studies of both rivers in works on paper, I discovered this swimming pool on the bank of the Saint-Charles River. The pool was closed down for the approaching winter. This discovery evolved into a site-specific work which involved flooding the pool with bright yellow light.

The light sources were precariously installed standing freely on the newly forming ice. They were open to the weather. The pool had been mostly emptied leaving water in the deep-end. This open, rectangular structure suggested a space that reflected the slowing down, quieting down, of the place as a whole; the slowing of the rivers as they formed ice, and of that of human bodies of water in their movement throughout the local landscape. A raised walkway, around three sides of the pool, provided a ready made observation deck. I worked closely with the Quebec council and they installed a power panel at the outside of the building to allow me 24-hour access.

I installed four flood-lights on stands, covered with warm yellow film gels, inside the pool. A double flood-light at the shallow-end and the deep-end, and a single flood-light at each of the sides to fill the pool with an even glow of yellow light. The flood-light stands were precariously installed, and susceptible to the force of weather. I placed them on the newly forming thin ice in the hope that they would become part of the ice as it was setting.

The irregularity of the snow falls, the ice forming, and the variability of sleet, rain and slush formations, continued to shift the visual appearance of the pool monochrome. The pool itself became more and more difficult to approach as temperature became colder, the snow became thicker and the ice formed. During the fourth week a phenomenal event occurred during a blizzard. The four lights on their stands were uprooted from the ice and turned over. The lights, now facing downward in the ice, formed a heat-field around each light, melting their way through the ice into the water underneath. Two lights remained on whilst face down in the water. The heat from the four light sources then formed a large amoeba form, flowering from the center of the pool. A pulsed heat line could also be seen connecting each of the four lights in an oval shape. The details of each light formed its own, more intimate, sculptured landscape. I managed to reassemble the two double lights at each end and continued the project. The yellow gels faded and one melted off altogether, creating a white light at the deep-end.
La Piscine St-Roch: Artistic Installation, Living Monochrome. Week 2
Drawing Diving:
330cm x 30cm
Photographic print
The three diving boards at the pool are taken off the platforms and stored away for the winter. I brought one out onto the snow, stood at the base of the board and photographed downwards, onto its surface. Taking steps as I took photographs, with each step that I took along the board, I extended my movement, projecting the camera outwards. I then assembled the series of photographs to form an extended diving board, which I installed in the gallery space.
Drawing Two Rivers:
Variable sizes
Plastic tubes, tape, funnels, wood, wax, plumbing fittings, electrical heating tape.
This project draws together the four main water sites into one hydrokinetic sculpture. Small funnels attached to two long clear tubes collected water from my studio shower and the gallery kitchen sink making contact with the human water bodies in the Gallery. These two tubes echo the Saint-Charles and Saint Lawrence Rivers in Quebec. The tube from my studio travelled through a doorway and down a staircase, and via steps into the roof of the gallery below. The two tubes met and joined a small open pool in the gallery space where a single spot light bounced the living monochrome, created by the transforming colours of the used water, onto the wall. A single thicker tube then took the overflow out of the gallery door, through the postage hole in the door and onto the street. Over time, as winter approached, the flow of water formed a living ice sculpture which reflected the Montmorency waterfall, which flows into the Saint Lawrence River. A particular phenomenon of this large waterfall is that it freezes in the course of the winter, allowing rock climbers to ascend its temporarily fixed surface. An electrical heating tape was wrapped around the end of the tube to stop it from freezing.
"Geurts performs many rituals, through which he tells many stories, involving water and journeying, incorporating them in temporary arrangements of light and 3D structures. These are accompanied by less ephemeral marks on man-made surfaces, notably drawings and photographic prints. Fluidity, or mutability, is his leit-motif."

"... one might look to Friedrich Nietzsche’s discussion of the way that intense experiences in life collapse each into the other, to finish in that fundamental and trans-historical place that comes forth as a manifestation of will, of life-force. Thus a process of distillation, as in Geurts’ channelling of water from his artist’s apartment upstairs at the Chambre Blanche, through clear tubes that he ran down to the gallery below, becomes an epic story. Epic encounters always at once both distil down and transport away. The epic and the simple in stories and phenomena are kindred."
Project 8.

San Diego; Venice Beach (California, USA) Ericeira Beach (Portugal, Europe) Porthmeor Beach (Cornwall, UK) Sandy Point (Victoria, Australia)

*Tidal-Surf Drawing Project: A series of performative three-dimensional drawings made in the surf zone at several locations around the world*

‘The Alternative Space and Beyond’, ARTspace, New Media, CAA Conference Los Angeles 2009
The Tidal-Surf Drawing Project is a series of site-specific spatial drawing works based on the ephemeral line created while surfing. This project sets out to trace the linear movement of a human body in the complex flux of a surf zone. It is a working method that is both circular and layered, and thus spiral. I consider the qualities of the drawings and the act of surfing in terms of latent and actual processes of performance. I am interested in tracking and combining flows of hydrodynamic singularities through the fluid movement of the human body of water.

The surf zone is a vital location for this study, as it has multi-layered, multi-directional forces at work at any one given time, which creates a complex visual and spatial dynamics for the study of human movement in place.

Tidal-Surf Drawing Project works directly with the unique combinations of elemental forces influencing each coastal site, for example: tide, currents, wind, swell size, beach gradation and wave height.

These tidal-surf drawings involve a recently developed sensor prototype device that tracks the trajectory of the surfer’s path in three-dimensional space, mapping the interaction within the movement of the tidal zone during the act of surfing, resulting in data that forms the basis of time-based spatial drawing works. The sensor tracking device is attached to the surfer. A thin, blue, fluid line forms a shape resulting in a three-dimensional linear map of the movement in the particular location of the surfing experience.
Waves Feeding Waves.

Video: drawing recording
4.40 min

A series of drawings made in Portugal, in relation to the Thermohaline Circuit, also referred to the 'Great Oceans Conveyer belt'.

Drawing Event
Tidal-Surf Drawing Project:
Sensor prototype device.
Porthmeor Beach, Cornwall, UK
GPS Lat.:50° 12.95208' N
GPS Long.:5° 28.96156' W
05.05.2009 In-coming Tide, Waves: 3.6ft
Swell direction: North, wind direction:
SoutWest, time: 04:10am - 06:40pm
"This analytical model - based on developmental pathways, dynamical interactions, singular points, and qualitative movements in abstract, sometimes multidimensional space - arguably furnishes a far richer theory of "site" than most currently employed in orthodox aesthetic or architectural practice. It would not be inappropriate to liken this approach to the artful shaping of a surfer's trajectory on the sea. Unlike more traditional (hunter-warrior model) sports, surfers do not conceive of themselves as exclusive or "prime motors" at the origin of their movements: they rather track, from within the flows, a variety of emerging features, singularities, and unfoldings with which they can meld. This style of "soft" intervention - primarily perturbation or inflection - is certainly emerging today with increasing frequency in a variety of domains - art, politics, mathematics - through sports may well offer the most startling and salient examples. Rigorous engagement with the surrounding milieu. As in surfing, the primary qualities are fluidity of movement, intuition (a quiet body harmoniously in step with its milieu - "in unity with the wave"), and innovation (rewriting the rulebook, "exploring uncharted territory")"
A series of photographs documenting the surfboards used in Tidal Surf Drawing Project, focusing on the residual marks of weather, salt water and pressure from the surfer, on the fiberglass, resin and foam.
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1991: BA Graphic Design, Drawing, Photography: Swinburne University, Melbourne
2009: Masters of Fine Arts, (Media Art): RMIT University, Melbourne

Exhibitions:
2009: Drawing Three Rivers, Open Art International Performance Art Festival, Beijing, China
2009: Periphery, Project Space, Melbourne
2009: Blue Print, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne

Masters of Fine Art Exhibition, installation on expanded drawing practice on human/hydrokinetic relations.
2008: Experimental Practice by Postgraduate Research Candidates in the School of Art
2008: Institutional Commissioning, Site-specific drawing performances, drawing on site-specific works, relating to gallery installation.
2008: Drawing as a Site-Specific Process, RMIT Gallery, Melbourne
2008: Explorations into expanded drawing practice through durational photographic and video projects
2007: 90 Degrees Equatorial Project, Experimental Art Foundation, Adelaide
2007: Land-Art Project, which took place at four sites equally spaced 90 degrees apart to perform photography, drawing, sculpture, installation and video
2007: Bridge Drawing Water, There For Ever Ephemeralt Public Art Project Commission
2007: Site-specific drawing Sound Performance taking place in a tidal port, a large draw-bridge opens for a boat, a high-tide, a large draw-bridge opens for a small boat at high-tide. A deep sounder drawing device recorded the movement through the river through sound waves. See paper, http://ensemble.va.com.au/thereforever/
2007: Salt Drawing Lake, Adelaide International Film Festival, Adelaide
2007: Ephemeral land-art drawing project as video. Drawing a line across Lake Frome, South Australia (a salt lake) in a light aircraft. Lake Frome has a special luminosity which allows it to be viewed from outer space.
2007: Always Forever, Adelaide International Film Festival, Adelaide.
2007: Good Evening Song BV02, Delicatessen Gallery, Adelaide, Project Space Gallery, Melbourne
2007: Experiments into expanded drawing practice through photographic projects
2006: Dutch Under, Canvas International Art, Amsterdam.
2006: There Forever Ephemeral Public Art Project Commission
2006: Site-specific drawing project. Large scale photo-drawing montages were made at 5 sites, mapping a circular shape around Amsterdam. The works were then posted up (interventionist billboards) on each site as sea-level signifiers.
2006: Gravitas, Project 3, Adelaide Festival of Art
2006: Commissioned video installation on the street.
2006: Site-specific video at an industrial curving pond picnic site.
2005: Jetty Federation Square, Melbourne Adep Festival, 2008 Luminosity Public Art Program, Adelaide
2005: Suburban Edge, Submerge, 24 Hour Art, Darwin
2005: Microcosm, Moving Image Festival, Adelaide
2005: White Wash, Adelaide Film Festival, Art Gallery of South Australia
2005: Drawing Field #02, Experiment Art Foundation, Adelaide
2005: Isle of Refuge, 4 Years to Life, Flinders University City Gallery, Adelaide
2005: Highlights the plight of asylum seekers in detention centers in Australia and the South Pacific.
2005: Blue Velvet, Adelaide
2005: Photo-lightbox drawing project.
2004: Site-specific video at a disused drive-in at Alice Springs
2004: There Forever Ephemeral Public Art Project Commission
2004: Site-specific drawing project. Large scale photo-drawing montages were made at 5 sites, mapping a circular shape around Amsterdam. The works were then posted up (interventionist billboards) on each site as sea-level signifiers.
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2001: Isle of Refuge, 4 Years to Life, Flinders University City Gallery, Adelaide
2001: Highlights the plight of asylum seekers in detention centers in Australia and the South Pacific.
2001: Blue Velvet, Adelaide
2001: Photo-lightbox drawing project.
E. CRITICAL FEEDBACK: ESSAYS, REVIEWS

Selected Essays:
2009 Dr Julie Bacon, Beyond Interpretation and Judgment: Writing the Story of Art, La Chambre Blanche
2008 Dr Linda Marie Walker, Drawing Moves. Tract. RMIT Gallery, Melbourne
2008 Dominic Redfern, Tract. RMIT Gallery, Melbourne
2007 Dr Linda Marie Walker, To Keep On Going: drawing/the/field, Drawing Field #01, Queensland Center for Photography

Selected Review:
2008 Nathalie Côté, Pour une poétique de l’eau (For a poetic of water) - La Presse Quebec
Essay on Drawing Field #01
To Keep On Going: drawing/the/field
Linda Marie Walker, 2007

"It's fields. Gravity is a field - a field of potential attraction, collision, orbit, of potential centripetal and centrifugal movements. All these potentials form such complex interference patterns when ... fields overlap that a measure of indeterminacy creeps in." (Brian Massumi, 'Navigating Movements', in Mary Zournazi, Hope, New Philosophies For Change, Pluto Press, Annandale, 2002: 222)

Drawings are this/that - drawings/photographs - and different from both this or that; they look like something in the middle of something, and something finished with something (destroyed even). They are real places too, outlines from above; saturated, intricate.

The drawings are in light of another kind (working-drawings/photographs); maps for the living (or not). They are fields, allusive, and active (caught while transforming). Saying this, and that, at once, drawing and photography, and alluding to writing too; the drawings exactly where they are, enticing, truly available in their intensity (expansive, as if music, or sound falling from the air); in place, gesture, a lingering, blur, blotch, and always 'the line'. The line that comes from elsewhere, secreted from the body, a sensual act, pressed, followed, as if a child - yet a memory comes, shows itself; the mark belongs to a tribe of marks that over time gather, killing time perhaps, moving from the sensual to the erotic - going, coming.

These marks can be transferred onto walls and floors and windows. Nothing to be gained except the labour of keeping faith with the vague and the dissolved, those (beings) who barely exist, yet are in our midst. Time stretches thin, transparent: "I gaze at you as one gazes at the impossible." (Roland Barthes, 'Right in the Eyes'. In The Responsibility of Forms, trans. Richard Howard, University of California Press, Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1991: 241) There is life: life comes along (looks us in the eye); everything stays in the time of its life (and gives itself magically (the drawing); life is 'before' its own arrival, and even 'after' its own departure (as in Salinity), it is too fast for us, we must believe in it, for instance (believe that it is worth believing in) ("It's not a belief that's 'about' being in the world; it is a being in the world. Because it's all about being in this world, warts and all, and not some perfect world beyond, or a better world of the future ... So its about taking joy in that process, wherever it leads ...") (Massumi, ibid: 242)

And the drawing/photograph is inexhaustible, an atmosphere; and at each moment, changed; stilled, held in abeyance; not to exude meaning necessarily, but to be seen instead for its own sake, and to be said (an abstract saying) for its own sake: to be wandered with, on the surface. Drawing is from time, for nothing, for remembering (for the passage from the outside to the inside, and then further and further inside - to continuous space (touch me, know that I exist). Drawing for free. Fragments come into an arrangement, not to re-present or to invent a code, but to play at being on the surface of space (of air and breath). "No surface, wherever we consider it, is a virgin surface; everything is always, already, rough, discontinuous, unequal, set in motion by some accident: there is the texture of the paper, then the stains, the hatching, the transparency of strokes, the diagrams, the words." (Roland Barthes, 'Cy Twombly: Works on Paper', ibid: 162)

This way of drawing (practicing the world, and gauging one's place inside a room, by a shore, late at night; the place of some other place, that is one's own place (solitary, hidden, fragile)) sends rhythms tones: carries 'love. I cannot read them, not really; yet I am completely theirs, as if taken, lost with them, with the hand; following the record of a human life, without quite knowing what he does. He 'writes' them large, and free of representing this or that - he is here and there. Time, 'being-in-time', appears, and is coloured and compressed, and pulled and pushed. The camera speeds over the earth-drawing, softening it, turning it like soil, inviting it to other vision (almost), time over time - the drawing disappears to reappear (as tissue, as scar). Transitory fields of lines and colours, offered; for passing on, passing into, passing by, not-passing, slowing down; stopping.
A calm day, sun shining, a bee, car far off; a film-maker stands on the mudflat, his camera on a tripod, bent over a little, as if in a movie himself. The camera opens to the shining pools of water, the low redbrown succulents, the greenbrown grass, the greyblue scrub, and the tyre tracks across the spongy ground. The road is palebrown, the sound of the sea faint. He is taking immense time, the air is warm, near his feet move on the tiny shells. In a month or two the water will have evaporated and the stench of the rotting reeds and algae in the summer heat will be overwhelming. In the thick low saltbush tiny birds flutter to and fro. There’s a plane, one minute our companions and then, lightingly expanding, last purple crosses the swamp, the clouds fall to the horizon.

Giving to the land, to give without wanting givingness to be evident: without requiring a giving back; the land gives, in its own time, in its own image. To be made, oneself, a figure (in)sense, because of answering, a call, an idea; and, a situation is a spatial ‘place’ - in terms of a meaning (virtual) or location (manifest). A space has been opened by a living being for/to whom choosing is possible. The situation is ground; a space has come into view by one’s being there, having founded it (as if) resolutely. It was there without you thought; by decision you have seen the situation; and, you are walking and, then you are walking back; you are very close now, and now you have gone by, left; a space comes about, to work with.

Landscape, in an old dictionary, is ‘a piece of inland scenery’; land is: ground, soil, state, country. One/self is always in the landscape, that’s how one is in/of the world, one is landed in the land. Land, sometimes, for sure, but sure-footed nevertheless, in a landlocked kind of way. The land is a landing, and we enjoy landing, or arriving - coming into to land. Writing is landing, and art is landing; in land and is thought. How do we speak land, and ‘bring’ land expression, outside of and other than itself, when it is not here or there (when it is part of another situation’s idea, e.g. art)? It come into our sight (but when), in relation to our use (un)parasitically of it, our touch of it, our peeling of it into images (what do we think it is/we are, that we want to make something in its name); in other words, when we remove ourselves from its view of us. Art transforms the thing (of our interest), writing transforms the thing (of art’s interest), writing about the transformation of land into image is almost chemical (the turning of something into something else and then into something else again); a begetting, an act within the createdspaceoferos, a participatory space, where one adds memory to memory, in the desire to extend, remembering; this can only be through love and care and intuitive moves, the following of an inner sensation, a quickening, a chance (for begetting to forget, or put aside, ‘plan’ or recall, turn, go back), and land cannot be represented (as in as not what it is). The land when encountered, and this is slow, is a mystery, a universe of ‘kinds’, an unwieldy poetic, minute, immense, vibratory, unfolding, folding place (always in the midst of re-arrangement, of finish and unfinish, of stilling and surging). We see landscape how we learn to see landscape (‘a piece of inland scenery’). Land is un(trans)scriptable; the ambiguity of translation, which is an action, a physical/psychic act, (a mystery that is) more tenuous, more suggestive, more fallable, more sensual (and more affect- ing). The artoflandwork, if it is ‘work’, if it thinks of itself as ‘work’, wants, in the underworld of intention, to be an objectseen,

An appearance to appear before. This ‘work’ is not reasonable, or pragmatic, or didactic; it is work of ‘intricacies’ and marvels. The land, landscape, ‘the world’ is not a picture; land is political, its vulnerability is our vulnerability; our looking at it is its looking at us, we are land(scape).

Something always remains - the imprint of the foot, the scent of the skin, the disturbance of the air. The artist could tend the land, by effort, by thought, by not being an artist - and measuring, planting, dreaming. Land, its value or event(fullness), as landscape, as experience, is its pliancy; oneself is eventful too, a scene, rather than from a scene (as if there is a scene to be ‘from’, and to be taken from, and to be made scene-full); one is a stranger in a strange land, passing through; and one is texture and tempo, and a scene/situation. It’s like breathing, this land - but, and this is the dilemma, the work comes back to the gallery. What if the gallery, or something from the gallery, pictures of it for instance, went out to the land; and the artist and the viewer went out too, and conditioned by the journey saw/saw the land - a small gesture, or nothing, or the actual doing of drawing or the filming, or the writing of writing of this (over time) could eventually come into the gallery (ten years from now); no ‘landscape’ in the gallery, just the inscription of landthought; the idea that it might exist, that the bones might feel dust, or the mouth taste stones, or the ears hear grass; in effect, no artefacts, only affects (and scraps of memories and hopes); nothing to see, except oneself and the other (the performer/artist/viewer) who says (assoundinto) they have ‘seen-landscape’.
Beyond Interpretation and Judgement, Writing the Story of Art
Dr Julie Bacon, 2008
La Chambre Blanche, artist residency and exhibition, Quebec, Canada, 2008-09

There are many ways to dance the dance that is the invitation to write on art. In this text, which is orchestrated around the work of the Australian artist James Geurts at the Chambre Blanche artist-run centre in Quebec City, I do not wish so much to interpret or account for his specific endeavours in the residency that he undertook at the centre. Nor do I intend to evaluate or judge his practice at large, for worse or for better, whether that concerns his research methods, skills with materials or his overall artistic vision. I am not analysing the artist, curator or judge, on this occasion. Rather I wish to take this opportunity to tell some stories. In case this seems errant, I can assure the reader that my stories are connected intimately to the artist’s work, for the journeys involved in these excerpts from my experience with Geurts – journeys that are always combinations of shadowy recollection, lucid encounter and day-dreaming – are inspired by his own journeying, as conveyed through the aesthetics and atmosphere of his work, and the stories that he himself charts.

In this way, I am proposing that writing on art becomes a way of thinking through the particular space that artistic research and art exhibitions offer. Writing then extends artistic spaces, by moving through the original art work, yes, but towards the ultimate goal of spurring the further making, and use, of critical, creative spaces: in the mindseye, in the city, and beyond. I imagine this to be the greatest goal of art: an offering that leads to more concerted doing.

Once upon a time a woman was sitting at a desk in an attic, at the top of a three-storey terrace house, on a small island, not so far away from here, over an ocean known as the Atlantic, named, in passing, ‘oceanic’. Science, including psychoanalysis, is also, in passing, a state of our existence, which Sigmund Freud, after Homer, called the ‘oceanic’. Science, including psychoanalysis, is also, in passing, a state of our existence, which Sigmund Freud, after Homer, called the ‘oceanic’. Science, including psychoanalysis, is also, in passing, a state of our existence, which Sigmund Freud, after Homer, called the ‘oceanic’. Science, including psychoanalysis, is also, in passing, a state of our existence, which Sigmund Freud, after Homer, called the ‘oceanic’. Science, including psychoanalysis, is also, in passing, a state of our existence, which Sigmund Freud, after Homer, called the ‘oceanic’. Science, including psychoanalysis, is also, in passing, a state of our existence, which Sigmund Freud, after Homer, called the ‘oceanic’. Science, including psychoanalysis, is also, in passing, a state of our existence, which Sigmund Freud, after Homer, called the ‘oceanic’. Science, including psychoanalysis, is also, in passing, a state of our existence, which Sigmund Freud, after Homer, called the ‘oceanic’. Science, including psychoanalysis, is also, in passing, a state of our existence, which Sigmund Freud, after Homer, called the ‘oceanic’. Science, including psychoanalysis, is also, in passing, a state of our existence, which Sigmund Freud, after Homer, called the ‘oceanic’. Science, including psychoanalysis, is also, in passing, a state of our existence, which Sigmund Freud, after Homer, called the ‘oceanic’. Science, including psychoanalysis, is also, in passing, a state of our existence, which Sigmund Freud, after Homer, called the ‘oceanic'.

Stories in, on and through lines and channels, of (human) landscape and bodies of water. The fluidity of representation. In relation to Geurts’ work, we come to the question of figuration and abstraction. These are distinctions that, as with the distinction between poetry and philosophy, only take us so far. Still, one must leave the house by some means, whether through the front door, or an attic skylight. To consider how things function through their opposites, how extremes in fact meet, and so how distinctions give way to a greater whole: a dynamic of nature at large and Geurts’ practice in particular – one might look to Friedrich Nietzsche’s discussion of the way that intense experiences in life collapse each into the other, to finish in that fundamental and trans-historical place that comes forth as a manifestation of will, of life-force. Thus a process of distillation, as in Geurts’ channelling of water from his artist’s apartment upstairs at the Chambre Blanche, through clear tubes that he ran down to the gallery below, becomes an epic story. Epic encounters always at once both distill down and transport away. The epic and the simple in stories and phenomena are kindred.

To go beyond the first step of categorising things in terms of opposites, following Nietzsche’s example, one might also look to the magical principle of sympathetic resemblance. One thing becomes another, through playing on that quality that is common in both. Thus, for example, a figurative representation — an effigy — may stand for a person in certain rituals. Finally, where the limits

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1 Geurts’ residency ran from 10 November-21 December 2008.
2 For further information see: http://www.jamesgeurts.com/
3 See Ludwig Wittgenstein, Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, first published in 1921.
4 See Friedrich Nietzsche’s Twilight of the Idols or How to Philosophise with a Hammer, first published in 1889. One commentator on this text explains Nietzsche’s argument as follows: “For art to exist, or for any form of aesthetic activity to exist, there has to be an inspired condition on the part of the artist or observer. The inspired condition is described as ‘Apollonian’ or ‘Dionysian.’ The Apollonian condition is a state of intensity in which a creative vision of form is fully realized. The Apollonian impulse is toward order, form, rationality, and control. The Dionysian condition, on the other hand, is characterized by a dissolution of form, and by a release of energy. The Dionysian force is an impulse toward disorder, irrationality, and spontaneity. The Dionysian condition is characterized by an ability to respond to any stimuli, and is a state of emotional intensity. Art is the result of the interaction or conflict between the Apollonian and the Dionysian. The Apollonian and the Dionysian transform each other, so that mastery of irrationality is obtained, and the Dionysian condition becomes the creative ‘will of life’ to affirm itself.” http://www.angelfire.com/md2/timewarp/nietzsche.html
of taxonomy are concerned, I am reminded of the understanding that things are connected by their kind, rather than simply their external form: thus a stolid horse resembles a stolid woman more than she does a faint-hearted horse, a spiralling constellation more than he does an explosive man, a waterfall in transformation resembles lovers in transformation more than it does lovers in stasis.

The work of Geurts lends itself, if one is so disposed – and I am – to the fabulous. What lies in fables? Something fundamental about experience. Should we name it becoming? What is at the heart of the epic and what simply is life? This becoming, that is the source of power, Geurts passage at la Chambre Blanche was called Drawing Field, implying the making of a mission field, epotheke, or what is the further making, and use, of critical, creative spaces: in the mindseye, in the city, and beyond, which I suggested at the outset of the text remains the ultimate goal of art. To name what I have until now endeavoured to demonstrate: I think journeying is required, of the kind the artist shows us he has undertaken, to get to a space beyond, through that of the exhibition. One can say that this work, generously, points to the great decision to simply undertake a journey.

All good stories feature some heartfelt confession. And so... Art per se does not interest me. Rather art is a means for the creation of a space, for movement, with purpose: transformation. To reiterate Nietzsche's insight, the character of the purpose is less important than its quality: things meet through the conditions that they offer for intensity. Like a cathedral and a library. An airport lounge and the stage of a Samuel Beckett play. A shopping mall and a cemetery. An art gallery and a river, to return to the content of Geurts' work at the Chambre Blanche. Galleries can make the city their own, that is be a point of departure, in this way. Through an alliance of their intention, the intention of artists that work in them, and naturally the intention of visitors to use them in this way.

I have sought to convey something of the essence of the intention in Geurts' passage at the Chambre Blanche, and that is its instigation of the fundamental. What does fundamental art look like, what is it? The answer cannot be spoken. Because transcendence - or 'movement beyond' - has no one face. And therein lie the limits of the mask of judge or accountant, and the limitless of the ritual of enacting stories. I have sought, in other words, to conjure the story of the space of the art work, the space of creating movement, that is a story of the collapse of differences of form into fundamental intensities in kind: the power of water, the power of dreams, the circulating dream structure that we know as the human body: back to Geurts.

The act of will on the part of the artist to create a space for movement invites the visitor's enactment, and story, of transformation. In a cavernous space in a former women's prison, which has now become an art museum, I asked James Geurts how possible he felt it was for the visitor to take up this invitation. My motive in asking something so hypothetical was this: the Chambre Blanche supports artistic enquiry, but what is its relationship with the public through what it offers? Here I want to state the obvious, which is the fact that artist-run centres do more than nurture arts communities, and support artists' practices. And so whilst artists do what they have to do, the larger social and personal conditions of visitors to arts centres cannot be abstracted. How to enter into the space of the art work from the street, from psychic and social, including work, spaces that consistently level stories and regulate ritual: that teach and tame? After all, as Jean-Luc Godard reminds us « Policing is to society what dreams are to the individual ».

The question of how possible it is for the visitor to enter into this act of will and can't be answered, as at the beginning of the day each man and woman decides for themselves. However a key aspect of artistic spaces that offer movement, that is which open up the ritual enactment of being of the world, leads to one response to my question: artists can favour this possibility through the atmosphere of initiation in their work.

An essential characteristic of powerful art is its initiatory aspect, because when stories unfold through us, we move through this aspect of initiation. Atmosphere is crucial for this to happen. I have written elsewhere that art that is powerful in atmosphere by its very nature invites us to leave the art work behind, as we move through it to a space that is at once born of it and beyond it. All art that offers this movement meets in an experience that lies above, and so below, the grounds of historical time or a contingent present.

And so I return to the captivation of our nightworking woman in her attic that evening with the atmosphere of Geurts' equatorial journey. And I return to my initiation with Geurts' space of water and light, at the Chambre Blanche. To atmospheres that inspire not the account or verdict of art but its story.
"I only went out for a walk and finally concluded to stay out till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in."

Since Turner brought the landscape genre to critical attention over 150 years ago, abstraction has provided a means to link perception, inner states and the physical environment. Tract brings together video artists from Honours, Masters and Doctoral studies in Media Arts who share an interest in this profoundly significant relationship between abstraction and the landscape. The exhibition configures their work in combinations that draw out synergies and contrasts in their approaches to the tension between inner and outer.

From proto-modernists like Turner, through Impressionism and the seminal seascapes of Mondrian, landscape was a foundational element of the abstraction project. Whilst abstraction is often misunderstood as a means of confusing that which is being depicted, it is used by many artists as a means of seeing more clearly. Although video based abstraction has found a home in the current explosion of audio-visual performance work, it is yet to be drawn into the fold of the broader video art renaissance that has been going on, and on, since 1995. Perhaps this is a hangover from 1970s early video synthesizer experiments or just an allergic reaction to abstraction in the post-modern moment - no textual analysis - no interest. However, despite its absence from galleries, abstract video continues to compel practitioners as a mainstay of experimental screen culture in festivals, clubs and DIY contexts.

Similarly out of vogue just now, the landscape nonetheless remains the great Australian subject. With all our national hand wringing over identity so closely tied to our relationship to the environment, it is a subject both vexing and unavoidable. In the work contained in Tract, understanding identity and understanding place are intrinsically linked as a means to engage critically with what Heidegger described as the ‘homelessness’ of the modern condition. Collectively this work addresses the ‘undifferentiation’ of place that the collapse as the ‘homelessness’ of the modern condition. In the work contained in Tract, understanding identity and understanding place are intrinsically linked as a means to engage critically with what Heidegger described as the ‘homelessness’ of the modern condition.

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F. VIDEO DOCUMENTATION ON DVD:

1. **Artesian**
   The Great Artesian Basin (South Australia, New South Wales, Queensland)
   Site-specific multi-screen video project in the Great Artesian Basin region.
   Four-screen video
   Various durations
   Funded by the Australian Film Commission.
   Producer, Julie Ryan; Instrumental Composer, Caerwen Martin; Electronic sounds by Foton, Hans de Man and Peter van Hoesen (Brussels) 24 Hour Art, Darwin 2008.
   *Artesian* was funded by the Australian Film Commission and the Australian Council for the Arts.

2. **Salt Drawing Lake**
   Lake Frome (Flinders Ranges, South Australia):
   An ephemeral Land Art drawing project, as video.
   Single channel video
   5 Minutes 30 seconds
   Electronic sounds by Foton, Hans de Man and Peter van Hoesen (Brussels)
   *Always Forever*, Adelaide International Film Festival, Greenaway Art Gallery, Adelaide 2007
   Drawing Field, Queensland Centre for Photography, Brisbane 2008.

3. **Drawing Inland Sea**
   Coorong (Mouth of the Murray River, South Australia):
   A two-channel video installation based on landscape abstraction.
   6 minutes
   24th International Conference (SAHANZ) 2007,
   Electronic sounds by Foton, Hans de Man and Peter van Hoesen (Brussels)
   *Living/Being in Between*, Symposium, The American University Girne, Cyprus 2008
   Tract, video installation
   RMIT Gallery, Melbourne 2008

4. **Spatial Transmission Drawing**
   Sound: location frequency
   6 minutes. 30 seconds

5. **Waves Feeding Waves**
   Sound: drawing recording
   4 minutes. 40 seconds