ALEATORIC GEOPOLITICS
art, chance and critical play on the border

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

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DECLARATION

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

Tintin Wulia, 2013
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ABSTRACT

This research is conducted within the field of art, through making and presenting artworks related to, and investigating the geopolitical border. It aims to challenge and question the normative notions of the geopolitical border while proposing ways to illuminate the key issues of critical geopolitics concerning the relationship between geography and power. It does so by re-examining the geopolitical border as an entity that is constantly in a state of renegotiation through the discursive actions of those involved in border politics. It focuses on individuals as active participants – or actors – of critical play in order to simulate the production of chance in the re-presentation of border dynamics in art.

The research sits in the context of globalisation in contemporary art. As well, it considers the globalising context of the contemporary world, with globalisation defined as a set of social, cultural, economic and political processes. Rather than advocating the pure cosmopolitan idea of a borderless world, however, this research through art practice acknowledges the unbalanced, unfinished notion of globalisation that is always in a state of flux, and puts the dynamics of the geopolitical border at the centre. It examines the border through making artworks based on three iconic objects of the border: the passport, the wall and the map. The approach to these three key objects in this project is informed by the field of critical geopolitics as a poststructuralist approach to geopolitics. The methodology is then implemented through critical play, a term used in contemporary art, with the aim of creating play environments to instigate a questioning attitude.

My research questions enable the investigation of three key themes: the geopolitical border, aleatoric processes and critical play. For this project, the border is considered as a socio-political space that is always in flux, in which interactions between individuals continuously transform the border. In my work, chance is explored through the performances of critical play, in which unpredictable interactions between individual actors produce chance that in turn sustain the continuous processes of the border, resulting in a geopolitics that is aleatoric, involving chance and interpretation. The methodological approaches are informed by critical geopolitics, standpoint theory, and Actor-Network-Theory, taking form in a practice-led research that is based on individualisation of the three objects that are taken from the border (the passport, the wall and the map) through methodologies of individualisation involving (1) making the
objects one's own, (2) activating individual agency, and (3) aleatoric processes through critical play in
the form of game-performances. The methodology of presentation of the research as a body of artworks
involves (1) building cyclical works in reference to the continuous processes of borders and the constant
renegotiations, and (2) crossing – rather than blurring – boundaries, between author and participants,
between one medium to another, and between making, showing and documentation.

The outcome of the research magnifies the aleatoric aspects of the border by involving the audience,
the viewers or the visitors as participants. At the same time, the involvement of the participants may
also reach an activation of their own critical awareness of the border as a contested site through the
experiences of participation as an individual actor.
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CHAPTER ONE: NARRATIVE OF DEPARTURE POINTS
1.1. A bird’s-eye view of the research

In 2011, I unexpectedly found myself living my own project about the border: on a trip for an exhibition and an artist’s residency in Germany, I arrived at the Frankfurt airport border only to be met with a refusal of entry to the country, with the accusation of attempting illegal entry. I was then deported under close surveillance to Moscow, and from there I eventually managed to enter Germany through the Stuttgart airport border control. This diverting story, which I will revisit and review in further detail in section 1.3. of this chapter, has personally and politically provided a fresh impetus in the midst of my research.

This research investigates the dynamics of the geopolitical border and its condition. It is a practice-led research exploring the border through art with a focus on chance and critical play, taking into account the four methodological points of critical geopolitics (identity, space, vision and resistance). The term aleatoric refers to a method commonly used in music whereby a composition is partly determined by chance and partly determined by the performer’s interpretation (i.e. the one playing the music). In this research, along the line of the conceptual context of the geopolitical border, the definition of the performer is broadened to include the audience: the viewers of the artwork – they too have an active role in the shaping of the eventual outcome of the artwork.¹

In this research the term chance is used instead of randomness because randomness implies an absence of intentional design. Chance, on the other hand, involves conscious decisions and intent at the individual level. Although decisions are made consciously at the individual level, within a complex system that includes multiple individuals, the involvement of chance can yield limitless possibilities of result so intricate it is practically unpredictable.

¹ It is crucial to note at this point that the eventual outcome of the artworks in this research is not important. The point of the research is not to predict the final shape of the artwork that results from a participatory act.
The focus of this research, however, is in the complexity of the process rather than in predicting the result. Within this research, this complexity is created through critical play, which in this research refers to game-performances (play environments and activities staged as an integral performative acts) that propose questions on the border. With a multitude of human participants, the game-performance becomes a more complex aleatoric system that produces chance.

1.2. Research Questions

This research investigates and explores the dynamics of the geopolitical border through three research questions:

1. How can the geopolitical border be re-imagined in art?
2. How can the agency and network in border dynamics be illuminated through art?
3. How can the continuous aleatoric processes of agency in the shaping of a border be simulated through art?

Firstly, how can the geopolitical border be re-imagined in art? With this question, I aim to explore how two different fields of research, critical geopolitics and art, can inform each other. The starting point of the exploration is my own practice as formed by my own standpoint (as will be discussed further in this chapter as part of the next section) as well as critical geopolitics' four methodological points: identity, space, vision and resistance (as will be discussed further in Chapter 2). The role of the visual culture is acknowledged in critical geopolitics as part of its third methodological points of geopolitical discourse, vision (the institutionalised ways of seeing, displaying and presenting space), as an aspect of power-knowledge relations. A process of translation is required in addressing this question. In order to translate, the definitions of the geopolitical border and on art as referred to in my own practice must be approached critically. These definitions will be discussed in Chapter 2.

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2 As this research illuminates the condition of the border that is always in flux, I am more interested in the process of the making rather then the eventual outcome. The artworks are always in the state of deferral, as in Jacques Derrida’s idea of différence: “the systematic play of differences, of the traces of differences, of the spacing by means of which elements are related to each other. This spacing is the simultaneously active and passive [...] production of the intervals without which the “full” terms would not signify, would not function” in which: “the relationship to the present, the reference to a present reality, to a being - are always deferred.” (Derrida, Bass and Ronse 1981: 28-29).
Secondly, how can the agency and network in border dynamics be illuminated through art? Having defined the geopolitical border, the fact that the border is actually a set of social mechanisms that needs to be constantly performed to exist becomes evident. The border is built upon a network of actors, and the individual’s agency is an important factor that often gets overlooked and undermined for the purpose of maintaining the normative definition of the geopolitical border. This is an interesting site to look at and to magnify through art, and will be defined and identified further in Chapter 2.

Thirdly, how can the continuous aleatoric processes of agency in the shaping of a border be simulated through art? Having defined the geopolitical border critically, it also becomes clear that the border is constructed of continuous processes. Having identified the continuous processes that shape the border, and the actors and their discursive networks, the openings as a consequence of the processes provide the space for the production of chance. The understanding of chance, or aleatory, specific to this research must also be identified in addressing this research question. This will be discussed further in Chapter 2.

Having defined the area of each of the questions, these three research questions will be addressed and discussed in Chapter 3, on my methodology.

1.3. A marginal border-crosser’s personal impetus into critical geopolitics

On 16 September 2011, following a long-haul flight from Denpasar to Frankfurt on my way to install my work at The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds after 1989 exhibition, I was deported from Germany on the basis of attempting illegal entry with an invalid Schengen visa. This refusal of entry is significant because it raises several points of departure about geopolitical borders that are fundamental to my research. I will spell these points of departure out later in this section.
The Schengen visa is a document that is granted to some third-country passport holders such as myself (traveling on an Indonesian passport) as an authorisation to enter any Schengen member country. A Schengen member country is a country that has signed the Schengen Agreement to implement amongst others “the abolition of checks at internal borders and the free movement of persons”. Germany is one of these countries. Although I have the necessary authorisation to enter the Schengen area – i.e. my Schengen visa – the actual permission of entry to the Schengen area is usually decided at the point of entry based on this pre-authorisation. In my case, it was at the discretion of the Frankfurt airport border police that my entry at the border of Germany was refused.

My deportation was not uncontested: knowing that my Schengen visa was supposedly still valid, I contacted the Dutch Embassy in Sydney who had issued the visa. The senior visa officer in Sydney immediately confirmed that my Schengen visa was indeed still valid. He also assured me that the Frankfurt border police should have had the same understanding regarding the validity of the visa based on uniform regulations across the Schengen area. However the Frankfurt airport border police continued to insist that the visa was no longer valid. Supporting documents and telephone calls from the

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3 “The term ‘third country’ is used in the Treaties, where it means a country that is not a member of the Union. This meaning is derived from ‘third country’ in the sense of one not party to an agreement between two other countries. Even more generally, the term is used to denote a country other than two specific countries referred to, e.g. in the context of trade relations. This ambiguity is also compounded by the fact that the term is often incorrectly interpreted to mean ‘third-world country’” (European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions 2007).

4 The term ‘country’ here is used colloquially. This term refers to the term I prefer to use throughout this exegesis: the ‘nation-state’. I am using the term ‘nation-state’ because of the importance of the territoriality in the concept of nation-states. While most theorists believe that the nation-state is a product of the 19th century European technological advancement that stimulated mass literacy, there is a more recent hypothesis by political theorist Steven Weber that the nation-states were a side effect of the advancement of map-making technologies in the 15th century (Branch 2011), which is also a suitable context of this exegesis. I am also using the term ‘nation-state’ in this exegesis to differentiate it from the term ‘nation’ that implies the absence of the state and thus tends to emphasise origin or blood relations instead.

5 The Schengen Acquis as referred to in Article 1(2) of Council Decision 1999/435/EC of 20 May 1999 (Official Journal of the European Communities 22 September 2000). The Schengen Area comprises the territories of twenty-six European countries that have implemented the Schengen Agreement signed in the town of Schengen, Luxembourg, in 1985. The Schengen Area operates very much like a single state for international travel with external border controls for those travelling in and out of the area, but with no internal border controls when travelling between Schengen countries. The Schengen acquis is part of the European Community pillar established in the Treaty of Amsterdam of 2 October 1997, but does not apply to the United Kingdom and Ireland, which countries have secured derogations.
well-known German institution that had invited me to participate in their art exhibition could not change their minds. The border police had no problem with my credibility, but they could not let me cross the border because my visa was invalid according to their reading of the details on the visa sticker (with no written explanation for the reason of invalidity), regardless of the fact that the issuer had confirmed its validity. They affixed a refusal stamp on my passport, and I was requested to leave immediately after signing several forms.\(^6\)

This personal experience of the deportation is critical to my research project because it introduces four inter-related impetus to my research about the border that I will describe in the following paragraphs: (1) the geopolitical border as the focus of my research, and its multitude of manifestations within the power relations of the nation-state, (2) challenges to the cosmopolitan utopia of the ‘borderless’ world and a shift of focus onto the dynamics of the border as part of the reality of globalisation, (3) the shaping of border dynamics by subjective socio-political actions coming from the individual actors, and (4) my own personal standpoint as a background to my research, in the context of the cosmopolitanism tendencies occurring in the contemporary art world along with contemporary globalisation processes.

\textit{Firstly, this refusal of entry was relevant principally because the geopolitical border is the focus of my research.} The border in this research conceptually refers to the ‘imaginary’ line between two nation-states that defines their respective geopolitical area. The word ‘imaginary’ here is important, it does not mean ‘fake’ or ‘unreal’, neither it is merely ‘perceived’. This line is, to quote Saramago, “visible only on maps” (2008: 32) yet when we ‘see’ this line at the real location as marked on the map, the line manifest in various other forms while the ‘imagination’ of this line on the map might stay as the reference point in our minds. This ‘imaginary’ line is also not only metaphorical nor only conceptual: it does exist on maps and identifying a border can be as simple as looking for a borderline on a map. However, as the hostile border dispute between Nicaragua and Costa Rica at the end of 2010 has demonstrated, merely referring to a line on the map to identify a border between two nation-states can potentially cause a war.\(^7\) The line

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\(^6\) Personal email correspondence and documentation, 16 September 2011.

\(^7\) In 2010, Google Maps almost caused a war: “On [November] 3 of that year, Edén Pastora, the Nicaraguan official tasked with dredging the Rio San Juan, justified his country’s incursion into neighboring Costa Rica’s territory by claiming that, contrary to the customary borderline, he wasn’t trespassing at all. For proof, he said, just look at Google Maps” (Jacobs 2012).
drawn on maps does not always correspond to the reality of the borderline between these nation-states, and the borderline between nation-states is rarely a mere line.

On par with the borderline that is ‘imaginary’, the nation-state is, as the political historian Benedict Anderson who also studied modern Indonesia has argued, an “imagined community”. This perceived community – comprising the citizens of the nation-states – is not an actual community because there is no everyday face-to-face interaction between its members, “yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson 1991: 224). Anderson argues that a nation-state is socio-politically constructed, imagined by the individual actors who perceive themselves as part of that community, exclusive of the outsiders and at times of the marginals as well. “Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.” (Anderson 1991: 224).

Anderson’s discussion of the nation-states as imagined communities gives a way to analyse nationalism. Anderson regards nationalism as a tool of nation-building – the process of constructing this imagination of a community that is the nation-state. Anderson also argues that amongst a few other stimulants in the end of the 18th century, like literacy (the increase of level of public access to a certain scripture) and the abolition of the divine states (monarchy, where power and control is handed over by God, via the church, to the monarch), the invention of the printing press made it possible for the nation-states (or any other power that takes interests in the creation of an imagined community) to feed and strengthen the imagination of the community (Anderson 1991: 90-7).

Inherent in the tools of nation building is the notion of an original identity for each of the members. New emerging nation-states imagine themselves as being ‘antique’ – in other words old, ancient and thus rooted and therefore powerful – and having some kind of an origin that binds the members of its community. This notion of being identified with the ‘origin’, being a ‘native’ of a certain imagined geography – to refer to an earlier concept coined by critical theorist of post-colonialism Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* (1978) to describe the creation of a perception of space through images, texts and discourses – that binds the community within a certain territory. The border comes into play again in this definition of power. The imagined community imagines itself as “limited and sovereign” (Anderson
1991). As it is being identified as possessing a certain origin, and because it is limited and sovereign, it is also excluding certain margins of the community that does not fall into straightforward identification.

It is within this marginalisation that my refusal of entry, by no coincidence, specifically happened at a border of Germany. As I will explicate further in the next departure point about the myth of borderlessness, the fact that Germany is one of the initiators of the Schengen agreement that ensures borderless travel within the Schengen area is noteworthy. Germany is economically one of the strongest nation-states in the European Union, and one with a history of extreme nationalism. Taking the previous discussion on nationalism as a tool of nation building into account, together with the formation of the Schengen area as a utopian ideal of a borderless continent, my refusal of entry can indicate the insecurities that accompany the search for utopia. The fact of Germany’s strong economy weaved together with the fact that its border within the Schengen area is absolutely permeable teases out the necessity for straightforward identification of whom to be included and whom to be excluded. I was simply a good candidate for exclusion because I traveled with an Indonesian passport – that I was a citizen of Indonesia, in other words – and as such I innately possess a certain economical risk to Germany because I identify with a nation-state with much less economical stability. All these complex discussions on identity construction, on territoriality that binds and signifies power and control, as well as the creation of perception through images is significantly relevant to the methodological points of critical geopolitics, an essential stream of thought to this research that I will discuss further in Chapter 2.

It is thought provoking that the German sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) who was a strong critic of German antisemitism – also known for being one of the founders of the liberal German Democratic Party that was forced by the Nazis to be dissolved in 1933 – evidently disregards territoriality in his definition of a nation-state. He argues, instead, that a nation-state is a power structure that holds the legitimate monopoly of violence (Weber 1978: 54), whereby the rights to kill is reserved to the nation-state. This rights to kill is one of the tools of the nation-state in exercising its power, and one that I am personally familiar with. One of Benedict Anderson’s research interests is Indonesia, the nation-state where I come from. Anderson was banned from entering Indonesia after a work that was later known as the Cornell Paper, disputing the Indonesian government’s claim that the Indonesian communist party (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) was the actor of the failed coup d’etat attempt of 30 September 1965.
This story is relevant to this research as it relates to my familial background: my grandfather was killed in the mass killing following the ‘coup’ of 1965 in Indonesia. This also contributes to the impetus for my personal and political standpoint in undertaking the research. I will explicate this further later in this chapter as part of my fourth departure point.

The term geopolitics in this research, in the meanwhile, refers to processes of power relations over geography that is influenced by social, cultural, political and economical aspects. In the geopolitical context the border can manifest in various forms of geopolitical definition that separates one country from another, and differentiates the citizens of one country from the citizens of another. This act of defining and differentiating has been discussed for thousands of years: in Plato’s last and longest dialogue *Laws* (Plato 348 BC: Book XII), one of the requirements of an ideal city-state is restricted movement of its citizens. Throughout history we have also seen magnificent border structures such as the Roman Limes, the Berlin Wall and the Great Wall of China, however borders – especially contemporary borders – are never simply physical. Take as an example the border as presented at the *Texas Virtual Border Watch*™ website.  

In this website, civilians from around the world that have signed in for free are presented with 27 channel of streaming video material from various parts of the border. These video streams mostly show rivers, trees and roads. Only one of the webcams focuses on a manmade building structure, which turns out to be a culvert. None of the streaming webcams shows a concrete, definite and physical borderline like the grand walls that were erected to control movement in the past. It is therefore understandable that when Britt Craig – the founder of the *Campo Minuteman Project* – first went out to the border
to do his ‘neighbourhood watch on the border,’ he was awestruck. As he described in a documentary video published at borderstories.org (Borderstories.org 2008): “When I got out here, I was really, really shocked ... that we didn’t have a border to defend. It’s an imaginary line. There’s actually nothing there”.

Is there actually “nothing there”? I will discuss this question in chapter 2 through a survey on critical geopolitics’ view on the border. Meanwhile, to return to my personal story, this geopolitical line manifests firstly as the Schengen visa: it takes form as a sticker in a passport authorising entry to the ‘borderless’ Schengen area. It then also takes form as the passport control area at the Frankfurt Airport, a liminal space where border control procedures are being implemented, and eventually as the refused entry stamp in my passport. This line also manifests in many other ways, for instance in the form of fences, border checkpoints and walls between adjacent countries in Europe although many of these dissolved as soon as the Schengen Agreement was implemented in 1995. It can also manifest as lines on the map of the Schengen member countries delineating their specific geographic areas regardless of the long-past border checkpoints. However, while the Schengen border is a useful example, it is not the focus of my research. Instead of focusing on one geographical border in particular, the focus in this research is on the geopolitical border as a discourse. I will expand this definition further in Chapter 2.

Secondly, the refusal of my entry across a Schengen border seems outwardly ironic because some regard the Schengen area as the first and only “borderless” area in our contemporary world; it is by far the only part of the world where freedom of movement between 26 countries is pragmatically implemented. The Schengen area is a single immigration area that comprises practically all the members of the European Union – plus Switzerland – except for the United Kingdom and Ireland, covering a population of over 400 million people and an area of 4,312,099 square kilometers, almost half the geographical area of the People’s Republic of China. The agreement was initiated by the Benelux – a cooperation that transcends the borders between Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg (Benelux

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Footnote 9: Tom Williams, a retired police psychologist that is the head of the Minutemen in the Northwest border of the US (separating the US from Canada), famously stated that the Minuteman Project, a citizen volunteer movement that guards the US borders, is not a vigilante group. Williams statement is often quoted: that the Minuteman Project is “just a neighborhood watch on the border”. The Minuteman is more well-known for the US-Mexico border patrols they undertake.
n.d.) – within which freedom of movement has existed since 1970. The Benelux then allied with France and Germany to form the Schengen Group as the vanguard for abolition of border checks between adjacent countries in Europe. The Schengen Agreement was signed by these 5 countries – half of the members of the European Economic Community at the time – on 14 June 1985 in Schengen, a small city where the borders of the Grand Duchy, France and Germany meet (Centre Virtuel de la Connaissance sur l’Europe 2012). Soon after the Schengen Agreement started to be implemented in 1995, many of the border checkpoints in the Schengen area were deserted, leaving behind either a barbed-wire fence and an abandoned border checkpoint, or a signpost, or nothing physical at all – as though the border has dissolved completely.

The dissolution of the borders is a utopian idea that can be traced back to the spark of cosmopolitanism in Ancient Greece. When asked for his origin, Diogenes of Sinope (c. 412 BC), the founder of the Greek Cynic movement, famously answered “I am a citizen of the world,” (Hicks 1972 [1925]), rendering the borders between nation-states irrelevant. This Greek cosmopolitan ideal, slightly preceding Plato’s last dialogue Laws (348 BC) – which discusses how the city-state should be bordered – then found its way into our contemporary world through the Greek Stoics who took Diogenes’s statement and developed a whole set of a cosmopolitan way of living (Nussbaum 1997), to the German philosopher Immanuel Kant who with his 1795 essay *Perpetual Peace* (1983 [1795]) proposed a cosmopolitan law that offers protection from war based on people’s equal rights to all surface of the earth.

This concept continued in the 20th century when excessive nationalism in state power and antagonism between nation-states led to the advent of the two world wars, which then required a global solution to restore an international legal order. Following this, the United Nations was set up in 1945 with a binding Charter. The Charter is dedicated to the “maintenance of international peace and security”, “equal rights and self-determination” and “respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms” (Charter, United Nations, Chapter I, Purposes and Principles n.d.). Freedom of movement is cited in this Charter as one of human’s fundamental freedoms. The utopian ideal of the borderless world then also manifests in what was dubbed the Net95, the belief of the early users of the Internet in the mid 1990s that the Internet as the new wide virtual world is deemed to be borderless.
This utopian ideal of borderlessness, however, while useful in contesting the idea of nationalism, is very questionable in itself. In early 2000s, following a French court case against the auction of nazi relics at Yahoo!'s auction site that eventually forced Yahoo! to implement the technology of filtering according to geographic locations of its users, the Net95 was declared dead. The French philosopher Jacques Derrida, in an interview with Bennington (Derrida 1997) stated that cosmopolitanism is “a very limited concept.” This is evident in one of the contemporary manifestations of cosmopolitanism: the so-called globalisation, which is “the intensification of economic, political, social and cultural relations across borders.” (Holm and Sorensen 1995: 1). In explaining the imagined community, Anderson indicated the presence of the “actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each [...] nation” (Anderson 1991: 224). As the globe in globalisation is also some kind of an imagined community, this ‘inequality and exploitation’ is inescapable. Globalisation theorist Manfred Steger has argued that globalisation is “messy and incomplete” (Steger 2009: 2). Recounting the death of Net95, leading cyberlaw scholars Jack Goldsmith and Tim Wu stated that “the failure to understand the many faces and facets of territorial governmental coercion is fatal to globalization theory as understood today, and central to understanding the future of the Internet” (Goldsmith and Wu 2006: 184).

As my personal experience has also illustrated, this ideal of “borderlessness” – which in my case manifesting through the Schengen agreement – is not without problems. Although it was personally disconcerting, the conflicting interpretation of my visa that resulted in my deportation is a relatively mild example of a disagreement between two different Schengen authorities. A more complex circumstance took place earlier in 2011 as one of the consequences of the Arab Spring. In the face of the “human tsunami” waves of refugee from Tunisia, the governments of Italy, France and Germany went into prolonged disagreement about the European Union’s moral responsibility to welcome these refugees. This disagreement reverberates Plato’s acknowledgment that a total movement restriction across the border – as outlined in his dialogue Laws – “is an utter impossibility, and to the rest of the world is likely to appear ruthless and uncivilized” (Plato 348 BC: Book XII), which is also illuminated in critical geopolitics’ fourth key issue, resistance, which I will discuss further in the definitions in my research, in Chapter 2. section 2.1.2. Whether to accept these refugees became an ethical discussion rather than pragmatic considerations of socio-political, cultural and economical effects.
It was perhaps based on this sense of moral obligation that the government of Italy decided to issue entry visas to more than 25,000 migrants, allowing them to travel freely within the Schengen area. This action angered Germany, who threatened to revoke the Schengen agreement by reintroducing border checks (Waterfield 2011), while France even went as far as stopping a train full of migrants at their border, claiming that this action is legal under the Schengen agreement. The arrival of these refugees right at a time of economic insecurity might have contributed to the tension (Hewitt 2011). Closer to the ebb of this turmoil, the prime ministers of France and Italy submitted a joint request to “renationalise” parts of the Schengen system, which was rejected by the European Commission (Pascoau 2011).

In light of my research, the Tunisian refugee case expands the basic definition of the border emphasising tensions of the geopolitical. The border is an ‘imaginary’ line in that it is never an actual line outside of the map. Although the border is often described as a line, in actuality this line is liminal, forming a space that is constantly in multiple states of flux – for instance the flux between the various spectrums of stances on either welcoming or rejecting the Tunisian refugees. These states of flux epitomise the geopolitical border as a contact zone – as “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power, such as colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out in many parts of the world today” (Pratt 1991: 34).

From this example we can see that as a contact zone, the geopolitical border is a contested space of a multitude of ideologies and policies with their respective cultural, economical, political and social motivations. As a space where all these motivations meet, the border is also subject to the interactions between the actors (for example the government of the countries that were involved in the Tunisian refugee case). All these factors play into to the dynamics of the border that fluctuates between the ideal states of being borderless and being bordered.

**Thirdly, experiencing border-entry refusal first-hand is significant for the research because it illustrates how closely related the personal and the political are, not only conceptually but also pragmatically.** The morning after I was stranded in Frankfurt airport waiting for my deportation flight, I was fortunate to encounter a border policeman who, unlike his colleagues, was willing to see me as a unique individual instead of merely a border-crossing threat. Discovering that I was not attempting...
to break the law but was frustratingly stuck in midst of a disagreement between two Schengen bureaucracies, he became committed to help me out. It was not within his power to cancel the report or my refusal stamp, because it had been documented the day before. However, knowing that I was going to be expelled to Moscow – which was my next destination for another exhibition – in order to help me he made a telephone call to the German Embassy in Moscow and talked to the consular officer in person.

The sympathetic border policeman took note of the name of the consular officer that he spoke to and wrote a recommendation letter for me addressed to the consular officer. He even included his mobile number in case there was a need to contact him directly. This recommendation letter was extremely helpful for me: it ultimately enabled me to enter Germany two weeks later, after being granted a new Schengen visa from the German Embassy in Moscow. In the process, the recommendation letter eventually overruled some of the Schengen visa regulations, such as that (1) an application should be submitted at the applicant’s country of residency (I lived in Australia, but my new application was submitted in Russia); (2) any valid existing Schengen visa has to be cancelled before a new Schengen visa could be issued (the Dutch Embassy who issued my pre-existing visa was not willing to cancel my existing visa, but the German Embassy in Moscow decided to issue another visa for me regardless); (3) no new Schengen visa can be issued to a passport holder that had been refused entry (a new visa was issued at the discretion of the German Embassy in Moscow regardless of the refused entry stamp in my passport).

I asked the sympathetic border policeman how he could make such specialised request to the consular officer at the German Embassy in Moscow – whether he is of a higher rank compared to his colleagues who insisted on the refusal of my entry, and what enabled him to help me out. He answered that he did not have a special privilege or higher rank; my case was special and difficult, but any border police would have been able to do everything he did to help me. The problem was that most of them simply could not care less. This is an example of complex aleatoric principles in action – this complex network of agreements and negotiations resembles a performance that is based entirely on chance. There is no score to the performance, however each of the actors in this performance contributes to an unlikely circumstance that was unpredictable to me.

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10 Personal conversation, 17 September 2011.
The sympathetic border policeman might have never appeared, yet he did, and at the right time. The consular officer in Moscow might have never agreed to help out – he did not have to, as it is not in his line of duty – yet he did, and went further by deciding that issuing a visa for me regardless of the refusal entry stamp was acceptable. Had the Dutch Embassy not replied to my urgent email, and had I not decided to once again try to contest the refusal of entry, I would not have met the sympathetic border policeman. This illustrates the intricate network of interactions, cause and effect, that lead to an unpredictable aleatoric circumstance.

This example also shows that while the decision-making procedures for establishing the policy is made at the government level, at the end of the day this policy is implemented by an individual at the border, in face-to-face interactions between individuals. Regardless of the policy made at government-level, the immediate interactions between individuals at the border often shape the end result of any border-related dispute. An individual’s decision can often directly affect another individual’s life. This is also why the process of lobbying is significant in any political relations. Seeing this from the perspective of Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network-Theory, in this case the sympathetic border policeman was an actor representing the nation-state, as well as an individual actor taking agency to help me, another individual actor although in the lower hierarchy of power. This is actor-ness according to Latour: a network of all these individual actors reaching a solution. I will discuss the Actor-Network-Theory further in Chapter 2 in the context of aleatoric processes as an effect of unpredictable agency.

Again, my experience was comparably harmless in a political sense; the Tunisian refugee in my previous example, on the other hand, could not afford to turn back due to the life-threatening circumstances in their home country. However, during the arrival of one of the refugee boats into Italy through a coastal Italian island of Lampedusa, an angry local crowd managed to turn them back – disregarding their own government’s policy – as they saw the refugee as a potential threat to the local economy. To ensure that the government’s policy was carried out, the Italian coastguard had to designate a special landing area guarded with armed police to protect the refugee boats from the local civilians (Lambert 2011).

The border comes alive in times like these; it is not merely a binary construct where the characters involved are either “one of us” or “the other”; the border at these times demonstrates its complex
dynamics of personal and political interests, government policy and its interpretation based on interactions between individuals and/or groups. Encounters at the borders are therefore always shaped by specific personal intentions as well as political motives. The immediate interaction between individuals as part of the dynamics of the geopolitical border is a crucial theme in my research.

Lastly – although not less importantly – the refusal of entry into this “borderless” area was personally timely because of the speaking position that I am professing in this research. The refusal of my entry to Germany occurred on my way to participate in an exhibition addressing the recent global cosmopolitan tendencies in art. The exhibition I was invited to was *The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds after 1989* at the ZKM/Center for Media and Art in Karlsruhe. This exhibition was part of the project *Global Art and the Museum*, initiated by renowned art historian Hans Belting and esteemed curator/media artist Peter Weibel, as “a first attempt at documenting the contested boundaries of today's art world; its aim is to spark a debate on how the globalization process changes the art scene and to undertake a critical review of the development 20 years after its onset” (Belting and Buddensieg 2010). This exhibition is one of the many similarly themed exhibitions that have sprung up in the past two decades, what the cultural theorist Nikos Papastergiadis calls “the emergence of aesthetic cosmopolitanism … [t]endencies [that] have been manifest in numerous studies and exhibitions that proceed under the general headings of globalism and internationalism” (Papastergiadis 2012: 112).

In the meantime, the theme of border dynamics – the focus of my research – has also been discussed at the forefront of major art exhibitions such as *Documenta XI* in 2002 curated by Okwui Enwezor and the 2006 Sydney Biennale, *Zones of Contact* curated by Charles Merewether, placing a curatorial focus on examining borders in a supposedly connected world. These are only two examples of the many exhibitions that show significant numbers of works by artists working on similar themes. Observing these tendencies, Papastergiadis argues that contemporary art is “increasingly engaged in a critique of globalization and the rearticulation of a universalist visions” and that the global tendencies of issues that are discussed in the diverse production of art are difficult to map because they are currently happening along with the rapid social change, or in Papastergiadis’s words, “enmeshed in the real-time processes of social change” (Papastergiadis 2012: 112).
This is the context in which my research sits: the changing shape of the contemporary art world that is becoming globalised, not necessarily evenly or smoothly, as globalisation is – to quote Steger again – a “messy and incomplete superimposition of the global village on the conventional nation-state and its associated key concepts of ‘citizenship’, ‘sovereignty’, ‘territoriality’, ‘borders’, ‘political belonging’, and so on” (Steger 2009: 2). Drawing from Papastergiadis’s book *Cosmopolitanism and Culture* (2012) as well as standpoint theory, in the following paragraphs I will explain how my speaking position is unique to my practice-led research. Firstly I will explain my fluctuating position between being a marginalised actor that can be an exemplary part of the unevenness of globalisation and an artist/researcher with an empowering émigré position. Then, I will explain my position as a part of the new nomads of the globalised world who are refusing to be categorised. I will summarise how I position myself in this context by forming a new ‘cosmopolitan imaginary’ that acknowledges the unevenness of globalisation, by always coming from a marginal position, always refusing to be categorised, always in flux rather than just being in between, and at the same time always bringing discursivity on the geopolitical border (versus the myth of borderlessness) into the limelight. I will also discuss the importance of disseminating my works through a strategy that defies categorisation, on the basis of my methodology and conceptual context. Finally, I will contextualise my positioning against the backdrop of current practices in contemporary art where – according to Papastergiadis’s observation – several recurrent issues are being discussed.

In my research, I am personally, professionally and politically part of these uneven processes of globalisation. This context of the research provides an important position for my identification. Personally – and politically – I am an Indonesian passport holder and an Australian permanent resident that migrated to Australia under the Skilled Migrant category in 2003. Unlike the Australian government, the Indonesian government does not acknowledge multiple citizenship, so even when I am entitled to an Australian passport because of the length of time I have lived in Australia as a permanent resident, acquiring the Australian passport (which literally means acquiring the Australian citizenship as the passport is one of the few proofs of citizenship) will mean that I will have to revoke my Indonesian citizenship. This will be unfavourable for me personally as on top of my already disadvantageous position...
as part of a ‘minority’\textsuperscript{11} group of the Chinese-Indonesian in Indonesia, without a legal citizenship I will then be regarded as a visitor (who would have less legal rights compared to a citizen) whenever I enter Indonesia, where my family and most of my relatives live.

I come from a family of migrants, where migration is virtually a constant theme. For instance, when my application for the Australian permanent residency visa was still in process in 2002, my younger brother unexpectedly won the US’s green card lottery and moved to San Francisco, where he resides until now. There he eventually met for the first time with our granduncle, who decided to leave Indonesia with his family in the 1950s because of the legalised discrimination against Chinese-Indonesians. They migrated to China regardless of their being unacquainted with the country and culture, escaped to Hong Kong during the Cultural Revolution, migrated to Canada not long after, and ended up in the Bay Area of the west coast of USA. It is also an anachronistic history of migration that made me a ‘minority’ group in Indonesia: I am believed to be a fifth generation Chinese-Indonesian, and although my ancestors supposedly migrated to Indonesia more than half a century before the birth of the Republic of Indonesia in 1945 and leaving very little trace of any association with the Chinese culture, until now I still experience the discrimination in Indonesia, particularly when dealing with actors of the government. For a large part of my life, this discrimination was also legislated by the Indonesian government. As an example of the many discriminative government regulations, it was only in 2000 that a President’s decree of 1967 that banned the “Chinese religion, beliefs, and traditions”\textsuperscript{12} in Indonesia was lifted (see Coppel 2002; Coppel 2005; Lindsey 2005; Lembong 2008; Tempo 2007).

\textsuperscript{11} The term ‘minority’ here is disputable. According to the 2010 census, the Chinese-Indonesian minority constitutes 3.7\% of the whole population. However, it is important to take into account that the persistent racism towards Chinese-Indonesians might have caused census subjects to not admit to be Chinese-Indonesians.

\textsuperscript{12} The Indonesian Presidential Instruction 14 of 1967 (Instruksi Presiden Nomor 14 Tahun 1967, Inpres No. 14/1967) on Chinese Religion, Beliefs, and Traditions effectively banned Chinese literature and the public practice of Chinese cultures in Indonesia, including the prohibition of Chinese characters. This is only one of the many legalised discrimination against Chinese-Indonesians. Other directives include the Presidential Decision 240 of 1967 (Keputusan Presiden Nomor 240 Tahun 1967, Keppres No. 240/1967) that mandated assimilation of Chinese-Indonesians, referring to them as “foreigners”. This directive supported a previous one, Cabinet Presidium Decision 127 of 1966 (Keputusan Presidium Kabinet Nomor 127 Tahun 1966, 127/U/Kep/12/1966) that mandated Chinese-Indonesians to adopt Indonesian-sounding names. In its implementation, the Presidential Regulation No. 10/1959 (Perpres No. 10/1959) issued on 13 November 1959 (State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia 1959, pp. 907-12), which prohibited small businesses with “foreign traits” to be located outside of the capital cities, gave rise to racial riots that target Chinese-Indonesians (Coppel 2002: 346, Tempo 2007: 94-5).
Within this ‘minority’ group, I have been positioned as even more of a minority – one who is personally, although not willingly, ghettoised – because I am a second-generation subject affected by the shifts of power within the Indonesian government in 1965. Like thousands\(^\text{13}\) of others, my grandfather was taken away from home by force during the so-called communist coup in 1965. Growing up, I had to keep this as a secret – an act of personal censorship, of self-ghettoisation in order to survive, forced by a system of terror set up by the Indonesian government under the Soeharto dictatorship – and never to be critical about it. It was only a couple years after the fall of the Soeharto dictatorship in 1998 that I could start talking in public about this family secret (Wulia 2008). I began to do this – very subtly at first – through making video artworks, disseminating these works and discussing them in public. This is where my other marginal position came into play: when I started practising as an artist, I was not academically or institutionally trained in this field – my first degrees being in music and architecture – and thus I was quite unknowing of how the art world works and how I was expected to behave and act as an ‘artist’. But at the same time, even if I might have not been perceived as an artist, I would have the benefit of being undefined. This standpoint of being undefined, however, was also met with matching concurrent policies and strategies by art professionals and institutions, and thus disseminating my works in the art world became possible.

In about 2005 the art professionals and institutions with whom I was associated seemed to be interested in ‘outside artists’ who were working more as ‘activists’ rather than being complicit with art world customs and protocols. Hence my work became known; my early entry to the art world involved participating in the Istanbul Biennale in 2005 curated by Charles Esche and Vasif Kortun.\(^\text{14}\) This gave me a perspective on the art world, yet also enabled my outsider position to stay intact.

My migration to Australia was partially an outcome of these experiences, and at the same time became a part of the impetus for analysing and internalising them because it allowed a distilled, external view

\(^{13}\) The number of casualties during the systematised mass killing in 1965 is still unconfirmed until now.

\(^{14}\) Before the Istanbul Biennale in 2005, a few curators had been including my short film/video works in public group exhibitions since 2002. The Istanbul Biennale, however, was quite a significant exhibition in terms of scale, and relevant because of the socially-engaged philosophy that underlies the curatorial context.
of these experiences. In talking about the border through my own practice, all these life experiences influence my standpoint and how I socially construct and analyse the world. Being in the position where I am personally affected by these life experiences while having the position (of power) to assimilate the first-hand knowledge to my disseminated practice is crucial to this research. To give an example: while owning up to the knowledge of the killing of my grandfather in the so-called coup in 1965 as a personal history, I was able to eventually reflect on the bigger picture by focusing on the border, i.e. the so-called coup as a territorial dispute between two sets of power over the whole nation-state. This bigger picture allowed me to engage a wider public through the realisation that the experience was actually a communal one. This and the subsequent refusal of entry to Germany – which indicated that I was seen as a threat – illustrate through personal, real-life experience the uneven processes of globalisation and the manifestation in personal and political actions. I would never have experienced this refusal of entry had I not come from a marginalised position. With my position as an artist/researcher, I can reflect on experiences like this both from the inside (as a subject that is able to personally reflect on the experiences in artistically compelling terms), as well as from the outside (as a researcher with an observational power to produce new knowledge).

Epistemologically speaking, this kind of marginal positioning resonates partly with standpoint theory, which began in 1807 with the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's study on the dialectical dialogue between the slave and the master. Noting that the reality of slavery is perceived differently depending on one's position in society (whether as a slave or a master), Hegel asserted that in a society structured through power relationships, there is no universal understanding of social life (Hegel and Baillie 1967 [1931]).

Standpoint theory then develops through the Marxist view that social relations structure one's understanding of the world and that concepts and categories structure the ways one interacts with the world. The Marxist tradition also provides Hegelian standpoint theory with a discussion on nuances of subjectivity, on the relationship between knowledge and power and on privileged epistemology on behalf of the proletariat (Marx 1964 [1869]; Lukács 1971). In 1983 feminist theorist Nancy Hartsock expanded Hegelian and Marxist standpoint theory into feminist standpoint theory, claiming privileged knowledge on behalf on women (Hartsock 1983).
In my research, while I am not concentrating on gender relationships, standpoint theory in general (rather than the specifically feminist development of it) provides a way to explain and empower my speaking position within the dynamics of power between structure and agency, acknowledging the position of the marginalised within these dynamics. According to standpoint theory, although all knowledge is partial, the marginalised have more incentive to understand perspectives other than their own, as they are not speaking from the position of the dominant group or discourse.

I experienced this in person long before reading any texts on standpoint theory when I spent a period of time studying in the USA. It became apparent to me that coming from a third-world country like Indonesia enabled me to see a bigger picture of the world compared to my peers who were born and grew up in the USA. For instance, as an Indonesian growing up in Indonesia I was bombarded with American cultural dissemination (such as Hollywood films), while my American peers in the USA might not even know where in the world Indonesia is, simply because Indonesia has less power to disseminate its culture. I saw this as a benefit rather than drawback: I understood more about how my American peers sit within the context of the whole world – in other words, I have a wider view of the world that includes the USA in the dominant position and my own country in a peripheral position (together with so many other countries), while my American peers’ view of the world might be limited to their own country as the centre of their world. This resonates with standpoint theory which argues that those who belong to the more powerful group have less reason to understand how those who are in a lesser position live. Thus, as standpoint theory asserts, the formation of a more objective view of the world depends largely on the voice of the marginalised (Harding 1991: 124, 150; Rolin 2009).

It is important to note that my standpoint depends largely on my being marginalised also because of its benefits and advantages, because as such it again resonates with Giddens’s discussion of the power of the individual agency to activate the “openings” within a structure system. The marginalised are usually excluded from the majority with a merely generalising definition. Being generalised, the marginalised are actually undefinable. This undefinability makes the marginalised flexible; the marginalised are always

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15 This was for my B.Mus. study in Film Scoring at Berklee College of Music, Boston, Massachusetts, in 2005 to 2007.
Being constantly in flux empowers the marginalised because they are unpredictable within the norm structure. To reflect on this through Michel de Certeau’s discussion of tactics and strategies in his work *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984), the marginalised are somehow suspected and thus expected to employ a wide range of tactics in navigating the existing strategies set up by the structure of the government. Acknowledging this position within the power-knowledge relationship at the border also elucidates my research methodology: being in the position of the marginalised, I am inclined to find Giddens’s “openings” in the system (Giddens 1987: 11) and employ the unpredictability of de Certeau’s “tactics” in negotiations within a structure (de Certeau 1984: 36-7). I will discuss my methodologies further in Chapter 3.

Having discussed my standpoint, the issue of categorisation and labeling of artists is important to raise. Like myself, more and more artists and other art practitioners are both expected and intentionally becoming regular border-crossers, the new nomads of the globalised world. In this current practice of contemporary art, Papastergiadis observes that “[t]he artists can be identified in almost every corner of the world, but they also express a deep resistance to situating their work within regional surveys” (Papastergiadis 2012: 112). It is true that regardless of the reality that artists are now becoming the regular border-crossers, survey exhibitions that focus on a certain geographic area associated with a certain nation-state are still popular. I have participated in several of these myself, although in this type of exhibition my participations have always been deliberate, as I will explain further in the following paragraphs. This type of exhibition is one of a few indicators that the contemporary art world still has the tendency to be conforming to normative borders, regardless of Papastergiadis’s observation of its cosmopolitan tendencies. Furthermore, an artist will not only be situated based on geographical area, but also by other kinds of definitions.

These definitions (which reinforce the borders) in the contemporary art world can also take form in the distinction between fine art (or high art) and craft (applied art), between commercial exhibitions

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16 For example, the Chinese-Indonesian minority as a marginalised group is suspected to be disloyal to Indonesia because they are thought of as having attachment to China. In general, because the marginalised are not attached to a land, they are more free to leave anytime they want, and thus suspect as being disloyal and uncontrollable.

17 See Appendix One: List of Relevant Publications 2007-2013 for a listing of exhibitions that I have shown in as part of this research.
(such as art fairs) and non-commercial exhibitions (shows held by public institutions). Even more interestingly, these manifestations of borders are also inseparable from the issues of the geopolitical borders in a global world. Websites like artfacts.net, for example, rank artists according to how widely spread internationally their exhibitions are, and only taking into account non-commercial art exhibitions in esteemed public institutions. However, the fact that the process of globalisation is unequal means that, for an instance, the citizenship of an artist will be quite crucial in her or his access to the esteemed international world. The distinction between commercial and non-commercial exhibitions are also still evident – an artist faring successfully in non-commercial exhibitions might not sell their works in the commercial scene, and vice versa.

Looking at these exhibitions as the opportunity to disseminate my work, the decision to participate in them was never unmindful. Papastergiadis notes that “[a]rtists are now routinely presenting themselves as participants in the collective making of a global worldview” – and resulting from this, he proposes that “contemporary art is not just reflecting the contradictions of globalisation but is also a constitutive force in the production of what I call a cosmopolitan imaginary” (Papastergiadis 2012: 112). This term, the “cosmopolitan imaginary”, resonates well with Anderson’s term “imagined community” (Anderson 1991). If the imagined community is the perceived community comprising the strong comradeship between the citizens of a nation-state, one that is so strong that its members are “willing to die” for the perceived union that is limited and sovereign, what would a cosmopolitan imaginary comprise of? Papastergiadis’s 2012 proposal implies that this cosmopolitan imaginary is what is produced by artists as participants in the “collective making of a global worldview”. The question I ask myself as an artist is, what kind of cosmopolitan imaginary can I produce as part of this collective making of a global worldview, and how can I disseminate it in a way that is relevant?

The kind of cosmopolitan imaginary that I produce as part of the collective making of a global worldview draws attention to aspects of globalisation – social, cultural, political and economic – and acknowledges the position of the marginalised within these dynamics, thus illuminating the reality of imbalance and inequality. This focus has also been approached by different artists through different methodologies. Works along the line of *The World Flag Ant Farm* (Yukinori Yanagi 1990) and *Untitled (The Gate)* (Shilpa Gupta 2009) commented on border dynamics by applying change and process into the physical
symbolism of borders. Works by Hamra Abbas, such as Please do not step (2004) and Please do not step 2 (2008), as well as Tom Nicholson’s ongoing work Marches for another season (since 2003) relocate the cultural signs and signifiers of the border into different contexts. While several performance works by artists like Guillermo Gomez-Peña and Coco Fusco (such as The Couple in the Cage, 1992-1993) focus on the cultural imposition of the body to reflect on the physicality of borders, several of Jens Hanning’s works like Turkish Joke (1994), Arabic Joke (1996) and Foreigners Free (Biel Swimming Pool) (2000) have illuminated the intangible cultural border – like the frictions caused by language – in everyday life.

The tone of borderlessness has also been prevalent in contemporary art production. Artworks such as Paul Sermon’s Telematic Vision (1993) and the 1989 Cyber Dada Manifesto by the Australian duo Cyber Dada (Dale Nason and Troy Innocent) express the optimism for a borderless world aided by seamless communication technology while post-2000 works like BorderXing (Heath Bunting 2002) juxtapose the imagination of the border (and of the borderless) with the reality of access of information in the Internet to question the illusion of the borderless world that was encouraged by the advance of the Internet technologies. In this work, Bunting documents his walks across the internal European borders and posts these documentation in the Internet, only to filter the website’s visitors and give access only for a selected few.

The death of Net95 as I have discussed in the second point of departure in this chapter finds its contemporary art parallel in the webwalker series by the duo tsunamii.net (Charles Lim and Tien Woon 2002, shown as part of Documenta XI) that conceptually question the illusion that the Internet is detached from geography (and thus borderless). The webwalker series is a portable Internet browser interface that would show the website requested by its user only when the portable browser is in close proximity with the website’s physical server. This work is remarkably evocative of the leading cyberlaw scholars Goldsmith and Wu’s statement that I have discussed earlier in this chapter as part of my second

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18 The year 2000 is significant to the way technology is being seen as liberating the constraints of the body because of a Yahoo! French court case that began in that year. Yahoo! which was based in the United States of America was sued by an individual in France for breaking the French law. Through this court case, the public finally understood that contrary to the Net95 belief of the borderless and bodyless Internet, the Internet is physical and bordered after all (Goldsmith and Wu 2006: 1-6).
point of departure about borderlessness, that the thorough understanding of territorial governmental coercion is crucial to globalisation theory as well as to comprehend the future of the Internet (Goldsmith and Wu 2006: 184).

Since the late 1990s there has also been a tendency for international artists network such as the Rain Artists’ Initiative Network (RAIN) a network of artists’ initiative in Africa, Asia and Latin America, and international residency networks such as the Khoj International Artists’ Association operating in India. The recent workshop by On The Move, a cultural mobility information network supported by an operational grant by the European Commission, focused on Artists’ Mobility and Visas (2012) – into whose survey I contributed the details of my Schengen border entry refusal case – indicating the prevalence of the problems of artists’ mobility across borders, another indication to the reality of the unevenness of globalisation.

To return to my own practice as an artist, instead of advocating borderlessness in this cosmopolitanism imaginary, I observe the legacy of conceptual art that has paved the way for artists to question the nature of art and the institutional infrastructure that supports it, however paradoxical the setting could be. Acknowledging the border as a reality and working within it could be as paradoxical as, for example, taking the context of the commercial gallery while presenting a critique of capitalism and the art world (Godfrey 1998: 219). I see this paradoxical setting as a resonance of Giddens’s idea of the subordinate as an agent taking advantage of the “openings” within a system of power instead of fighting it externally (Giddens 1987: 11). I am not imagining a borderless world; instead, I re-imagine the existing geopolitical border and magnify its aleatoric aspect through art. By implementing a strategy whereby I invite as many participants as possible into my artwork, I multiply the amount of individual actors in the system, which in turn amplifies the aleatoric aspect of the geopolitical border, which then eventually sheds light on the dynamics of the border.

My methodology, which I will discuss further in Chapter 3, therefore calls for the importance of disseminating my body of work to as many participants as possible. In disseminating my works, I have to take into account the potential participants who I will work with. This is the basis of consideration in deciding which exhibitions I should participate in as an artist. To refer back to the beginning of this
discussion about dissemination, there is a tendency of categorisation and labeling that artists themselves often conform to, by for example refusing to be ‘commercial’ for the sake of being ‘scholarly’, because in certain cases this conformation is beneficial for an artist’s career. In my case, this basis of consideration is strongly relevant to my other departure points: the geopolitical border, want it or not, is affected as strongly by economy and commerce as by the other aspects, therefore the option of being both ‘commercial’ and ‘scholarly’ is possible.

In the dissemination of my product of the cosmopolitan imaginary, therefore, taking the risk of disregarding the benefits of categorisation and labeling of myself as one or another type of artist, I navigate both commercial and non-commercial exhibitions, putting an emphasis in the kind of audience I can reach through the different kinds of exhibition to attract as many individual actors as possible, in which as well I can create as many one-to-one interactions as possible, in order to re-stage the aleatoric performance of a border in flux. Art fairs, for example, are worthwhile sites for my work because they attract a different kind of audience than what the public institutions do, and are ideal to reflect on the relationship between the geopolitical border, commerce and the mass. By participating in a regionally-focused exhibitions that pose a risk of typecasting, in the midst of other artworks I provide a space for questioning the notion of culture as something attached to geography. By this crisscrossing through the categorising and labeling in the contemporary art world I hope to form a new cosmopolitan imaginary that acknowledges the unevenness of globalisation and re-imagines the border.

1.2. Significance of the study

This research is significant because it draws attention to the problematics of globalisation as described by Steger (2009:2), while doing it through aesthetics processes. The process of globalisation brings the world closer together; at the same time this close-connectedness brings light to the imbalance between different actors within globalisation, be it cultural, social, political and/or economical. In the midst of this close-connectedness, issues like forced migration across border escalates border insecurities not only in the governmental level, but also within the society of citizens. Cross-border terrorism as an aftereffect of colonialism feeds into the tension. The contested border becomes a site of focus. My research draws attention to this problematics through a methodology of participation that takes critical geopolitics, the Actor-Network-Theory and my own standpoint as a basis.
Critical geopolitics theorists have discussed topics of popular visual culture, such as depictions of politics or war in public literature for example in the form of political cartoons and the portrayal of specific power-knowledge relations in video games (McDonald, Hughes and Dodds 2010), as part of critical geopolitics’ third methodological point, “vision”. Alan Ingram is one of the few critical geopolitics theorists that focus in art. In a 2011 paper, Ingram summarised the “recent proposals for alternative forms of geopolitics” and argued that “contemporary art is a field in which it is possible to reflect on how geopolitics might be enacted differently” (Ingram 2011: 218).

In contemporary art, artists like Charles Lim, Shilpa Gupta, Tom Nicholson, Yukinori Yanagi, Jens Haaning and others have shown interest in talking about instances of the border, of globalisation, and of geopolitics. My research contributes to this new interdisciplinary tendency by venturing specifically and intentionally into critical geopolitics. This venture involves rigorous practice-led research that is specifically prototyped after critical geopolitics’ methodological points by taking a relatively small, but key, subject of critical geopolitics, namely the border. In my investigation, I am dealing with the border conceptually and critically by activating aesthetic responses through critical play: I am involving the viewer as a participant immersed in the tactile experience of dealing conceptually with the border. This is throwing new light on another way to consider the question of border politics, both within the self and within the geopolitical discourse.

1.5. Summary

In this chapter I have summarised my research and research questions. I have also drawn four departure points from my personal experience as an introduction to the research. I have outlined the focus of my PhD research: the geopolitical borders, the ‘lines’ on the map as liminal spaces that manifest in various forms. I have also explained how my research stems from the dynamics of borders. Through real-life examples cited in this introduction I have identified that immediate interactions between individuals are crucial relationships in this border dynamics; subjective social encounters at the border shape everyday experiences of geopolitical borders and constitute the flux of unpredictability that is the nature of borders. I have also highlighted how the geopolitical border is becoming a key theme in contemporary art, and as art practitioners become regular border-crossers, globalisation and cosmopolitanism shape
new understandings of borders and the world as a whole. Being an artist working within these new understandings also contextualises this research.

1.6. The structure of this exegesis

In this following chapter, Chapter 2, I define and discuss the key terms in this research: (1) I define the geopolitical border for the purpose of my research and discuss the border dynamics further in the context of the field of critical geopolitics. What emerges from this definition and discussion is a clear indication regarding the contested fixity of borders, through which I then define (2) the meaning, position and potentials of aleatoric processes in border dynamics and how border dynamics can be shaped by subjectivity. Having identified my focus on the production of chance, I examine the potentials and opportunities for this production of chance in art through critical play. Throughout these definitions I review key theorists whose views form the principal basis of my research, and in the subsequent and concluding section of this chapter I re-identify these key theorists: Gerard Toal, Anthony Giddens, Bruno Latour and Nikos Papastergiadis. Their views and how they influence my research will be addressed in Chapter 3.

In Chapter 3, I review my methodology in conducting the research. In the first two sections I discuss the re-imagining of the four methodological points of critical geopolitics: firstly I discuss the re-imagining of the three key points of identity, space and vision – as Toal has proposed – into the iconic objects of the border, respectively the passport, the wall and the map. Following this is a description of how I re-imagine the key point of resistance in critical geopolitics through the way I treat the first three key points in my body of work. Developing on Giddens’s openings and Latour’s Actor-Network-Theory I then review the methodology of individualisation in my body of work. There are three parts to this: (1) making an object one’s own; (2) activation of individual agency; (3) aleatoric processes through critical play. The last two sections in this chapter are about the two other recurrent characteristics in my research’s body of artworks that refer back to the geopolitical border: (1) cycles; and (2) boundary-crossings. Papastergiadis provides an underlying positioning of the aesthetics of resistance within this methodology.
In Chapter 4, 5, and 6 – based on the review of methodology in Chapter 3 – I analyse the body of work that forms part of this research. Each chapter is an examination of my body of works that are based on: (1) the passport (Chapter 4); (2) the wall (Chapter 5); (3) the map (Chapter 6). In Chapter 7, I conclude and synthesise the study, and identify the potentials for further research.
CHAPTER TWO: MARKING THE RESEARCH TERRITORY
In this chapter I will first define and discuss the key terms of the research that fall into two main themes, namely (1) the geopolitical border and (2) aleatoric processes. I will then continue to discuss the key theorists before following onto the next chapter on Methodology.

I will start with defining the border through critical geopolitics, an important stream of thought that shapes my understanding of the border as a subjective continuous process, contrasted with the "hidden politics of the border" in classical geopolitics that emphasises control and regularity to keep the border stable. I will first summarise the four methodological points of critical geopolitics (identity, space, visual and resistance) that I will use to define the border and its essential characteristic (always in flux as opposed to static). These four methodological points will also be used in the subsequent section as a basis in discussing my research questions to approach the border through art.

Following the fourth methodological point, resistance, I will discuss in more detail the role of the individual as an unpredictable agency in the dynamic structure of the border. As interactions between individuals at the border are even more complexly unpredictable than an action of a single individual, these interactions are crucial in the production of chance at the border as a complex socio-political space. This production of chance is what summarises the act of resistance in my research. It is a significantly useful methodology in my project in order to challenge and question the conventional definition of borders as stable (regular, controlled and predictable). This discussion will conclude with an examination of the potentials and opportunities for implementing performances of critical play as an activating potential, as a way of addressing my research questions (re-imagination of the border in art, agency in border dynamics, and production of chance through aleatoric processes at the border).

2.1. Geopolitical border

2.1.1. What is the geopolitical border?

As I have mentioned in Chapter 1, the focus of my research is the geopolitical border. By referring to the border as geopolitical rather than merely geographical, I firstly wish to imply that borders are inseparable from the territorial politics of the relevant countries. These territorial politics, in turn, are
inseparable from the other aspects that shapes how a country is governed, namely the social, the political, the cultural and the economic. Thus the geopolitical border is much more than just an “imaginary’ line” that demarcates an area, and in response to the Minuteman Craig’s remark I mentioned in the previous section, the absence of the ‘line’ only indicates that there is significantly more than “nothing” there.

The imagination of the border as a 'line' merely remains as a starting point to define the border. In practice, the border actually refers to the geopolitical definition in various forms that separates the citizens of one country from the citizens of another. It is also a liminal space in which procedures of border control are being implemented throughout a space, which makes it also a contact zone (Pratt 1991: 34) or – as stated by the Fadaiat collective – “a ‘crossed-place’, where mixtures intensify and new ‘social practices put pressure on established limits’” (Papastergiadis 2012: 72). As I have illustrated through my personal experience with the Schengen border in the previous section, and as I will discuss further in the following subsection through critical geopolitics’ view on the border, the geopolitical border is also a socio-political space where immediate interactions between individuals take place.

While acknowledging the long history of different meanings and usage of the term “geopolitics” – coined as a portmanteau (“geo-politics”) to imply a sense of novelty in 1899 by the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellen (Dodds and Atkinson 2000: 27) – in this research the term is used in specific reference to critical geopolitics.

2.1.2. Critical geopolitics and its methodological points

Critical geopolitics is a multidisciplinary field that is referred to as poststructuralist geopolitics involving a study of history, geography, social sciences and spatial politics practices. The term ‘critical geopolitics’ is usually not capitalised to preserve its loose approach and to avoid it being formalised. As post-structuralist geopolitics, critical geopolitics questions the tendentious and simplistic binary opposition occurring in supposedly self-sufficient geopolitical structures. As such, critical geopolitics is a reaction to previous currents of thought in geopolitics, although instead of being “a new critical position to oppose an old reactionary one” it is “rather opening up a complex and somewhat neglected problematic for analysis” (Ó Tuathail 1996: 14).
Unlike other currents of thoughts in geopolitics such as classical/neo-classical geopolitics, subversive geopolitics and non-geopolitics/political geography, the label of “critical geopolitics” is self-designated (Ó Tuathail 1996, Mamadouh 1998). Geopolitics theorist Virginie Mamadouh distinguishes the four schools of geopolitics on two dimensions: (1) the distance to the object under study – either purely academic or practical/policy oriented; (2) position towards the state system – either towards the state or towards other political actors. Within this distinction, while classical geopolitics provides practical advices for the main political actors of the state, critical geopolitics differs from the other schools because of its purely academic approach and its attention to political actors other than the state. Unlike subversive geopolitics that also pays attention to political actors other than the state, critical geopolitics is purely academic. Unlike political geography that is also purely academic but focusing on the state, critical geopolitics pays more attention to the internal diversity and the conflict of interests inside the states (Mamadouh 1998).

Critical geopolitics “seeks to reveal the hidden politics of geopolitical knowledge. Rather than defining geopolitics as an unproblematic description of the world political map, it treats geopolitics as a discourse, as a culturally and politically varied way of describing, representing and writing about geography and international politics” (Ó Tuathail 1998: 3). Critical geopolitics does this through four methodological points: (1) identity as effects of power-knowledge relations instead of a presumed innate ontology, (2) space as being constructed by this effects of power-knowledge linked to identity instead of being frozen, ahistoric or predetermined by geography, (3) vision – or the institutionalised ways of seeing, displaying and presenting space – as an aspect of power-knowledge relations, and (4) resistance – not only against the imposed representation of space, but also in the form of conflicts between different ways of envisioning and reimagining the world (Ó Tuathail 1996: 8-12).

Similar to critical geopolitics, my practice-led research is a critical practice – “one whereby attention is given to cultural, social, economic and political discourses, that throws light on ways power relations may be constituted, reproduced or resisted as part of the social.” (Grierson 2003: 102). I am not aiming for new knowledge of the world political map to aid the practice of statecraft as the various streams of geopolitics in the past have done. While I am contributing to the discourses, I am not directly employing critical geopolitics’ research methodologies. Instead, critical geopolitics’ methodological points helps shape my understanding of the border while I am primarily making a substantive and original contribution to the
field of art. Comparable to the approach of critical geopolitics that seeks to reveal the hidden politics of the statecraft, I seek to do the same with the statecraft’s presentation of – specifically – the border, as I will explicate in the following paragraphs.

### 2.1.3. The border in critical geopolitics

Although critical geopolitics does not particularly focus on the border, several of its key thinkers have asserted the significance of the border in understanding geopolitics. Such thinkers include Simon Dalby, who has argued that the formation of the border – that separates one from the other – is the “essential moment of geopolitical discourse”:

> The exclusion of the other and the inclusion, incorporation and administration of the Same is the essential geopolitical moment. The two processes are complementary; the Other is excluded as the reverse side of the process of incorporation of the Same. Expressed in terms of space and power, this is the basic process of geopolitics in which territory is divided, contested and ruled. The ideological dimension is clearly present in how this is justified and explained and understood by the populations concerned; the “Other” is seen as different if not an enemy. [...] This theme repeatedly recurs in political discourse where others are portrayed as different and as threats; it is geopolitical discourse (Dalby 1990: 22).

These two processes – the exclusion of the Other and the inclusion of the Same – is the basis of the border, and this basis is not always straightforward. The Lampedusa case in my previous section is a good example: while the refugee is excluded by the citizens regardless of their government’s willingness to include, the citizens in turn are excluded by the government’s apparatus in the process of inclusion of the refugee. The “we” are not always “the Same”, and the “enemy” are not always “the Other”. In understanding the border as a contact zone where complex socio-political processes are constantly performed instead of merely as a simple line separating the “here” from the “there”, the actors at the border rarely fall into binary categorization. This complex processes result in a border that is always in flux. This is one of the characteristics of the border that I wish to discuss further in this research.
The fact that the border is always in flux is also the fact of geopolitical discourse, in which the struggle over space is perpetual. One of the founding figures of critical geopolitics, Gerard Toal – or Geraóid Ó Tuathail as the name is spelled in its Irish origin – suggests that the border is the best place to learn about geopolitics, while also indicating that his personal experiences of the border are as noteworthy:

> It is along borders that one can best appreciate the acuteness of this perpetual struggle over space in global politics. In my own case, growing up along the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland was an education in spatial politics, for, in this borderland, geography and politics were intensely intertwined (Ó Tuathail 1996: 2).

Toal’s understanding of the border was generally shaped by personal experiences as a subject of the Republic of Ireland growing up close to the Northern Ireland border, where his family “owned a grocery shop, which [his] dad bought from a Protestant family”. Growing up close to the border, Toal slowly realized that where he lived was not like other places in Ireland because they were so close to Northern Ireland:

> In driving there we were, weirdly, entering another world, another country. Some might describe this as ‘political geography’ but where I lived, in an area where many people were strongly nationalistic, the border was perceived as a political construction. The term ‘geopolitics’ is, therefore, more appropriate. It was a geography made by politics, and that political order was under contestation (again) from the late sixties onwards (van Efferink 2012).

With this personal background in which the border is an everyday reality, and dissatisfied with writing in a general way at the global scale, Toal became interested in how “international events are experienced in local places” and decided to “reveal the locals that are behind the globals”. This has resulted, for example, in a project on the “Russian-Georgian August War of 2008, a project that involves a very small place shaped by and caught up in a global symbolic geopolitical struggle” (van Efferink 2012). While my research discusses the border as a condition, and regards the border as a global concept instead of
focusing on a particular border (like what Toal did with the Russian-Georgian border), my focus on the individual subjects within this continuous struggle over space corresponds to Toal’s personal-political position.

The understanding of the border as being always in flux is also demonstrated in critical geopolitics’ idea of “geography” as “not a noun but a verb”. “Geo-graphy” – as Toal suggested how ‘geography’ should be spelled – is a continuous process of geo-graphing, of writing the earth. It is “not something already possessed by the earth but an active writing of the earth by an expanding, centralizing imperial state.” (Ó Tuathail 1996: 1). Seen through the eyes of critical geopolitics, border dynamics – the constant performance of the social processes of the border – is part of this writing of the space or “geo-graphing”. The border is always changing and in process of becoming. Highlighting this constant flux – these complex and continuous socio-political processes that are constantly performed and shaped by interactions between individual subjects – is a key theme in this research project.

2.1.4. The essence of the border according to statecraft: control over agency

The border as a fluid space where complex socio-political processes are constantly performed sits at the focus of my research. This reality of the border in flux is a significant part of the border dynamics where my focus lies. In contrast, the statecraft’s practice of “incorporation of the Same” as described by Dalby requires the border to be stable and unchanging to function. This is the site of the hidden politics in statecraft’s presentation of the border that I seek to reveal in this research.

In the practice of statecraft, the border is seen as an essential building block of a country (Yiftachel 2002). The border plays a critical role in the political and economic formations of nation-states; it strengthens the autonomy of a state. It is also an essential symbol of sovereignty, as “[o]ne of the attributes of a sovereign state is bordered territory” (Kuzio 1997). The border also functions as one of the tools of a country’s nation-building, an effort to keep their “imagined communities” (Anderson 1991) intact, or in Dalby’s words, the exclusion of the Other “as the reverse side of the process of incorporation of the Same.” (Dalby 1990: 22).
These processes of incorporation of the Same and exclusion of the Other, as I have mentioned in the previous section, have been discussed for thousands of years, as reflected in Plato’s last and longest dialogue *Laws* (Plato 348 BC: Book XII). To quote Dalby once more, the geopolitics discourse of the border is that “We are “the same” in that we are all citizens of the same nation, speak a similar language, share a culture.” (Dalby 1990: 22). In order to establish and maintain this Sameness, the Platonic border has to be regulated and controlled. In the process of control, the nation-state—critically dependent on the structure of the border to ensure its existence—tends to prevent individual agency within the border dynamics, to prevent “confusion of manners”. In the practice of control, no stranger should be allowed to suggest any novelty to another stranger, so to speak.19

The borders in the contemporary world are based on this Platonic ideal: control. The structure of the border in the eye of the nation-state should only consist of restriction and regulation of interactions between strangers. This significance of control is illuminated through British artist Heath Bunting’s Internet-based work *BorderXing Guide* (2002), commissioned by the Tate Modern. In one part of this project Bunting documented his walks across borders within Europe without interruption from customs, immigration or border police. These walks across borders were not always legal in the early 2000s, but by then the Schengen agreement had included a significant part of Europe (thus had abolished many border checkpoints in Europe), making such walks possible to a certain extent. In Bunting’s project, even when the physical structures of the borders were still erect, he could still cross these borders without restriction. This highlights the significance of control: the only reason Bunting could cross the border—regardless of the existence of the physical structure of the border—is that control was non-existent.

If the physical structure of the border does not guarantee control, what is the essence of border control? As I have begun to discuss in the previous section, the border in this research conceptually refers to the ‘imaginary’ line between two countries that defines their respective geopolitical area. This ‘line’ takes form of a liminal space in actuality, where procedures of control are implemented as a transition between one frontier of the border and the other. Even when the border is seen as a stable and unchanging entity,

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19 The *Laws* dialogue comprises detailed description of treatments for visitors wishing to visit a city-state and citizens wishing to leave through the walls of the city-state. This is similar to modern-day nation-states’ implementation of visa requirements (Plato 348 BC: Book XII).
to ensure its fixity certain processes of control are required. Therefore, process is actually inherent in the border – whether it is seen as a noun or as a verb. Process is the essence of control at the border.

2.1.5. The essence of control at the border: processes that needs to be constantly performed

Border control is in essence a system of processes. More and more, the contemporary border relies less and less on physical structures. As an example, the *Texas Virtual Border Watch*™ website proves that even the complete absence of this physical space does not eliminate control. The website demonstrates a reliance on the social mechanism formed by the participating border watchers to detect the movement across the border.²⁰ It is the social process in this hindrance mechanism that shapes contemporary geopolitical borders.

Because the contemporary border relies more and more on the existence of the social space of the border, in order to maintain and sustain the border, these processes of control need to be constantly performed. In the border watching television programs like *Border Security: Australia’s Front Line*, we can also see that the physical walls always stay in the background; they never become the feature. All immigration procedures take place within these walls as procedures.

These procedures appear to be well understood by all the participants, who are aware that they are entering another country. The real hurdle to getting into the country is not embodied in a physical wall, rather it is mostly embodied in what is believed as the professional judgment – although this does

²⁰ Philosopher and art theorist Gerald Raunig has interestingly noted that “[i]n the control society setting, external borders may be becoming increasingly invisible or they may seem to be dissolving – but only to simultaneously engender a whole landscape full of internal borders” (Raunig 2007).
not write off personal discretion – of the immigration officers.\textsuperscript{21} The participants of the immigration procedure are aware of this and are generally willing to comply with the customary procedures.

This awareness is some kind of a norm, and is to a certain extent a socialized procedure – a performative act, so to say – that signifies the process of entering another country. The immigration officers can apply some kind of a judgment, and there is a behavioural and hierarchical power rule that does not need to be explained.\textsuperscript{22} The interaction that happens during an immigration procedure is, however limited, a socio-political interaction, and herein the immigration clearance hall becomes a container for that socio-political interaction. The border thus manifests as a socio-political space, where the mechanism of control are actioned. It is crucial to pinpoint at this stage that because the border is a set of performative processes, there is an Actor-ness that is strongly connected to the reality of the border. This description of the border also bears strong resemblance to the heterogeneous network according to the Actor-Network-Theory, which asserts that the social processes within a network need to be constantly performed, otherwise the network will dissolve (Latour 2005: 34-37). In the following section on aleatoric processes I will contextualise the Actor-Network-Theory further.

I will discuss this aspect of control and performance at the social space of the border further in subsection 2.2. about aleatoric processes, including the potentials of unpredictability of individual agency, chance and critical play at the border.

\textsuperscript{21} In an episode of the popular television program \textit{Border Security}, a French citizen (described by the narrator of the series as an “artist”) was held up and questioned for visiting Melbourne to shop in only 16 hours. The customs officers could not find any evidence of any breach of law, but the visitor’s situation was judged as being suspicious solely on the basis of the relatively short duration of his visit. In the episode we can see a customs officer explaining to a translator on what to ask, “the only thing I can think of that would even remotely make sense is he’s here to see someone that he doesn’t want to tell us about, like some sort of Internet lovers, you know, and he may have a wife or child back home, can you ask him if he’s married, [what sort of situation he has] back in Paris?” The visitor ended up being searched; the customs officers did not find anything, and the visitor was released.

\textsuperscript{22} When the passport controller on our train across mainland Europe asks to see our passport, almost everyone appeared to comply without comment. These rules even though not explicit are customary.
2.1.6. Summary

In this section, I have defined my key terms through a train of thought that stems in the border dynamics. I have firstly defined the geopolitical border, and I have also stated that the aim of my research, in line with critical geopolitics, is to reveal the hidden politics of the statecraft’s presentation of the border. Following this I have reviewed critical geopolitics’ view of the border, which contributes to my understanding of the border as an entity that is always in flux. The border is always in flux not only because of the perpetual struggle over space in global terms – it is also in flux because it is in essence a system of processes where interactions between individuals are performed.

This understanding of the border in flux was then contrasted with the understanding of statecraft where the border has to be stable as a critical aspect that ensures the existence of a nation-state. Thus in the practice of statecraft the border has to be controlled and regulated to minimise – if not to eliminate – social interactions between “strangers”, regarded as a threat in the Platonic ideal of the border. Interactions between “strangers” are considered a threat because these interactions are likely to produce “confusion of manners”, which disrupts the predictability of the system. Aiming to reveal the hidden politics of the statecraft’s representation of the border, however, this disruption is exactly the site of my research. This is the kind of disruption that produces unpredictability as a result of performative acts (the interactions between individuals as I have identified as a focus in the previous section).

In the following section I discuss aleatoric processes, starting with the examination on how unpredictability of the individual agency can disrupt a predictable structure. Continuing on to the definition of chance, differentiated from randomness, I review the existence of chance in politics and in art, and how chance is produced in the respective fields. Having identified the production of chance as a form of disruption to the predictable structure, I define critical play as the way to perform it, through game-performances that re-imagine an aleatoric geopolitics.
2.2. Aleatoric Processes

2.2.1. Predictable structure, unpredictable agency

In the eye of the state, the power to control should be solely in the hands of the state. As I have explicated in Chapter 1, the Frankfurt border policeman who was willing to see me as an individual is an exception to the norm in an ideal border regulation – the apparatus of the proper state should be indifferent, the border should be an unforgiving line, and there should be minimal social interactions between strangers at the border. In other words, the border as a system of power has to be regular thus predictable because, as sociologist Anthony Giddens has argued, “[a]ll social reproduction and, therefore, all systems of power, are grounded in the ‘predictability’ of day-to-day routines.” (Giddens 1987: 11).

Classical geopolitics also assumes predictability; it puts an effort into predicting the shape of the world to come. Uncertainty is recognized in political sciences, but unlike in the poststructuralist critical geopolitics, classical geopolitical theorists would put significant effort into predicting the outcome of uncertainty, as political theorist Claudio Cioffi-Revilla stated in his book Politics and Uncertainty (1998):

[R]ather than being treated either as a property of politics that is impossible to penetrate (uncertainty qua magnum mysterium), or as a trivial entity that is often ignored as measurement error (uncertainty qua res indesiderata), political uncertainty can and should be used as a rigorous cornerstone for a new general theory of politics with wide empirical scope and explanatory power (Cioffi-Revilla 1998: 38).

In my research, I will not use the term uncertainty, but rather ‘unpredictability’, because I am more interested in unpacking the potentials of unpredictability rather than predicting uncertainty. Unpredictability here is seen as a potential to develop what Giddens call ‘openings’ in structures of power:

All forms of rule have their ‘openings’ that can be utilized by those in subordinate positions to influence the activities of those who hold power over them. One consequence of this is that technologies of power – in other words, formalized procedures of rule – rarely if ever work with the ‘fixity’ which on the face of things
they might seem to possess. The more a social system is one in which the control exercised by superordinates depends upon a considerable scope of power over subordinates, the more shifting and potentially volatile its organization is likely to be (Giddens 1987: 11).

These are the "strangers [...] suggesting novelties to strangers" mentioned as a threat in the Platonic ideal of the border. These are individuals acting as agencies, resulting in the volatility of the border. On top of this, as Giddens has argued: "[t]o be a human being is to be an agent – although not all agents are human beings – and to be an agent is to have power" (Giddens 1987: 7).

Giddens’s idea of agency is further developed by Bruno Latour through his Actor-Network-Theory. Latour argues that in any system, people as actors (although, again, not all actors are human beings) in the system must do an action. This is based on his proposal that a system is sustained by a network of actors that are constantly performing rituals that keep the system alive:

[...] social aggregates are not the object of an ostensive definition – like mugs and cats and chairs that can be pointed at by the index finger – but only of a performative definition. They are made by the various ways and manners in which they are said to exist (Latour 2005: 34).

In a socio-political system, each of the individuals involved – whether as an apparatus of the nation-state or as a lay citizen – is a player that is taking action in the system. This system is a network of all actors constantly reaching the flux of solutions and outcomes. The same can be said for the geopolitical border as a socio-political system: all the actors performing in this system are individual actors, with individual agency, within the structure of the geopolitical border. The power of the individual as an agent lies in its unpredictability, its potential in the production of chance.

This unpredictability is magnified when an individual interacts with other individuals – as vector components, the sum of interactions between individuals magnify unpredictability. In my practice, I put an emphasis on interaction between individuals, because in the context of my research individual agency is the best randomiser. This will be discussed further in Chapter 3, on my methodology.
2.2.2. Chance and process

In this research, unlike in classical geopolitics, uncertainty is neither ignored (instead, it is magnified) nor regarded as impenetrable (impenetrability is irrelevant because uncertainty is the aim instead of being unfavoured). Uncertainty in this research is rather regarded as unpredictability that gives access to the 'openings' in the structure. As I have discussed in the previous subsection, the individual is important in approaching this unpredictability because the individual is an unpredictable agency. In each unpredictable encounter between individuals, there is intent and conscious decisions (thereby it is chance instead of randomness), yet the result of the interactions keep being unpredictable because of the magnification through interactions. It is an aleatoric condition much like an aleatoric music composition whereby the performers, or actors, act unpredictably within the aleatoric rules of the composition and therefore intensify the production of chance.

The term 'chance' is used throughout this research to refer to a method involving conscious decisions where the predictability of the result of an action is of no importance to the process, differentiating it from 'randomness'. In the Oxford English dictionary, the word 'random' is defined as "made, done, or happening without method or conscious decision", while chance in this research is certainly a method. The word 'chance' in the same dictionary is defined as "a possibility of something happening" and "the probability of something desirable happening". However, as a method in this research, chance is not seen as part of statistics of probability or any other attempts to predict, but as produced by unpredictable interactions between individuals in an encounter. This is how I define the 'production of chance' in this research: it is closely connected to the unpredictability of individual agency and how interactions between multiple unpredictable individual agents magnifies this unpredictability. In this research, chance is produced by magnifying unpredictability, and it is an open-ended result, much as Derrida's notion of différance whereby the end result is in a constant state of deferral.

How, then, is unpredictability magnified in the production of chance? Chance can result from a simple throw of a dice; it can also result from more complex procedures. There are degrees to how chance can produce unpredictability. A simple throw of a dice, for example, can only produce a limited possibility of outcome: it is either one of the six faces of the dice. Thus the throw of a dice is predictable chance;
we call this probability – in other words, controlled chance. The agency of an individual actor, however, is not limited to only six faces of a dice. It is much more complex. The more an individual interact with other individuals in one or more encounters, the more unpredictable the result of the interaction becomes. Thus more encounters stimulate more unpredictability. This is one of the two ways to magnify unpredictability in the production of chance.

The other way to magnify unpredictability is through process. In classical geopolitics, where the definition of the border is as a fixed entity, there is little or no space for chance to emerge. However, as I have discussed in Chapter 1, the reality of the border resembles a heterogeneous network according to the Actor-Network-Theory: it is a set of social processes within a network that needs to be constantly performed to keep itself from dissolving. That the border is a process is important to note here, as this is how I approach the border – as a space of process – to allow unpredictability to emerge and create space for chance. Approaching the border as a space of process means providing space for more encounters to happen between individual agents, over a period of time. Approaching the border as a space for social mechanisms and processes also asserts an emphasis in procedures. It is in these procedures that aleatoric methods can be applied.

In this space of process, aleatoric methods take the role of being a regulator that constantly deregulates. While the social mechanisms in a fixed border are strictly regulated to minimise chance, and while the regulations and rules are generally authoritarian, in this research the regulations and rules are intended to motivate and magnify individual agency. Instead of aiming to minimise chance, the regulations and rules in aleatoric methods are specifically designed to produce chance.

2.2.3. Chance in politics and in art

As philosopher Patrick Suppes has stated, “Men everywhere, especially those who have reflected on the vicissitudes of politics and war, have from the beginning recognized the central place of chance in human affairs” (Suppes 1984: 11). As much as the statecraft keeps its border intact by reenforcing predictability and regularity, chance is actually not a foreign concept in other areas of statecraft. The concept and application of chance in politics have actually been discussed since the Athenian democracy (around
Imagine, for an instance, what happened on January 10, 49 BC, when Julius Caesar famously says “Alea iacta est” (meaning “the dice has been cast”) as the Caesar decided to take his legions to cross the frontier landmark between the Italic Republic and the Cisalpine Gaul (Suetonius 2004 [121]). The word ‘alea’ in this famous saying is the root of the word ‘aleatoric’ used in this research to describe the involvement of chance. Studies have shown that in referring to the roll of the dice, Julius Caesar was alluding to a point of no return with unpredictable results.

In politics, it is also often believed that allowing space for chance can strengthen democracy. In classical Athens, for example, members of the Council and the courts as well as some public officials were selected by lot (Headlam 1993 [1891]) as a “public expression of democracy's commitment to the equality of all citizens” (Mulgan 1984: 546), and the French socialist president Ségolène Royal’s proposal in 2007 to use “randomly selected citizens to oversee the work of elected representatives” (Dowlen 2009: 298-9) illustrates this expression in a contemporary setting. Jury duty for civilians in most of the present Anglo-Saxon courts of law is also based on the process of sortition (BBC NEWS 2008; General Information about Jury Duty 2010; Jurors Frequently Asked Questions 2013; Jury Frequently Asked Questions n.d.), showing an "ideal of trial by a random cross section of citizens on behalf of the citizen body as a whole" (Mulgan 1984: 554), and when a UK local council election results in a tie between two leading parties “either a coin is flipped or the parties draw straws” (BBC NEWS 2000). The most well-known contemporary practice of chance in a statecraft might be the USA's Diversity Immigrant Visa, or more popularly known as the Green Card Lottery, issued each year by the government of the USA to a quota of individuals selected through aleatoric method from around the world (Diversity Visa (DV) Program n.d.). In a way, this visa is the only process of allowing chance that occurs in the sphere of the contemporary border. However, although their entitlement is decided by chance, the holders of this visa will still have to go through the mechanism of checks at the border that preserve the predictability and regularity of the border.

The visa system has also been discussed since Plato's Laws. This last and longest of Plato's dialogues contains detailed examples for movement control and its relationship to the spaces of the city-state. Visitors are separated into profession and age – it was suggested, for example, that only people over forty are allowed to travel, and if one is a merchant they are to be “received in markets and public buildings
without the city, by proper officers, who shall see that justice is done them, and shall also watch against
any political designs which they may entertain; no more intercourse is to be held with them than is
absolutely necessary” (Plato 348 BC: Book XII). Even in this early conceptualization of the visa system,
processes are inherent in its regulations, although little or no space is allowed for chance to happen.
What is expected to happen within the social and physical spaces of the border, instead, is predictable
probability and regulated outcomes.

While control remains the ultimate goal in politics regardless of the implementation of chance, the
tendency in art is the contrary. For instance, control is exactly what the Surrealists intended to extinguish
through their automatic techniques. Surrealism emerges in the 1920s as a development of Dada that
sparked in the 1910s as a reactions to the World War I. Dada – as inherited by Surrealism – also “rejected
reason and logic, prizing nonsense, irrationality and intuition” (Budd 2004), and as art theorist and artist
Mary Flanagan reviews in her book Critical Play: Radical Game Design (2009), Dada’s “subversive
practices in its reworking of authority and authorship were one way social norms were pushed and
literally “at play”” (Flanagan 2009: 139). In his manifesto in 1924 the Surrealist figure André Breton
defined Surrealism as “[p]ure psychic automatism by means of which one intends to express, either
verbally, or in writing, or in any other manner, the actual functioning of thought. Dictated by thought,
in the absence of any control exercised by reason, free of any aesthetic or moral concern” (Breton 1969:
26). By eliminating control, the Surrealists hoped to express the actual functioning of thoughts free from
reason, moral concern and any form of aesthetics.

The methods that the Surrealists implement to achieve this loss of control – thus pure thoughts – varies
from automatic writing to collective drawing such as the exquisite corpse whereby an individual artist
would continue his or her part of a drawing on a part of paper without knowing the bigger picture. All
these methods are implemented in the aim of losing a part of one’s self, to illuminate another part that is
regarded as more pure. While chance is an important aspect in the Surrealists’ techniques, their point of
departure is the inner space, and their focus is on crossing the border between the inner space and the
material world and social life by involving chance in order to eliminate the control of reason. Aiming for
the absence of control, the Surrealists would produce situations where chance would flourish.
The production of chance was later reiterated by Fluxus artists in their methodology. As implied in its name, to quote Flanagan, Fluxus emphasises “both change and flow in the artists’ play, games, and “disposable” work” and “like the Dadaists and Surrealists, […] relied on humor, instructions, impermanence, and interactivity in a practice where the permanence of the object is trumped by the moment of experience.” Fluxus is arguably a seminal movement in art that opens up the definition of what art can be. As Flanagan argues, “[f]or many of the Fluxus artists, play and “the joke” evolved as a methodology, moving interaction and audience participation away from galleries and traditional theatre environments and creating for the first time a kind of multiplayer artistic play space and environment” (Flanagan 2009: 139).

John Cage, influential in the development of the Fluxus movement, is one of the most prominent and influential artists that uses chance as an significant part of his methodology. In the mid 1950s when teaching a class he called Experimental Composition at The New School for Social Research, a university in New York city, Cage unofficially invited many avant-garde artists of the time including George Brecht and Alan Kaprow, who later were involved in Fluxus. As a composer, Cage started using chance as a method of composition after discovering the I Ching through one of his students, Christian Wolff, in 1951. The I Ching, also known as The Book of Changes, is an ancient Chinese book of divination that interprets events based on chance. Cage’s chance operations based on the I Ching in his compositional strategies, however, are not solely regarded as a means of producing work without any control of the artist in determining its direction, but also seen, ultimately, as an agent of personal change:

I use chance operations instead of operating according to my likes and dislikes. I use my work to change myself and I accept what the chance operations say. The I Ching says that if you don’t accept the chance operations you have no right to use them. Which is very clear, so that’s what I do (Kostelanetz 2003: 215).

Cage sees his production of chance as a total surrender of his authority as an artist to an unknown and unpredictable set of rules. Cage’s view of seeing the production of chance as a tool to change himself is strikingly similar to the Surrealists’s aim of eliminating control to arrive at the purest expressions of thought.
Observing the types of methods of producing chance, art theorist Margaret Iversen argued that it is “the gap between intention and outcome that seems crucial to the meaning of chance in art” (Iversen 2010: 12). “George Brecht,” as Iversen then describes, “makes a useful distinction between two species of chance. One sort of chance event is described as such because it results from ‘consciously unknown causes’; the other type results from some mechanical operation where human agency is bypassed. Consequently, the origin of one kind of image ‘is unknown because it lies in deeper-than-conscious levels of the mind. The other kind derives from ‘mechanical processes not under the artist’s control. Both of the processes have in common a lack of conscious design.’” (Iversen 2010: 20)

In my research, chance is produced a little differently. It neither results from ‘consciously unknown causes’, nor is it merely mechanical processes that lack the human agency. Conscious design in the production of chance is deliberate; it is a performance of social mechanisms where the surrender of authority/control to a set of rules is crucial, in order to give space to the production of chance, and involving almost unlimited participants. To a certain extent, however, although it is true that in my research “the instruction is a device for evading authorial or artistic agency and so generating chance events and unexpected results” (Iversen 2012: 12), keeping the role of control of the authorial agency is crucial to give rise to the renegotiation of individual agency.

Although Cage’s work tend to be not participatory, in several of his compositions he would set the rules and the performer will have to interpret this set of rules. In some ways, Cage’s attitude towards his aleatoric compositions echoes Giddens’s ‘openings’, which is an essential aspect of my methodology. For an instance, “Cage was […] the leader in the avant-garde project of diminishing the distance between art and life. However, he always insisted on the importance of the instructional frame: “Life without structure is unseen. Pure life expresses itself within and through a structure.”’ (Iversen 2010: 14-15). Like in Cage’s methodology, I allow space for personal interpretation and individual agency – the difference is that I push it further by involving a large number of people in the participatory performance. Because of the large number of participants that each have a freedom – however limited by the set of rules – to decide on the direction of their participation, the spectrum of personal decisions also produces an intricate network of unpredictability.
Another important distinction is that while chance is an important aspect in the Surrealists' and John Cage's techniques, their point of departure is the inner space, and their focus is on crossing the border between the inner space and the material world and social life by involving chance in order to eliminate the control of reason. In contrast, while the function of chance in my research is also to eliminate control to some degree like the Surrealists, I do not start with an inner subjective space, I begin by drawing from the lived social space of the border. This is a mere "mirror turned towards the world, reflecting the world as is" (Potolsky 2006: 4) until I involve chance in order to disturb this habitual lived space of the border and inject new possibilities of meanings – and the artworks become "a mirror turned towards the spectator, reflecting social beliefs or conventions" (Potolsky 2006: 4).

Because the focus of this research is in border dynamics, I acknowledge that it is impossible to eliminate control entirely. The production of chance, therefore, is not to achieve "absence of all control" as the Surrealists would state. It is rather to reflect on the variable spectrums of its presence:

'Power', along with 'agency' and 'structure', is an elementary concept in social science. [...] 'Power' in this highly generalized sense means 'transformative capacity', the capability to intervene in a given set of events so as in some way to alter them. The logical connection between agency and power is of the first importance for social theory, but the 'universal' sense of power thus implied needs considerable conceptual refinement if it is to be put to work in the interests of substantive social research (Giddens 1987: 7).

In my research, therefore, the methodology of an aesthetics of resistance – that makes space for critical play that produces chance – enables the constant renegotiation of the degree of balance between power, agency and structure. The question of authorship emerging in participatory art is relevant here as performer becomes composer, viewers become participants and reader becomes writer. There is a constant crossing of boundaries encapsulated within definite roles. This will be discussed further in Chapter 3, on my methodology.
2.2.4. Critical Play

In my research I examine the spectrum of chance and the ways to illuminate and integrate chance in the aleatoric processes that are inherent in my artwork. This process in my research can be explained as “the movement between conditions of theory and practice. In a sense they are constantly in play through the process of creative research. To separate them, or to claim one as superior to the other, is to destroy their potential for différance as an activating and empowering force of knowledge generation” (Grierson 2009: 153). Thus there is a gradual focusing on chance throughout the heuristic process in the research, in which I discover an effective implementation of chance through critical play.

The term critical play in this exegesis is derived from Mary Flanagan’s 2009 book that I have mentioned in the previous section. While the term critical is also used in critical geopolitics as a poststructuralist discipline, in this context I also emphasise an approach that “opens spaces of knowledge beyond binary prescriptions and categories […] It is the multiple that we seek: multiple layers of meaning, multiple voices and multiplicities of possible connections” (Grierson 2009: 154). Flanagan’s definition of critical play, which is “to create or occupy play environments and activities that represent one or more questions about aspects of human life” (Flanagan 2009: 6) generally applies to what I implement in my works during the research. In my research, the aspects of human life being questioned is the processes at the border. The plays are some kind of a modified simulation of these processes – as I will describe later in this section – some kind of a game that is performed. As performativity is a strong element in these processes whereby strict regulations are constructed in advance and later applied with undefined control, I chose to refer to the work as game-performance.

As Flanagan describes, defining the term ‘game’ has been a significant challenge throughout more than a century of game scholarship and research. The connection between art and games has also been noted early in this history; Johan Huizinga, in his book *Homo Ludens* (1955, originally published in Dutch in 1938) that explores human games, argues that “[a]ll art derives from play.” Flanagan also refers to ‘game’ as “those instances of more-or-less constructed play scenarios” (Flanagan 2009: 6), ones in which “[p]layers will consistently explore what is permissible and what pushes at that boundary between rules and expectations, and a player’s own agency, within any given play environment – no matter how structured
that play is” and that “player subversion – as cheating, as open play, as social critique – is an intrinsic part
of play” (Flanagan 2009: 13). Inherent in the aspects of games is the “player agency, or the player’s ability
to make choices that mean something to him or her” (Flanagan 2009: 7). She also asserts the existence of
agency and some connection to uncertainty in games:

At different stages of human history, then, games have played varying roles. From
assisting in the development of conceptual processes, to invoking ritual, to forging
a connection with time and the future, players throughout history have struggled to
gain agency and understand uncertainty through game play (Flanagan 2009: 73).

While Flanagan calls games “social technologies” (Flanagan 2009: 9), Giddens also mentions “technologies
of power” that he describes as a “formalized procedures of rule” (Giddens 1987: 11). Some authoritative
definitions of games such as proposed by Salen and Zimmerman (2003) include the aspect of winning
or losing. In my game-performances, however, as I have noted early in Chapter 1, it is not the result that
interests me, it is rather the process.

At this point, the last half of my hyphenated term, performance, is noteworthy. As I have reviewed in
the previous section, the border resembles the heterogenous network according to Latour in his Actor-
Network-Theory: the procedures at the border have to be performed in order to keep it alive. Giddens
also stated, however, that in all structures there is a potential to activate the openings as a site of power.
As in the Fluxus instructions, often times the dynamic is created between the score (the generality of the
instruction) and the performance (the degree of specificity of the realisation), which involves processes
of communication, translation, interpretation and re-imagination at the level of the individual (between
individual actors regardless of their hierarchical roles in the game). This also explicates the rationale for
participation in my game-performances: it is rooted in the notion that at the core of the border dynamics
and processes, the individual, in all its Actor-ness (be it as part of the civilians or as part of the statecraft)
prevails. In my game-performances, people are the producer of chance: the participants are the ideal
randomisers.
2.2.5. Summary

In this section I have defined what I mean by aleatoric processes through firstly reviewing the concept of the structure and agency as viewed by Giddens – that structure needs predictability while agency is unpredictable. Through defining chance and process I have identified the potential site that Giddens noted as the openings within a structure. In spite of the need to portray fixity, the structure of politics acknowledges the existence of chance – especially when representing democracy – to the extent that it is not bypassing control. In art, on the other hand, there has been a long history of attempts to eliminate control and activate individual agency – one of the methods being critical play. In defining critical play I also introduce a term that I will use to describe the play element in my body of works, namely game-performances, whose definition of performance refers to Latour’s Actor-Network-Theory in describing a heterogenous network that needs to be constantly made and re-made to sustain. Although definition of games often requires an end result (of winning or losing), I define games without the end result because of the process, in which an individual actor gains agency through critical play, of which subversion is an intrinsic aspect.

2.3. Summary of key theories

In this chapter, while defining my key terms, I have referred to the work of several key theorists. As a practice-led research in art it finds its context foremostly in Nikos Papastergiadis’s cosmopolitan ideas, while the conceptual context of the geopolitical border strongly refers to critical geopolitics theorists like Gerard Toal. Standpoint theory makes it possible to explicate my tight involvement, both personally and politically, both as an artist and a researcher, similar to Gerard Toal’s personal position when approaching his field of critical geopolitics. Revealing the hidden agenda of statecraft at the border I refer to Bruno Latour’s Actor-Network-Theory that emphasises agency, as developed from Anthony Giddens idea of the potential working of unpredictable agency in the “openings” found in structures, and reflections on how art can approach this idea of the border manifest in Nikos Papastergiadis’s definition of reflexive hospitality which is honed through discussing Claire Bishop’s participatory art that began as a critique to Nicolas Bourriaud relational aesthetics. The significance of each of these theories as the basis of my methodology will also be discussed at length in Chapter 3.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY
My research employs a range of methodologies to systematically weave together the complex dynamics of aleatoric geopolitics, specifically at the border, through art practice. Crucially, it is a practice-led art research, whereby I am critically investigating the power-knowledge relationship in border dynamics through an activity of making and disseminating objects of art. I use the term ‘objects of art’ here to refer to any work of art – both physical (tangible) and abstract (intangible) – implying the presence of a ‘subject’ in an aesthetic work.

The critical investigation of the power-knowledge relationship in border dynamics calls on: (1) critical geopolitics as a post-structuralist underpinning to enable a philosophical intervention of classical geopolitics; (2) my standpoint, which I have partly explained through standpoint theory and partly through Giddens’s “opening” in Chapter 1; identifying my standpoint enables my speaking position while engaging the common experiences of the wider public; and (3) Actor-Network-Theory to engage agentic voices of individual and political actors at the border.

I have contextualised and defined these theories and perspectives in Chapters 1 and 2, and I will explicate their relevancy in my methodologies of individualisation: (1) making an object one’s own; (2) activating individual agency; and (3) aleatoric processes through my art practice.

These theories and perspectives are applied through my art practice, by a set of hands-on strategies that involves: (1) building cyclical artworks that produce a substantial body of works cross-referencing one another to build a valid anatomy; and (2) crossing – rather than blurring – boundaries: between author and participants in order to illuminate individual agency; also crossing boundaries between the making, the showing and the documentation, in order to communicate aspects of ephemerality and process in the border dynamics.

In the following sections I will detail this range of methodologies, starting with the theories and perspectives of the initial approach to the practice, followed by how I apply these theories and perspectives into practice. In this detailing of methodology I will allude occasionally to the artworks in my practice-led research, which I will discuss more thoroughly in the Chapters 4, 5 and 6.
As it is through my art practice that the research investigations take place, I will begin by explaining the basis of my re-imagining the border in art: how I translated the methodological points of identity, space and vision in critical geopolitics into the three iconic objects of the border – the passport, the wall, and the map – and then into tangible objects of art. I will discuss further about how the fourth methodological point of critical geopolitics, resistance, entered the object-based re-imagination in two ways: firstly, resistance becomes relevant through engaging with my standpoint: in this context it takes form in ‘possessing’ or ‘taking over’ (instead of ‘borrowing’) these iconic objects from the border and ‘making it my own’. This discussion also addresses how I am using several approaches that resonate with the DIY movement to activate Giddens’s “openings”. Secondly, resistance as the fourth methodological point of critical geopolitics also becomes relevant through my engagement with the Actor-Network-Theory. In the activation of Giddens’s “openings”, chance is produced through participation. The participation takes form in game-performances, which I will discuss further subsequently.

In addressing the hands-on strategies of my practice-led research, I will begin by explicating why and how I work with the iconic objects to build cycles of works; and I will explain why and how I stage the aleatoric processes to investigate border dynamics. This section addresses why there is a conceptual necessity to cross boundaries: between the author and the participants, as well as between the making, the showing and the documentation. Following this I will identify how I cross (rather than blur) these boundaries through specific methods, namely game-performances and the utilisation of theatrical/real-time and video installation techniques to give a permanency to these ephemeral/time-based performances.

### 3.1. Re-imagining as a methodology

In addressing my first research question – “how can the geopolitical border be re-imagined in art?” – there is a re-imagining of power structures and illumination of the complex and dynamic movement of agency within these power structures. I refer to ‘re-imagining’ as a process similar to translating. It is important to note here that although the performances that I stage can sometimes resemble the

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23 I use ‘possessing’ instead of ‘borrowing’ because ‘to borrow’ an object means I only own that object temporarily, while ‘to possess’ an object means that the object eventually becomes mine.
Actor-Network-Theory’s ‘sociology of translation’, the term ‘translation’ that I refer to here is different from the term ‘translation’ in the Actor-Network-Theory. In the latter, ‘translation’ refers to a process whereby all actors gather and agree that their network is worth building or defending. My ‘translation’, however, is more similar to textual translation, which is to carry meanings across these two different mediums of thinking.\(^{24}\) namely critical geopolitics and art. While critical geopolitics originally manifests in texts or verbal discussions, reflecting on it through art necessitates, and potentially benefits from, having an object of art upon which a set of ‘discourses’ is built. This object of art – which can be tangible (materialised) or intangible (for example in the form of a performance) – facilitates an aesthetic way of thinking about the issues put forward in critical geopolitics.

In my research, this translation process involves reflecting on the four methodological points of critical geopolitics as I have previously described in Chapter 2 while defining the border through critical geopolitics. The border, as Dalby has argued, is the “essential moment of geopolitical discourse” (Dalby 1990: 22). As the border is crucial in understanding geopolitics, I can proceed to argue that the methodological points of critical geopolitics are applicable at the border as well. The issues of identity, space, vision and resistance – four methodological points of critical geopolitics – manifest at the border, and each of them contributes to the ever-changing nature of the border, which is critical in contemporary views of geopolitics. Contrary to the normative practice of compliance inherent in the politics of the statecraft, however, the agency of the individual actor is also inherent in the structuring of the border.

Reflecting on the methodological points of critical geopolitics, often described in keywords, I can reflect on my own practice-led art research as utilising similar kinds of keywords. These serve as anchoring points, a set of signifiers in the form of objects of art that signify entry points to more complex discourses. Much like a translation process in literature,\(^{25}\) the process of translation of these keywords into my art research was not at all mechanical. In this I am benefiting from the context of contemporary art, which “has seen a shift from thinking about the art object as a discrete bearer of meaning or truth of the visible world, to

\(^{24}\) Briefly put, the word ‘translation’ comes from the Latin word *translatio*, meaning ‘to carry across’, ‘to bring across’, or ‘to lead across’.

\(^{25}\) The process of translation throughout history has been described as complex and requiring judgements of values as meanings are carried across different cultures. The role of the translator has also been compared to that of an artist.
seeing the image, object or artefact as a signifier of multiple meanings situated in the multidimensional social, cultural, and political domains of a global world” (Grierson 2003: 102). The process of translation into this art object as a signifier of multiple meanings involved lengthy reflections, which began even before my practice became a formalised research in this PhD program, and long before my introduction to critical geopolitics.

There is a chronology to my practice-led research, and there is also a chronology to my practice before it became a formalised research. This chronology is parallel to the chronology in my standpoint. In 2003 when my Australian permanent residency visa was granted, I became thoroughly interested in passports. Whenever I reflected on the border, I thought about my passport and how it determined my existence to a certain extent. I also started interviewing an exile who used to be stateless, Sobron Aidit – a brother of the Indonesian communist party leader D. N. Aidit who was killed in 1965 – in whose life I found parallels to my family history.26 Through these interviews I found out more about the importance of passports and how someone without a passport is practically a modern day homo sacer to quote the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (1998). “Look,” as Sobron said, “I have a passport. I’m a real human now”.27

From this background, the passport was therefore the first object I began to work with in my formalised practice-led research. It was through further readings on the passport – mainly through the works of John Torpey, *The Invention of the Passport: Surveillance, Citizenship and the State* (2000) and Mark B. Salter, *Rights of Passage: the Passport in International Relations* (2003) – that I then discovered critical geopolitics, and found parallels between its first methodological point, identity, and the object of the passport. Reflecting on this model of comparison that is somewhat intuitive and somewhat analytical, I continued to find parallels for the other methodological points in critical geopolitics: the wall to discuss further about space, and the map to discuss further about vision. During the practice-led research, the feedback process was never one-way. With the passport, it was led predominantly by the object of practice with texts serving as a background; however, with the wall and the map, the analysis

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26 This story is also part of the transcription of my lecture-performance, *The name game – or the years of living with no one to blame*, published in the online journal *Inside Indonesia* (Wulia 2008).

27 My own translation, personal communication, 2005.
has always been circular, going back and forth between the objects and the texts. The reflection on the objects can be quite separated from reflection on the texts, but the reflection on the texts has always served further reflection on the objects.

The passport, the wall and the map are objects chosen for re-imagining the border. They can be seen as iconic objects of the border. Partly intuitively and partly analytically they are extracted from the textual discourses of the border and they describe the border through a re-imagining process in the context of contemporary art. This re-imagining process can also be seen as a process whereby I observe the border like a birdwatcher would watch the natural environment to identify certain species of birds: I note my findings down in the field of contemporary art – each of these iconic objects from the border being the different notebooks for each aspect of the border. Each of these objects is by no means a single representation of each of critical geopolitics' methodological points; rather, they are an initial assumption, a pivot point for me to talk about each of the three methodological points: identity, space, vision. In my work, the passport relates to identity, the wall to space, and the map to vision.

To explain further: (1) the passport is an iconic object of the border that I am using in my body of work to begin a discussion about identity as effects of power-knowledge relations, rather than a presumed innate ontology; (2) the wall is an iconic object of the border that I am using in my body of work to begin a discussion about space as being constructed by the effects of power-knowledge linked to identity, rather than being frozen, ahistoric or predetermined by geography; and (3) the map is an iconic object of the border that I am using in my body of work to begin a discussion about vision as an aspect of power-knowledge relations, or the institutionalised ways of seeing, displaying and presenting space. I will discuss each of these methodological points in relation to the objects that I work with in the following chapters: Chapter 4 for my passport works, Chapter 5 for my wall works, and Chapter 6 for my map works.

The fourth methodological point of critical geopolitics, resistance, is valuable to elucidate my method of treating the iconic objects of the border, namely the passport, the wall and the map. Resistance in this case is seen as a fight or struggle, not only against the imposed representation of space, but also in the form of conflicts between different ways of re-imagining the world. While many expressions of resistance
in art come from the dystopian ideals of destroying the border, my research sits more at the site of resistance by acknowledging the present reality of the border and aiming to re-imagine it. Giddens's argument provides a rationalisation for my approach on working with the border: “Structures must be conceptualized not only as constraints upon human agency, but also as enablers” (Giddens 1987). By working with the border I acknowledge the border as a reality, but at the same time my work illuminates the “openings” (Giddens 1987) within border structures that are the site of power and agency.

With Giddens’s openings in mind, the methodological point of resistance from critical geopolitics can be employed to identify two general approaches that I have used in treating the objects of the border: firstly how I make those objects my own; and secondly, how I activate individual agency within the network of agency that is the geopolitical border. Through this process of identification, it will become clear that the wall as an iconic object in my artwork is actually a signifier of the more intangible space – it is space that becomes prominent, although without the wall one will never be able to experience space. While I propose the wall as one of the entry points to further discourses about the border, I am not making the wall as a literal object. The wall, rather, becomes a structure for the place in which a performance can happen. In other words, the space defined by the wall is what needs to be activated, and one of the ways I activate this space is through participatory performance, which is an activation of individual agency. I will discuss this individual agency and its relevance to resistance as the fourth methodological point of critical geopolitics further in subsections 3.2. and 3.3 below.

3.2. Re-imagining resistance through individualisation

In addressing my second and third research question – “how can the agency and network in border dynamics be illuminated through art?” and “how can the continuous aleatoric processes of agency in the shaping of a border be simulated through art?” – the research ventures into the area of resistance against the imposed representation of the space that is defined by an unchanging geopolitical border, and conflicts between different ways of re-imagining this border. In Chapter 2 I have defined the geopolitical border as a set of processes that needs to be performed to keep itself from dissolving. In these continuous performative processes that constitute the border as a network, there is a strong element of Actor-ness. Each individual at the border, be they part of the legal political system or not, is an actor in this network of performative processes.
In addressing these research questions, therefore, I specifically focus on the border as a network of agencies because this has been undermined in the legal existence of a normative geopolitical border. I would also stress the importance of the agency of the individual at the border, taking into account Giddens’s description of the power of agency: “… to be an agent is to have power. ‘Power’ in this highly generalized sense means ‘transformative capacity’, the capability to intervene in a given set of events so as in some way to alter them” (Giddens 1987: 7). Putting an emphasis on the individual is not to disregard the legal and socio-political agency at the border, but rather to stress that even actors that are affiliated to legal and socio-political power at the border are also individuals that can operate unpredictably, as exemplified in my third departure point in Chapter 1.

The word *individual* comes from the Latin word *individuus* that means *indivisible*. In this research, the individual is seen as the smallest unit that is an indivisible part of a network of agencies. A group of individuals operating in the context of this network of agencies forms a collective, and they are doing collective actions. The term “individualised collective action” has also gained prominence in the recent development of personalised politics theories; originally proposed by Michele Micheletti in her book *Political Virtue and Shopping: Individuals, Consumerism and Collective Action* (2003) the term “individualised collective action” refers to how individuals influence political directions through personal choices of acquisition of consumer goods. The most recent development, as discussed in Walter Lance Bennett’s article *The Personalization of Politics: Political Identity, Social Media, and Changing Patterns of Participation* (2012: 20) also indicates the prominence of participation. In my research, although the components of my collective action are similar to Micheletti’s – individual, personal, political, participatory and relevant to economy (because of the context of borders in the contemporary globalised world) – in practice it takes a specific form in art, based on an aesthetics that can be discussed as an “aesthetics of resistance” (Papastergiadis 2012: 97).

With an emphasis on investigating individual agency, part of my methodology involves a process of individualisation of the iconic objects of the border. The how of this individualising can be explained through Papastergiadis’s “aesthetics of resistance” (2012: 97) – which I will discuss in the following subsection on activation of the individual agency – however at this point I will focus on the basic rationale for my participatory performances, which is the process of individualisation. The passports in my cycle
of work *(Re)Collection of Togetherness* (ongoing and shown in stages since 2007) are never exactly the same as actual passports that are valid at a geopolitical border, because the passports in my artworks have gone through a process of individualising, of making them my own.

The maps in my cycle of work *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs* (taking place in different locations since 2009), to take another example, have gone through a similar process of individualising in a more communal or collective sense – they are no longer exactly the same map that is issued by a statecraft agency to reinforce an imagination of Anderson's "imagined community" (Anderson 1991). The wall as an iconic object of the border, meanwhile, as I have mentioned in the previous section, functions as the structure for an intangible performative action to take place within the physical and conceptual space defined by this wall. In this intangible participatory performances that activate individual agency, I address different issues, including individualisation by means of ownership and belonging-ness, for instance, in *Construction of a Hole – opus 1* (2010).

The process of individualising these objects takes form in different ways that can be interweaved as well as separated – and this is how I address each of the research questions mentioned in the beginning of this section. I employ three methodologies to investigate processes of individualisation: making an object one’s own, activation of individual agency through participatory game-performances, and aleatoric processes.

**3.3. Methodology of individualisation: (1) making an object one’s own; (2) activation of individual agency; (3) aleatoric processes in critical play**

There are three distinctive processes of individualisation that I exercise in subjecting the three iconic objects of the border (passport, wall, map). The first, which I call ‘making an object one’s own’ for the purpose of this discussion involves processes that resonate with the DIY culture and the Letterist International’s technique developed in the 1950s, *détournement*. The second, which I call ‘activation of individual agency’ for the purpose of this research, involves a set of processes that resonates with participatory art according to Claire Bishop’s critique of the missing antagonism in Bourriaud’s relational aesthetics (Bishop 2004: 67) (or rather, to quote Papastergiadis, “reflexive hospitality”, as
I will explicate further in the relevant subsection) in contemporary art. The third is individualisation through aleatoric processes - in which production of chance brings light to the individual agency by fueling the unpredictable and the unexpected. In the following paragraphs I will first describe the DIY culture, _détournement_, participatory art, relational aesthetics and finally reflexive hospitality, before I discuss how I 'possess' or 'take over' – rather than borrow – the iconic objects of the border by making them accessible for ownership by the individual agents in my border dynamics, and how I activate the individual's agency through critical play in the form of game-performances. I then address the two types of aleatoric processes that I use in my game-performances: participatory performance and interactivity.

### 3.3.1. DIY culture and détournement: making an object one’s own

The DIY in DIY culture stands for Do-It-Yourself. This refers to the activity of doing something on one's own without the support of a professional. The phrase 'do it yourself' entered the English-speaking households in a post-War world of the 1950s. It first referred to the emerging tendency of the common people (non-experts or non-professionals) undertaking activities in which they would self-improve their household as a hobby or as a way of saving money. In technology, this also hinted a dream of the technologically borderless world. For instance, my family's first computer in the unlikely island of Bali in the 1980s was the ZX 81, which was designed to be small, simple and cheap (using the commonly pre-existing household television as its monitor and any magnetic tape player to transfer data). My father received it in kit form that had to be self-assembled, having bought it through mail order. For myself and my siblings as young children, playing computer games for fun meant that we had to enter the code ourselves into the computer before the game was ready to be played. Reflecting on this in retrospect, having to prepare my own video game to play actually gave me a sense of control as a child.

This sense of control is what sparked the DIY movement, and the same could be said for its precedent, the Arts and Craft movement that was prevalent in England and North America in the 1900s. While the Arts and Crafts movement was a reaction to the declining quality of craftsmanship in decorative arts because of...
the rise of mass, industrialised production, the DIY movement started partly as a cost-saving alternative and quickly grew into some sort of an activism to protest against mass consumerism and an education system that celebrated cerebral achievements over manual labour (Watts 1967). The DIY culture is formed with the individual in mind, promoting self-sufficiency, and is often seen as the empowerment of the individual (or a group of individuals – which I will heretofore refer to as the collective) through alternative means to overcome societal or bureaucratic obstacles.

*Détournement* works at a similar level in empowering the individual or the collective by subverting the status quo. This French term can be explained with English words such as diversion, misappropriation, hijacking; however, for the purpose of sustaining its meaning I will continue using the French term. In essence it is turning something into another thing that is outside its original purpose in order to challenge this original purpose, or to put it more politically, “turning expressions of the capitalist system and its media culture against itself” (Holt and Cameron 2010: 252). The Situationist International also defined it simply as “the reuse of pre-existing artistic elements in a new ensemble” (SI 1959). While the subversive act of “turning expressions of capitalist [...] media system against itself” is immediately evident in my work *The Most International Artist in the Universe* (2011), which will be discussed as part of Chapter 4 on my passport works, I will further discuss the simpler definition – the reuse of pre-existing artistic elements in my research – as part of my methodology of cyclical works (section 3.4.).

The other meanings proposed by *détournement* and DIY culture are useful for explaining a methodology of individualisation that I apply to the iconic objects from the border. The passports that I have collected in *Re)Collection of Togetherness*, for example, are self-made, handmade, and an imitation of the originals (the originals being the official legal passports issued by the government of the respective nation-states). The act of imitating in art has been discussed extensively throughout the ages. In *The Republic* (Plato 380 BC: Book X), Plato dismissed the artists as being thrice removed from the truth and argues that art would not give the viewer any true insight in understanding the world. In Aristotle’s *Poetics*, which can be seen as a response to Plato’s position against art, it is argued that this position allows humans to understand the nature of the universe better, as human beings are “the most imitative of living creatures, and through imitation learns his earliest lessons” (Aristotle and Heath 1996). My process of imitation draws from this discourse. It is this process of imitation that makes the passports my own, because in
imitating them by hand I am adding my personality into the object. Thus it is a process of translation, of re-imagining rather than a mechanical process of imitation that results in an object that is purely a copy of the original. This process also creates conceptual spaces in between the original and the imitation, as I will discuss further in Chapter 4.

Likewise, in my map works, such as Terra Incognita, et cetera (2009), the process of individualisation is at work. There is a significant difference from the process of individualisation at work in (Re)Collection, however, that is the individualisation process in Terra takes place on a collective level. The blank world map that I begin with in this game-performance is subjected to acts of individualisation by multiple individuals, creating conceptual ‘openings’ in the process, and resulting in a completely individualised collective map that is entirely different from the original (the original being the official world map that can cause the border dispute between Nicaragua and Costa Rica as I have mentioned in my first departure point in Chapter 1).

Parallel to the effect of creating conceptual spaces in between the original and the individualised objects, this process of individualisation also allows the subjects to ‘possess’ or ‘take over’ the objects. I refer to ‘possessing’ and ‘taking over’ instead of ‘borrowing’ because to ‘possess’ and to ‘take over’ mean that the subjects are able to transfer the object permanently into their realm of possession, rather than to ‘borrow’ them only temporarily to be returned again. By doing this, the objects are subjected to a process of demystification: by making these objects my own or the collective’s, access to the objects is opened so that the subjects can hold the objects to observe and analyse them in their own conceptual pace and place.

Having discussed the processes of making an object one’s own, it is relevant to point out here that the concept of ownership resonates throughout the geopolitics of the border, and thus is a recurrent theme.

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29 The term ‘collective’ used here does not always mean ‘communal’ as well. To take an example, in Terra Incognita, et cetera, and in several other artworks in this research, it is possible that the collective is also part of the same community, which makes the collective map communal as well. However, I am careful in using the term ‘communal’ as the game-performances can happen sporadically and not necessarily in the context of a defined community.
in this research. Conceptually, the border is a signifier of territorial ownership – as a tool of nation-building it is crucial in deciding who belongs and who does not (Mylonas 2012: 17). In discussing the geopolitical border in an unequally-balanced global world, this concept of ownership is also crucial in talking specifically about the economy aspects of the geopolitical border. That trade – or economy and commerce – has always been the main driving forces for territorial expansions, strengthens my argument about the act of individualisation in the context of subversion: ownership is power. In economic terms, Susanne Soederberg discusses this concept in her book *Corporate Power and Ownership in Contemporary Capitalism: The Politics of Resistance and Domination* (2009), however I am applying this concept of ownership into my practice-led art research. For an individual to ‘possess’ or ‘take over’ also reinforces her/his marginalised position (note that the recent Occupy movement, for instance, have shifted the ‘marginalised’ into the position of power with its slogan “we are the 99%”), a position from which an agency gains power.

### 3.3.2. Participatory art, interactivity, and reflexive hospitality: activation of individual agency

The process of individualisation of the iconic objects of the border as discussed in section 3.3.1, while resulting in the opening of conceptual spaces and the demystification of the objects, activates the complex dynamics of an agentic intervention that is aleatoric when it randomises at a collective level. This agentic intervention is highly individual – even when an actor acts on behalf of a nation-state, this actor is still an individual and therefore can still operate with unpredictability, as I have also exemplified in my third departure point in Chapter 1.

While my map works, implemented collectively, open up the space for individual agency to create aleatoric processes, it is mostly through the wall as an iconic object of the border that I discovered ways to activate this agentic intervention. After creating several wall works, I learned that the wall in my research is actually a signifier of something intangible, such as the network in Latour’s Actor-Network

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30 I use the word randomises here in the sense of the open-ended outcome of a significant production of chance. Earlier in Chapter 2, I pointed out that I differentiate chance from randomness to imply conscious design. An open-ended outcome of a significant production of chance, however, can be perceived as random especially when chance is produced at a substantially collective scale.
-Theory, discussed earlier as part of my definition of aleatoric processes in Chapter 2. Although it is an object of the border, it is not the wall that is the focus: the wall is a crucial structure that defines space, but it is the space defined by the walls that becomes prominent in my wall works. This prominence of space gradually developed from a passive space that only encourages the viewer to move from one spot to another, into an active space where game-performances take place. The individualisation of the wall is achieved not through making the wall as an object, but rather through the activation of the space it defines.

In Western art, from Dada and Surrealism in the early 20th century, and reinforced in post-Minimalist art practice in the 1960s and 1970s, participation has gradually gained prominence as an artistic methodology. It has continued to be a key part of performance art and public art since the 1960s, and has become increasingly prolific since the 1990s (Marsh 1984; Lacy 1995; Carlson 1996; Bourriaud 2002/1998; Goldberg 2001; Heathfield 2004; Kester 2004; Bishop 2010). In the 1960s, the Fluxus group, highly influenced by the artist/musician John Cage, has also brought the element of chance into focus as a participatory methodology (Higgins 2002: 1-2, 112, 116-8, 203). However, while in a letter to Tomas Schmit in January 1964 George Maciunas stated that Fluxus should “tend towards collective spirit, anonymity and ANTI-INDIVIDUALISM” (as cited in Stiles and Selz 1996: 726), in my work the individualised collective action is emphasising the process of individualisation, as I have discussed in the previous section 3.3.1. on making an object one’s own.

The participation in my artworks can take form in simple aleatoric games (lucky dip, fortune cookies, claw vending machine/skill tester machine, a ball game), role-based games (ball game between two competing teams), instruction-based games (magic show, memory game) and transaction (auction). Because in general the participation takes form in a sort of game that is pre-designed and then performed with, or by, the participants, I call my method ‘game-performances’.

My game-performances – functioning as an activation of individual agency through employing critical play to which subversion is intrinsic – can fall into the categorisation of participatory art and socially-engaged projects as discussed by contemporary art historians and theorists. In her book *Artificial Hells:*
Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship (2012), Claire Bishop argues for the emergence of artists that, in debating Nicolas Bourriaud’s Relational Aesthetics (1998/2002), are since early 1990s “less interested in a relational aesthetic than in the creative rewards of participation as a politicised working process” (Bishop 2012: 2).

While I am interested in the “creative rewards of participation as a politicised working process” as Bishop describes it, I also emphasise that it is a certain kind of aesthetics that is activated through my participatory performances as art. The site of my research is art, and this site needs to be differentiated in its approaches to critical geopolitics or any other kind of research. Papastergiadis’s argument on the aesthetics of resistance is immediately relevant in discussing what I see as the manifestation of critical geopolitics’s resistance in my research. It also encapsulates Giddens’s “openings” and the importance of individual agency:

The aesthetics of resistance in contemporary art assumes a different stance towards public participation, aesthetic form and political theory. A critical stance is defined not simply by claiming to be standing outside or against power, but also by finding ways to rework the meaning and form of power through collaborating with the public. The point of art is not the exposure of the truth but the creation of public situations for reimagining reality (Papastergiadis 2012: 97).

Therefore, although political, my work of art is not the same as field activism, as there are different levels of consciousness and re-imagination in action. Rancière as quoted in Ingram (2011: 9) noted that the “critical potential of art derives from a constitutive ambiguity in its relationship to life, where art works can appear simultaneously as both autonomous (as part of a realm that functions according to its own logics and criteria) and heteronomous (as coincident with and immersed within everyday life)”.

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31 Bishop describes participation as a politicised working process, which creative rewards could include, amongst others, “constructive social changes”, “repairing the social bond” (Bishop 2012: 13), “[r]e-educating […] politically” (Bishop 2012: 34), “changing people’s attitudes toward life” (Bishop 2012: 95), “a means to deal with anxieties about reality, representation and political oppositionality” (Bishop 2012: 104), “a different mindset” (Bishop 2012: 134), and “producing a non-conformist attitude” (Bishop 2012: 134).
This is the potential that I delve into: while coincident with the reality of the border, my artworks are still autonomous, and this has the potential to create space where re-imagination can happen. While field activism would aim to topple the government, for example, my methodology of re-imagination and individualisation works at a more subtle level of consciousness to allow participants to come to their own conclusions independently – or as I have mentioned in my earlier subsection on making an object one’s own: in their own conceptual pace and place.

Providing the participants with their own pace and place becomes possible because in my methodology I summarise the socio-political circumstances of the geopolitical border into game-performances, removed from the particulars of their original issues and circumstance. This can be explained through Flanagan’s note on games:

Games, functioning as an ordering logic – a machine, or a technology – for creating social relations, work to distill or abstract the everyday actions of the players into easy-to-understand instruments where context is defamiliarized just enough to allow Huizinga’s magic circle of play to manifest (Flanagan 2009: 9).

The removal of the original issues and circumstances serve as a conceptual thrust that is implemented through a game-performance, rather than to solve any particular political or social transgression incident. The game-performances depict the geopolitical borders that are ever-changing in opposite of the Platonic philosophy of the border as a fixed entity. Summarising the circumstances of the border into game-performances that are removed from factual issues also takes stance against the Platonic idea of the role of artists as mere imitators that are third removed as I have discussed in the context of imitation in the previous subsection. However, it is this removed methodology that allows the participants to be participants – rather than political activists that march on the streets – directly involved in the game-performances not as a detached viewer but taking part in influencing the outcome of a network of actions. Papastergiadis explains this mechanism of involvement in his definition of reflexive hospitality:

As the viewer adopts an active role in shaping the whole environment, their subjectivity is in turn shaped by the experience of giving in to it. This shift in perspective towards the object of the artwork, and the heightened attitude towards the consciousness of
the viewer in the artwork, also amounts to a redistribution of agency. It stimulates a relationship of co-production. The viewer is no longer a passive and detached observer. Given the vigorous interplay between subject and object and the fundamental role of alterity in defining the intentionality of the viewer and the form of the artwork, this tendency recasts the relationship between self and other as a form of reflexive hospitality (Papastergiadis 2012: 113).

In my research, I refer to participatory performances as a way to create a space where aleatoric critical play (play environments that produces chance and stimulates questioning) can occur. In a sense I am enacting the role of a composer of an aleatoric composition, designing structures to make sure that chance is being produced within the rules of the games as well as through collective participation. I have the authorship control of the game-performances that I create, yet at the same time the potential meaning is going out to the participants for their input, interpretation and often their completion.

The ‘authorship’ control brings light to the discussion of balance between power, agency and structure in my game-performances. In my research I illuminate this discussion in the context of power and structure. As an artist it is arguable that I am the assumed author of my own work, however in reference to how I view the individual actors in Actor-Network-Theory, I am one of many agents in the eventual outcomes of any work. It is by conscious decision that I invite participation from the audience knowing my position within the role of authorship and the potential for aleatoric activation. The roles in my game-performances are definitive and unchanging, however there are frequent crossings of boundaries between the author and the participants. I will specifically discuss the crossing of boundaries between authorship and participation – along with other crossings of boundaries in terms of the artistic means and mediums that I utilise – in section 3.6 of this chapter on methodology.

### 3.3.3. Game-performances: aleatoric processes in critical play

The production of chance through aleatoric processes is a crucial aspect of my research not only because it emphasises the unexpected, but also because of its potential for examining the absence of control, which in turn allows me to reflect on the degrees of authority. An emphasis in the unexpected is a logical
response to the border as "not a noun but a verb" (Toal 1996: 1). If the border is a verb as an act of geo-
graphing – a continuous process of negotiations and renegotiations – then contrary to the beliefs in
classical geopolitics that regard geography as a calculable science, the outcome of the processes of the
border should be unexpected. There is critical play and chance in action here, magnified by bringing
individual agency into the focus.

In my research, these aleatoric processes are activated in two ways: through participatory performances
and interactivity. Claire Bishop differentiates participatory art from interactivity based on the complexity
and magnitude of the relationships that are formed through participation: "'[P]articipatory art' [...] connotes
the involvement of many people (as opposed to the one-to-one relationship of 'interactivity')" (Bishop
2012: 1). I use the term participatory performances instead of participatory art to emphasise
its relevancy to the Actor-Network-Theory, in which the interactions between actors are in essence
socio-political performances. It should also be noted that I incorporate both ways of activation –
participatory performances and interactivity – in a single method that I call game-performances. My
game-performances sometimes incline toward being participatory, and at other times more interactive.
The difference between these are the type of actors. Some of my interactive installations are described
as such when they, as a game-performance, involve one human actor and one machine actor. In a more
participatory game-performance, most interactions also occur in one-to-one situations because of the
focus on the individual actors.

The results of these game-performances, as the individualisation of iconic objects of the border, are also
different. The participatory performances in my research usually take place in one or several designated
site(s), within one designated time period that is relatively short. With interactivity, the site of activation
can be wider – for example, people talk to each other about *Eeny Meeny Money Moe* while it is on show
at the 7th Asia-Pacific Triennale of Contemporary Art (Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art,

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32With this definition, Bishop raises an area of problematisation as her differentiation reflects the tendency in current practice to be
disapproving of individualism (2012: 12). My game-performances demand the incorporation of both participatory performances and
interactivity as per Bishop's definition: they utilise both ways of activation, i.e. involving many people ("participatory art") as well as
consisting of one-to-one relationship ("interactivity"). The connections between the individual and the collective are essential: a collective
comprises a collaboration of many individuals.
Australia, December 2012 to April 2013), and the longer the show, the more people hear about it. The more people win the passports and compare the passport they have won from the interactive installation, there is an opening up of a wider space for the activation of individual agency.

3.4. Cycles: time, space, place

There is a cyclical aspect to my research, which I am identifying as a methodology. As a whole, in the practice-led processes, the research is cyclical, in that it produces a substantial body of works that cross-reference one another to build a valid anatomy. This anatomy activates the considerations of aleatoric geopolitics. Within this body of works, however, there are several works that are cyclical at a more micro level, as explicated through Situationist International’s definition of détournement: “the reuse of preexisting artistic elements in a new ensemble” (SI 1959).

In principal, by deciding to begin with the three iconic objects of the border (passport, wall, map), I have set up my whole research as a détournement of some sort, as these three objects are reused over and over again in different (and new) ensembles. Certainly, there is an aspect of cross-reference as well, between each body of work developed upon each of these objects. However this is only a small part of what I refer to when I discuss my cyclical works. I prefer to define these cyclical works (referred heretofore as ‘cycles’, or the singular form when I refer to a single cycle) as open-ended sets of works in which all the works in the set are based on a similar concept, and use similar physical materials. The most important character of a cycle is that within the succession of work in the cycle, the newer work reflects and develops ideas from the previous work in the cycle in a heuristic33 process.

The cycles in my research are different in nature from the cyclical research. For each of the objects that I have chosen from the border, one or more cycles are developed with each object as an entry point. As part of my passport body of works, for example, there is the (Re)Collection of Togetherness cycle, as the project builds up over time and is never-ending. (Re)Collection is shown in numbered stages (by 2012,

33 The word heuristic comes from Greek, meaning to find or discover. It refers to experience-based processes of intuitive discovery or judgement.
the latest stage that has been shown in this cycle is stage 7, of 2011) with exactly the same material
(which is the collection of handmade passport that I develop over time since 2007), but with different
treatments to the physical material (stage 6 and stage 7, for example, involved performance). Each of the
works that is part of the (Re)Collection cycle is site-specific and time-specific, however (Re)Collection
as a whole cycle reflects on time.

As part of my wall works, the Wanton cycle facilitates my inquiry into the intangible space formed by the
wall. All the works in the Wanton cycle stem from a similar method: video installation that was designed
to activate the space formed by the wall. The video-channels that are shown are all different, and the
works are also titled differently. In Study for Wanton (2008) there are 4-channel videos synchronised
so that it moves around between 4 different monitors that are arranged with the aim of activating the
viewers’ movements following a certain pattern across the space. In Microstudy for Wanton (2008)
the 2-channel synchronised video emphasises the space in between the two monitors, while the latest
succession of work in the cycle, How I Captured Those Wantons (2010) finally activated the space formed
by two walls through a performance, utilising the 2-channel video in Microstudy. Having discovered
performance as a way to activate the space defined by the walls, the method of performance is then
brought forward to a newer work, which is also envisioned to form another cycle – Construction of a
hole – opus 1 (2010) in which the performance take form in an auction. As a whole, the Wanton cycle
reflects on space and its activation.

In my map body of works, the Nous ne notons pas les fleurs cycle takes yet another approach: each of
the works in the cycle is associated with a place. The cycle began in Patna, India in 2009, and since then
until the time this exegesis is written has been implemented in Singapore, Jakarta (Indonesia), Fort
Ruigenhoek (Netherlands) and Gwangju (South Korea). Terra Incognita, et cetera (2009), another
map work, is not a cycle in this sense, although it does allude to the significance of place – each time the
map game-performance is implemented in different places it results in a different map that is relevant to
the community of the place where it is implemented, however the subsequent map never develops upon
the precedent. Therefore, in terms of my definition of a cycle this work is not a cycle, although in terms
of research it is cyclical and the whole of this series of Terra implemented in different places will form a
substantial body of work from which a conclusion can be drawn.
This methodology of working with cyclical works alludes to time, as the development seen through the cycle is an indication of time passing. Although the cycles in my body of works can assume different characters as shown in the previous paragraphs, the cycles are also closely associated to place in their striking site-specificity. In the context of geopolitics, therefore, the cycles in this research can also be seen as referring to history, with its tendency towards cyclical repetition.

In the context of this research the cycles are not merely repeating. The cycles take place in a locale and form a container of power relations. As they are not merely repeating, the end of each cycle does not return to its starting point. Instead, the cycle threads up and out and back in a spiral-like web. The repetition in the form of reuse of objects always finds itself in a new circumstance; it never returns to the same.

Each of the work in a cycle also informs another work in another cycle, thus transforms into another realm. The reflection and transfer of knowledge and ideas do not only happen within one cycle of work; the cycles are not isolated from one another. The reusing and recycling of physical material also spans across the whole research, where the passports that were made for (Re)Collection, for example, were reused in the Wanton cycle, recycled as a digital image (in video instead of as a physical object in the early works of the Wanton cycle). There is a continual recycling going on through the cycles, but instead of being born over and over again into the same life, the objects undergo some kind of metamorphosis.

34 At this point, Giddens’s distinction between ‘tradition’ and ‘history’ is useful to clarify the cycles as my methodology. Giddens argues that all repetition is reflexive; since “agents in all societies are ‘social theorists’, [...] it is never the case that they blindly enact and re-enact the routines of daily life. Even in the most traditional of cultures ‘tradition’ is reflexively appropriated and in some sense ‘discursively understood’.” Following this argument, Giddens explains how in small oral societies with no exposure to other cultures, ‘tradition’ is not known as something that constantly changes because “there is nothing that escapes its influence and, therefore, nothing with which to contrast it.” Contrasting ‘tradition’ with the newly invented ‘history’, Giddens argues that the reflexive understanding of ‘history’ has given rise to a “significant alteration in the conditions of human social existence [...]. From then on the circumstances of social reproduction are themselves reflexively monitored in an effort to influence the form institutions assume.” (Giddens 1987: 12). Giddens then continues to discuss the link between political power and domination with the mastery of time-space, and emphasises the link between power and locales – in which he refers to coordination of time as well as space, contrasting it with the more vague concept of ‘place’ (Giddens 1987: 12-3). This time-space coordination linking power and locale is significant in looking at the cycles as my methodology.
The process of making is a crucial methodology in this research, including the preparation of the artwork for a public show involving production and dissemination, and the politics of these are crucial to any outcome of art research. What I have learned from the process of installing *Lure* (2009), for example, also influenced the next stage of *ReCollection* at the time. The reflections from making the works in the *Fleurs* cycle, for example, also fed back to the methodology of the *ReCollection* and the *Wanton* cycles, and in turn contributed to the methodology of the research as a whole. This cyclic methodology eventually substantiates the research; although each of the artworks can function independently of each other, each of the artworks in the research supports the presence and existence of the other and it becomes a body of work, in which each work is mediating, altering, intervening in and supplementing the other, as much as actors interact in a network of response and alteration as in my previous discussions of the flux of the border.

### 3.5. Boundary-crossings

As I have previously discussed in section 3.1., my body of works is not antagonistic towards the geopolitical border. Rather, the border is fully acknowledged as a reality of demarcation, along with “openings” within its structure, where agency has the power to produce the kind of geopolitics that is aleatoric. There are clear and indisputable boundaries within the body of works in my research, which means that the act of crossing these boundaries can occur and is even encouraged.

This crossing – rather than blurring – of boundaries, between author and participants, between one medium to another, and between production, dissemination and documentation is a kind of metamorphosis that I allude to in the previous section on Cycles. It is also relevant to my previous discussion on the definite rules of the game-performances where authorship is clear and indisputable, without discounting the reality that all actors in the network are individuals (including the author) with non-hierarchical potentials for agency.

In my game-performances, although I am the composer of the aleatoric composition that is referring to the production of chance in the geopolitical border, and it is anticipated that the participants will follow the rules of the game, there are undeniable elements of misunderstanding and miscommunication to be taken into account. Translation across cultures is not always smooth, especially in the implementation
of my game-performances, and while I – as the leader of the game who sets the rules – would strive to implement the game-performances as accurately as possible, there is always a deviation to the rule. The participants come into the site of the game-performance with their own background and context, as does the author/leader of the game; they all have potential for agency as the participants. The status of an artist immediately sets up some kind of a hierarchy in encounters with the participants, however the rules of the game-performances allowing the participants to take part in some kind of a creation encourages the crossing of the boundary into the authoritative role – the participants are granted an authority, albeit collectively, to influence the outcome of an artwork.

While this crossing of boundaries might resonate in the term intermedia, as coined by Dick Higgins in his analysis of the Fluxus practice, as discussed by Hannah Higgins (2002: 91), in my research I see this crossing more as a metamorphosis. Another manifestation of this metamorphosis – the crossing of the boundary between one existence to another – is the way I, as author, move between mediums in a single work. Construction of a hole – opus 1, for example, begins as an empty site with a projection on the wall. In time, the site is opened for participants to bring in each of their roles in an auction that will result in the construction of a hole on the wall. At this moment, the auction becomes a site of production where two video camera-persons make a recording of the whole act according to a rough storyboard with which I have briefed them. At the end of the auction, the hole on the wall is completed, and the video footage recorded during the production is projected through this hole onto the wall behind the hole. The participants then leave the site and it remains with all the props of the auction – as well as the projection and the edited video-recording – as an installation, until the end of the exhibition.

This metamorphosis between mediums is to be found in many of my game-performances, implying the presence of history. Videos are used both as a navigational and a documentation tool. This is evident in the Nous ne notons pas les fleurs cycle, where the map can be perceived better with the aid of a surveillance camera installed above the site of the game-performance, giving the participants a bird’s-eye view of the site and the map. The footage captured by this surveillance camera, at the same time, becomes some kind of a documentation that in certain cases is then edited into a multiple-channel video works. In this light, the video functions both as a tool and as a spectacle. The participations are recorded on video and the edited video will then be part of the artwork.
The role of documentation is also brought into light in this cycle, as part of the methodology of boundary-crossings. The questions that I propose in the making of the documentation of my game-performances is relevant to history. In this context, documentation can be seen as a neutral form, or primary source, of history. Official history, which is in most cases a derivative of the primary source, is often propagandistic and arguably part of the policy of nation-building. Especially in cases of violence as part of nation-building policies (note again Weber’s definition of a nation-state, 1978: 54) – such as the mass killing that took place in 1965’s Indonesia in the coup that brought Soeharto into power and 33 years of state terrorism (as I have discussed as part of my fourth and last departure point in Chapter 1, section 1.3.) – researchers often face a problem in sourcing reliable data for sensitive issues:

Frequently, governments create “institutes of national history” or more specific centers studying certain periods or regions in an attempt to propagate their view of history and legitimize their claims. Moreover, such works are likely to be published in places where intense nation-building has taken place and this leaves us with very little data on cases that were less violent. Archival material is less likely to include propagandistic overtones, although researchers have to be careful of the biases – ideological or other – of the individuals writing the reports. In sum, sources on nation-building policies are difficult to find; even when they are available, they are often part of a nation-building strategy themselves (Mylonas 2012: 171).

In the context of my game-performance, history is portrayed as an aesthetic treatment of documentation. By aesthetic treatment of documentation I mean to refer back to Papastergiadis’s aesthetics of resistance, in which “[a] critical stance is defined not simply by claiming to be standing outside or against power, but also by finding ways to rework the meaning and form of power by collaborating with the public. The point of art is not the exposure of the truth” (Papastergiadis 2012: 97, emphasis added). It is important to note that my aesthetic treatment of documentation emphasises the recognition of different viewpoints, and as such is a production of “public situations for reimagining reality” (Papastergiadis 2012: 97). This operates as another site of resistance.
3.6. Summary

The foregoing discussion on methodology shows the complex interweaving of a methodology that involves re-imagining, individualisation, cycles and crossing boundaries. The methodology of re-imagining is firstly applied into interpreting the three key methodologies of critical geopolitics into three iconic objects of the border. Then, re-imagining resistance, an action of individualisation is applied onto these iconic objects of the border. This methodology of individualisation consists of either or all of (1) making an object one's own; (2) activation of individual agency; (3) aleatoric processes through critical play. Another characteristic methodology is the cycles, illuminating Derrida's *différance* and the nature of heuristic research. Last but not least is the methodology of crossing boundaries whereby boundaries between author and participant, artist and viewer, are crossed – instead of blurred – encouraging spaces for individual agency. I will analyse how this set of methodology impacts the resultants of my investigation through my body of work on passport, wall, and map respectively in the following Chapter 4, 5, and 6.
CHAPTER 4: THE PASSPORT
This chapter provides an analysis of several works in my body of work that I categorise as “passport works”: *Re*Collection of Togetherness (ongoing since 2007 and until 2011 has been shown in 7 stages); *Lure* (2009); and *The Most International Artist in the Universe* (2011). Other works will be mentioned in the context of supporting the analysis: these include *Sustainability, the Nation-States and Immortality: a short history of mosquitoes and an even shorter one of us* (2009); *Pupae* (2010); *Fallen* (2011); and *Eeny Meeny Money Moe* (2012). These works generally include passports as their prominent feature, and it is through these works that I study the problems of identity.

### 4.1. Problematics of identity: re-imagining the border in critical geopolitics through the passport

Through the passport as an iconic object from the border, my work investigates issues of identity in the context of the nation-state as the passport is a personal and political signifier of identity. In this context, identity is closely related to space. In classical geopolitics, both space and identity are considered as a ‘given’ with the birth and identity of a nation-state. In critical geopolitics, however, both are seen as constantly being renegotiated, and both are implicated in the way social identity is spatially constructed (Ó Tuathail 1996).

The passport, as a tool of national identification issued (and owned) by the state (see figure 022), appears to inherit this notion of freedom. In other words, it is as though we are born as captives, and the passport seems to ‘free’ us. This impression of freedom is inherent in the tools of nation-building because of the process of “identification” – in the idea of the state as an imaginary community (Anderson 1991); we are identified by the nation-state, and in turn we identify with the nation-state. When a country declares its independence, the citizens become, at least conceptually, ‘free’. Stateless people, for example, who are not in possession of a valid passport, are not legally free to move. Without a passport a person has no legal rights as a citizen – a *homo sacer*, a non-person (Agamben 1998).

In practice, the concept of freedom applies only within limits, and there is a hierarchy of freedom that depends on the origin of the passport. The different queueing lines to which we are directed in airport customs’ procedures pragmatically evidences the existence of this hierarchy. This suggests that passports
are inherently discriminative, although one’s knowledge of its discriminatory characters might be limited only to what one’s own passport entails – because passport control is held at an individual level, one never knows what it is like to have a different passport. With the passport, movement across borders could be controlled while the impression of freedom is maintained. With the passport control system in place, *not everyone* is prohibited from traveling, and *not all strangers* are excluded.

This is what makes the passport special as a social and regulatory instrument. Being generally seen as an identifier of the freedom to move, people tend to give the passport a special value. While the flag of one’s nation or other symbols of state sovereignty tend to refer to one’s allegiance to the nation-state, a passport is generally felt as having a personal value and is a significant marker of personal identity. In addition to giving the sense of identification with a certain nation-state, a passport can be seen as a sort of personal journal of travel that can embody certain memories. When we cross a border, we get a stamp. It is a potent reminder; it gives the passport a sanctity almost as a record of one’s life. It is personal and also regulatory in a political-legal sense. As such, it is a significant instrument of political and legal surveillance, tracking the movement of every single person traveling across the world. Thus as much as it is associated with freedom, the passport is actually a tool of control.

As a personal identification document a passport embodies emotional values. This was not always with ease: many travellers during the period of World War One reported that the mechanism of passport control at the border is “dehumanising” (Marrus 1985: 92). The passionate poem that a Russian poet, Vladimir Vladimirovich Mayakovsky, wrote of his own passport in 1929 is a noteworthy depiction of this dehumanising circumstance:

> He takes my pass, as if it were
> A bomb, a blade or those sorts of things,

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35 One of my audience in an exhibition of *Lure* remarked that she used to make a made-up passport for herself when she was a child, and would carry it around in her made-up wallet with made-up money as well. For her, in playing as an adult, these two objects (passport and money) were significantly important because they seemed very valuable.

36 “Much work on identity (national or other) has focused on flags, but a passport is a more intimate, personal object. Arguably more intimate is a name. [...] Names are a mix of the given, choice and expediency” (Godfrey 2010: 118).
He takes it with extraordinary caution and scare  
As if it were a snake with dozens of stings.  
The porter meaningly bats his eyes  
Ready to serve me for free.  
The detective looks at the cop in surprise,  
The cop looks at him inquiringly.  
I know I’d be fiercely slashed and hanged  
By this gendarmerie caste  
Only because I have got in my hand  
This hammer-and-sickle pass.  

However, even when Mayakovsky was aware that his passport could essentially kill him merely because it reveals that he’s a Soviet citizen – a threat – Mayakovsky concludes with illustrating the love and pride that is attached to a passport. He continues:

I have no respect for formalities.  
May every paper go to the devil  
But for this …  
This little thing, so dear to me,  
I withdraw from my loose pantaloons,  
Read it and envy me: I happen to be  
A citizen of the Soviet Union.  

Mayakovsky’s poem interestingly captures another characteristic of the passport: because it is a discriminating tool, it is easily regarded as conforming to a certain hierarchy:

Some passports arouse an obliging smile  
While others are treated as mud.

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37 Translation by Alex Vagapov.  
38 Ibid.
Say, passports picturing the British Lion
Are taken with special regard.
A burly guy from the USA
Is met with an exorbitant honor,
They take his passport as if they
Were taking a gift of money.39

A passport is also valuable, like money, and the state requires you not to lose it. However, unlike money a passport is not exchangeable, and is usually held dear as though it somehow extends one’s soul – losing a passport means losing the freedom to move across borders. There is significant fear that given the passport’s role in legal identification, having a passport stolen carries a risk of stolen identity.

These characteristics of the passports – personally sanctified, economically valuable, discriminating, hierarchical and falsely signifying freedom – are the basis of my re-imagination in my passport works. In the following sections I will discuss three works from my passport body of work: (1) (Re)Collection of Togetherness cycle (various medium, ongoing and shown in stages since 2007); (2) Lure (interactive installation, 2009); and (3) The Most International Artist in the Universe (site-specific unsynchronised multiple-channel video installation, 2011).

While Lure and The Most International Artist in the Universe focus more on chance, the (Re)Collection of Togetherness cycle began with continuous process as its emphasis. I will also refer to a few supporting works, namely Pupae (short story, 2010); Sustainability, the nation-state and immortality: a short history of mosquitoes and an even shorter one of us (lecture-performance, 2009); and Fallen (single-channel video projection, 2011).

(Re)Collection of Togetherness is an ongoing cycle of work that started in 2007 and has been shown in stages (stage 1 in 2007, stage 2 and 3 in 2008, stage 4 in 2009, stage 5 in 2010, stage 6 in 2011

39 Ibid.
and stage 7 in 2012). This cycle is principally a performative and process-based work in which I as the author aim to: (1) imitate passports from all the countries on earth; and (2) keep them in an ever-growing collection of self-/handmade passports. The number of appropriated passports keeps changing according to the political mapping of the world. By performative I mean that the act of collecting the images of the passports and imitating them in a collection of handmade passports is the core of the work. The act of collecting passports is never-ending because the premise of the work is that the border will continually be changing. In 2012, for example, there are 203 sovereign nation-states in total, 192 of which are recognised members of the United Nations. The different stages of the cycle can be seen like a still photograph of a movement in time (see figures 001 to 007).

Lure is about luck and citizenship. It is an interactive installation where the visitors (players) can play a claw vending machine to win a passport (see figures 008, 025 and 026). The success of the play is dependent on luck, skill or both. The random passport that is 'won', however, is not necessarily the intended choice. There are two parts to the installation: a long line of miniature passports that is installed across the wall, the ceiling and the floor, delineating the space of the installation, and the machine itself at one end of the line of miniature passports. The machine is playable by inserting a one-dollar coin in local currency; one coin gives the players three chances of playing. The passports inside the machine are closer to real-size and are reproductions of 120 different passports in multiple copies. These passports are also handmade, but unlike the passports in (Re)Collection of Togetherness, the passports in Lure are mass-produced. Although the covers of the passports are made as similar as possible to the authentic passports, they contain only white blank pages. If a player wins a passport they can take their award passport home with them; however, if they lose they do not get their money back.

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40 This work has been shown in stages during its never-ending progress in several exhibitions i.e. Landing Soon #5 at Cemeti Art House, Yogyakarta, a residency show in 2008; in the group exhibition Be(com)ing Dutch at Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, curated by Charles Esche and Annie Fletcher in 2008; at the Jakarta Biennale XIII curated by Agung Hujatnikajennong in 2010; in the group show Transfigurations: Indonesian Mythologies at Espace culturel Louis Vuitton, Paris, curated by Hervé Mikaeloff in 2011; and in the group exhibition Encounter: The Royal Academy in Asia at the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore curated by Charles Merewether in 2012.

41 This work has been shown in several exhibitions i.e. Last Words: Asian Traffic at 4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art, Sydney, curated by Aaron Seeto in 2010; in the 4th Moscow Biennale of Contemporary Art curated by Peter Weibel in 2011; in What a Wonderful World: visions of contemporary Asian art of our world today at the Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art, Hiroshima, curated by Naoko Sumi in 2012; and in the art fair Art Hong Kong in 2012.
*Pupae* is a short story that is based on *Lure*. In it, two characters find themselves devoid of any memory of the past in a foreign land that turns out to be a Limbo (the undefined space and time between death and rebirth), where their citizenship is decided. This short story animates the elements of the installation in *Lure* in a fantasy-like environment where the miniature passports can move and talk, and the vending machine is a finalising power in one’s citizenship (Wulia 2010: 75-93). The machine refers to some kind of a technocratic mechanism, in which a non-human agent is making a political decision.

Another work that involves a text in this body of work is a lecture-performance with video, *Sustainability, the Nation-states and Immortality: a short history of mosquitoes and an even shorter one of us*. Through a narrative that intertwines the history of mosquitoes, the nation-states and environmental sustainability, this lecture-performance can be seen as complementary of *(Re)Collection*. In the lecture-performance I read from a text with the accompaniment of a video projection. The text was written to resemble an academic paper with references ranging from the history of mosquitoes throughout human civilisation, Greek and Chinese ancient myths, the concept of time as a ball of yarn, the idea of the Umwelt as described by von Uexkull, news and statements from the NASA, and the negative effects of DDT taken from Rachel Carson’s book *Silent Spring* (Carson and Darling et al., 1962). This lecture-performance also explicates the element of immortality through the history of mosquitoes, and looking at mosquitoes as the memento mori in *(Re)Collection*.

The narrative of luck and citizenship in *Lure* is developed further in *Eeny Meeny Money Moe* (see figure 027), where four claw vending machines are synchronised while only one is accessible to play. The passports included in this installation are limited to passports from the ten richest and ten poorest countries in the world. In the machines, the passports are sorted according to the colour shade of their cover. There are four colour shades: black, blue, green, red, one for each machine. The lightbox-like design on top of each machine says “eeny,” “meeny,” “miney,” and “moe”. The rationale for categorisation

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42 This lecture-performance has been performed at the *Cultures of Sustainability* conference at RMIT University (Melbourne) in 2008, at *Landscape Surgery*, the regular meeting for the Geography Department, Royal Holloway University of London (London) in 2009, and as part of an artist talk at the *Encounter: the Royal Academy in Asia* exhibition co-curated by Charles Merewether at the Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore (2012). The text for this lecture-performance is included in the appendix of this exegesis (Appendix Three: Text for Lecture Performance 1).
according to colour is similar to *(Re)Collection* – to keep the method of classification, while at the same time questioning the basis of the classification that leads to hierarchy.

*Fallen* is a single-channel video projection that was produced originally during, and shown as part of, *(Re)Collection of Togetherness – stage 6*, an installation that incorporates a game-performance. This video piece shows a loop whereby an installation of pedestals and passports fall down, over and over, each time with different characters (or actors, to refer to Latour’s Actor-Network-Theory) performing an action of writing into the passports. On one layer this work portrays history as an aesthetic alteration of facts. On another layer, the cause of the falling is obscure: in the video a scene shows some kind of a lucky dip, alluding to aleatoric processes. This work will also be discussed as a supporting work.

### 4.2. Individualising the passport: re-imagining resistance

The passport as a signifier of resistance has long been a subject in art. When the passport system started to be implemented during World War One, the Dada artist Arthur Cravan declared he did not have citizenship of a single country and claimed that he was a citizen of 20 countries (BBC Radio 4 - Arthur Cravan Memorial Society 2013) – or even 32 countries (Smith 2013) – which in his time might have been equal to saying that he was a citizen of the world. Cravan would then travel across Europe and America with forged documents (Conover 2008). Cravan’s series of actions, until he was declared missing off the coast of Mexico in 1918, expressed a refusal to be identified. This was a statement that a person’s identity is always in flow and in negotiation. This mirrors the characteristics of a border that identifies the area of a sovereign country. As such, a border is also always in flow and in negotiation. As I have described in section 4.1, as an iconic attribute of the border, the passport seems to inherit these characteristics of the border as well.

The intrinsic and economical value of the passport has also been explored frequently in art. In 1997 Jens Hanning framed his Danish passport with a certificate to be shown and sold as art. In 2010, the conceptual artists collective Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša sold their conceptual artwork
The passport has also appeared in other forms in other projects: as a fictional document for an imaginary geopolitical entity, like Lucy and Jorge Orta’s *Antarctica World Passport* (2008), or in the form of passport for world peace, like Tom Mueller’s *World Passport* (2000), which has actually been preceded by the activist Garry Davis’s *World Passport* that he started issuing in 1948 through the *World Service Authority*, a not-for-profit organisation founded by Garry Davis himself, and which he has attempted to use to cross actual geo-political borders with some degree of success (World Service Authority 2013). The passport has also been part of declared micronations. These are entities that declare sovereignty, but are lacking diplomatic relationships with recognized sovereignties, such as the Republic of Molossia, founded humorously by Kevin Baugh in Nevada, and the Principality of Sealand, a former sea fort in the North Sea off Suffolk, England, claimed as an independent sovereign state by Paddy Roy Bates in 1975.

In all these works, the artists (or activists) would propose a single passport that is either ‘real’ to stimulate reflection on the economic value of the passport (like Hanning’s and Janša, Janša and Janša’s works) or functions like the passport in the real world by supposedly giving the holder some sort of freedom (Orta, Mueller, Davis, and declared micronations). My approach to the passport in my work bears a few significant differences:

1. Instead of focusing on a single passport, in my research I see the passport system as an integrated system, a network.
2. By working with a set of passports from different countries instead of a single passport from a single country, I can reflect on the sense of global hierarchy between the passports.
3. Having developed the way of looking at the passport in the context of the global hierarchy, I can reflect on the inequality of globalisation. For example, the economical value of each passport (a British passport...
would give the bearer more ease of movement across the world compared to an Indonesian passport) highlights this hierarchy and gives the passport status. It shapes the passport into a tool for economic, political and social discrimination.

I use the term network here to not only to refer to the close-knit system of border control of the contemporary world, but also to refer to the interdependence between the contemporary nation-states. It is intriguing to note here that Latour's idea of an agent can include a non-human entity; it is actually useful to see the Actor-Network-Theory manifests in my passport works as well, as I will describe in the later sections. The global environment issues, which are faced by the contemporary world, present an example of this interdependence between nation-states, in that solutions will be found only via interdependence as identified by the United Nations in holding major earth summits in 1992, 2002, 2012. This interdependence is also obvious in economy and commerce. It is only within this network that the hierarchical nature between the nation-states can be made apparent, but at the same time unjustifiable in the longer term because of the interdependence.

4.2.1. Making the passport one's own

Inasmuch as the passport falsely signifies freedom, it actually does not belong to the holder of the passport. The act of individualising a passport, therefore, is an act of resistance, as it illuminates the conflicting viewpoints between the different ways of re-imagining the passport and one’s relationship to it.

In (Re)Collection, one of the acts of individualising involves the manual work done in order to imitate the actual passport (see figures 030, 031 and 032). The imitation of the passports in the collection is not done in the spirit of forgery – the tone of the project is more of self-determination, of possessing something not to profit, but to make it one’s own, as I have discussed in section 3.3.1. This imitation is carried out bearing in mind that Plato, in his dialogue The Republic (Plato 380 BC: Book X), argued how artists are harmful for an ideal city because they are third removed from the original object. In contesting this idea of the ideal nation-state that appears to be a structure depending on fixity, it is appropriate to utilise an imitative process: the imitation of the passport in this project is a handmade object, which in
comparison to the original will create ample conceptual space between the original and its mimesis. The imitative objects in turn will make a conceptual space for aleatoric invention, thus activating the complex dynamics of agentic intervention. This is one of the openings within the structure, as Giddens has argued, in which the subordinates can subvert the structure. It is also in this conceptual space that aleatoric processes can take place, in order to re-imagine meanings.

A further act of individualising in (Re)Collection takes place in making each passport unique, both from the original and from each other. The white pages inside the passports are blank, except for a few pages where I insert images of four swatted mosquitoes made of scanned images printed onto paper. Four corresponding “blood specks” are placed on the opposite page (see figure 033). The blood specks, in reality, would be coming from the mosquitoes when they are swatted; however, the blood would not be that of the mosquitoes, but rather the blood of the people who have been bitten by them. This composition of actors can be seen through the Actor-Network-Theory that recognises non-human agents: the mosquitoes transfer blood, which refers to identity (blood line is a material identifier especially in nation-building), across the border. The blood specks on the pages appear to have resulted from the mosquitoes being swatted inside the passports, with a gesture similar to stamping by the border’s authorizing agent, which in turn refers to control. This gesture of the stamping of the passport is focused further in another work that will be discussed in Chapter 5, Microstudy for Wanton.

Next to these blood specks, in pencil, I write names of people that I either have known, crossed path with, or heard of (see figure 034). The process of naming makes each passport unique in that each name is picked, grouped with other names and written at random. In a way, the only element that is real in this work is the names, although at the same time the inclusion of the names questions reality, because names are merely another representation of one’s identity.

The uniqueness of these passports is not immediately visible in the way the installations are arranged (see figures 024 and 003). The viewer will have to get to the other end to see the whole composition as a collection of booknotes with white pages and blood specks with names written on them. The realisation that these passports are not real passports usually comes with distance, from afar the viewers would recognise that they are passports; but then upon close inspection, which involves moving around the
The action of moving around the space to view the installation is also a process of individualisation. Through the movement, the viewers as individual actors gain understanding and thus conceptual control of the object of art; and in this way they gain agency.

Writing names of people on the white pages inside the passports is some kind of a performative act, or to refer to Papastergiadis again, reflexive hospitality (Papastergiadis 2012: 113). A name is something essential to life, it is something that I have in common, for instance, with you, the reader: we both have a name. Our names might be different, but if I call you with your name out of the blue, you will answer. By writing people’s name inside the passports, I hope to create some kind of a relationship. In Papastergiadis’s concept of reflexive hospitality, this relationship is one of co-production. “The viewer is no longer a passive and detached observer” (Papastergiadis 2012: 113).

While the act of individualising in (Re)Collection follows the strategy of DIY culture by re-making the passports by hand, The Most International Artist in the Universe (see figures 035, 036 and 037) applies the tactic of détournement. In the universe of the art market, websites like artfacts.net trace and rank the market value of practising artists around the world with their own criteria of how international, and thus how valuable as a commodity, an artist is. The more often an artist exhibits internationally with respected institutions, the more international she/he is. The more international an artist is, the higher his or her rank is. This ranking system is offered to art investors as a guide for judging the economic worth of an artist. In the “messy and incomplete” process of globalisation, to quote Steger, this value judgement depends heavily on the artist’s access to the centres of international art activities. This is how the international artworld operates, and this is where the artist’s passport – in other words, citizenship – matters. Without a ‘better’ passport that allows access for more travel or living possibility to the artist, for instance, access to the centres of international art activities will also be limited.

The Most International uses a marketing term found commonly in the publicity of an artist to turn the logic of the system onto itself. I have made the 140 passports my own for (Re)Collection, at the time I made the video, so through a verbal narrative and twisted logic I argue – tongue-in-cheek – that I was the most international artist in the universe, because I have 140 passports. The logic of the verbal narrative in
The Most International is like a magic trick: it starts with an incomplete assumption, and quickly moves on to subsequent assumptions and further arguments in a very short time (the longest clip in this piece is one minute), in the aim of tricking the mind to believe. For example, during the verbal narrative I also propose the possibility of evaluating parallel possibilities of my citizenship, and a completely different power struggle of the global world in case the Japanese won World War Two.

As a site-specific installation, The Most International follows the format of a television advertisement clip. The video-channels come in durations similar to the durations of a television advertisement – fifteen seconds to one minute. Installing the work, I usually pay attention to how the video-channels – played through TV monitors, digital frames and projectors – work together in the space as a cacophony of infomercial, in a manner similar to John Cage’s radio compositions where multiple radio receivers are turned on and off at certain random intervals to form the composition. The TV monitors, digital frames and projectors are placed in between other works in a group exhibition (see figure 037), referring to these other works conceptually as the structure, whereby the video-channels of The Most International becomes the agency. At the same time, the television advertisement clip mocks the prevalence of commerce concealed in almost every aspects of life in a globalised world.

Both The Most International and (Re)Collection uses the methodology of individualisation by making the object one’s own, through applying the tactics of, respectively, the DIY culture and détourment. The activation of individual agency, however, is undeveloped in The Most International and in the early stages (stages 1 to 5) of (Re)Collection, in the sense that the control of the outcome of the works is solely at the hands of the artist. The process of transference through the internet as I have mentioned in the earlier stage of (Re)collection, however, provided an entry point to reflect further on more complex aleatoric processes. This reflection will be discussed in the following subsection.

4.2.2. Activation of individual agency through the passport

In the earlier stage of (Re)Collection I opened the conceptual space for individualisation through letting go of control in the process of transference of the image files that were collected from the internet. At the initial stage of the cycle, manifestation of chance was more visible in the process of the making. For
example, I took deliberate chance in finding the passports in the internet: it was whatever I could find at the time, without many restrictions. Sometimes, for example, someone would send me a photograph of their passport and the image is overexposed. In this case, the colour of the cover of the passport would have a lot of white in it. I deliberately do not correct the colour, nor compare it in any way to the passport in reality. The process of digital information transfer enabled by the Internet also introduces a relationship between original or source image, translation and transference.

This process provided an entry point for me to consider opening up a bigger conceptual space that involves the viewers in practical terms, in order to encourage more complex aleatoric processes. The basis of the reflection was the aleatoric outcome of the search for passport images: in this process, I realised that the more participants I include, the bigger the space for chance that will be produced, and some new discoveries might eventuate. The object-making process and this realisation was opening up a critical potential into the inquiry of critical geopolitics where a network of actors play out the workings of structure and agency.

Therefore, the participatory aspect of (Re)Collection evolves through the cycle. From collecting my own images in stage 1, I started asking for images through friends and acquaintances in stage 2. In stage 6 of the cycle, I stimulate more individual agency by opening up the process of writing the names inside the passports (see figure 038). In this stage, an interactive performance was part of the work, in which the viewers, deciding to pick on a passport based on the aleatoric process of the lucky dip, are allowed to write their names in that passport. This act of writing our names on something is a symbolic act of owning, with naming being a signifier of unique identity of self. At the same time, for the viewers to touch the artwork is thrilling, because this is usually a forbidden act in the gallery tradition. By opening up a conceptual space where the viewers are not only allowed but also encouraged to touch and make changes (by writing their name) to the object of art, I am creating a conceptual space for reflexive hospitality, a space where individual agency can be more unpredictable. In the exhibition of this stage, seven passports ended up missing, and many participants mistook the instruction. Instead of writing their names, for example, they wrote comments as well and some even drew random images related to nation-states and travel. This suggests the claiming of individual agency through self-identification; the unpredictability of human agency is amplified as a result of the game-performance.
4.2.3. Aleatoric processes in critical play with the passport

Recognising the creation of conceptual space that is activating the individual agency through performing the stages of *Re*Collection, I created *Lure* (see figures 008, 025, 026 and 039) with the participants in mind. The interaction between the participants and the machine resonates again with the Actor-Network-Theory in which not all agency is that of the human being. The machine, although controllable, and can be set according to certain technical requirements, is in itself an unpredictable agency. The constellation between the unpredictable participants, interacting with the unpredictable machine one-on-one, in order to unpredictably win an unpredictable passport, is arguably activating a space for production of significant aleatoric processes.

This aleatoric aspect of the work instigates a critical attitude in the participants and the viewers. The discussion on talent versus skills is one that some people have after trying out my passport vending machine *Lure*. Some participants have come to me saying that it is impossible to win any passports from the machine, because: (1) it is impossible to control the claw; and (2) the passports are just too lightweight. On the other hand, other people have won two or more passports in a row, from the same machine, and within the same exhibition period. It might not be the exact passport that they have aimed for, but at least they have won some. Is this dependent on talent? Were some people born with thriving claw control skills while others are just total failures? Or were the skills actually earned after years of training through a combination of accomplished motor coordination and tact? Perhaps these winners are regular arcade-goers? Or is it purely luck and these people are naturally effortless winners favoured by fortune?

The same questions of talent, skills and luck are applicable to citizenship: no one can choose which parents to be born from, or which nation-states to be born into, yet the principle of decision of a citizenship is still commonly based on *jus sanguinis* (Latin: by blood), where citizenship is being determined by having one or both parents with a citizenship of the nation-state or by place of birth/*jus soli* (Vink and de Groot 2010: 35).
In his performance work *The Collector* (1991-1992) Francis Alÿs walks through the streets of Mexico pulling a magnetised toy that eventually collects metal objects from the street. In this performance there is a surrender of control to a somewhat random process with a parameter – that the object collected would consist a certain percentage of metal that the magnet can attract. Similar to this process, in *(Re)*Collection images of passports, from current sovereign nation-states, are collected through Internet: downloads from Google, photographs or scans emailed by friends, photographs downloaded from blogs, wikipedia and others. Prior to commencing the search, however, I had to set a few parameters as the composer in the aleatoric process. This is much like the composer of an aleatoric music composition deciding on parameters of rules, such as which passports to search for, and why. This decision-making required extensive reading on the nature and history of passports, and a reflection on my own aim as an artist in making this work. This is an example of how the process of making necessitated the heuristic process of reflection and activation.

In the search for passport images, there is no systematic strategy; I would stroll around the Internet whenever I have time and find images of passports here and there. Then these images are reproduced carefully by hand: when they are skewed, the images are then edited in digital imaging software so that the image is ready to be printed to make the cover of the handmade passports. I also cut the paper to size by hand, sew each passport-sized notebook manually, bind the covers manually, and trace each cover design with a golden marker manually as well. The colours are not corrected; they are used as is with many factors such as the monitor and printer’s calibration adding to the chance operations.

The few parameters that I have set for the search of the passports for *(Re)*Collection include the issue of colour calibration: there should be no colour correction procedure on my side in any way. The process of searching through the Internet would not guarantee a consistency of calibration. For instance, when a person takes a picture of his or her passport, the lighting condition might affect the brightness of the image, or the white balance setting of the camera might affect the whole colour hue of the image, and so on. By the time I print out this image on my side of cyberspace, the image having been transferred into a

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44 For example, in 2012 I met with a few passport collectors (http://passport-collector.com) who have helped me to find additional passports.
computer and sent through email to me and eventually to my printer, the result of the printing might show a completely different colour from the original object. The prominence of aleatoric transference between the medium of technology also stresses the fact that the advance of technology and the internet does not necessarily make the world borderless: there are many stages of intervention. As the prominence of aleatoric processes at the border is one of my research inquiries, this realisation led to a reflection on how chance works in other ways that are indeterminate.

4.3. Passport cycles

In (Re)Collection, the continual change of the passport collection from stage to stage also gives space for chance to emerge. The cycle operates as a framework and process within which chance can play a part, intervening into what first appears as a concrete manifestation of nation-states that is unchanging. Over time, however, as the stages are being shown, there is a realisation that each stage is different from the previous, as the viewers see documentation of previous stages printed in the catalogue of the exhibition.

The doing of the work requires constant awareness on my part about the issuance of new passports or passports that become obsolete. In this respect the project is actually a parallel to the attempt to trace the geopolitical movement on earth, much like a geologist would observe plate tectonics that are in states of constant change.

The number of passports in my collection keeps increasing, as does the number of mosquitoes, blood specks and names in it. I started with 24 passports in 2007; in 2011 I have 140 and lost 6 in stage 6. As I was working towards my aim in 2008, Montenegro issued its brand new passport, finally completing the division of its citizens from the Serbians. The old Yugoslav passport became obsolete at the end of 2010, while the Kosovan passport has been gaining more recognition. At the moment, no nation-state in the world recognises the Transnistrian passport, but in a decade, this new nation-state might possibly be a widely recognised member of the United Nations, while the whole configuration of the world might be very different from what it is now. Borders are never frozen; the world keeps evolving; as the Greek philosopher Heraclitus (535 BC - 475 BC) argued, change is the only constant. Thus, embedded in my act of collecting the passports is the very act of tracing the geopolitical movements on earth.
The act of painstakingly making the passports one by one is similar to the story of Sadako Sasaki (Coerr and Himler 2004), a survivor of Hiroshima bombing who contracted leukemia 10 years after the bombing, as a delayed effect of the radiation. Wishing to survive her leukemia, Sadako attempted to fold 1000 origami paper cranes so that her wish to live on would be granted, as believed in the Japanese tradition. The difference between my act of making the passport and Sadako’s story is in the targeted number – Sadako did not manage to reach her aim before her death, but there was fixed targeted number of 1000 paper cranes. In my case, because in theory the number of passports will keep changing in parallel to the tug of war between political powers, my process will never end.

Death and immortality becomes a significant set of elements in this project. As often implied in national anthems, the nation-state’s ultimate wish is to be immortal. My self-imposed task becomes an echo of the punishments in Hades according to the Greek mythologies: I will have to repeat and repeat this task of keeping my passport collection current, ad infinitum. However, the act of repeating does not keep me in a circle. Like a heuristic cycle, I never return to the same point.

An attempt to stop time is futile; even photographs decay. As the documentation of this ongoing act, the collection of passports with mosquitoes, blood specks and names in them has been exhibited in several stages since 2007. Each exhibition functions like a photograph of a moment in time, showing the documentation of my act in the form of my collection at that particular point of time. Each time has a different arrangement and a unique site-and-context-specific approach. Although the individual passports are re-exhibited, the whole body of work of which each individual passport is a part keeps changing and being reconfigured.

The cycle of visual research generally manifests in between exhibitions of this body of works, and the conceptual is also informed by the visual. Working with (Re)Collection, for instance, informed the creation of Lure: the visual composition of Lure in which a pile of passport is placed inside the claw vending machine was originally generated while packing the passports for (Re)Collection after an installation (see figure 042). The same passports that I am using for the stages of (Re)Collection also became the main material for The Most International, and the way it is arranged at the end of the clip (see figure 044) was informed by the trail of mini-passports in the installation of Lure (see figure 045).
Stage 6 of (Re)Collection is an interactive performance that is informed by the metamorphosing form of Construction of a hole – opus 1 (to be discussed in Chapter 5), where as a finale the plinths where the passports are placed fall like a series of dominoes (see figure 028). This falling of the plinths first happened during the installation period of Stage 3 in which I realised that the way the plinths were arranged to fall was conceptually potent (see figures 046 and 047). Stage 7 of (Re)Collection (see figure 007) is also a performance that reflects on documentation and history as discussed in Fallen (which results from Stage 6), while the passports are arranged in stacks. This visual concept of stacking, which resembles the fall of the pedestals in Stage 6 of (Re)Collection, came from reflecting on the efficiency of space during the installation of Lure (see figure 043 and 041).

This is how the cycle works in this art-based research: the conceptual reflection and the visual reflection inform each other reciprocally. I would propose that this is the site of contribution that Ingram (2011: 218) discusses, that potentially “reflect[s] on how geopolitics might be enacted differently”.

4.4. Boundary-crossings with the passport

In (Re)Collection, one of the most significant act of boundary-crossings is where the hierarchy of the passports is perturbed by arranging them according to gradation of colour (see figure 002). The starting point of arranging the passports according to colour was an aesthetic consideration: it is not an everyday experience to see passports from all countries arranged in rows in the same space. However, at the same time rearranging a representational object so infused with meaning is actually an act of superimposing another meaning onto the object.45 This superimposed meaning, however, is open to interpretation, and activating the individual agency in terms of opening up a space to think up possibilities of categorisation, by playing up the human tendency to categorise.

The act of arranging the passports according to colour (instead of geographical region or alphabetical

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45 In stage 1, however, because of the number of passports, this other, superimposed meaning is not visibly explicit. It was in stage 3 that I started getting questions about the colours of the passports from my audience while the number of passports included in the work hits above 100.
order) is an act of disorganising the organised, intervening into norm-referenced systems of categorisation, dis-categorising the categorised. The hierarchy of geopolitical status or economic value signified by the passports is deliberately disturbed by introducing another kind of hierarchy: colour. In the apparent arbitrariness of colour attribution, however, the tendency of human minds to organise and pattern data becomes most conspicuous. People tend, for example, to think that passports from the same geopolitical region have similar colours. This is not always the fact.

Byron Kim’s Synecdoche (1991-present) uses an act of dis-categorisation through categorisation as an artistic point of departure. The artist paints grids of colours that are based on the models’ skin tone. The difference between Kim’s work and (Re)Collection is that in Synecdoche it is difficult to associate back to the skin tone without looking at the text about the work and realising that the brownish/creamish shades were actually skin tones. The artist’s intention apparently is to detach any association, to do an abstraction, although because of this the potential of the knowledge of where the work comes from is dependent on the text. Interestingly, the knowledge that these shades were skin tones conceptually adds to the work.

In most stages of (Re)Collection, the work operates in different layers: as an installation there is a possibility for the viewer-participant to understand the work by moving. This provides another manifestation of boundary-crossings in this work: between the layers of the work. Approaching the work from a distance we see a gradation of colours, of the small objects that appears like books. When one moves closer, the shapes, size and details of these objects resonate with something that is very valuable: the passport. There is a layer that is detached (looking at the work from a distance), but there is also a layer of realisation (the literal imitation of the passports) included in the work. Both the layers of abstraction and literalisation add to the work. Next come the reflection. Some viewers have asked me questions about the colours: why are some passports of a certain colour? Do the colours mean anything? The answers to these questions are not as important as the fact that the work has instilled a questioning attitude.

Unlike the passports in (Re)Collection, the passports in Lure are mass-produced to refer to commercialisation prevalent in contemporary market-driven globalisation. Lure was also produced in
multiple countries: the machine was bought in China, for an exhibition in Hong Kong. The passports were made in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The curator for this commissioned project was based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and because of my permanent residency requirement I had to stay inside Australia at the time *Lure* was being produced. This is another example of boundary-crossings within the layer of production, as well as regulatory mechanisms that inflect our time, space and identity.
CHAPTER 5: THE WALL
The works analysed in this chapter investigate the geopolitical border through working with the wall as an object of art that resonates with the border. I categorise these works as “wall works”, and these include: *Invasion* (kinetic installation, 2008); *Wanton* cycle (various formats, since 2008) including *Study for Wanton* (four-channel synchronised video installation with four wall structure surrounding a column, 2008), *Microstudy for Wanton* (two-channel synchronised video installation at a corner of two walls, 2008), *How I Captured Those Wantons* (interactive performance with two-channel synchronised video installation at a corner of two walls, 2011); *Construction of a Hole – opus 1* (game performance and installation with 2-channel synchronised video, 2010); and *The Butterfly Generator* (interactive installations with live video projections networked between two locations, 2012). A few other works will be mentioned when necessary to support the analysis; these include *The Great Wallpaper* cycle (water colour mural, since 2008) and *The Window of Contemporary Art* (various formats, 2011).

5.1. Problematics of space: re-imagining the border in critical geopolitics through the wall

Chronologically, during the practice part of the research, when I began working with the wall I observed it only as another iconic object of the border (besides the passport). The characteristics of the wall as an iconic object of the border are different from the characteristics of the passport. Through doing the wall works, I realised that in my wall works I was actually observing the space defined by the wall. Re-imagining the border in critical geopolitics through the wall, therefore, requires an identification of the characteristics of this space as a prerequisite.

In identifying the characteristics of the space defined by the wall I refer to architectural and social theories of space. The reading on the methodological points of critical geopolitics came later and informed this initial object-based framework for further development. Similar to the analysis of my passport works, I found the way to analyse my wall works further through a methodological point of critical geopolitics, namely *space*. Whereas the understanding of space in classical geopolitics is physical, critical geopolitics considers space to be a social construction, taking into account the wide array of actors that are involved in this construction (Ó Tuathail 1996).
The aim of the wall works is to shed light on the border as a kind of space that is constantly renegotiated by interconnected actors within this construction. *Invasion* (2008)\(^4\) (see figures 010 and 048) explores such kind of interconnection between the elements – or actors, to refer to Latour’s Actor-Network-Theory – of a geopolitical border. In this subtle kinetic installation, the actors of a geopolitical border are represented through “dead” kites made of my family’s citizenship documents, threads, flowerpots, razor blades and rare-earth magnets. All these actors are subtly interconnected forming a network, and from the quiet balance of this network we can see that none is actually stronger than the other. Depending on the movement of air in the gallery space, either the razorblades would fall, or the threads that hold the kites would be cut. Amongst the subdued inertia, the sharp edges and the shape of the razorblades, discernible at close range, imply an impending destruction.

Mobility, as both a product and a producer of power (Cresswell 2006: 265), is the early focus in the *Wanton* cycle (see figure 011), which started in 2008 with *Study for Wanton* (multiple-channel synchronised video installation) and *Microstudy for Wanton* (multiple-channel synchronised video installation).\(^4\) \(^7\) In both works I reused the passports from *(Re)Collection of Togetherness* as an element of the composition. Again, the elements of the composition here can be conceptualised as actors, to refer to the non-human agent in Latour’s Actor-Network-Theory. I also imposed a self-limiting spatial requirement for the work as a parameter: I would use only the existing architectural structures as a defining and bordering device, and as integral part of the narrative of the work.

In addition to considering the existing architectural structures of a space in this cycle, I also explore the potentials of the spaces created in between the video channels shown through multiple TV monitors. In 2010, with *How I Captured Those Wantons* (game-performance and installation with video)\(^4\)\(^8\)

\(^4\) *Invasion* was shown in *Landing Soon #5*, a residency exhibition at the Cemeti Art House, Yogyakarta, in 2008, and in my solo exhibition at Ark Galerie, Jakarta, in 2010, curated by Alia Swastika.

\(^7\) *Study for Wanton* was shown in *Landing Soon #5* together with *Invasion* and recently at the exhibition *What is it to be Chinese?* (2012) curated by Katerina Valdivia Bruch at the Grimmuseum, Berlin, while *Microstudy for Wanton* was shown in my solo exhibition at Motive Gallery, Amsterdam, in 2008, and also in my solo exhibition at the Ark Galerie in 2010 together with *Invasion*.

\(^8\) This work was shown as part of the group exhibition *influx: Multimedia Arts Strategy in Indonesia* (2010) at Galeri Cipta Taman Ismail Marzuki, Jakarta, curated by Hendro Wijanto.
I expanded the potential space even further, by creating another space between the videos and human interaction, and involving the element of magic and technology in the composition (see figure 013 and 049).

Through *Construction of a Hole – opus 1* (game-performance and installation with video) I explore the imagination of ownership and belonging that is related to physical space and the wall. The work starts with an auction where the audience can bid for a piece of a territory projected onto the wall. Each of the projected territories is associated with historical border walls. For example, the first territory was associated with the oldest wall and situated furthest away from the site of the auction: the Roman Limes. The winning bidder then has the chance to destroy a small part of the wall, an opportunity they had paid for at the auction (see figure 014).

As with many of my other works, *Construction* also examines documentation. The whole process was recorded on video, partly projected through the eventual gaping hole in the wall onto the wall behind it, and for the duration of the exhibition the result of the game-performance (the debris, all the props of the game performance, and an edited version of the recording of the whole show in 2-channel synchronised video) was left as it was as an installation (see figure 050).

*The Butterfly Generator* (interactive installations synchronised between two distant locations with live video projections) examines the walls of the Internet (see figure 015), by provoking questions about connectivity and globalism: sameness and differences, locality and remoteness, and virtuality and reality. In this work, two identical interactive machines are made in two different locations (Hong Kong and Karlsruhe) using hacked IKEA products sourced locally. The two machines are synchronised through the Internet, and a live video stream of the remote machine is projected on a screen above the machine as though it is a mirror image of the local machine. A result of a residency at the ZKM/Centre for Art and Media, *The Butterfly Generator* is also partly a performance piece in its preparation, in which two

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49 The work was shown in my solo show *Deconstruction of a Wall* at Ark Galerie in 2010, curated by Alia Swastika.

50 *The Butterfly Generator* was shown in two locations concurrently: as part of the group exhibition *The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds after 1989* in the ZKM/Centre for Media and Arts in Karlsruhe, and in Osage Kwun Tong, Hong Kong.
technical teams collaborate through the Internet to produce the work according to the manual book that I have prepared.

5.2. Individualising the wall: re-imagining resistance

In critical geopolitics, the methodological point of resistance sees the border as a contested site. The border is crucial in imposing representation of space, but there are conflicts between different ways of envisioning and re-imagining the border (Ó Tuathail 1996: 8-12). Invasion is the first work in this body of work that I call "the wall", in which I aim to interpret the characteristics of the iconic object of the border. The border, however, is rather the spatial structure defined by a wall. Through Invasion I explore this spatial structure, the inside mechanism of the border dynamics.

While my passport works explores the border dynamics between countries situated in a network of borders, Invasion in particular investigates a single border in itself as a system, where the elements are interconnected and transient. This is an allegorical piece exploring identity, mobility and control, which I based on my personal biography. In a way, this reflects my methodology of individualising, where I make the wall mine. Through a self-identifying process that speaks in a personal level to my viewers, a form of agency is incited.

5.2.1. Making the wall one’s own

The objects I use to symbolise the border structure in Invasion derive from personal experiences. The documents whose copies I used to make the kites in the installation are my family’s legal citizenship status documents (see figure 051). These include, for example, my grandparents’ and my parents’ birth certificates, proof of citizenship and change of name documents. I grew up in Indonesia with these documents being very significant when dealing with the government. Based on my physical appearance (deemed as “the Chinese look” in Indonesia), a government official would determine that it is necessary for me to provide proof of my Indonesian citizenship with these documents, even when I have my own birth certificate that states I was born in Indonesia as an Indonesian citizen.
These family documents, therefore, somehow signify my bond to my nuclear family evoking the feelings of connection and intimacy. At the same time, however, they also bring about the feelings of being an outcast, because these are the documents that I will have to show whenever my identity is questioned and whenever I am, and was, suspected as an outsider. In Invasion, these two contrasting feelings manifest in the two parts that are separated by the wall: the sewing threads holding the kites emerge from the pots at one side of the wall, while the kites on the other side instead of flying freely are suspended from hooks on the ceiling and are dependent on them to avoid falling onto the ground (see figure 052).

The hole in the wall creates a physical gap on the physical border (see figure 053). The kites suspended from the ceiling act as invaders. The relationship to the other objects (threads and pots) implies that the kites have somehow moved from their origin (see figure 054) to the other side of the wall, merely an implied movement, not explicitly shown. Looking at the installation we do not see the kite crossing over to the other side; we can see only the result of that implied movement: the kites, with their threads originating in the pots have emigrated through the hole in the wall. The tensions that are visible from the way elements in the installation are interconnected, imply that the final arrangement is yet to emerge.

Other artists have approached similar ideas around borders, and kinetic installations, which provide a pertinent context for Invasion. The works I have identified, through which I can analyze Invasion to bring out its key issues, are Heath Bunting’s BorderXing Guide (2002), Theo Jansen’s wind-walking artificial life Strandbeest that he has been building since 1990 (see figure 056), and Jean Tinguely’s Homage à New York (1960).

In his work BorderXing Guide (see figure 057), Heath Bunting documented his movement across borders and made these documentations available on the Internet through an IP filtering mechanism that allows only a certain type of access to the Guide’s website. In this work, Bunting surveyed the borders in Europe to find ways to cross them. A significant aspect of Bunting’s documentation process consists of identifying gaps on the physical border, for example in the form of a broken fence. This is similar to the hole in the wall in Invasion.
The hole in *Invasion*, however, is not just a hole. A set of rare-earth magnet and razor blade pairs are placed in different spots in the hole. This is what is missing in the gaps that Bunting has documented in his *Guide*: control. Like the implied movement of the kites, the allegory of control in *Invasion* is also subtly suggested. The razor blades are held up by the rare-earth magnets, leaving a gap between the magnets and the potentially harming edge of the razor blades, through which the threads pass (see figure 055). At the initial state of the installation the threads are not cut, but the threat of the cut is implied. The installation as a whole implies danger and precariousness, a momentum of inertia in which a tiny change can cause a collapse. It is through these implications that *Invasion* as an installation represents a frozen moment of movement and control.

As is the case with many artworks that are kinetic, *Invasion* is a system. It is a system made of subjective allegories of the elements that constitute the border. Like the elements in many kinetic artworks, the elements of this system, i.e. the pots, the threads, the hooks, the kites, the wall with the hole and the magnet/blade pairs, are causally interconnected. Each element physically serves a purpose in building the system: the pots hold the threads in place, without which the kites would not be held in place; the kites are hung through the hooks, without which the movement of the air would not influence the kites; the wall holds the magnet/blade pairs in place, without which the threads in the magnet/blade pairs would not have a place; the magnet and the blade hold each other in place, depending on each other for their implication of balance. As an allegory, the installation explores critical geopolitics’ critique of classical geopolitics’ stance on geography as an exact and predictable science: like the unpredictability of political turmoils, the movement of the air in the gallery depends on complex variables influenced by factors such as the room temperature, wind and the movement of people.

The reference to and application of physics in *Invasion* can also be understood by analysing Theo Jansen’s body of work. Jansen (b. 1948, Netherlands) studied physics at the Delft University and since then has been involved in projects of art and engineering. Since 1990, he has been creating his wind-walking artificial lives, the *Strandbeest*, made of PVC pipes and plastic bottles that are able to sustain and even strengthen their own structure through their movement. Jansen sees this work as diminishing the border between art and engineering, but this is not why I am looking at this work in contextualising *Invasion*. It is rather because *Invasion* also investigates the use of physics, in particular the use of magnetic field...
to suspend the razorblades from a distance, and the effect of air movement. The spaces between the rare-earth magnets and the razorblades are saturated with magnetic fields. Because they are suspended with thin threads, these metal objects often look as though they are floating. Sometimes the movement of the air in the space also makes the razorblades move up and down while defying gravity. What holds the razor blades up, and what makes them move up and down, is invisible to the naked eye, so the effect looks like magic, although it can be explained through physics.

This is what Jansen’s self-sustaining creatures look like to me: magic. The Strandbeest are activated by and utilize wind to survive, and Jansen aims to build herds of Strandbeest and let them lose in beaches where they can ‘cultivate’ on wind to live on their own. The materials used for the Strandbeest are “not pollen or seeds, but plastic [...] tubes” (Jansen n.d.). With these types of materials, Jansen’s creatures will take a long time to disintegrate. Their movement, fed by the wind, is designed to refine only their own joints so that each movement would result in strengthening their own mechanisms, making them live longer. On top of all, “they don’t have to eat” (Jansen n.d.); these creatures are supposedly immortal. This is where their relevance to Invasion ends. Instead of being designed to be immortal, Invasion rather refers to mortality and transience with its vulnerability to destruction. In the light of critical geopolitics, this echoes critiques of the stable and eternal nature of the geopolitical border.

Just like “technologies of power – in other words, formalized procedures of rule” that “rarely if ever work with the ‘fixity’ which on the face of things they might seem to possess” (Giddens 1987: 11) – at first impression Invasion could be seen as demonstrating stability and permanence if not eternity, because the quiet inertia demonstrates a balance. This refers allegorically to the image of the border of the nation-state, which often appears unflinching and imposing like the immigration control mechanism in airports, or permanent if not eternal like the Great Wall of China. However, as is the case with objects in terminal velocity where they move at a speed that causes them to look at first impression as though they stand still, Invasion actually does not stand still. It is an installation filled with tensions and subdued inertia, and the smallest variation in the way the air moves in the gallery will disturb this inertia, causing a modification. This modification refers to the constant renegotiation between individual agency and the structure that takes place in the liminal space of the border. Except for the pots, the wall and the hooks that are intended to be sedentary, all the other elements in this installation are intended to move very
subtly depending on the movement of the air in the gallery. The movement of visitors in the gallery will influence the movement of the air as well.

Unlike Jansen’s *Strandbeest, Invasion* is intended to self-destruct over time, with no possibility of recovery. The installation is designed to eventually show the contrast between the initial balance and the moments of self-destruction, with the intent to challenge the view of the border as stable and eternal. In time, the movement of the air will subtly move the kites, which will trigger subtle movements for the threads, which in turn might or might not touch the magnet/blade pairs, causing them to either fall, or cut the thread that touches them, or both. When the thread is cut, the kites will fall onto the floor. In the cases where the thread is not cut, however, the razor blades will fall instead. As the magnets are suspended with threads, the movement of the air can also move the magnets, resulting in the movement of the razor blades as well, resulting in the same effect: contrary to the first impression that the razor blades will certainly cut the threads, none of the elements in this installation is actually stronger than the other. Therefore, while the delicate balancing and movement in the suspended system of *Invasion* seems reminiscent of Alexander Calder’s balanced and perpetual mobiles, it has more in common with another modernist kinetic artist, Jean Tinguely.

Tinguely’s *Homage à New York* (1960) is an elaborate machine designed by utilizing physics and mechanics to eventually destroy itself (see figure 058). Within minutes of its activation, the movement of the machine would cause fire eventually destroying the whole mechanism of the work. Just as *Homage à New York, Invasion* ends, once a thread is cut, there is no way for the installation to recover and have the thread uncut. Through this implied end, the installation also implies mortality. However, unlike Tinguely’s machine that self-destructs dramatically in minutes, the intended self-destruction of *Invasion* proceeds through slow evolution over a relatively lengthy period of time, with subtle changes in the process. *Invasion* implies balance at first sight; upon closer investigation it shows threats, danger and precariousness. During the exhibition, one can only see an indication of the self-destruction in that the eventuality of it is clear, but still open to imagination.

The audience’s imagination is a factor that I generally take into account in my works. However, in my earlier works in this research, like in *Invasion*, the audience’s imagination stays in an area unreachable
to me. It is only visible from the way I see the audience react to the work physically (see figure 059 where a viewer is looking at the razorblades so closely, almost touching them, and another viewer tries to touch the kite), and is limited to my own interpretation (although the viewer in figure 059 looks curious, because he is not allowed to touch I would not know his response to the fragility of the installation). Although this response is somewhat documented in the pictures taken during the exhibition, it is not part of the work itself, and therefore is not a contributing element to the work (i.e. the work is “finished” and “closed”, making the viewer’s response part of another territory). In my subsequent works I tried to incorporate responses from the viewers, as I will describe in the next sections.

*Invasion* draws attention to three ways of re-imagining resistance through the iconic object of the wall in geopolitical borders:

1. The border is a self-destructive, ephemeral system. It is self-destructive because it is ephemeral and ever-changing. Its tendency, as portrayed in *Invasion*, is iconoclastic because “technologies of power – in other words, formalized procedures of rule – rarely if ever work with the ‘fixity’ which on the face of things they might seem to possess” (Giddens 1987: 11). This point informs further works, such as *(Re)* Collection of Togetherness – stage 6 and stage 7 (discussed in Chapter 4) and Construction of a hole – opus 1 (to be discussed in section 5.2.3.), in which I deliberately bring the iconoclastic element into the foreground.

2. Process is an inherent part of border. *Invasion* is actually a kinetic sculpture moving all the time, although very subtly. This movement as a process of self-destruction in *Invasion* is not recorded, so when a viewer comes to the installation they will only see the present state of the installation, just like “the ‘fixity’ which on the face of things they might seem to possess” (Giddens 1987: 11). This brings up two points of further discussions. Firstly, art has the potential to show the processes beneath the “face of things” through documentation as an aesthetic tool. The subject of documentation of performance has long been an important discussion in art, and is conceptually relevant to the border as I have discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.5. on boundary-crossings, particularly on the problem of sourcing documentation as a primary source in cases of violence in nation-building, and on my aesthetic treatment of documentation. As part of the wall works, this is investigated further in Construction of a hole – opus 1. Secondly, the process at the border also suggests that the border is not just a line, or a physical structure, but a liminal space, which is explored in Study for Wanton, Microstudy for Wanton, and How I Captured Those Wantons (to be discussed in section 5.2.2).
3. The border is a structure that is affected by aleatoric processes. In *Invasion*, chance elements such as the movement of the air in the gallery and its unpredictability are integral parts of the work. This key point illuminates the aleatoric processes that activate Giddens’s "openings" (1987: 11), providing gaps for the subordinates to subvert the power structure. After *Invasion* was shown, how to incorporate the audience’s reaction into the work became a critical question. Together with the previous ideas of aleatoric processes, this becomes the basis of critical play used in further works, namely in *Construction of a hole – opus 1*; and *The Butterfly Generator* (discussed in section 5.2.3).

The aim of the wall works is to shed light on the border as a kind of space that is constantly renegotiated. Through *Invasion* I have explored the allegory of renegotiations made possible by the interconnection between the various elements within the system that constructs the border. This system is internal in the sense that it is not immediately visible to the naked eye because a significant amount of time needs to pass before the process that physically demonstrates the interconnection (e.g. a thread moves very subtly against the floating razorblade and over a certain length of time is eventually cut) can be seen. The physical wall as an element in *Invasion* is not prominent. As an architectural object, the wall in *Invasion* stays in the background, serving as a structure that supports the elements of control within the system.

**5.2.2. The wall, identification of liminal space, and activation of individual agency**

Simultaneous to *Invasion*, I also started the *Wanton* cycle. Instead of looking into the system, I focus on the physical-spatial characteristics of the wall as an architectural object. While in *Invasion* I have identified the characteristics of the system of border control, in the *Wanton* cycle the main focus is on the physicality of the wall and, as a consequence, the space it creates. In *Invasion* I have identified that while the wall is static, the mechanism is dynamic and is a continuous process. This dynamic and process-based mechanism must take place in a space, and while the wall itself is static and seemingly unchanging, this space where process-based mechanism takes place might have characteristics that are different from those of the wall. These formed my next questions: where does this mechanism of border control occur, and what are the characteristics of this space? These questions will be put forward in analysing the *Wanton* cycle.
In analysing the *Wanton* cycle and contextualising the work within the field of contemporary art, I refer to and make analogies between definitions of space in architectural and film theory. Negative space in architectural design theory is different from the concept of non-diegetic space in film theory. As the border is the focus of this research, in referring to negative space and non-diegetic space I will identify them in relation to liminality and the characteristics of liminal space (Cresswell 1996).

The term *negative space* is often referred to in discussions of physical-spatial structures in architecture (Ching 2007: 99, 231). Negative space in Lao Tze’s poem *The Uses of No* offers some insights into how to understand negative space:

> Thirty spokes meet in the hub,  
> but the empty space between them  
> is the essence of the wheel.

> Pots are formed from clay,  
> but the empty space between it  
> is the essence of the pot.

> Walls with windows and doors form the house,  
> but the empty space within it  
> is the essence of the house (Fletcher 2001: 370).

Negative space, as the essence of space, is not directly formed by the physicality of the wall. It is rather experienced by the users of the space as an effect of the presence of the wall. Therefore, negative space may only exist in the users’ imagination and the presence of it can only be discussed conceptually.

The *Wanton* cycle started with *Study for Wanton* (see figure 060). The site that I chose for this work is structured around a square column at the centre of the gallery. This square column, as an architectural element, has created negative space around it. The space interested me because I could walk around it in a circle, yet the awareness of the squareness of the column somehow divided my circular walk into four
sections. By developing this impression, I extended each of the surfaces of the column to form a wall with an opening. This created four walls protruding out of the column, but at the same time the circular walk was still feasible.

The wanton symbolises rebellion and the unwillingness to be defined or pinned down, rather than migration explicitly. The term migration has a detached sense, as though it is a term that is accessible only through numbers and statistics, in comparison to these border-crossing terms. The mosquitoes are included in this work for their resilience as a family (consisting of so many genus and species). The individual mosquitoes could be easily killed, but as a biological family they are much older than *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*. For me, this signifies some kind of wilfulness, some kind of persistency, and perhaps stubbornness, that at the same time accommodates so much flexibility that is achieved through frailness. One death is insignificant, even thousands of deaths are insignificant. They are like gypsies wandering not only through space but also through history.

The *Wanton* cycle investigates space, and in particular, spaces-in-between. In *Study for Wanton*, I disappear from one passport-photograph-box after singing the relevant national anthem (see figure 061) and I would reappear in the next screen in another passport-photograph-box, singing another relevant national anthem. What happens to me in between these visible spaces, no one knows. For me it is similar to the liminal space of the border (at airports, for example), where you are contained and disconnected from the “outer world”: no photography or mobile phone calls allowed. As though whatever happens in this liminal space only occurs in your memory, and in the border control’s documentation that is inaccessible to you, it is like a type of purgatory. And in a way, my disappearance (that is constantly “proved”, over and over again, by my reappearance in the next visible space) in *Study for Wanton* is a confirmation that this liminal space does exist.

In the *Wanton* cycle I aimed to investigate ways to show movements and relevancy across walls as a delineating structure in order to bring the liminal space onto the foreground. Architectural structures are physical objects, because architectural structures define space, to focus on negotiating the architectural structures means that I have to bring up strategies to negotiate space. I explore the potentials of the spaces created in between the synchronised and looped video channels shown through multiple TV
monitors. The physical spaces between the physical TV monitors are as important as the virtual spaces that are shown through the monitors. The fact that the videos are synchronised and looped also reinforces the virtual space created within the installation. The video works are always conceptually related to compositions of walls and objects, and all these architectural elements are integral to the story. All these relate back to the physical and liminal space of the border.

In *Invasion*, there is a subtle interconnection that happens within the system of the installation that reflects the mechanism of a border space. Although the wall that holds the elements of control in this interconnection is not prominent in the work, it also delineates a space. The presence of the wall in *Invasion*, opens discussion about the sides of the wall. For example, we can talk about the implied movement in *Invasion* as being rooted on one side of the wall (where the pots are) and completed on the other side of the wall (where the kites are). This delineating structure is not prominent in *Invasion*, but is the focus in the *Wanton* cycle.

In the *Wanton* cycle I brought this structure into focus. The wall is treated as a physical structuring element of space, and its presence is made obvious through movements or connections between the spaces on either side of the wall. While *Invasion* explores the internal renegotiation within the system, in the *Wanton* cycle the physical structure, and the space it forms, becomes the main cause and starting point.

Although the starting point is physical, I put an emphasis on the liminality of this space as an output of the physical. Liminality can be described as the “kinds of space and place that are inhabited by people between states, undergoing rites of passage” (Cresswell 2012: 71). This liminal space is where renegotiations potentially take place. The wall as a border in the *Wanton* cycle forms what is defined in the spatial theory of architecture as negative space (Ching 2007: 99), and it is this negative space that is the essence of the border.

A similar concept to the negative space is also prominent in film theory, where it is often applied to the presence of music that supports the narrative: there is a space outside the screen where the imagination of the viewers is activated. This is crucial to the formation of the narrative. For the purpose of my research,
I describe this space as non-diegetic: the space outside the screen that complements the narrative on the screen. This space is not physical, although its formation depends on the physical and it is clearly an active presence in the on-screen narrative.

In the Wanton cycle, the superimposition of a multi-channel video installed on the wall not only forms negative space, but also non-diegetic space. This is shaped by the content of the video channels in the installation. For example, while I might physically superimpose a 2-channel video on top of two walls that meet at the corner, it is the images of passports as the content of the 2-channel video that identifies the work as relevant to the concept of borders. While the physical composition refers to the border, a further and more specific meaning is formed by the content of the video. While the composition of the walls creates negative space, the video screens, with narratives that are supposedly connected to each other, form non-diegetic space.

Through the three works in the Wanton cycle I explore ways to superimpose this non-diegetic space and negative space. The presence of non-diegetic space opens the potential for further meanings to emerge in the perception of space. The use of non-diegetic space and negative space in exploring the concepts of the border is evident in works such as Shirin Neshat’s Rapture (1999), and Quintet Without Borders (2007), a collaboration between Ergin Çavuşoğlu and Konstantin Bojanov.

In Quintet Without Borders (see figure 062), five individual pieces of footage with five gypsy musicians are installed in five different screens in the gallery space. Exploring an idea similar to Mike Figgis’s film Timecode (2000), where a cinematic screen is divided into four with each quarter showing individual footage that together forms a narrative, the five screens in Quintet Without Borders are synchronized in a way that results in a harmonious musical work combining cultural identity and community (E-flux 2007, November 18). However, unlike Timecode where the screens are grouped together onto one big screen leaving little space for the assumption that the four screens are independent, the five screens in Quintet Without Borders are dispersed in the gallery space. Non-diegetic space is crucial in this work as it is the imagination of the viewer that brings these screens together as a whole.
Study for Wanton (2008) pushes the method used in Quintet Without Borders further, not only by distributing its four screen across space, but also by creating an implied movement between the screens to activate the non-diegetic space. The importance of movement in recognizing a border is evident, because it is movement that can alarm and activate a border control procedure. In a passage from Death at Intervals a family carries the dying grandfather through the border to the neighbouring country to meet death, as death has ceased to exist in their country of origin. As they tried to find the border, “a line that exists only in maps” (Saramago 2008: 32), they realised that it is only by moving across it that they can detect the exact position of the borderline, which will be indicated by the grandfather’s death. As Cresswell has noted, “[l]iminality also suggests some kind of journey – a leaving of one space and all its expected codes and rules and arrival in another” (Cresswell 2012: 71). As the family moves through the border area with no marks of the border, the arrival is signified by the grandfather’s death. The grandfather’s death in this passage becomes the expected codes and rules of the space into which the family has arrived.

Developing the idea of movement across borders, Study for Wanton is a performative work in which I imagine myself as a border-crosser. While in Quintet Without Borders the characters are five different musicians who are fixed in one location for the duration of the piece, in Study for Wanton I, as the single performer, move from one screen of TV monitor to another to sing the national anthems of four different countries, one after another, in a four-channel video which content flows and synchronised between the four TV monitors through which the video is shown. These TV monitors are separated from each other by four separate walls.

The reference to liminality in Study for Wanton is apparent in my singing of the national anthems. As I arrive in one passport photograph box after moving across a liminal space where I am invisible, I simultaneously emerge in another space with a set of expected codes and rules. These codes and rules are referenced in the karaoke-style text pointer that guides my singing. Iconoclastically, however, the whole installation suggests that the concept of nationalism and loyalty is void: the video channels show me singing (and failing to sing) these anthems with my foreign accent (see figure 11), while being free to move around. It also depicts how I can move around and visit these four different spaces with their own codes and rules without any obstruction: the border-crossing depicted in this piece is casual, regular and devoid of anxiety.
It is obvious however that during my movement there is a space in between, in which I am not visible. Should there be any obstruction to my movement across the borders, this obstruction could happen only within this area of invisibility, which resonates with the concealment of the spaces of border control, such as customs halls in airports. No photography is allowed, and everyone is under close surveillance within these spaces. This non-diegetic space, superimposed on the negative spaces between the walls, is some kind of a liminal space, where procedures of obstruction would happen. This liminal space is essential to a border, and this is one of the critical elements in the *Study for Wanton* that is not deliberately acknowledged in *Quintet Without Borders*.

In *Microstudy for Wanton* (see figure 063) the liminal space is also formed in between screens showing a two-channel synchronised video. There is no implication in the video that there is an invisible movement between the two screens. In this work, I emphasised working with the existing architectural structure of the corner. *Microstudy for Wanton* is a microscopic look at an element of space that cannot exist without the walls: the corner.

In this work I explore how negative space is superimposed onto diegetic space. I draw parallels between a corner, at which two walls meet, and the passport as a book. The passport opens either to the left or the right depending on the literary culture of the nation-states it represents. In the installation, however, while the walls meet, the two screens are spatially separated, thus separating the left and right pages of the passports. In the video, the stamping of the passport refers to the protocol at immigration checkpoints, and the mosquitoes that are swatted in between the pages leave specks of the blood they have just sucked from humans. The hands that stamped these passports, although seeming to move cholerically, perform their task indifferently.

While in *Study for Wanton* the screens are held together as a complete narrative by the implied physical movement between the four screens, in *Microstudy for Wanton* the two screens appear to come from a single screen divided into two (see figure 064). The space in between the screens (or divisions) becomes a liminal space because of the diegetic connection between them. This method is comparable to *Quintet Without Borders*. Although one can argue that in *Quintet* the unifying element is the harmony of the music, *Microstudy for Wanton* therefore is more similar to Shirin Neshat’s work *Rapture* (see figure 065), where the connection between its two screens is more diegetic than non-diegetic.
In *Rapture*, two screens are placed on two walls opposite each other. Between these two projection walls, a negative space is formed, in which the viewers would be standing to see and listen to the video projection on the two walls. The installation shows two groups of people doing different activities, sometimes pausing as though watching the group on the other screen. One screen shows a group of females, and the other shows a group of males. The gender-specific and vernacular content of the video is deliberate, and this context imbues the negative space between the two walls with cultural and gender values. It is as though the viewers are placed in between two opposing energies and power, a space that is full of meaning.

By placing the viewers in between the two screens, Neshat produces a liminal space that is imbued with tradition (as Cresswell has described as one of the characteristics of liminal spaces). While the *Wanton* cycle focuses on space and liminality, it is only in the last work in this cycle, *How I Captured Those Wantons* (2011) that I refer to the tradition that occurs in liminal spaces of the border.

Audience questions in response to this work revolve around details regarding how the video was made. The video mixes animation (mosquitoes) and real footage. Apparently this mix of “fact” and “fiction” works quite well in the piece: the audience would ask curious questions such as how I have bred the mosquitoes (I did put live mosquito pupae in a sealed flask and recorded their process of metamorphosis with video) and how it was possible to catch them inside the passport (it was an animation).

As a response to these questions, in early 2011 I reused *Microstudy for Wanton* as a prop in a game-performance, *How I Captured Those Wantons*. In this work, the two-channel videos of *Microstudy for Wanton* are installed in a corner where two walls meet. A table-like pedestal was placed a few metres in front, with the arrangement of these physical objects in the shape of a triangle forming negative space. The liminal space is manifest when the game-performance is executed: instead of verbally answering questions on how I captured the mosquitoes in *Microstudy*, I interact with my visitors directly from the pedestal (see figures 067 and 068). The two-channel video serves as a guide dictating the game-performance, to which participants must conform. Standing next to the pedestal with a pile of passports from *Re)Collection of Togetherness*, I engage the audience’s curiosity by offering to teach them how to catch mosquitoes with a passport.
This performance promises to demystify the magic and mystery behind *Microstudy for Wanton*. Using techniques similar to those used in magic trick performances, I invited a member of the audience to participate by “swatting” the mosquitoes that we saw and heard on the TV monitors, using the real (fake copies) passports that we held in our hands. To make sure that the mosquitoes were dead (they are in fact quite resilient), after the swat we would bang our fists on the closed passport to make sure the mosquitoes would not escape (see figure 069). The last step was to open our passports again, flicking through the pages to find out whether we did capture a few mosquitoes. Surely, most of the time we did. There were names written next to some of the blood specks, and I would ask the audience to read them with me.

The liminal space that is formed has an aura similar to the immigration control points in that the visitors will have to conform to an unwritten regulation without questioning. Few of the visitors actually questioned what I did, and as the exhibition was a new media exhibition, there appeared to be a prior expectation that audiences would be entertained by the tricks of technology.

5.2.3. Aleatoric processes in critical play with the wall

Through *Invasion* I have identified the need to involve documentation (of the processes occurring during public exhibitions of my artwork) as an artistic tool. Through both *Invasion* and the *Wanton* cycle I identified the potential of the liminal space of the border as a site of activation of individual agency. *Construction of a Hole – opus 1* revisits these methods in a comprehensive way, and furthers the activation of individual agency by involving aleatoric processes in the form of critical play.

Similar to *Terra Incognita, et cetera* (2009), game-performance and installation with video (analysed further in Chapter 6), *Construction of a Hole – opus 1* is held at exhibition openings to enable access to a larger number of participants, and like in *Terra*, to implement a kind of détournement to the idea of the vernissage in the gallery tradition of contemporary art. The undertone of destruction is a key part of *Construction*, like *Invasion*. However, in *Construction* it is intended to come across as more humorous, like *Terra*.
Tintin Wulia, *Construction of a hole - opus 1*, 2010

Installation view at initial state before game-performance begins

Image courtesy of Jessica Harkins
Figure 072
Tintin Wulia, *Construction of a hole - opus 1*, 2010
Game-performance view
Image courtesy of Jessica Harkins

Figure 073
Tintin Wulia, *Construction of a hole - opus 1*, 2010
Game-performance view
Image courtesy of Jessica Harkins
Figure 074
Tintin Wulia, *Construction of a hole - opus 1*, 2010
Installation/projection detail
Image courtesy of the artist and Ark Galerie

Figure 075
Tintin Wulia, *Construction of a hole - opus 1*, 2010
Installation/projection detail
Image courtesy of the artist and Ark Galerie
In the initial state of *Construction*, a Mondrian-like visual composition consisting of eight squares was projected onto a wall, and visitors were invited to sit down and participate in an auction (see figure 070) of the wall. The Mondrian-like visual composition refers to Mondrian’s *The Wall Works* (1943-44), a mobile work that was once part of his final studio in Manhattan. Mondrian would have different sized paper with different colours tacked to the wall and would rearrange these cut-outs everyday in no apparent structure. With reference to Mondrian’s works that are often cartographical in appearance, for me this act of arranging and rearranging the compositions of coloured paper cut-outs resembles the constant change of the border.

Each of the eight squares represented a lot to be auctioned. In the first showing of this work at Ark Galerie in Jakarta, I worked with a well-known Indonesian auctioneer based in Jakarta to manage, accept and stimulate the bidding. Taking turns with the auctioneer, before the bidding for each lot begins, I would imbue a specific square with meaning by means of verbal recounting of stories about the border to the audience, accompanied by the projection. After a story was told for a lot, the visitors could start bidding on that particular lot. The successful bidder would get a chance to tear a hole on the wall within a particular square-shaped area of the part being bid for (see figures 071, 072 and 073). The entire game-performance was recorded with three cameras: two moving cameras in the auction space with the audience, and one static camera recording behind the wall section that was being torn away.

The image in the video captured by the static camera started as pitch black, as in the beginning the wall at the front of it was still intact. The camera then recorded the gradual intrusion of light each time a lot – a small square part of the auctioned wall – was torn. The recording from the outside of the wall was done with a standard cinematic language. There were close ups of facial expressions as the auctioneer hit his hammer on the wall to decide on the winning bidders, the smiling winner punching the wall with a hammer, the handymen’s expression and the expression of the people who were only watching and not bidding. The resulting video work was a synchronised diptych, which was shown as an installation for the duration of the exhibition, creating a disparity of styles and views regardless of the synchronisation.

The game-performance was completed when the eighth lot was sold and torn. A big, gaping hole was formed on the wall, and the last few minutes of footage, captured by the static camera, was then
immediately replayed and projected back, visible to the audience through the new hole in the wall (see figure 075). This video projection functioned like a mirror, reflecting not only the space and the participants, but also giving the opportunity to look back in time.

The props from the game-performance were immediately arranged on the auction table and left as part of the artwork as an installation (see figure 076). The footage captured during the construction of the hole during the auction was edited into a 2-channel synchronised video loop and installed a few days later in the gallery. One channel was played through a TV monitor of similar size to the hole installed right next to the hole, and the other channel was projected through the hole onto the wall behind the torn wall (see figure 074). The channel played through the TV monitor included texts on screen alluding to the story of Plato’s cave, where humans are portrayed as prisoners in a cave who can only gain understanding of the world through the shadows cast on the wall in front of them. Because they are prisoners in the cave, they can never look behind them to see the real objects that cast the shadow on the wall; they can only ever look at reflections of reality.

This game-performance activates the individual agency amongst the participants by means of the auction. The unpredictability is somehow limited by the economic capacity of the bidders (i.e. how much a bidder is able and/or willing to pay for a lot), however the constellation of the bidders operates together in the constant renegotiations of individual decisions (to bid higher, or to stop bidding). The aleatoric process in this game-performance can be described as self-generating: the parameters keep adjusting according to the synergy of action and reaction between the participants as individual agents.

The lots to be won are merely imaginary reflections of the border: the stories are verbalised, but not recorded, while the lines are projected instead of drawn on the wall. Once a lot is won, the tearing of that part of the wall is symbolic of tearing the projected border. However, once the particular part of the wall is torn it leaves a gaping hole (see figure 077). The projection through this gaping hole will again fall at the wall behind the auctioned wall. Thus this projection, the remnants of the imagination of the old, torn border, creates another border at the wall behind. The winning bidder gains the chance to make the hole on the wall, but they own nothing. Above all, the original wall is still standing, although now with the gaping hole revealing another wall behind it.
The whole game-performance as a network of agencies resonates the “messy and incomplete”
globalisation (Steger 2009: 2) in which economic capital determines the destruction of an old border and
the formation of a new one. In this game-performance, the border structure is disrupted by individual
agency, however the process continues: the tearing of the border remains an imagination as a new
projection of the whole game-performance falls onto the wall behind.

This “messy and incomplete” process of globalisation (Steger 2009: 2) is also reflected in *The Butterfly
Generator*. This work illuminates the connectedness of our contemporary global and local lifestyle that
is often disjointed.

*The Butterfly Generator* (see figure 078) is a twin game machine in the form of a networked installation
with webcam video projection consisting of two uncannily similar setups (made by repurposing IKEA
materials) placed at a significant geographic distance from each other. The title refers to a popular term
coined by meteorologist Edward Lorenz since 1963, the Butterfly Effect, that emphasises the importance
of an individual agency in deciding global events.

The work is essentially a game machine inviting its users to play with it. As a comment on globalization
and the rise of local-specific/self-specific and DIY movements, and in the constraints of the project
(similarity of setup was crucial), the setups are designed to be made of hacked IKEA products.\(^{51}\) The
use of IKEA products imply a sense of ‘home’,\(^{52}\) however in this work the IKEA products are hacked and
repurposed so that it looks and functions differently from the original. An IKEA-style manual accompanies
the work and opens up the process to its users, making it practical to be constructed anywhere that IKEA
products can be purchased. This manual is a DIY-type manual that is applicable in practice (see figure
079 for excerpts from the manual).

\(^{51}\) In the past few years a growing number of people have been repurposing the well-designed, generic IKEA products into something that
specifically fits their lives and homes. A blog has been dedicated to this movement since 2006 (http://ikeahackers.net/). See also Rosner
and Bean 2009.

\(^{52}\) IKEA’s ad campaign of 2007 revolves around the statement “Home is the most important place in the world”. 
Figure 079
Tintin Wulia, *The Butterfly Generator*, 2012
Excerpts from manual, pages 4 to 11 and 42 to 43
**ANDA**

- Arduino Mega 2560
  - CNY 100
- Arduino Mega Sensor Shield v1.0
  - CNY 60
- LED lights with metal frame (7x)
- PC server fans 25A (8x)
  - CNY 1.88
- Fans front grills 3.5" (8x)
  - HKD 5.6
- Fans back grills 4.5" (8x)
  - HKD 1.08
- Stereo speakers + Subwoofer

- RGB LED Strip + IR Controller
- 4-Channel Mosfet IRF540 (4x)
  - @CNY 60
- Switching Power Supply v-20A
  - CNY 100
- Relay 5VDC
  - CNY 2.50
- Arduino Environment + ANDACommunicator software package running on PC Windows 7 (Mini PC #1)
- Twisted Cables

**DETритUS**

- **ВАНИЯ**
  - Table mirror
    - HKD 49.00
    - EUR 6.89
- **ДЕКАД**
  - Alarm clock, black
    - HKD 79.00
    - EUR 10.99
- **ТОРКА**
  - Decoration ball, set of 8 (16)
    - HKD 69.00
    - EUR 10.99
- **ДОФТА**
  - Potpourri, scented assorted colours (4x)
    - 10x beige (apple)
    - 10x pink (rose)
    - 24x purple (blueberry)
    - @HKD 3.20
    - @EUR 0.50

Note: All prices are current at time of production and excluding shipping costs.
CONTAINER

EXPEDIT
Bookcase, black-brown (2x)

VIKA AMON
Corner table top, white

The animated version of this container manual is downloadable at http://thruhikwa.com/th hublurfe/fganevolent
VIKA AMON
Corner table top, white

Product dimensions
Length: 120 cm
Width: 120 cm
Thickness: 3.4 cm

Product description
Top: fibreboard, Acrylic paint
Frame: Particleboard, ABS plastic
Filling material: Paper
Bottom: fibreboard
The DIY manual explains that each of the paired game machines (interactive setups) consists of three parts:

1. **Korpus** (Swedish: body, hull): an interfaced container with cowhide rug, a webcam and a projection. The interface consists of seven colourful hand-made buttons, and the container is equipped with seven small electric fans and LEDs on seven different spots, a pair of speakers and a headphones set. The webcam is placed directly above the container, capturing the setup from a horizontal plane. The projection is placed behind the machine, facing the user. The projection is a ‘cross-projection’, showing the mirrored webcam capture of the remote setup. The **Korpus** is a container for **Anda** and **Detritus**.

2. **Anda** (Swedish: spirit, breath): the mechanism inside the structure that is controlling the interface in **Korpus**.

3. **Detritus**: the lightweight objects (dried flowers and potpourri materials) that respond to wind, an old-style alarm clock and a small mirror positioned at a certain angle so that the user can see the reflection of the webcam above the setup. Such angle of reflection also means that although the users will be able to see only the webcam on the mirror, the webcam will be able to capture the face of the user (which will be visible on the projection of the remote setup). The ringing of the alarm clock is also controllable by the buttons on **Korpus** through **Anda**.

By pressing one of the seven handmade buttons of different colours on the game interface, the users can activate one of the seven small electronic fans in the container. The wind from these fans will subtly blow on the lightweight objects inside the container and induce some flow of movement. When a fan is turned on, by the press of a button, a small LED light that accompanies the fan is also automatically turned on, lighting the area where the wind blows. A musical tone is also played through the speakers. As the lightweight objects consist of mostly potpourri (see figure 080), eventually the fragrance fills the air.

The setups are networked, so when a user presses a button in one setup, the action that this button triggers also occurs in the other setup. When a fan is activated in one setup, the same fan in the other setup will be activated as well. The LED next to the fan in the other setup will also be turned on (see figure 081), and a musical note will also be played through the speakers in the remote location. The lightweight objects inside the container in the other location, however, will not respond exactly the same way in that they will be subtly blown on as well, but the flow of their movement in response to the wind will be different, acknowledging the specificity of the local in a supposedly interconnected, global world.
The video projection behind the machine is a cross-projection: the webcam video feed from one setup is (transmitted through the network) and projected on the screen of the other setup (in the other city/continent). As these setups are almost identical, the video feed that is projected on-screen looks as though it is a mirror reflection of the local setup, but actually coming from the other side of the world where the twin machine is (see figure 082). Therefore, there will be a disparity between the physical, local setup and the ‘reflection’. This disparity might give first-time visitors an experience of the uncanny.

The networked setups can also be seen as a stimulator for an open-ended game. It is also a stimulator for an open dialogue as only one button can be active at one time. When two people are interacting through the machine, each using one of the setups at the same period of time, they can then decide to either work together to achieve an unspoken common goal, or to play some kind of an unregulated competitive game, or even to conduct another kind of game with no purpose that cannot be defined.

With The Butterfly Generator I attempted to synthesise my body of works that are based on the wall as the iconic object of the border. The work stimulates individual agency through tactics of individualisation: the DIY manual stimulates individual agency by making it possible for participants to make the machines at the convenience of their own homes, while the use of IKEA products is a tactic of détournement. Playing the machine, each participant can decide what kind of game to play. Although there is no physical wall in this work, the existence of the two machines in two locations separated by geographical distance brings the virtual wall of the Internet to light.

The machine is designed to be used only by one person at a time, one in each location, stressing the importance of the individual, and of one-on-one contact that refers to Papastergiadis’s reflexive hospitality (2012: 113). The potpourri blown by the fan in each local machine will not twirl the same way, and the composition of colour the disarranged potpourri in each local container will always be different from each other. This individualisation process, while representing an exceptionally complex aleatoric process, also shows a disconnect in connectedness – although the two machines are synchronised, each is still unique. While the webcam captures the image of the machine and streams it live to the other side, the fragrance of the potpourri cannot be transmitted over to the other side. Once I smell it coming through my machine, however, I know that similar fragrance would come out from the other machine as
well. It is through this affective being that The Butterfly Generator emulates complex circumstances of globalisation.

5.3. Wall cycles

Throughout the research, my wall works feedback between each other to gradually refine the notions on geopolitical border that I began with. Beginning by examining the wall with Invasion and the Wanton cycle, with The Butterfly Generator the wall eventually disappears, leaving the intricate network between individual agencies at the foreground.

Invasion was useful in identifying the directions of the research in the beginning. The findings of Invasion were then re-imagined in subsequent works: Study for Wanton and Microstudy for Wanton gave way to analyse the characteristics of the space defined by the wall. Having identified the characteristics of the space defined by the wall as a potential site for a network of individual agency, through How I Captured Those Wantons I investigated the potential of aleatoric processes performed through critical play at that space. This was explored further in Construction, in which the issues of globalisation as a network with imbalanced agencies became apparent. All these findings were then reflected through The Butterfly Generator, where the physical wall became redundant, pushing forward the problematics of a “messy and incomplete” globalised world (Steger 2009: 2) where the value of an individual is presented at the foreground.

5.4. Boundary-crossings: rhizomes and bulbs

Chronologically speaking, my body of works based on the wall began with several practical experiments with the aim of detecting potentials for further investigation. For example, while examining the wall in its function of defining negative space through Study for Wanton, I was also experimenting with the wall itself as the site of study through making a mural series, The Great Wallpaper series. This mural series did not develop further in itself, however the method informed a few other works, including my first map work Terra Incognita, et cetera (discussed in Chapter 6) and my other wall work Construction of a hole – opus 1.
Terra was informed by the way the viewers reacted to The Great Wallpaper series (see figure 083). Because the murals in this series was made in watercolour with only one colour (blue) in very subtle shades, the murals were usually almost indiscernible from a distance. The viewers would have to come closer to the wall to see what the murals were about. Observing the viewers who became curious enough to touch, but at the same time were discouraged by the fact that the artwork was directly on the wall, I began to reflect on incorporating these tendencies in my work Terra, which will be discussed in full in Chapter 6.

Construction, in the meantime, develops extensively on this observation. In this work, the viewers’ behaviour is modified from one stage of the game-performance to the next. The first stage was informed by the specific use of the mural on the wall, partly making the wall untouchable as a work of art: in the beginning of the game-performance the wall was untouchable. An earlier discovery of liminal space informed subsequent stages in my research. The space in front of the wall is a liminal space where the viewers are expected to behave a certain way (in the auction part of this work). Several rows of seats are placed in front of the wall, and as the first act of boundary-crossings (from the situation where the work of art was untouchable) the viewers are invited to sit down and participate in the auction.

The third stage of boundary-crossings began when a bidder won the opportunity to make a hole on the wall. Walking from the seat to approach the wall, the winning bidder crosses another boundary that, by now, has made the wall touchable, and destructible. The act of tearing a hole on the wall brings the winning bidder to another boundary-crossing, this time the hole on the wall reveals, gradually, what is behind the wall. While the auction takes place, the site of the game-performance became the site of a new production where two camera-persons capture the proceedings in a documentary fashion. There is an act of boundary-crossing here as well, as the function of the liminal space was torn into two: (1) as a site of production; and (2) as a site of the game-performance.

The following stage of boundary-crossings in Construction began with the end of the auction, when the last part of the footage captured by the camera installed behind the wall was screened: the viewers see themselves in this footage, which came from the recent past. The space behind the wall is definitely another space. The viewers saw their own image within this other space, differentiated from the space where they sit by means of the separating wall.
These boundary-crossings in *Construction* are different from the method that I used for *The Window of Contemporary Art* where the work manifests in different forms that are detached from one another. The constant metamorphosis of form in *Construction*, which finally settles when the work was shown as an installation during the period of the exhibition (see figures 084 and 085), is continual, resembling a rhizome that grows horizontally underground putting lateral shoots and adventitious roots at intervals, unlike *The Window* that resembles a bulb whose growth lacks continuity.

*Terra*, as will be discussed in the following chapter, also takes form in a rhizome, while each of the works in the *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs* cycle (also to be analysed in the following chapter) resembles a bulb. The cycle itself, however, much like *Re)Collection* as a cycle, combines both approaches: each work is like a bulb, however the continuity of the material (the passport in *Re)Collection* and the map in *Fleurs*) is conceptually rhizome-like.
CHAPTER 6: THE MAP
In this chapter I analyse the map works in my body of work: *Terra Incognita, et cetera* (2009, mural, game-performance and installation with DIY kit and single-channel video); and the *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs* cycle, which has taken place in *Patna* (2009), *Jakarta* (2010), *Singapore* (2010), *Fort Ruigenhoek* (2011) and *Gwangju* (2012). Through these works, I study the problematics of vision, which concerns the “institutionalised ways of seeing, displaying and presenting space as an aspect of power-knowledge relations” (Ó Tuathail 1996).

6.1. Problematics of vision: re-imagining the border in critical geopolitics through the map

The acts of displaying and presenting territoriality are so central to human nature and culture they are observable in daily life. Sometimes the act resembles writing your name on the first page of a book to indicate that it is yours. In this way mapping is similar to how the American astronauts planted the American flag on their first landing on the moon and also similar to the act of tagging in street art and graffiti. Historically, art and cartography used to be inseparable for aesthetics reasons: to draw a map requires both a mathematical and an artistic skill. However, contemporary art’s exhaustive list of artists working conceptually with maps and cartography shows that artistic expertise has not been the only contribution to cartography.

*The Surrealist Map of the World* (1929) is an early example of artists dealing with maps (see figure 086) as a conceptual and subversive representation of space rather than merely a beautiful image of a given world. In the 1950s, the Situationists saw the potential of subversion in performing the act of mapping in the city (Cosgrove 2005: 39), taking advantage of the “openings” (Giddens 1987: 11) as a way of taking over geography. As Toal has asserted, “Geography is power”: Richard Bartlett, a geographer and mapmaker appointed by an Earl of the Elizabethan state to re-map the space of Tirconnell, was murdered by the inhabitants because they would not want their country discovered and thus rendered conquerable (Toal 1996: 1-18). This story demonstrates how powerful a map is.

Although taking a smaller scope of politics with a stance against the very institution (of art) wherein they are placed, conceptual artists of the late 1960s and the 1970s also put a focus on the processes
of mappings. For conceptual artists, reworking the image of maps was done with the intent of a more populist subversion, to “subvert dominant readings” (Godfrey 1998: 263, 364-5). It is on these grounds that post-conceptual contemporary artists continued to place cartography under scrutiny.

The rise of artists’ interests in maps, which is arguably signified by the activities taken by the Situationists in the 1950s, curiously coincided with a period where art gradually disappeared from the cartographic artefacts’ “theoretical and practical ‘umbrella’ of art, science and technology” (Cartwright, Gartner and Lehn 2009: 3). Computer technologies in cartography started to take over, forming an image of the scientific cartography. At the same time, as though branching out to intervene between cartography as pure science and cartography as a form of informed art, the concept of cognitive mapping developed in late 1950s (Cosgrove 2005: 39). This curiously coincided with the silence in dialogues on classical geopolitics, because classical geopolitics theories were exploited by the Nazi Germany to legitimise their expansion, geopolitics became a taboo in the academic world after World War Two. In the late 1980s, however, an interest in taking critical thinking into account in cartography marked the beginning of cartography’s new period of convergence with art (Caquad, Piattu and Cartwright 2009: 298). On the other side of the pairing, since the end of the 1980s the increasing frequency of art exhibitions examining art and cartography shows a curatorial interest in this subject (Curnow 1999: 254-5).

In the chronology of my research, the map was an iconic object from the border that I started working on accompanying the analyses on the two previous objects (passport and wall), together with a better understanding of the methodological points of critical geopolitics. With this understanding and the findings from the analysis on previous works in the research, the process of experimentation with the map started immediately with the participatory methodology aiming to instil a questioning attitude.

Terra Incognita, et cetera (see figure 016, 087 and 088) is presented as a party game in vernissages and exhibition openings. It is an exercise in collective painting and, simultaneously, a spin on collaboration

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53 This work was shown in the Bus Gallery, Melbourne, as part of the group exhibition Kompilasi, curated by Kristi Monfries and Georgie Sedgwick in 2009; in Centraal Museum, Utrecht, as part of the group exhibition Beyond the Dutch curated by Meta Knol and Enin Supriyanto in 2010; in the art fair Art Stage Singapore as part of the Indonesian Pavilion in 2013; and in the 11th Sharjah Biennale curated by Yuko Hasegawa in 2013.
and territorial marking. The first instalment of Terra was part of a group exhibition at Bus Gallery in Melbourne, the second was in Centraal Museum in Utrecht, the third was in an art fair in Singapore and the fourth was part of the Sharjah Biennale. Unlike Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Terra is not intended to be a cycle. It is intended to be performed with the same basic aleatoric parameters each time, regardless of the local context, although unavoidably the local context will emerge through the map, which will turn out differently each time the game is performed.

A blank dymaxion world map is painted onto the wall with watercolour prior to the exhibition opening, and during the opening a grid is projected onto this mural (see figure 089 and 090). A few attendants serve trays of cocktail-umbrellas and cocktail-flags of four colours, and a bowl of glue that resembles a dip (see figure 091). Captured by the luring, fake ‘finger food’, the attendants would then offer the audience members the opportunity to choose a flag or umbrella from these trays to stick on the mural within the grid reference that they specify. Thus they claim the area, writing their last names with pencil on the chosen territory. The size of the area is decided by a process of lucky dip that gives the audience random miniature-bills ($5 for one grid, $10 for two grids, $15 for three and $20 for fours grids). The grid projected onto the mural can change size at random (under my control as composing agent), parodying the rise and fall of inflation rate. When the party is over, I then mark the claimed territories in accordance with the colour of the flags, and paint the names in black ink. All unclaimed areas of the map are then marked as “Terra nullius” and the finished mural with its freshly marked borders, names and flags remains as part of the installation work for the duration of the exhibition (see figure 092).

The props from the game, together with a video recording, are also shown as part of the installation. The video that is part of the finished Terra installation, Do it yourself: how to make a new world map (2009) can also function as either a stand-alone Do-It-Yourself (DIY) instructional video, or a documentation of Terra as a whole. This DIY video is bilingual: it is principally in English, with several tips in Indonesian. If you are not familiar with any of these two languages, you can still get something out of the DIY video, but certainly not all. As the DIY video suggests, this game is doable at home. I am also selling the complete kit together with the video in a suitcase (see figure 093), and the buyer will have the rights to distribute the DIY video over the Internet, disseminating it widely, to encourage more people to make a new world map through the Terra game, in order to activate more individual agency.
Cocktail flags and umbrellas are served on a tray, with a glue dip.

Certificate of Authenticity

Artist: Tintin Wulia
Title of work: Terra Incognita, et cetera
Year of creation: 2009
Edition number: 1
Unique edition number: 1 of 6 unique editions including 1 unique AP

This is an original of 6 unique editions including 1 unique AP.

Without this Certificate of Authenticity bearing the original signature of the artist, the artwork is not an authentic unique edition.

The artwork can only be transferred together with this Certificate of Authenticity, bearing the original signature of the artist.

The owner of this certificate is the mentioned unique edition. It includes:
- all the rights pictured and described in this certificate as 1 (one) set of Do-It-Yourself (DIY) kit,
- the rights to perform or assign the performance of the game-performance,
- the rights to distribute the watermarked videos through the internet.

I confirm that the artwork mentioned in this Certificate of Authenticity has been authored by myself.

Melbourne, 14 December 2012

Tintin Wulia
the artist
Figure 094
Tintin Wulia, *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs*, Patna, 2009
Video still
Image courtesy of the artist

Figure 095
Tintin Wulia, *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs*, Jakarta, 2010
Video stills
Image courtesy of the artist

Figure 096
Tintin Wulia, *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs*, Singapore, 2010
Video still
Image courtesy of the artist
Figure 097

Tintin Wulia, *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs*, Patna, 2009

Video stills

Image courtesy of the artist
Tintin Wulia, *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Fort Ruigenhoek*, 2011

Installation view

Image courtesy of the artist and Kaap/Stichting Storm

Tintin Wulia, *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Gwangju*, 2011

Installation view

Image courtesy of the artist and the Gwangju Biennale Foundation
Nous ne notons pas les fleurs is a cycle of works taking place in different locations in the world. Until 2012, the cycle consisted of five separate works. Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Patna (2009) responds to the high-rate of mobility and migration out of the poorest area in India (see figures 017, 094 and 097). Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Singapore (2010) responds to the expanding, reclaimed land of Singapore (see figure 096). Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Jakarta (2010) responds to its local site, within the Senayan Central Business District right next to the World Trade Centre, by alluding to trade and mobility routes around a world map (see figure 095). Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Fort Ruigenhoek (2011) refers to growth and constant natural change in response to the intended participants of the exhibition (children) and to the outdoor site of the exhibition (see figure 098). Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Gwangju (2012) both explores the embodiment of the city by its denizens, and responds to the two sites of the work: the Daein Market and the Gwangju Biennale Hall (see figure 099).  

The title of this cycle, Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, is taken from a dialogue in Le Petit Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry (1943), where a geographer tells the Little Prince that geographers do not record flowers in their maps because, unlike the earth, flowers are ephemeral. Diverting from this dialogue, each map installation in this cycle is made of colourful flowers and other ephemeral materials, and is subjected to a process. In this process, the map starts off as a site for a participatory performance in which the map’s borders are constantly modified through audience participation. This challenges the notion that maps are frozen and borders are static.

In each work in the Fleurs cycle, the setup always involves a surveillance camera and multiple-channel video with twofold function: the camera is placed above the site, and thus shows a bird’s-eye view of the map with the participants in it, serving as a navigational tool, but at the same time it is recording what is happening beneath (see figure 100). The multiple-channel video shows both a live stream from the camera (what is happening now), and a time-lapse version of the same footage (what has happened in

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54 These works are usually performeed and shown on site. The aesthetic documentation of Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Patna, and Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Jakarta have been shown in my solo show at Ark Galerie in 2010 and several group exhibitions elsewhere. Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Gwangju is an outcome of a residency that is part of the 9th Gwangju Biennale curated by Ali Swastika, Mami Kataoka, Sunjung Kim, Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Carol Yinghua Lu and Nancy Adajania in 2012.
the past). As the game-performance is both shown as live stream and as an edited recording, this video setup also provides access to the temporal context in addition to the spatial context of the installation.

Documentation is an integral part of most of the works in the Fleurs cycle, and is intended to be both an artistic device and a conceptual critique of political history. The authority of the artist to extensively edit the final part of the documentation into the second part of the work alludes to the power structure in which the government has a final say on officialised discourse of history as a tool of nation-building (see also Mylonas 2012: 171 as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.5.), however this is again subverted by presenting the documentation with an aesthetics of resistance (Papastergiadis 2012: 97) in which the video installation post-performance is presented in multiple-channel, implying the recognition of different viewpoints. While the game-performance and installation with video is presented in a site-specific and local-specific environment, the aesthetic documentation is presented separately, almost as a second part of the work in a whitecube-type gallery, as a site-impartial and local-impartial aseptic environment.

6.2. Individualising the map: re-imagining resistance

In cartography, there has been a constant call for a participatory methodology. In their book The Nature of Maps (1976), geographer and cartographer Arthur H. Robinson and co-author Barbara Bartz Petchenik coined the term map percipient, referring to a recipient of map that is actively interacting with the map. In 1999, James Corner clarified the difference between tracing and mapping, situating mapping as “a collective enabling enterprise, a project that both reveals and realizes hidden potential” (Corner 1999: 251). This resonates with what I call individualised collective action as discussed in Chapter 3, section 2, in which the agency of the individual is activated to operate within a network that is unpredictable and always in flux. In his 2005 essay, Denis Cosgrove called for a “shift of attention away from the map itself and towards the process of mapping” (Cosgrove 2005: 51).

In drawing attention towards the process of mapping, asking what this would take form in, perhaps James Corner opens the question further:
[...] I am less interested in maps as finished artifacts than I am in mapping as a creative activity. It is in this participatory sense that I believe new and speculative techniques of mapping may generate new practices of creativity, practices that are expressed not in the invention of novel form but in the productive reformulation of what is already given. By showing the world in new ways, unexpected solutions and effects may emerge (Corner 1999: 217).

One of Corner’s examples of this reformulation is Buckminster Fuller’s *Dymaxion* projection (1943). This world map projection is not an invention of a new form of the world map, but is clearly representing the world in a different way. It is showing the world as a big land mass, breaking free from cartographic conventions of its time (see figure 101).

Regardless of how James Housefield, as described by Cosgrove in his 2005 essay, argued that Marcel Duchamp’s readymades “were strongly influenced by a cartographical impulse to represent actual spaces” (Cosgrove 2005: 38) there is a substantial connection between Duchamp’s readymade and cartography. Corner’s idea of reformulation echoes in Duchamp’s readymades, which he began to explore in early 1910s, receiving more exposure in the 1940s when this legendary figure relocated to New York’s Greenwich Village, the same decade Fuller presented his *Dymaxion* projection. The readymades are not new inventions; they are daily objects, which context is modified. The object itself stays as it is, but as it is displaced from the original context, new meanings are generated.

Like Fuller’s *Dymaxion* projection that challenges our preconception of the world map, Duchamp’s readymades challenged our preconception about art. In a way, both Fuller and Duchamp operate well within the area of *resistance* as described by Toal (1996) as part of the critical geopolitics’ methodological points to uncover hidden politics of the statecraft: they both propose yet new ways to see the world, adding to the multiplicity of views, generating new meanings. In the context of my research, this approach resonates with my methodology of individualisation. The iconic object is ‘taken’ from the border, to be made unique by displacing it in a different context.

Implicated within these parallels is my approach to researching the geopolitical border through my artistic practice. Instead of imagining an ideal world, I re-imagine a pre-existing object, condition and/
or process, which is already situated by our preconception, and relocate it to a new highlight. With critical geopolitics as my context, I source from the readymades of geopolitics. The map is one of these readymades, an iconic object of the border, like the passport and the wall discussed in Chapters 4 and 5. In both *Terra Incognita, et cetera* and the *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs* cycle, the readymade that I use is the shape of a map.

### 6.2.1. Making the map one’s own

The significance of the shape of a nation, portrayed in maps, is also an element of Marcel Broodthaers’s work *The Conquest of Space: Atlas for the Use of Artists and Military* (1975). Broodthaers made a miniature atlas the size of a matchbox, abstracting the shape of each country out of their original context, arranging them in alphabetical order and in this way stripping the map of the power that they usually convey (see figure 102). This is an act of individualising, of taking into possession a conceptual object, in this case the map as the readymap, and making it one’s own.

For both *Terra* and *Fleurs* I first extracted the shape of the maps as shapes, putting this readymade in a different context as an attempt to eliminate some significance in order to make space for new meanings. In *Fleurs* the maps are portrayed with ephemeral materials on the ground, covering quite a significant ground area, so that the shapes are not immediately recognisable. In *Terra*, the use of the **Dymaxion** map is effective to invite the participants to look at the map with fresh eyes. Some significance, however, such as the connection between the image of one’s country map and one’s nationalistic feeling, cannot be eliminated so easily as the shape of a nation-state portrayed in a map tends to incite patriotic sensibility.

From conducting the game-performances, I discovered how people are generally fascinated by maps. There is a sense of pride in knowing where they are in the world, and where they have been. A woman looking at the arrangement of the map at *Fort Ruigenhoek*, for instance, claimed that she knew the world map so well that she could recognise it from all different angles. In *Terra*, the Dymaxion projection is usually not immediately recognised. After some observation and attempts at changing viewpoints, however, usually the first shape that is recognisable is one’s own country, or an easily discernible island or continent-country like Australia (see figure 103). When the participants think that my map does not
represent their country correctly, they complain. This also happens with the passports in (Re)Collection, as though the shapes, the dimensions, the colours, the locations associated with their countries are very important and personal to them.

Amongst these participants, travel and mobility is usually highly regarded, and people who have not traveled dream of traveling. There is also pride, for example, in having passports from multiple countries. These issues are interesting because our (national) identification systems are geared towards rootedness; having a valid identity enables you to travel but you need to be living in one place, and have one address in order to do so. However, displaced people – Agamben’s *homo sacer* – on the other hand, have no address at all, and are excluded from the possibility of travel and mobility, and often stripped off the rights to have any passport.

Young children, however, look at the maps in Fleurs as unknown patterns of colour. In Jakarta, several toddlers brought by their parents were simply more interested in playing with the loose flowers and seeing themselves in the navigational monitor. Some of them also tended to sort the flowers, implying a desire for order. In the opening of Kaap 2011 at Fort Ruigenhoek, I asked the audience, which was made up of mostly children, to match pots to coloured saucers on the ground. A group of boys were eager to put the orange pots into the map, orange being the colour of the Netherlands (see figure 104). This became amusing because in the Fort Ruigenhoek map, the orange-coloured pots were allocated to Australia in the map, and thus Australia became the first continent that was populated.

A three year-old came with her parents and immediately picked up a pot, brought it to her father asking him to smell the flowers, which she did repeatedly. This suggests that at different stages of maturation, there are different stages of learning – and that the shape of the world map – like other identifier of nationalism that is the tools of nation-building – is something that is acquired by learning at one of these stages.

On another layer, the ephemeral materials can also be interpreted independently from the shape of the map, in that a mere arrangement of colourful flowers with enchanting scents can look beautiful, while an arrangement of agricultural products can be mouthwatering.
Like in Marcel Broodthaers’s Atlas, the shape of the map can mean nothing to an uninformed audience even when the seemingly abstract composition is appealing. This layer challenges the notion that there is only one possible interpretation of a shape, or a map, or an event in history – or in Toal’s describing of resistance, that is what happening is “not just a battle of cartographic technologies and regimes of truth; it is also a contest between different ways of envisioning the world” (Ó Tuathail 1996: 12). In Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Patna, for example, although it is apparent that the event takes place at the same location and within a similar timeframe because the setup (the shape of the map, the colour of the map, the size of the map visible on the video screen) are the same, each of the 3-channels of video shows the event differently from each other (see figure 105). The left screen portrays only the process of shaping the map, alluding to the process of nation-building; the centre screen portrays only the evolution of the shape of the map, with the human subjects edited out from the video, alluding to geographic evolution and geological formation. The right screen portrays only the process whereby the participants trace their movements throughout India, and thus gradually the border became blurred along the course of the game-performance and the colours of the flowers progressively mix. The three videos, as a triptych, alludes to the concept of balance of the trinity (formation, evolution, revolution). As these videos are looped, each of these processes would perpetuate in eternity.

The aesthetic documentation of Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Jakarta takes form in an octaptych. Like in Patna, each video channel features one aspect of reality, and each is titled differently. Cleanup, one of these video channels that portrays what happens on the site after the more celebrated game-performance was over, placed at the centre area of the 8-monitors installation (see figure 108), summarises a point while allusively asking a further question. In this video channel, a sentence is gradually revealed, one word at a time: “Out of the different kinds of realities what I prefer is rarely the truth” (see figure 106).

These different kinds of realities manifest through the different actors in the network. In Fort Ruigenhoek, this network is extended, shedding light on Giddens’s and Latour’s idea that not all agents are human. The living plants invited a whole different sets of agents: the butterflies, the worms, the birds, the untrimmed grass, the moles, including the slugs that ate the whole Busy Lizzie, representing the continent of Africa and America (see figure 107). They all contribute in the network of meanings. In Terra some participants refused to claim a territory because they were ‘not interested in owning land’. Mainly, people were excited
Figure 106
Tintin Wulia, *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Jakarta*, 2010
Installation details
Image courtesy of the artist and Ark Galerie
Figure 107

Tintin Wulia, *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Fort Ruigenhoek*, 2011

Game-performance view and installation details

Image courtesy of the artist and Kaap/Stichting Storm
to mark the wall; some tried to claim as many lands as possible. It is a human tendency to mark some kind of a territory, even if overtly done.

The act of naming is also significant here. While in the earlier stages of (Re)Collection I began with writing the names in the passport as an act of relating, I then brought the act of relating along with activating individual agency in the viewers of my work (by requesting them to participate). I also explore the act of naming in another work, Untitled (2012), in which I highlight a network of economy between the art (working with art galleries) and socio-political systems (requiring the art galleries to work with non-governmental organisations/NGOs) by activating it through printing names on second-hand T-Shirts for sale through the art galleries.

In Terra, although there is still some act of relating through the name, another aspect of naming is brought up: naming is territorial. Some participants decided to write their names in the writing system that they are familiar with, for example in Chinese, Arabic or Hindi (see figures 110 and 114), implying their cultural background thus asserting a kind of positioning. Groups of participants took photos in front of the country they are from in reality, which they had claimed on the map as well (before anyone else with a different nationality could claim it). Someone from Indonesia claimed Malaysia; although she did not tell me why, I knew that it had something to do with the then-recent unofficial battle of cultural property rights between the Indonesians and Malaysians. When I did this work in the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, a Moluccan-Dutch person claimed the Moluccas, saying that the Moluccas should be independent from Indonesia.

All these reactions, be they participating or refusing, presented as initial acts of making the map one’s own. Further reactions enabled me as the composer of the aleatoric game-performances to include the participants in the network of individual agency. With Terra, some of the reactions took territorial marking to new levels: in the gallery where it was first shown, upon a visit to the gallery’s toilet, I found a small toilet graffiti which handwriting resembles one of the participants. It says “FREE PALESTINE”, both in the territory on the Terra map and on the wall of the toilet (see figure 109).
6.2.2. Activation of individual agency through the map

The main methodology that I apply is to create a physical playground into which I can invite my audience to experience and question that experience. In the game-performance, the audience becomes a part of the work as well. This approach resonates with Robinson and Petchenik's predisposition of the map percipient and Corner's idea of mapping as a collective enabling enterprise. This approach also echoes the Fluxus event-scores, wherein - as Mike Sperlinger described in his 2005 essay on the imperatives of conceptual art - although the practice remains “a relatively autonomous, language-based practice which conceived the audience as the performers”, the dispersal of authority is questionable. “[I]s the creative act really being thrown open, or is this dispersal of authority an act of supreme irony which only reinforces the artist’s position of privilege?” (Sperlinger 2005: 6).

As Sperlinger discusses, “instructions are inherently political; they imply a hierarchy, whether of authority or knowledge, and this hierarchical element remains even in the most whimsical instruction pieces” (Sperlinger 2005: 7). This is why instructions are highlighted in my map works: hierarchy is inherent in a geopolitical system, it is part of the reality of mapmaking. Following through Robinson and Petchenik's predisposition of the map percipient, however, my map works also take Corner's idea of mapping as a collective enabling enterprise, where “[a]t each stage [of the operations of mapping], choices and judgements are made [by the map-maker]” (Corner 1999: 231).

Corner emphasises the importance of the “map-maker’s awareness of the innately rhetorical nature of the map's construction as well as of personal authorship and intent” (Corner 1999: 231). Even when I claim authorship of the work, I also become one of the individual agents, perhaps trying to assert my authority, but finding myself as only one individual agency in the midst of the multiplicity of the other individual agencies, amongst miscommunication, misunderstanding and misinterpretation. In Fleurs, for example, by giving the participants the authority to both contribute to the formation/deformation of the work, and the awareness of the context through the video recording, the participants gain the possibility of talking back. In Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Fort Ruigenhoek, for instance, at some parts of the video footage the participants have made patterns of their own in the world map: a bridge connecting Africa and the Americas; patterns of colours springing up in certain areas of the map; several
participants 'flying' across the world. This kind of agency also takes place in Terra, as much as I as the composer attempt to set the rules (see figure 111 where someone broke the rule, which was that participants were to write their names only on the area of the map that they have claimed). The aim of my game-performances is not to disperse authority, but to activate individual agency into a network of unpredictability through aleatoric processes.

6.2.3. Aleatoric processes in critical play on the map

The network of unpredictability in Terra takes form in a new world map every time the game is performed. As the world map fills up with new countries, the aleatoric process becomes increasingly complex. There are simple procedures and a few rules in Terra to begin with: (1) the participant decides on the colour of the flag or umbrella; (2) the size of the area that participants can claim depends on the value of the toy money bill that they get from the lucky dip; (3) they can claim any unclaimed area, except for an area next to an area with the same colour flag or umbrella. From time to time, I would resize the grid, randomly (without clear method). As the artist, I also have the agency to oversee the composition of colours, but only to the extent of concocting another improvised rule, for example that, (4) the participants have to claim an area between two or three other areas with different colour flags or umbrellas. I would decide to implement this improvised rule if the patches of colour (representing the countries) form an incoherent shape; the decision is entirely aesthetics, but because the conceptual site of the game is the new world map, the implication on the participants’ minds can be political. This resonates with the ambiguity of art as its critical potential as discussed by Rancière (in Ingram 2011: 9). In this space of critical potential, the individual agency of the participants remains intact, although all the actors in the network influence this agency directly or indirectly, as a network is always in flux.

The aleatoric processes in Terra becomes increasingly complex as the number of participants increase, and as the unclaimed area in the map becomes scarcer (see figure 112). While the participants as

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55 The camera for Fleurs always records in time-lapse, a technique that is similar to the technique of stop-motion animation. Some informed participants in Fort Ruigenhoek have made use of this feature efficiently by recording themselves so that they seem to be flying in smooth motion across the world map on the ground.
Figure 114
Installation detail

Image courtesy of the artist, Bus Gallery, Art Stage Singapore and the Sharjah Biennale Foundation
individual actors constantly form newer and newer networks, the countries on the map constantly form newer and newer constellations as well. At this point, the aleatoric process whose parameters I, as the composer, have set in the beginning, practically results in even more aleatoric processes whose parameters are the result of the original parameters combined with the complex circumstances. Chance is constantly produced and multiplied until the end of the game, resulting in increasing unpredictability. In *Terra*, this exemplifies the geopolitical border that is “not a noun but a verb” (Toal 1996: 1); it is the constant process of a geo-graphing of the borders on the new world map through a continuous process of negotiations and renegotiations (see figures 112, 113 and 114).

6.3. Map cycles

As discussed in the previous chapter, *Terra* takes a cyclical form of a rhizome (see figures 087, 088, 114, 115 and 116 showing the different ways *Terra* manifests), while each of the works in the *Fleurs* cycle resembles a bulb. The *Fleurs* cycle itself as a cycle, however, is a combination of rhizome and bulb: each work is like a bulb, however because of the continuity of the material (the map), the cycle becomes conceptually rhizome-like.

The *Fleurs* cycle works like a chain hotel: each of the works in the cycle is associated with a place, alluding to the importance of the local in an unevenly globalised world. Like a bulb, it feeds on site- and local-specificity: each of the works in the cycle has a site-specific part to it, and each responds to a local context relating to geopolitical borders and human movement. The parameters in each of the works in the *Fleurs* cycle are not the same, but comparable. This activates the spaces of aleatoric processes taking place between the whole and the part, between the global and the local.

Although each of the works in the *Fleurs* cycle can be understood independently of each other, together as a cycle they have the potential to interact with each other, forming a network much like an actor-network. This forms the substance of the research. In this cycle, specifically, the use of the video techniques and technologies feeds back to intervene in subsequent work in the cycle. This will be discussed in the following section.
Figure 115
Installation detail
Image courtesy of the artist and the Sharjah Biennale Foundation

Figure 116
Installation detail
Image courtesy of the artist and Art Stage Singapore

Figure 117
Installation detail
Image courtesy of the artist and Bus Gallery
6.4. Boundary-crossings with the map

Both Fleurs and Terra take several different formats in succession, crossing the boundaries from one to the other. Terra exists initially as a mural that is the base of a game-performance, whose outcome is then organised into an installation that includes a single-channel video. The single-channel video, however, can work independently, and can always be distributed through the internet as a DIY video. In comparison, Fleurs, for the most part, is simpler: most of the work exists at first as an ephemeral installation, then as a game-performance that is acted upon the ephemeral installation, out of which only the aesthetic documentation remains, as a residue that could be shown elsewhere independent of the original installation and performance.

The participatory site in Fleurs is closely surveilled and recorded (see figures 118 and 119). The recording and monitoring equipment integrated in the installation of the site serves as a tool for visual reflection and navigation for the participants, while also stimulating the participants’ awareness that there is more to the performance than merely as a passing event. The recording of this perpetually-moving map is then edited into a multiple-channel video installation, which, as in Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Jakarta, is shown through monitors of different sizes (and brands), as a composition of parallel interpretations of one single event. In this installation, all the video-channels loop endlessly, forming a moving-image and sound sculpture (see figure 108). Because the looping channels are unsynchronised, the visual and sound composition as a whole will continuously change, much like John Cage’s radio pieces. In a way, this installation also shows how the change and the constant coexist: while the setup of the installation remains unmoving, the composition of moving visuals and audio as a whole constantly changes.

From this analysis, the fact that I am using video is brought to prominence. What is exactly the role of video in this work? To answer this question, I again recourse to Corner’s identification of the three essential operations in mapping:

- first, the creation of a field, the setting of rules and the establishment of a system;
- second, the extraction, isolation or ‘de-territorialization’ of parts and data; and
- third, the plotting, the drawing-out, the setting-up of relationships, or the ‘re-territorialization’ of the parts (Corner 1999: 231).
In *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Patna*, the act of laying out the carpet of mixed flowers on the ground and painstakingly separating a shape of the map of India and its 28 states, as well as the communication of the rules of the game and the intention of the work during this process, constitute the first step of mapping. The second step takes place in the Open Day, where participants embrace the shape as the map of India and trace, with direct physical engagement of movement as opposed to conceptual lines, their history of movement and migration across India. The creation of the video triptych that is a detached part of the work (produced at a later stage with the footage captured during the game-performance), then, is the third step, where the act as a whole is plotted and drawn out, and the relationships between all the actors in the network are set-up.

This analysis clarifies the role of video in this work as an ephemeral mapping device. While graphic or images on paper can record a timeline as a notation or documentation, video actually re-enacts the timeline. Corner wrote that there are “some phenomena that can only achieve visibility through representation rather than through direct experience” (Corner 1999: 229), and referring to Robinson and Petchenik, “in mapping, one objective is to discover (by seeing) meaningful physical and intellectual shape organizations in the milieu, structures that are likely to remain hidden until they have been mapped ... plotting out or mapping is a method for searching for such meaningful designs”. The video in the *Fleurs* cycle functions as a tool harnessing the phenomenon of movement and migration to achieve this visibility. The resulting video triptych of *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Patna* potentially functions as an initial study in ephemeral cartography, an ever-changing map which shows the different realities of constant negotiations and renegotiations happening at the site of the geopolitical border. This is also true for the aesthetic documentation of *Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Jakarta*, the video octaptych.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION
Aleatoric Geopolitics: art, chance and critical play on the border was a practice-led research project investigating the geopolitical border as a structure in which activating individual agency through aleatoric processes in the form of critical play produces chance that enables subversion. The research, situated in the field of contemporary art, aims to open up a critical potential into the inquiry of critical geopolitics where a network of individual actors play out the workings of structure and agency.

The research has drawn from five key theories: (1) critical geopolitics as poststructuralist geopolitics, mapped out by theorists such as Gerard Toal; (2) standpoint theory as developed through Hegel, Marx and Hartsock which empowers the marginalised’s epistemic potential, relevant to Giddens’s openings; (3) Anthony Giddens on identifying the potential openings for subversion by individual agency at the border as structure; (4) Bruno Latour – developing from Giddens – on the network of individual actors including non-human agents as explicated in his Actor-Network-Theory; and (5) Nikos Papastergiadis’s discussion on aesthetic cosmopolitanism, noting the cosmopolitan tendency in recent works and exhibitions of contemporary art, provides a way to make sense of the context of the research.

The project sought to study the geopolitical border through three research questions:
1. How can the geopolitical border be re-imagined in art?
2. How can the agency and network in border dynamics be illuminated through art?
3. How can the continuous aleatoric processes of agency in the shaping of a border be simulated through art?

Addressing these questions, the research produces the outcome in the form of a body of work using a variety of mediums that explore the ways of: (1) re-imagining the four methodological points of critical geopolitics (identity, space, vision, resistance); (2) individualising the iconic objects of the border (passport for identity, wall for space, map for vision) as a re-imagination of resistance, in order to illuminate the networks of individual agency at the border; and (3) staging game-performances as a manifestation of critical play that activate the network of individual agencies as a subversion of the structure of the border. This exploration was implemented through the methodologies of: (1) re-imagining; (2) individualisation; (3) cycles; (4) boundary-crossings; and drawing from practices of viewers’ involvement in contemporary artworks as discussed by Claire Bishop, Nicolas Bourriaud, and Nikos Papastergiadis using terms such as participatory art, relational aesthetics and reflexive hospitality.
Through my art-based research I have shown that the geopolitical border is central to understanding critical geopolitics, and vital to examining the tendency of cosmopolitanism prevalent in the current state of contemporary art. Furthermore, I have demonstrated how the geopolitical border is a key aspect in globalisation processes manifesting in an individual's personal and political habitation in the present world. Drawing from my personal experience, practice and the context of aesthetic cosmopolitanism, I have shown ways to make a conceptual space for aleatoric invention, thus activating the complex dynamics of agentic intervention as a boundary-crossing possibility. This is one of the openings within the structure, as Giddens has argued, in which the subordinates can subvert the structure. It is also in this conceptual space that aleatoric processes can take place, in order to re-imagine meanings.

Advancing the discourse of critical geopolitics through my practice in art, while contributing to international biennales and triennales around the world I have become increasingly aware of the need to critically question the current geopolitics of the border by focusing on individual agents. In a world undergoing the process of globalisation that is "messy and incomplete" (Steger 2009: 2) my practice-led research has contributed to the discourse of critical geopolitics by magnifying the aleatoric aspects of the border through an experience-based, socially-engaged aesthetic that involves the audience, the viewers or the visitors as participatory agents. These participatory aesthetics have stimulated critical questions on the current state of the geopolitical border as a concept. The answers to these questions are not as important as the fact that my practice-led research has instilled a questioning attitude – a contribution that critical geopolitics theorist Alan Ingram (2011: 218) discusses as potentially "reflect[ing] on how geopolitics might be enacted differently".

It is my aim that by way of radical interventions through my practice-led research this critical attitude will continue opening spaces for a new cosmopolitan imaginary. While acknowledging the unevenness of globalisation, I aim to expand new enactments of cross-border aleatoric geopolitics through contemporary art, especially through subverting the structures of power by activating the agency of one individual at a time, one opening at a time. This can be achieved by harnessing the social networks that are created alongside my artworks - engaging, activating and mobilising not only the viewers but all the stakeholders involved in the production, distribution and consumption of my artworks - as part of an integral framework that constitutes the globalising cosmopolitan imaginary.
APPENDIX ONE: LIST OF RELEVANT PUBLICATIONS 2007-2013

RELEVANT GROUP EXHIBITIONS

2013

*Terra Incognita, et cetera* (Tintin Wulia 2009)
Art Basel Hong Kong
Osage Gallery
23-26 May 2013
Hong Kong

*Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Jakarta* (Tintin Wulia 2010)
*With or Without You*
Curator: Aaron Seeto
3 May – 13 July 2013
Lawrence Wilson Gallery University of Western Australia
Australia

*Terra Incognita, et cetera* (Tintin Wulia 2009)
11*th Sharjah Biennale, Re:emerge - Towards a New Cultural Cartography*
Curator: Yuko Hasegawa
13 March – 13 May 2013
United Arab Emirates

*Terra Incognita, et cetera* (Tintin Wulia 2009)
Art Stage Singapore
Indonesian Pavilion
24-27 January 2013
Singapore
2012

_Eeny Meeny Money Moe_ (Tintin Wulia 2012)
*7th Asia Pacific Triennale of Contemporary Art*
Curator: QAGOMA/Reuben Keehan
8 December 2012 – 14 April 2013
Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art
Australia

_Study for Wanton_ (Tintin Wulia 2008)
*What is it to be Chinese?*
Curator: Katerina Valdivia Bruch
12 October – 23 November 2012
Grimmuseum
Germany

_Unnamed_ (Tintin Wulia 2012)
*Marcel Duchamp in Southeast Asia*
Curator: Tony Godfrey
15 September – 28 October 2012
Equator Art Projects
Singapore

_(Re)Collection of Togetherness – stage 7_ (Tintin Wulia 2012)
*Encounter: The Royal Academy in Asia*
Curator: Charles Merewether
14 September – 21 October 2012
Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore
Singapore
Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Gwangju (Tintin Wulia 2012)

9th Gwangju Biennale: Roundtable
Curators: Alia Swastika, Mami Kataoka, Sunjung Kim, Wassan Al-Khudhairi, Carol Yinghua Lu, Nancy Adajania
7 September – 11 November 2012
South Korea

Fallen (Tintin Wulia 2011)
art:gwangju:12
Osage Gallery
5 – 9 September 2012
South Korea

The Most International Artist in the Universe (Tintin Wulia 2011)

Homo Ludens 3
30 August – 20 September 2012
Emmitan Gallery
Indonesia

Fallen (Tintin Wulia 2011)

ART / JOG / 12, Looking East: a gaze upon Indonesian contemporary art
14 – 28 July 2012
Indonesia

Lure (Tintin Wulia 2009)
Art Hong Kong
Osage Gallery
16 – 20 May 2012
Hong Kong
**The Most International Artist in the Universe** (Tintin Wulia 2011)

*Might Forces: whither contemporary art*

Curator: Jonathan Thomson  
15 May – 30 July 2012  
Osage Kwun Tong  
Hong Kong

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**The Most International Artist in the Universe** (Tintin Wulia 2011)

*Survival Techniques: Narratives of Resistance*

Curator: Davide Quadrio  
13 April – 1 July 2012  
Museum of Contemporary Photography, Chicago  
USA

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**Lure** (Tintin Wulia 2009)

*What a Wonderful World: visions in contemporary Asian art of our world today*

Curator: Naoko Sumi  
24 March – 13 May 2012  
Hiroshima City Museum of Contemporary Art  
Japan

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**The True Maner of the Execution** (Tintin Wulia 2012)

*Here and There, Now and Then*

Curator: Tony Godfrey  
14 March – 14 April 2012  
Langgeng Art Foundation  
Indonesia
The Butterfly Generator (Tintin Wulia 2012)
The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds after 1989
Curator: ZKM/Jacob Birken
5 January – 5 February 2012
ZKM/Center for Art and Media and Osage Kwun Tong
Hong Kong and Germany

2011

Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Jakarta (Tintin Wulia 2010)
OK.Video – 5th Jakarta International Video Festival
Curator: ruangrupa/Hafiz
6-17 October 2011
National Gallery of Indonesia
Indonesia

Lure (Tintin Wulia 2009)
4th Moscow Biennial: Rewriting Worlds
Curator: Peter Weibel
22 September – 30 October 2011
Russia

Catch (Tintin Wulia 2011)
Homo Ludens 2
26 June – 22 August 2011
Emmitan Gallery
Indonesia
(Re)Collection of Togetherness – stage 6 (Tintin Wulia 2011)

Transfigurations: Indonesian Mythologies
Curator: Hervé Mikaeloff
24 June – 23 October 2011
Espace culturel Louis Vuitton
France

Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Patna (Tintin Wulia 2009)
É necessario che le nuvole fuoriescano dalla cornice (It is necessary that the clouds come out of the frame)
Curator: Viviana Siviero and Davide Quadrio
11 June – 23 July 2011
Sponge Arte Contemporanea
Italy

The Most International Artist in the Universe (Tintin Wulia 2011)

Commercial Break
Curator: Neville Wakefield, Defne Ayas and Davide Quadrio
1 – 5 June 2011
Italy

Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Fort Ruigenhoek (Tintin Wulia 2011)

Kaap 2011
Curator: Tiong Ang
29 May – 10 July 2011
Netherlands
Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Patna (Tintin Wulia 2009)
Menggagas Kekinian Indonesia dalam Seni Media
Curator: Hafiz
26-30 May 2011
Indonesia

Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Jakarta (Tintin Wulia 2010)
Art Stage Singapore
Ark Galerie
12 – 16 January 2011
Singapore

How I Captured Those Wantons (Tintin Wulia 2011)
influx: Multimedia Arts Strategy in Indonesia
10th Anniversary of ruangrupa
Curator: Hendro Wiyanto
7 – 27 January 2011
Galeri Cipta II Taman Ismail Marzuki
Indonesia

2010

The Window of Contemporary Art (Tintin Wulia 2010)
ruru & friends
10th Anniversary of ruangrupa
Curator: Agung Hujatnikajenong
28 December 2010 – 12 January 2011
National Gallery of Indonesia
Indonesia
Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Patna (Tintin Wulia 2009)
Para/Site Auction 2010
5-9 November 2010
Para/Site Art Space
Hong Kong

Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Singapore (Tintin Wulia 2010)
Manifesto of the New Aesthetic: Seven Artists from Indonesia
Curator: Alia Swastika
20 October – 17 November 2010
Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore
Singapore

Lure (Tintin Wulia 2009)
Last Words: Asian Traffic
Curator: Aaron Seeto
3 September – 16 October 2010
4A Centre for Contemporary Asian Art
Australia

Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Jakarta (Tintin Wulia 2010)
Summer Festival
Curator: Alia Swastika
28-29 July 2010
Potato Head
Indonesia
The Window of Contemporary Art (WOCA): a proposal for DICA (Tintin Wulia 2010)
Curator: Donkey Institute of Contemporary Art (DICA)
21 May – 4 July 2010
Kunstverein Baden
Austria

(Re)Collection of Togetherness – stage 5 (Tintin Wulia 2010)
The Problem of Asia
Curator: Alvaro Rodriguez Fominaya
29 April – 22 May 2010
Chalk Horse
Australia

Lure (Tintin Wulia 2009)
Inventory: New Art from Southeast Asia
Curator: Eugene Tan
27 February – 18 April 2010
Osage Gallery
Singapore

2009

Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Patna (Tintin Wulia 2009)
Soil Bite – Khoj Bihar International Workshop
5-7 November 2009
India
Terra Incognita, et cetera (Tintin Wulia 2009)
Beyond the Dutch: Indonesia, the Netherlands and visual arts from 1900 until now
Curator: Meta Knol and Enin Supriyanto
16 October 2009 – 10 January 2010
Centraal Museum
Netherlands

(Re)Collection of Togetherness – Stage 4 (Tintin Wulia 2009)
Jakarta Biennale XIII: Arena
Curator: Agung Hujatnikajenong
6-27 February 2009
National Gallery of Indonesia
Indonesia

Terra Incognita, et cetera (Tintin Wulia 2009)
Kompilasi
Curators: Kristi Monfries and Georgie Sedgwick
24 February – 12 March 2009
Bus Gallery
Australia

2008

Pulang – draft 3 (Tintin Wulia 2008)
Landing Soon
31 July – 11 September 2008
Erasmus Huis
Indonesia
(Re)Collection of Togetherness – stage 3 (Tintin Wulia 2008)

Be(com)ing Dutch
Curators: Charles Esche and Annie Fletcher
24 May – 14 September 2008
Van Abbemuseum
Netherlands

2007

(Re)Collection of Togetherness – stage 1 (Tintin Wulia 2007)

Intimate Distance
Curator: Wulan Dirgantoro
1-10 August 2007
National Gallery of Indonesia
Indonesia

RELEVANT SOLO EXHIBITIONS

Tintin Wulia: Deconstruction of a Wall
Curator: Alia Swastika
30 September – 6 November 2010
Ark Galerie
Indonesia

Tintin Wulia: Invasion
17 May – 28 June 2008
Motive Gallery
Netherlands
Landing Soon #5
23-30 January 2007
Cemeti Art House
Indonesia

RELEVANT PRESENTATIONS

Sustainability, the Nation-states and Immortality: a short history of mosquitoes and an even shorter one of us (Tintin Wulia 2008)
Lecture-performance and Artist Talk
Encounter: Royal Academy in Asia exhibition
4 October 2012
Institute of Contemporary Arts Singapore
Singapore

Playground Tales: Tintin Wulia’s stories of games, fluke and the border
Artist Talk
Originalfassung talk series
19 October 2011
General Public
Germany

The Name Game – or the Years of Living with No One to Blame (Tintin Wulia 2008)
Lecture-performance
Asiaweek talk series
21 October 2008
University of Melbourne
Australia
Sustainability, the Nation-states and Immortality: a short history of mosquitoes and an even shorter one of us (Tintin Wulia 2008)
Lecture-performance
Cultures of Sustainability symposium
27 September 2008
RMIT University
Australia

The Name Game – or the Years of Living with No One to Blame (Tintin Wulia 2008)
Lecture-performance
1 September 2008
Australian Defense Force Academy
Australia

The Name Game – or the Years of Living with No One to Blame (Tintin Wulia 2008)
Lecture performance
Indonesia Ten Years After conference
22-23 May 2008
Oost Indisch Huis, University of Amsterdam
Netherlands

RELEVANT RESIDENCIES

10 August – 12 September 2012
9th Gwangju Biennale: Roundtable
Gwangju Biennale Foundation
South Korea
16 November 2011 – 10 January 2012
_The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds After 1989_
Osage Art Foundation
Hong Kong

19 September – 30 October 2011
_The Global Contemporary: Art Worlds After 1989_
ZKM/Center for Art and Media
Germany

20 October – 11 November 2009
_Soil Bite – Khoj Bihar International Workshop_
India

1 November 2007 – 31 January 2008
_Landing Soon #5_
Cemeti Art House
Indonesia

**RELEVANT TEXTS**

Wulia, T. (2008, September). The name game, or the years of living with no one to blame. _Inside Indonesia_. Retrieved from http://www.insideindonesia.org/weekly-articles/the-name-game/all-pages
RELEVANT CATALOGUE ENTRIES

Ewington, J. (2012). Tintin Wulia: Crossing borders. In Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Queensland Art Gallery & Gallery of Modern Art (Brisbane, Qld.). *APT7, the 7th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art* (pp. 214-5).


RELEVANT PUBLIC ACQUISITIONS

*Microstudy for Wanton* (2008)
Queenland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art
Brisbane, Australia
2011

*Nous ne notons pas les fleurs, Jakarta* (2010)
Singapore Art Museum
Singapore
2011
Dear [name],

As you are already aware through our previous correspondence and/or conversation, I am currently pursuing a PhD in Art from RMIT University, Australia. The PhD project is titled 'Aesthetic Geopolitics: Art, chance and critical play on the border'.

[Name of artwork], which you were a part of, was one of the artworks in the project that I have developed during this project-based research. I would like to include the artwork and the documentation of this artwork in my Appropriate Durable Record (ADR), exegesis and examination that I will be submitting as part of the requirements of the PhD assessment at RMIT University.

As I have informed you verbally, my project-based research focuses on the geopolitical border and investigates the ways in which borders can be understood through art.

With this in mind, I would like to invite you to provide consent to use the photographs/video in which you appear, in my ADR, exegesis and examination. I will not use material with your image without your consent so if you wish to appear I will need you to provide your written consent. Specifically, the material that I will use includes: details of material & date. Other than the image of you, I will not reveal anything of a personal, sensitive or compromising nature. To provide your consent, please reply to this email. I will keep this email in a secure location in my email account (which is password protected).

Note that you can withdraw your consent at any time until the ADR is published. If you withdraw your consent I will remove the image from my PhD project, but I can only do this before the printing and reproduction stage of the PhD. Please let me know via email if you want your photo to be used.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating please contact me at:.

Please email this signed consent form by 28 February 2013.

Thank you for your help and looking forward to your reply.

Trista Walla
Dear [Name],

As you are already aware through our previous correspondence and/or conversation, I am currently pursuing a PhD in Art from RMIT University, Australia. The PhD project is titled ‘Aesthetic Geopolitics: Art, chance and critical play on the border’.

[Name of artwork], which you were a part of, was one of the artworks in the project that I have developed during this project-based research. I would like to include the artwork and the documentation of this artwork in my SDR, egresses and examination that I will be submitting as part of the requirements of the PhD assessment at RMIT University.

As I have informed you verbally, my project-based research focuses on the geopolitical border and investigates the ways in which borders can be understood through art.

With this in mind, I would like to invite you to provide consent for your image (photograph/video) to be used in my SDR, egresses and examination. I would also like to invite you to also provide your consent for your name to be used via the credit/acknowledgement at the end of the video. I will not use material with your image without your consent so if you do wish to appear I will need to you to provide your written consent. Specifically, the material that I will use includes: [details of material & date]. Other than the image of you and your name, I will not reveal anything of a personal, sensitive or compromising nature. To provide your consent, please reply to this email. I will keep this email in a secure location in my email account (which is password protected).

Note that you can withdraw your consent at any time until the document is published. If you withdraw your consent I will remove the image from my PhD project, but I can only do this before the printing and reproduction stage of the PhD. Please let me know via email if you want your photo to be used.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating please contact me at: tintin@walla.com or you can contact my PhD supervisor Dr Kristen Sharp, kristen.sharp@rmit.edu.au.

Please email this signed consent form by 28 February 2013.

Thank you for your help and looking forward to your reply,

Tintin Wulfs
Dear [name],

As you are already aware through our previous correspondence and/or conversation, I am currently pursuing a PhD in Art from RMIT University, Australia. The PhD project is titled ‘Aesthetic Geopolitics: Art, chance and critical play on the border.’

(Re)Collection of Togetherness, which you were a part of, was one of the artworks in the project that I have developed during this project-based research. I would like to include the artwork and the documentation of this artwork in my Appropriate Durable Record (ADR), exegesis and examination that I will be submitting as part of the requirements of the PhD assessment to RMIT University.

As I have informed you verbally, my project-based research focuses on the geopolitical border and investigates the ways in which borders can be understood through art.

With this in mind, I would like to invite you to provide your consent to use your name, as you wrote it in the passport, as a documentary image for my exegesis of ADR. I will not use material without your consent so if you do wish your name to appear I will need you to provide your written consent. Specifically, the material that I will use includes: [details of material & date]. Other than the name you wrote in the passport, I will not reveal anything of a personal, sensitive or compromising nature. To provide your consent, please reply to this email. I will keep this email in a secure location in my email account (which is password protected).

Note that you can withdraw your consent at any time until the document is published. If you withdraw your consent I will remove the image from my PhD project, but I can only do this before the printing and reproduction stage of the PhD. Please let me know via email if you want your photo to be used.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating please contact me at: tinlin.wuila@unisa.edu.au or you can contact my PhD supervisor Dr Kristen Sharp, kristen.sharp@rmit.edu.au.

Please email this signed consent form by 28 February 2013. Thank you for your help and looking forward to your reply.

Tinlin Wuila
APPENDIX THREE: TEXT FOR LECTURE-PERFORMANCE 1

Wulia, T., Sustainability, the Nation-states and Immortality: a short history of mosquitoes and an even shorter one of us. Unpublished, 2009.

In ancient China, men traveling to malarious areas were advised to arrange for their wives’ remarriage before departing. Many Egyptian mummies have enlarged spleens (a symptom of the disease). Alexander the Great was likely killed by malaria in 323 B.C. Carthage was known to be infected at the time of Christ, and malaria probably helped prevent Genghis Khan from invading Western Europe. [...] Until the 1990s, no one would know for certain that the fevers, which typically afflicted Lucy and the very first human beings to evolve in Africa, were carried by mosquitoes. But many observers reached conclusions that brought them close to the truth. Time and again, physicians and chroniclers correctly associated dirty, standing water with these illnesses. And they also linked them to travel, armies on the move, and the clash of cultures.1

**Politics of sustainability**

Ever since the concept of sustainability — augured by Rachel Carson’s book *Silent Spring* (1962) — entered the mainstream of global discussion in the 1960s, it has sparked controversy. Committed debates surrounding the concept of environmental sustainability, albeit somewhat lopsided in their publicity, span an exhaustive spectrum, stretching from extreme doomsaying at one end to extreme doomslaying at the other end. While the extreme doomsayer James Lovelock — the Gaia scientist who first detected the human imprint on the atmosphere — declared in 2005 that it is “far too late for sustainable development” and that “what we need is sustainable retreat,”2 proposing the use of nuclear power as a solution, extreme doomslayers such as the late Julian Simon swore by statistical facts to show that “the environment is increasingly healthy, with every prospect that this trend will continue,”3 arguing that the ultimate resource is in the number of population; human imagination and creativity is crucial to its survival.4

Apparently, as we live in an Umwelt5 in which our Earth is round, the ends of two extremes will always eventually meet at one point: both these extreme doomsaying and doomslaying scientists agree that coal is more dangerous than nuclear,6 a politically incorrect opinion that put the media into consternation. 7 Speaking of time, in 1948 the Swiss chemist Paul Müller was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine “for his [1939] discovery of the high efficiency of DDT as a contact poison against several arthropods.”8 Ever since the concept of sustainability was introduced, the most widespread war in the history of Homo sapiens sapiens, was initially known for its major effect on developing from other parasites that the mosquitoes had imbibed from the bloodstreams of nearby Japanese troops.9

After the war, United States embraced DDT to establish political influence through a worldwide malaria eradication scheme, part of its Agency for International Development (AID) program, an economy-based subtle war against communism.10 Paul Russell, a mosquito expert and the evangelist of this mission, after publishing his book *Man’s Mastery of Malaria* (1945), reported with the International Development Advisory Board (IDAB) to the U.S. State Department in 1956 that “[e]radication is economically practicable today only because of the remarkable effectiveness of DDT;” however because it seemed to take seven uses of DDT to arise in mosquitoes under attack from DDT, “TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE” [sic].11

Sustainability is inevitably political, because it concerns geography, to which modern nation-states cling. If certain doomsayers were right, before the turn of this century the people of Tuvalu will eventually lose their geopolitical territory due to sea level rise12 and by then, global immigration and border security policies should better be reassessed, because — as all the waters on Earth constitute a single entity — Tuvalu will not be the only one sinking.

One degree of separation: the mosquitoes amongst us

[It] can be said without exaggeration that the tropical world is to-day being steadily and surely conquered. The narration of the numerous campaigns against the mosquito which I have here recorded is signal proof of this. The campaigns show that the three great insect-carried scourges of the tropics — the greatest enemy that mankind has ever had to contend with, namely Malaria, Yellow Fever and Sleeping Sickness — are today on the point of being exterminated, and with their conquest disperses the awful and grinding depression which seems to have gripped our forefathers.11

As we live in an Umwelt in which our Earth is round, all ends eventually meet, and therefore everyone is theoretically an average of six nodes away from each other person on Earth.12 Our Umwelt, however, obviously but perhaps often oblivioulsy so, involves other living beings. *Silent Spring*, widely credited for inspiring the raise of the environmental movement in 1962, was initially known for its major effect on raising public awareness of the risks of uncontrolled use of dichloro-diphenyl-trichloroethane — popularly referred to as DDT — once considered an ultimate weapon against the Culicidae family, commonly known as mosquitoes.

When the insecticidal quality of DDT was first discovered during the dawn of World War II in 1939, it was clear to war strategists what its main purpose was to be: the war against mosquitoes, to ensure the healthiest, most malaria-free military troops possible. Compared to other insects, mosquitoes have significantly fought more together with and against troops on either sides of the battlefields, also during the World War II — the most widespread war in the history of Homo sapiens sapiens, involving mobilisation of more than 100 million military personnel13 — when “mosquitoes delivered parasites to GIs that had developed from other parasites that the mosquitoes had imbibed from the bloodstream of nearby Japanese troops.”14

Speaking of time, in 1948 the Swiss chemist Paul Müller was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine “for his [1939] discovery of the high efficiency of DDT as a contact poison against several arthropods.”15 In 1962, seven years after Russell’s book *Man’s Mastery of Malaria*, along with the expiry of AID’s funding on the worldwide malaria eradication scheme, Carson’s *Silent Spring* was published, arguing for restraint of DDT, amongst other grounds linking it to the decline of certain population and describing its events of accumulation in human babies through their mother’s milk. In 1969, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially recognised the failure of the worldwide malaria eradication mission, but while the seven uses of DDT was finally officially banned worldwide in 1995 under the Stockholm Convention, the WHO still permits its use “when safe, effective and affordable alternatives are not locally available in a country.”16

15 Ibid., p. 159.
16 Ibid., p. 155.
18 Ibid., p. 159.
19 Ibid., p. 155.
Continuing in time, in 2007, fifty-nine years after the Nobel Prize for discovery of DDT and twelve years after the official worldwide ban of DDT, despite criticism of Al Gore’s documentary An Inconvenient Truth being exaggerated and erroneous, he was awarded one of the two Nobel Prizes in Peace. Gore shares the award with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), whose detailing of sea level rise of 23 inches this century contrasted with Gore’s 20 feet (with no specified timeframe). In the same year, the media also began to draw public attention to the mysterious sudden disappearance of Apis mellifera (western honeybee) colonies, a phenomenon dubbed as the Mary Celeste Syndrome after a ship whose crew disappeared in 1872. Throughout this timeline, on the other side of our round-shaped Umwelt, even when traces of DDT continue to be found in fish, human fat and breast milk, and even when one single Epicurean focuses on commonly known as brown bats, it would be easier to consume 1200 of most member of the Vespertilionidae family in an hour (that amounts to 4.8 million mosquitoes for a colony of 100 bats in a single 40-hour week), the mosquitoes continue to flourish — and kill.

Time is of essence: death as the common denominator

In the long run, we are all dead.20

Despite the apparent polarity, if we remove ourselves from the centre of each pole and look at our Umwelt of the round Earth from a distance, we would notice that both doomsayers and doomslayers are in fact standing on the same ground: doom. Owing to the ostensible dichotomy, it is often overlooked that what they disagree on are mainly which attitude to adopt and what steps to take. The discussion is in fact on whether the glass is half full or half empty and how to sustain the condition before it gets even fuller or emptier; these essentially depend on where they each think we now stand at the timeline.21 Time being of essence, both doomsayers and doomslayers actually agree on one common, irrefutable fact: that — in time — resources are not limitless. Death is the only thing certain in our Umwelt; it is still inevitable both in the micro and macro sense. No matter how long Homo sapiens sapiens have reigned on its Umwelt of Earth, death remains its biggest enigma.

In today’s media, the descriptions of the Mary Celeste Syndrome — the mysterious disappearance of the western honeybee colonies that raised dramatically since late 2006 — commonly include a quote that supposedly originated from Albert Einstein. This quote, existing in many different forms and has generated controversy on whether or not Einstein really have said it, basically states that extinction of bees will lead to extinction of Homo sapiens sapiens. As exceptional as the Mary Celeste Syndrome might sound, this is definitely not the first time that the possibility of human extinction comes into light. Homo sapiens sapiens’ long list of potential doomsday ranges from deluge to the Y2K Problem, from Earth’s collision with the Sun to the 99% extinction event.22 The idea of immortality is in advent for as long as the genes manage to survive.

In our Umwelt of the round Earth, as though following Newton’s law of reciprocal actions,23 this enigma of inevitability, together with the fear to submit to it, create an inevitable fascination for immortality. The Epic of Gilgamesh, one of the earliest known literary works on Earth, follows the journey of King Gilgamesh to find immortality, smitten by his fear of ending up dead like his counterpart Enkidu.24 This epic found its parallel in the Chinese Epic of Houyi, whose wife Chang’e ascended to the moon after drinking up the elixir of immortality that her husband has acquired from the Queen Mother of the West. In the story, in exchange of the elixir of immortality the Queen Mother of the West asked Houyi, who was also a skilled architect, to build her a summer palace.

Using its architectural skills for survival, Homo sapiens modify their environment and built enclosures they call homes in order to avoid death for as long as humanly possible. In the macro sense, another strategy for survival is the act of procreation whereby an organism’s genes are envisioned to outlive the individual organism. In this strategy, the idea of immortality is in advent for as long as the genes manage to survive. This concept of separating the attribute of fatality from a single individual’s body to reach a commensal level of immortality is reflected culturally as well: when Homo sapiens create a system of society, a leader would be appointed, either formally or informally, upon whom responsibility of fatality and immortality would be granted.

In all forms of Homo sapiens sapiens’ government, obsolete and current, the rights to inflict death is legally reserved for the government — many believed as being direct descendant or incarnation of gods — thus conceptually ensuring communal immortality, and in practicality reducing risk of randomly inflicted death amongst the citizens that it vows to protect. In this concept, the longer the reign of a government, the better is the supposed quality of its citizen’s (and their offspring’s) lives. The lyrics of Kimi ga yo, the present-day national anthem of Japan, literally means “may your reign last forever.” This is based on a traditional poem from the Heian period (794-1185), and was chosen as Japan’s national anthem more than 7 centuries later in reference to the British national anthem.

Together with the inherent wish for immortality, the expansive nature of Homo sapiens sapiens is also embodied in their societal system. One of the legends about the origin of Japanese people began with the first emperor to unite China, Qin Shi Huang (259-210 B.C.), a controversial figure in Chinese history known for planting the seed for the Great Wall of China, who in his fear of death sought for the fabled elixir of life. In his desperation, he sent a fleet carrying thousands of men and women to seek for immortality to the Eastern seas. Failed to find immortality, legends said that these people feared being sentenced to death if they would come back to the emperor empty-handed, and therefore settled on one of the Japanese islands. Legends about the search for the new world to seek immortality is mirrored in the European voyages to find new capital for survival in the Age of Exploration. In time, our Umwelt of the round Earth convinced Christopher Columbus to “set sail on a route to the east by sailing to the west, and much has possible Ferdinand Magellan to circumnavigate the Earth. The European exploration of the New World brought back capitals in the form of resources and slaves, but they did not find immortality. On the contrary, this massive human movements in the history of Homo sapiens sapiens — aided by vessels like Mary Celeste — marked the spread of newly discovered pathogens, the most resilient of which, like malaria and yellow fever, carried by the most admirable memori mo of our Umwelt: the mosquitoes.

Beyond the nation-states, beyond the solar system: our Umwelt of the round Earth

The adaptive qualifying of mosquitoes and pathogens combine with travel, trade, and natural events to present modern society with endless possibilities for diseases and vector mosquitoes to arise in surprising places. [...] [In greater New York in 1999, when a rash of human encephalitis cases occurred in the borough of Queens. Thus began an episode that would become the most publicized outbreak of a new mosquito-borne disease in history. In the end, the New York experience would become the perfect illustration of the challenges we face in an era of disease without borders.]

In an Umwelt, all parts perceived by an organism have meanings and together assemble an organism’s model of the world. The mind and the world of the organism is inseparable because the mind of the

22 Science recognises the reality of biological immortality, in which an organism does not experience the process of aging. However, even an organism that is biologically immortal can definitely die if exposed to a toxic environment, or otherwise killed or destroyed.
23 Newton’s third law of motion, of the law of reciprocal actions is commonly summarised in one sentence “every action has an equal and opposite reaction.” The nature law was first published in his seminal work Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica in 1687, and today still an excellent approximation at the scales and epochs of everyday life today, although it does not hold within very small scales, within scales comparable to the speed of light, and within very strong gravitational forces.
organism is the source of interpretation of the world as it views it. If this theory is true, the way we think of the Earth as a round orb might be a decisive factor for our understanding of all the other objects in our subjective Umwelt.

If the aforementioned theory is true, does living in an Umwelt, especially one of the round Earth in which all ends meet, actually comprise a self-fulfilling prophecy? The other planets in our solar system are all shaped like our round Earth. The sun, our source of life, is a giant orb. We imagine the sky as a celestial sphere. We see our world through orb-shaped eyes. The cell is modelled as little orbs. Even the period at the end of this sentence is round. A period, that round-shaped little dot, is also a measurement of time. Our clock's hands go round in a circle. The earth rotates around its axis and evolve around the sun, both movements are based on a circle and provide the roots for our solar and lunar time units. Ancient cultures on Earth have a concept of a wheel of time that regards time as cyclical. Is time — on this orb that we call Earth — actually a big ball of yarn?

In 2005, NASA chief Michael Griffin declared that space colonisation is human's destiny "[i]f we humans want to survive for hundreds of thousands or millions of years."27 In 2007, NASA declared its aim for manned mission on Mars in 2037, using a space-station on the moon aimed to be established in 2020 to tiptoe onto Mars. In the Chinese epic of Houyi, sun's heat on earth became intense at around 2170 B.C., and not long afterwards, Houyi’s wife Chang’e ascended onto the moon upon drinking up the elixir for immortality. In search for immortality, Gilgamesh made a perilous journey to meet Utnapishtim and his wife, the only humans to have survived the Great Flood. In Gilgamesh’s epic, this pair were granted immortality by the gods. In the Book of Genesis, to save Noah, his family and a stock of all animals of the world from the Deluge, God instructed Noah to build a vessel. The vessels that transport the slaves to the New World in the Age of Exploration, having to travel for 6 to 8 weeks through the ocean, brought casks of drinking water with them, in which mosquitoes would have bred and induced two or three cycle of yellow fever virus through its human hosts. Death happens, all the time. The question is only when.

In our Umwelt of the round Earth, mosquitoes are scientifically speculated to have descended from an insect that emerged in the Jurassic period. Ancestors of mosquitoes might have each gone through a relatively short lifetime of at most 3 months, in the first few days of which they metamorphose from a larva that lives underwater, to a mosquito that flies in the air. They might have suck dinosaurs' blood, and if they share the same characteristics with present days mosquitoes, for at least 150 million years most of their females have suck blood not for nutrition, but to develop their eggs. From a mosquito’s point of view, Homo sapiens might be nothing but just another group of mammal that emerged only 200 thousand years ago to feed on, not for their individual survival, but for the survival of their whole species, or even their whole family, Culicidae.

In our fuzzy timeline that lasts a few seconds to midnight compared to the Earth’s age of a day, together with the mosquitoes resistance of DDT and the publication of Silent Spring, the exploration of Mars began in the 1960s. In an interview about NASA’s space colonisation program, Michael Griffin stated that it is important that Americans lead the way, because “we know the kind of society we would get if you, for example, carry Soviet values. That means you want a gulag on Mars. Is that what you're looking for?” In our Umwelt of the round Earth, with Homo sapiens sapiens at its centre standing on a land surrounded with waters, and with immortality being their main goal, apparently globalisation does not mean the diminishing of borders, but the strengthening of it.

Is immortality the only solution? In Greek mythology, punishments in Hades are associated with repetition of an event in infinity and even more painfully so if coupled with immortality.28 In Hinduism there is a destroyer God and this God is essential for life because without death there will be no life. Over time, mosquitoes quickly adapt to escape the slapping of annoyed Homo sapiens sapiens — but do they fear death? Is it our fear of death, our fear of an end that does not meet another end, that shapes our whole Umwelt?

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27 Source.
28 (Tantalus, Sisyphus, Tityos and Prometheus).


