Negotiation Space: A Relational Approach to Interior Design.

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

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September 2016
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 project 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.

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September 2016
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people for their valued contribution and support:

Sand Helsel (Senior Supervisor).
Andrea Mina, Charles Anderson (2nd Supervisors).
Anthony Fryatt.

Graphic edit: Laura Casey, Alana Fahey, Freya Robinson.
Exhibition Installation: Robert Sowter, Jess Wood.

Collaborators:
3 Tonne ’O’ Space: Peter Bennetts.
Motel: David Carlin, Lisha Corcoran, Cath Jones, Robin Plunkett, Paul Ritchard, Christine Rogers, Liz Schofield.
VCU Qatar TASMEEM: Johan Granberg, Maja Kinnemak, MotoElastico.

Supporters:
School of Architecture and Design
School of Media and Communications
RMIT Interior Design Staff.
Suzie Attiwill, Ross Mcleod, Michael Trudgeon, Soumitri Varadarajan, SueAnne Ware, Rachel Wilson.

Rebekah, Oscar, Stella and Ole.
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Abstract
Interior Design is most often understood as concerned with the design or reform of the inside of buildings. In this way, an interior is defined by the enclosure of a building – the result of its containing architecture. The dominant association of the term ‘interior’ is with ideas of location, containment or enclosure. It is my contention that this is unnecessarily restrictive and hinders the development of broader and far richer opportunities for the discipline.

The central aim of this PhD is to develop an expanded practice of Interior Design, drawing on a more liberal understanding of interiority as a relational condition. This relational approach to Interior Design foregrounds the positioning of occupants relative to the physical and virtual conditions of a space, both perceived and experienced.

A collaborative design practice titled Making Distance was established for the duration of the PhD. This practice developed participatory tools and techniques that embraced and extended a collaborative partnership with filmmakers, scriptwriters, other designers, and the public.

Physical ‘making’ of interiors was central to this practice-based research. Various self-initiated and commissioned projects (including constructed models, installations, exhibitions, and sets for film and television) supported a deliberate shift in medium and context to address the rhetorical nature of the work as both speculation and reflection.

The body of work produced under the banner of Making Distance carried two research trajectories simultaneously: that of Negotiating Space and the Mediated Interior. Ultimately Making Distance acted as a framework and vehicle for a conversation between two designers, enacted through the medium of design.

This research’s major contribution to the discipline is to provide a methodological catalyst for further research by practice in interior design. It provokes a serious reassessment of the role of interior design. Eschewing restriction to the ‘indoors’, it suggests an expanded engagement in the design of our contemporary urban environment.
Introduction
Interior Design - Questions Of Enclosure

Interior Design, Interior Architecture, Spatial Design

Interior Design continues to be troubled by its position and disciplinary role. This is in part due to what Drew Plunkett identifies as "The Profession That Dare Not Speak Its Name". He suggests, "Interior Design has the trappings of an established profession but not the associated status" and that "its practitioners lack the confident self regard of architects, doctors, lawyers, and members of every other professional body that scrutinises the content and quality of its own professional training and the maintenance of its professional ethics."  

Over the past 20 years or so, there has been continued debate around even the title of the Interior Design discipline. There is disparity around the terms 'Interior Decoration', 'Interior Design', 'Spatial Design' and 'Interior Architecture' – not only on the part of practitioners, but also the people who engage them. Much of this can be attributed to the haphazard evolution and expansion of creative practices working with interior space, as well as a lack of consistency in defining terminology.

Practising interior decorators have embraced the term 'design' as a way of distinguishing themselves from skilled workers such as painters and wallpaper hangers. Their academic counterparts have also embraced the term to substantiate academic merit within a competitive education environment.

2. ibid, 93.
3. ibid.
The popularity and adoption of the more contemporary term ‘design’ presents a dilemma for interior designers whose work on commercial, retail and institutional projects is substantially different in complexity and operation from the domestic applications of a decorator. The ubiquity of the term ‘design’ conflates roles that were previously demarcated.

Consequently, many Interior Design practitioners (and particularly academic institutions) have adopted the term ‘Interior Architecture’ in order to claim professional status. Two internationally recognised bodies, IFI (International Federation of Interior Architects/Designers) and IDEA (Interior Design/Interior Architecture Educators Association) 4, include the terms 'Interior Architecture' and 'Interior Design' in their name.

In the 1990s, substantial debate around the nomenclature of Interior Design saw many Australian undergraduate university programs adopt the term ‘Interior Architecture’ to substantiate an academic discipline that is distinct from the craft emphasis of Interior Decoration associated with vocational education programs (which, incidentally, have recently adopted the term ‘design’ also). This shift was consistent with moves made in North America.5

Despite this, the Bachelor of Interior Design at RMIT University resisted the 1990s trend to adopt ‘Interior Architecture’. Its reasons were both philosophical and political.

Politically, it was regarded important to ensure that the program was not seen by university senior management as duplicating material that could be taught under a broader Architecture program structure. Distinguishing the discipline from Architecture would therefore protect its future in the context of university restructuring.

Philosophically, questions provoked by re-naming focused on the identity and role of Interior Design. Why did the discipline of designing interiors need to be defined through an architectural outcome? Why not maintain a broader scope? Were there other ways to consider ideas of ‘interior’ and interiority not defined by an external boundary condition, or owning body? As Drew Plunkett states, “the term Interior Architect has the disadvantage of describing the discipline in relation to another field that protects its title rigorously.”6

More recently, universities such as UTS (University of Technology Sydney) and Massey University have adopted the term ‘Spatial Design’. In the case of UTS, the full title is ‘Interior and Spatial Design’. Their website states: “This degree equips students with the critical skills required to interrogate and transgress the traditional boundaries of commercial design….Students learn to engage with public and urban spaces alongside internal environments.”7

The Massey University website reads: “The spatial design major focuses on the creation and manipulation of places and spaces within which people play out their daily lives, desires, and social encounters. As a complex field integrating space, lighting, and technology with human habitation, it combines pragmatic requirements with poetic ideas.”8

4. Roger Kemp is a current director of IDEA.
5. The Department of Interior Architecture at the Rhode Island School of Design defines Interior Architecture as a practice that “takes an innovative approach to the reuse and transformation of existing buildings,” accessed March 17, 2016, http://www.risd.edu/about/interior-architecture/
6. Plunkett, “The Profession that Dare Not Speak its Name,” 101.
Like many other Australian bachelor or honours level Interior programs, Interior and Spatial Design educates students to place an emphasis on people’s experience of space. It also looks to take this design activity beyond the limitations of interior spaces defined as the interior of buildings. Similarly, in the UK, the BA Interior and Spatial Design at Chelsea College of Arts “develops students skills in designing, creating and conceptualising new spatial situations…[preparing students] …for a wide variety of careers in the design industry, where they can focus on designing complex architectural spaces, multi-media installations or sensory environments.”

Although there remains a divide in the naming of academic programs around Australia, there is certainly evidence of many academies directing their students to projects that sit outside the conventional boundaries of building interiors. The RMIT Interior Design program has supported students over recent years in making projects that translate to a number of mediums, environments or scales – including the production of items such as jewellery.

Arguably, these activities embrace the notion that Interior Design continues to be in an emergent state or perhaps, as in the case of Massey, has completely left behind the disciplinary and professional boundaries of ‘Interior’ and ‘Architecture’ to announce itself as simply a practice in the design of spaces and places.

The question that arises from this variation might be: What is the value of ‘interior’ in relation to the broader activity of the design of contemporary urban environments? To me, that point of difference – the critical lens – lies in the concept of ‘interior’, the opportunity the discipline has to examine this concept in greater depth, and in the consequent scope to use this examination to strengthen its position and relevance to contemporary society.

Interiority

Christine McCarthy’s essay ‘Towards a Definition of Interiority’ is now 10 years old but continues to shift the discussion from a definition of physical territory to a qualitative evaluation of space. She states:

Interiority is that abstract quality that enables the recognition of and definition of an interior. It is a theoretical and immaterial set of coincidences and variables from which “interior” is made possible. It is not an absolute condition that depends on a restrictive architectural definition.”

Thinking about interiority opens up ideas of the relationship between people and their surrounding environment. For example, proximity and distance are important considerations in the perception of interiority. “Interiority is an imaging of closeness and the making of relationships. It draws its strength with decreases of distance, luke-warm at infinity.”

More recently Lubomir Savov Popov’s essay ‘The Social Production of Interiority: an Activity Theory Approach’ offers:

10. A number of RMIT Interior Design graduates have continued their studies in Gold and Silversmithing, using ideas of interior to inform their work.
13. ibid.
14. ibid.
Activity is perceived as the major mechanism for the appropriation of space and also for endowing it with the quality of interiority. By interpreting interiority this way, it becomes possible to dematerialise it and liberate it from the constraints of structures, building shells, and technical systems, as well as the problems associated with them.

An important idea offered by both McCarthy and Popov is that interiority is not static, "it is selective in its filtering of exteriority". Interiority is therefore determined by its participants and their relationship to their environment. In this sense, there is always a process of negotiation.

Relational space

Lois Weinthal conceptualises the interior as a series of layers radiating from the body. She states:

For me, the interior begins with the elements that are closest to the body, forming concentric and more complex layers as it progresses from the body into spaces where larger scales are accommodated without losing their relatedness to the body and emotion.

Architecture, for instance, is often described as having layers like an onion that peel away to reveal layer after layer of detail. In that analogy, the layers of the onion represent distinct entities. Applying this same analogy to interiors, the layers are stretched and skewed to overlap and share spatial relationships, as well as details of objects, such as the body that wears clothing but also occupies furniture, or private rooms that spill into public spaces.

Weinthal’s relational view of interior positions the body and emotion as the determining entities of an interior. This idea moves away from the notion of physical boundaries for defining an interior to a selective process that emphasises relationships through physical and emotional connectivity. Her notion of interior relations aligns with Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz’s ideas that an event or object’s location is a situation that is dynamic – relative to other objects and events.

The term ‘relational’ has been used extensively across disciplines including geography, curatorial studies, and the arts in general. It became prominent in the late nineteen-nineties through Nicholas Bourriaud’s book Relational Aesthetics which highlighted the artistic practices of the time that explored human relations and their social context. These art practices and ideas present a significant intersection with the practice of the making of interiors, with many works operating within social settings and situations understood as in the domain of interior designers.

The projects in this document take the view that ‘space is not a ‘container’ for entities and processes; rather, space is made by entities and processes. Moreover, these entities and processes combine in relations. Thus, space is made by relations. Space is Relational.19

17. McCarthy “Toward a definition of interiority,” 11.
Background

My motivation in undertaking this PhD comes in part from my academic position within a university. Having completed a Research Masters in 2006, I have continued to approach design research through a practice-based model, generating creative works that range from drawings, models, installation and exhibition.

Occupying a leadership position within the Interior Design Program at RMIT University for a number of years, my motivations for the content of and approach to the PhD arise from a desire to strengthen the discipline. Recognising this, I acknowledge that this research work folds back into my teaching practice, and that its presence encourages others (particularly students and recent graduates) to critically pursue interior design practice through making.

Aim And Objectives

The central aim of this PhD (by project) has been to develop an expanded practice of interior design that moves beyond the restrictions of an interior understood as an enclosed space (such as the inside of a building).

In order to achieve this, the following objectives were established:

- Adopt a relational approach to the design of interiors that foregrounds and positions occupants relative to perceived and experienced physical and virtual conditions of a space.
Develop a set of tools and techniques that support a relational approach to Interior Design.

Establish a collaborative design practice that offers an exemplar in the innovative approach to the design of interiors; that in turn provides leadership and inspiration in building a community of designers that practice Interior Design in an expanded way.

Enable this practice to support and contribute to my role as a design educator.

Research Questions

In the process of developing the PhD, many questions have surfaced; however, the enduring research questions are:

- Does the design of interiors need to be confined to the inside of buildings, or even be defined by an architectural enclosure?
- What are the opportunities for my practice (and others) to re-conceptualise interior space, taking it from being understood as the inside of a building to being understood more universally as the spatial and temporal relations between people and the surrounding environment?
- What design tools and techniques can be developed and employed to support this approach to interior design?
- What are the opportunities that exist within the collaborative structure of the design research practice Making Distance?

Research Methods

The work in this PhD is framed as research through designing. Each project is structured to test a specific aspect of the stated research questions – recognising that each project provides an insight into the broader enquiry and, in turn, informs the intent and approach to the project that follows. In many cases, this becomes an iterative method.

Each of the projects is a collaborative endeavour between my colleague, Anthony Fryatt, and myself. This collaborative design practice, titled Making Distance, was formed initially for pragmatic reasons. It provided a structure that enabled us to combine our resources (time and skills) to make projects of a public scale that could respond to the requirements of ERA creative works. It soon became an entrenched mode of working that was adopted as a design-led research practice for this PhD.

The Making Distance collaboration adds a critical dimension to this research work, combining two research trajectories that are distinct but complementary. It recognises that most design activity is collaborative and that creative practice often depends on a synthesis of contributions from a number of sources to move beyond preconceived approaches and outcomes. Over the duration of the PhD, we have deliberately included other collaborators, clients, and disciplines in order to extend this approach.

As an act of research ‘through practice’, each project had a caveat: that the work would provide a platform for the exploration of two research themes...
- ‘Negotiation of Space’ and ‘Mediated Interior’. These two themes were pursued through three phases of project work over six years.

The three phases include both self-initiated and invited projects, as well as an on-going annual project – the creative direction for the RMIT University Interior Design Graduate Exhibition – ‘INDEX’.

**Structure Of The Document**

The document expresses the nature of the PhD as an iterative approach to design research practice through the chronological discussion of projects. It tracks the development of a relational approach to the design of interiors, building in complexity and shifting in context.

Chapter 1 ‘Interventions In Space’ discusses work made prior to the commencement of the PhD that sets a tone for the establishment of the partnership of Making Distance. It reflects on my Research Masters and two subsequent design projects, Looking Back On Things and Occupying Space Now. The chapter identifies processes of intervention, re-orientation, and re-assembly as established methods for the manipulation or reform of existing spaces.

Chapter 2 ‘Influential Themes And Practices’ introduces some key themes and practices that have influenced the work over the duration of the PhD. Ideas of ‘mobility’ and ‘temporality’ offer a dynamic consideration of interior space, defined by duration rather than location. Two sections, ‘Spatial Sequence And Implied Narratives’ and ‘Fiction’, look at the way that interior spaces can be understood as a sequence of events that maintain a relationship through narrative. ‘Urban Interior’ identifies the increasing interest in interiors as a significant component of our urban centres. ‘Fragments And Layers’ explores techniques for breaking down enclosure.

Chapter 3 ‘Mobilising The Interior’ discusses the first two projects undertaken in the PhD: 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space and Carry On. 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space was the first collaborative project undertaken by Anthony Fryatt and myself. It was used as a mechanism to draw out some latent ideas that had been developing in conversations up to that time, including ideas of interior design as an urban strategy and the use of implied narratives through constructed settings.

The second project, Carry On, uncovered a reflective strategy in making a project – in this case a constructed model - which directly addressed the ideas of the previous project. This procedure, including a shift in medium, became a consistent approach throughout the PhD.

Chapter 4 ‘Scenic Strategies 1: Proximities, Relations And Collaborations’ is an exposition of the beginning of the second phase of projects, predominantly situated in a film and television context. A critical exploration in the first project, Motel, was the manipulation and expansion of the traditional film and television device: the A4 sized script. The expanded script format presented a revolutionary artefact that offered an enhanced collaborative engagement between writer/directors and interior designers.

Ultimately, this work intercepted the hierarchical and often linear film production process, allowing a more detailed interrogation of relational qualities identified in the script at the early stages of the film-making process.
The second project in this phase of work, Time, Distance, Duration, reflected on and re-imagined the space of the Motel film through a separate installation. It was at this point that we began to recognise 'the reflective project' as an extended conversation through making.

Chapter 5 ‘Scenic Strategies 2: Fragments And Layers’ discusses three set designs. Two of these are made for television and the third for an online video application. The first set, designed for a television series titled The Temperature’s Rising 1, investigated the interior as set of urban fragments, requiring the narrative and actors’ movements to build relations. The set designed for The Temperature’s Rising 2 extended this approach, emphasising a layered but permeable structure that sets up multiple views and relationships.

Chapter 6 ‘Constructed Relations: Interior Assemblies’ discusses two projects, Complexity And Fullness and Quick/Slow Transition, which returned the research to a focus on urban spaces through a fusion of diagram and model. Complexity And Fullness suggested the idea of ‘retail’ as a medium of space – something we move through and inhabit as part of our day-to-day activities. This way of thinking about urban space is different to other approaches such as typological, programmatic, or environmental classifications.

In the conclusion of the document, I give an account of the contribution this PhD makes in demonstrating a relational approach to the design of interiors.
Interventions In Space

Questions Of Interior Design
Introduction

This chapter gives an account of two projects, *Looking Back On Things* and *Occupying Space Now*, made as precursor studies, which provide a bridge from my previous Research Masters into the PhD.

Completed in 2006, my Masters explored techniques for the representation of space, where drawing acted as a method for orientating and positioning oneself (the drawer) in an existing environment. The research posited drawing as the means of engaging with the interior conditions of existing built spaces and reconciled my habitual drawing practice with a newly-articulated way of designing and making interiors.

Documenting the interior spaces of Heide 2 at the Museum of Modern Art in Bulleen Victoria, my drawings expressed the unfolding of spaces when an occupant traverses the building — a motion parallax that opens and closes the views into spaces, continually shifting the visual, material and temporal relationships. These shifts had the effect of recomposing the interior at every turn.

Brunelleschi’s famous drawing of the Duomo in the early 1400’s was an important reference for the research. I was interested in the way the perspectival strategy had, in effect, located Brunelleschi relative to his surrounding space. The Masters went on to explore methods of perspectival construction as a navigational tool.

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1. *Was a collaborative intervention at Craft Victoria, Melbourne.*
2. *Heide 2 (Reed House) 1967 by David McGlashan, McGlashan Everest Pty Ltd Architects.*
Drawing became a selective process that identified or registered important things to me as an occupant, ignoring certain elements and capturing others. This activity suggested that not all aspects of a space were relevant to a particular experience. I could virtually take away most of the space, leaving only the engaged items which could be considered as important relationships. This process of positioning in space through selective drawing constructed a personal or individual relation to a space. Drawing moved from an act of representing space to one of making space – the negotiation of interior(s).

This however presented a dilemma for the work. If an interior is generated through an individual perceptual negotiation, what is the role of the interior designer?
Looking Back On Things
Exhibited work in a group exhibition: Strangely Familiar at UNISA gallery.

Looking Back On Things continued my exploration of spatial negotiation, reconciling the questions of interior production from my previous drawing works by making a physical intervention in space that others could experience. It introduced a new relationship with an existing interior (the space of a public gallery) through the manipulation of location, view and distance.

The work commenced with a series of ink wash drawings of landscapes I had visited around that time. The drawings were partly informed by the etchings and prints of Spanish sculptor, Eduardo Chillida. I was attracted to Chillida’s process of embossing or layering paper to generate arrangements of monochromatic shapes, and inspired to extend my earlier ink drawings into a more three-dimensional operation which gave greater attention to positive and negative space.

I made the initial drawings by cutting up a series of ink washes, then layering them to reveal overlapping shapes and apertures. The resultant drawings suggested an imagined landscape that contained remnants of interior spaces.

Following that, I made seven periscopes from 3mm plywood in various lengths and volumes. Each device had a small, drilled hole at one end that would allow a view (via two corresponding mirrors) into a gallery space. These new sightlines through the aligned mirrors offered alternative views of the space and exhibition.

3. A group exhibition, curated by Professor Gini Lee, asked participants to consider the notion of “Strangely Familiar” as a basis for reflecting on design research practice. The exhibitors included academics from the School of Architecture and Design at RMIT University and the Louis Laybourne Smith School of Architecture and Design University of South Australia.
One of these apertures – a rectangular hole in the paper that suggested a view cut through a hillside – revealed a potential relationship to a second opening, which provided a view through to another space. This prompted a progression in my thinking to three dimensions and, in turn, the production of a second series of periscopes that could redirect a person’s view through (or around) an intermediate object or space.

These seven periscopic devices were dispersed throughout the gallery, hung on walls, columns and horizontal surfaces, offering the opportunity to reinvigorate views back into the space. Similar to the effect of a rear vision mirror, these devices revealed a view inconsistent with the occupant’s orientation. The devices presented a corridor of space that appeared to be located inside the wall, thereby expanding the perceived limits of the existing space.

Prior to installation, in consultation with the curator, we imagined these periscopes as items that could be interspersed with other artworks within the gallery. On arrival, after further discussion, we reconsidered the appropriateness of locations for the type of views obtained through the devices.

The periscopes simultaneously reduced and extended the depth of view experienced within the gallery. They demanded a close inspection through the viewfinders, whilst promoting a negotiation of visual distance via displaced vistas of the gallery space.

Looking Back On Things subverted the spatial intentions of the exhibition’s curator (and designer of the gallery interior) by offering alternative spatial views, which attempted to manufacture a ‘look folding in on itself’.

What became apparent through this work was that the periscopes did not just produce a series of views of an existing space but could be understood as multiple interior experiences, each dependant on the participant’s actions and relationships within the space of the gallery. Could this be understood as the production of multiple interiors? Interiors conceived through action and perception rather than location and enclosure?

Reflecting on this work reminded me of the Bruce Nauman project ‘Live Taped Video Corridor’ made in 1970. At the end of a constructed narrow corridor, Nauman set up two television monitors showing the view from a closed-circuit camera at the opposite end. On entering the corridor, a participant becomes aware of their image in the upper monitor. Walking towards the monitor along the corridor results in the image of the participant...

4. “Moreover, upon entering a Loos interior one’s body is continually turned around to face the space one has just moved through, rather than the upcoming space or the space outside.” Beatriz Colomina, “Interior,” in Toward a New Interior: An Anthology of Interior Design Theory, ed. Lois Weinthal (Princeton Architectural Press), 479
receding (as they walk away from the camera). The combination of physical movement with the dissymmetric video footage has the effect of extending distance and distorting orientation and position.

Nauman’s work allowed me to think further about the way in which I could layer one space inside another through perceptual shifts and the distortion of expected relationships (such as distance or location). It also foregrounded the idea of ‘duration’ in respect to movement through space and the resulting experience.

My previous Heide 2 drawings had defined interior space through my position as viewer and maker of the drawn artefacts. The drawings documented specific spatial relations encountered in moving through the spaces. In this work, the lines of connection were made through the viewing positions of the periscopes. A plan drawing (made after the exhibition) documented the lines of view through the space, highlighting the relational connection.

In this work, the periscopic devices offered an opportunity for others to negotiate an interior through the assembly of curated views (directed and controlled through the use of mirrors). I could also see a potential to extend this to a broader application, setting mirrors in specific locations of existing environments to ‘fold’ or ‘double’ spatial relationships.
Occupying Space Now – Working In Progress

Exhibited work in a group exhibition: Urban Interior Occupation at Craft Victoria.

Occupying Space Now – Working In Progress set out to explore ways in which the boundaries of a space could be manipulated, blurred, stretched or confused. It generated new spatial conditions and relationships in an existing site through minimal material alteration. The critical design methods were programmatic intervention and the physical occupation of space.

This project took the form of an intervention situated around one end of the corten reception/retail counter located in Craft Victoria. Central to the intervention was the addition of a temporary one-metre long plywood box extension, made to the same height and width as the existing steel counter.

The exhibition catalogue included a description of the project:

“Roger Kemp will be sitting at the desk making drawings and artefacts for 6 days during the occupation of Craft Victoria by the Urban Interior research group [UI]. The primary focus of the drawings and artefacts will be as an act of participation in the space. They will focus on a negotiation and investigation of the Craft Victoria space over the time of the [UI] occupation. Invited guests will collaborate through conversation, speculation and spatial production. Some of the artefacts will remain in the space for the duration of the occupation. Other works will be recorded and distributed back to the collaborators as an extension of the space.”

5. Occupying Space Now – Working In Progress was a project undertaken alongside other academics under a collective titled Urban Interior. Located at Craft Victoria, 31 Flinders Lane, Melbourne, ‘Interior Occupation’ was set up as a research-led collaboration to highlight the various ideas and practices within this research group.

6. Craft Victoria is a gallery and retail space located in Melbourne dedicated to the exhibition and sales of work by local and international craftspeople.

7. Urban Interior (UI) is a research collective from the school of Architecture and Design at RMIT University formed in 2007. It brings together academics and practitioners from Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Interior Design, Fashion Design, Industrial Design, Sound Design and Public Art with “a shared concern with aesthetic, experiential, poetic, political, sensory, social and technological relations within the urban realm.”
Sequence of working: getting set-up, building the surface, setting the space, getting comfortable, talking about space, seeing what is happening, discussing the issues, considering it further, drawing it out, introducing, looking around, commenting further, making something work, another space, something’s happened, you wouldn’t believe it, I thought that might happen, and another thing, more space, more time, documenting, closing comments, no longer occupying.8

In this collective occupation, designers and artists utilised different parts of the space across a range of durations throughout a period of two weeks.

Occupying Space Now - Working In Progress began with the making of the ply box extension. This was manufactured in the RMIT University workshop and transported by hand trolley across the city to Craft Victoria, approximately 1km away. This process was documented through photographs and understood, not just as a matter of pragmatic transportation, but as the beginning of a process of occupying or expanding the interior of Craft Victoria beyond its architectural confines.

The Craft Victoria tenancy stretches the length of the basement floor of the building and is arranged with a retail space at the front, a central exhibition area in the middle, and administrative offices at the rear of the building.

The retail space includes a central, corten steel counter for sales and enquiries, a number of shelving and display units holding craft objects for sale, and a front showcase window that allows visual access from the footpath of Flinders Lane. The exhibition area is a long narrow space approximately 90 square metres. Windows to the south open on to a light-well formed by the adjacent building. The steel counter provides a delineation of program to the space, separating retail, exhibition and administration. The length of the counter determines the beginning of the gallery exhibition space.

Given the (UI) collective provocation of occupation, the first step in conceiving the project was to find a space to work in. I was particularly interested in the way in which the Craft Victoria activities of retail, display, exhibition and administration were separated, and I identified the counter as an excellent opportunity to somehow shift the orientation and programmatic structure of the space.

8 from (UI) Exhibition catalogue.
On arrival, the prefabricated ply box was positioned at the end of this counter, along with a stool sourced from the Craft Victoria storeroom. This provided the location for what would be two weeks of spatial occupation through talking and making. The ply box extension (extruding from the existing corten steel rectangular box counter) offered a low cost material intervention and an ambiguous aesthetic in relation to a perceived duration.

By extending the counter one metre, the surface conventionally used for sales now pushed into the gallery space and began to ‘blur’ the activity of retail and exhibition. This ‘blurring’ was reinforced by my occupation of the space around and on the surface of the extended counter.

Over the course of two weeks, between meetings and lectures, I would attend and adopt a role within the space: that of maker and conversationalist. A number of people were invited to meet with me for a few hours – a morning coffee, lunch, afternoon tea, or simply a quick catch up. Each person was invited to bring a material or tool of his or her choice.

Each meeting became an opportunity to simply occupy this space (using the extended counter as a surface for the design act) and engage in conversation whilst making things. For instance, Tessa Blazey (a Melbourne-based interior designer and jeweller) brought a roll of aluminium flashing. Over the course of a couple of hours we talked and made objects, surfaces, and jewellery from this material, using the counter as work bench and coffee table.

At the end of the session, we cleared the counter and organised the works that we had made into a small exhibition.

A similar process was enacted with each guest that attended over the two weeks. The chosen materials or tools ranged from different paper stock and collections of printed material to drawing equipment or cameras.

At each session, the work added to an increasingly dense arrangement of artefacts. This collection of objects was framed by the ply surface of the counter but, curiously, sat alongside the various objects on the retail counter, such as wrapping paper, adhesive tape, promotional information, cash register and accounts documents.

This relationship was significant – both for the occupation of space and the research intent of exploring aspects of ‘interior’. What had been a particularly clear programmatic boundary between retail sales and exhibition activities was diffused by the added activity of making and exhibiting artefacts.

Time not spent in making, talking, and exhibiting was an opportunity to activate conversation with staff in the adjacent sales zone along the counter. This added another flow of information and spatial relationships to those already established across the counter between sales staff and retail consumers. At this point, I had begun to occupy more of the space and was mixing established programmatic relationships.

The display connotations of objects exhibited on the plywood extension played across both retail and exhibition conventions. The counter became a blurred threshold between gallery, retail and administrative functions. People entering Craft Victoria would walk past the counter and show interest in the
work whilst enquiring about retail products, the exhibition, and directions to
the administrative offices.

Occupying Space Now – Working In Progress used the strategy of
intervention to explore ways in which an existing interior space can be
reformed, reorientated or extended.

This intervention occurred through the following techniques:
1. An intervention of a physical object (the counter extension)
2. A shift in program (work/display space)
3. The participation of additional occupants to support the intentions of the
new programmatic condition

1. Intervening Physical Object:
Physical interventions in space have been common practice in public art since
the 1960’s and influenced this work. Richard Serra’s project ‘Tilted Arc’ is a
good example. Commissioned in 1979 by the United States General Services
Administration (GSA) and approved in 1981, ‘Tilted Arc’ was a 37m length
of corten steel, 640 mm thick, bisecting New York’s Federal Plaza at a height
of 3.7m.

The work is particularly famous for being removed in 1989 following a
heated legal dispute between Serra and the GSA, which resulted from
public pressure by bureaucrats working in adjacent buildings. Local workers
perceived the artwork as an unnecessary impediment to movement across the
plaza and the GSA argued for its relocation.

The dispute both amplified and missed the point of the artwork. The slightly
tilted section of steel intentionally blocked views and physical access through
the space. Serra wanted to make people in the plaza more aware of themselves
relative to the shifting geometry.

2. Programmatic Shifts:
The addition to the corten steel desk in Craft Victoria did not bisect the
gallery space like ‘Tilted Arc’; instead, it stretched an existing boundary
condition of the counter (separating public and sales staff) to a point that
entered another programmatic condition – that of the gallery space. It
required sales staff to enter the gallery when assisting the public in the retail
space.

A shift in program along a single object is eloquently explored in Vito
Accenici’s ‘Where are we now (who are we anyway?)’, an installation made
for the Sonnabend gallery New York in 1976. A central component of this
work was a wooden plank “forty feet long and two feet wide, a plank that changes function: it starts by settling into the room as a table, eight stools on either side, and it continues toward the window, extends out the window and becomes a diving board” 9 A set of speakers (at the junction of exterior wall and the table/diving board) project Acconci’s voice mockingingly presenting a fictitious meeting.

Acconci’s plank transits from meeting room to diving board (with no pool below) – a similar, if more perilous shift to that of the desk extension deployed in Craft Victoria.

3. Participation and Occupation:
The desk acted as a space for the production of works arising from conversations, interactions and activities. As a participant in this work (craftsperson/maker/conversationalist) sitting at the desk over a period of one week, I played a supporting role to the physical intervention of the desk. This role was part performative and part observational.

I would engage the sales and administrative staff in conversation, drawing the programmatic concerns of that domain into the gallery and vice versa. The public were also drawn into conversation or a relationship with the work while it presented an ambiguity in the previously defined craft/display/sales spatial relationships.

Summary

Looking Back On Things and Occupying Space Now moved away from the medium of drawing and began using physical artefacts positioned in space (along with programmatic changes) to generate shifts in spatial orientation and activity. Both works occurred within gallery spaces exhibiting research projects of designers and artists.

Reflecting on these projects, I became aware that, in the act of intervening, reorienting or connecting existing elements of a space, I was actually making new interior spaces. Creating new sets of relationships offered new interior conditions.

It occurred to me at this time that what I had been doing in my Masters and through these two works was to liberate interior space from its defining architectural enclosure. This provoked the question: how can we make interiors that are not defined or articulated through a bounding physical structure?

Looking Back On Things and Occupying Space Now – Working in Progress investigated ways of working in existing spaces that went beyond those of perception and documentation that I had explored in my Masters research. Looking Back On Things used a method that curated framed views of an existing space to collect up a new space. The isolation of specific visual moments derived from the viewfinders (and the resulting collection of moments) generated a particular construction of spatial experience for the

participants. This personalised experience was cut from the space of the exhibition and understood as a new space — an interior within an interior.

**Occupying Space Now — Working in Progress** set out to explore ways in which the boundaries of a space could be manipulated — blurred, stretched, or confused. It is the first project where I included any form of physical participation or offered ways to occupy space as a design act. By bringing myself and others into the work as participants, it occurred to me that this was an appropriate method for moving the idea of ‘interior’ away from the physically contained and into an interpersonal or relational condition.

Both projects identified existing conditions in spaces that could be manipulated (through intervention, extension, or reorientation) to generate a new set of relations. These acts might be conventionally understood as a form of building alteration — an activity that Fred Scott would advocate for in order to raise the profile of designers and associated professionals to “a level comparable with pure architecture”. However, my contention takes this further and claims this activity (making interiors) is one that can be unchained from the preceding material and spatial container.

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10. Fred Scott is a visiting professor in Interior Design at the Royal College of Art London.

Community Of Practice
The following section introduces some key themes and practices that have influenced the work over the duration of the PhD.

- Mobility
- Time And Duration
- Spatial Sequence And Implied Narratives
- Fiction
- Fragments And Layers
- Urban Interiors
- Diagram

**Mobility**

Understanding interiority as a dynamic condition brings into focus the notion of mobility. The work of the South Korean artist Do Ho Suh has been a significant influence in considering this idea and its relation to the production of interior spaces. When I first saw his artwork ‘348 West 22nd St Apt. A New York, NY 10011’ at the 2002 Biennale of Sydney, the silk fabric replica of his Chelsea apartment spoke of the mobility of space through physical and psychological dimensions. He states, “My desire to guard and carry around my very own intimate space makes me perceive space as infinitely movable”¹ The material structure replicates the volumetric dimensions of the apartment, its fine-sewn details provide a level of accuracy to the original space that suggests an embedded memory.

Walking through this space, it occurred to me that it was similar to a drawing. The silk is like an ink wash, a translucent film that carries light and pigment. Spatial depth is enhanced by building density with each layer of silk, each wash. The sewn details produce patterns of lines with a calligraphic quality.

This idea of hybridising drawing and physical space has influenced many of the projects in this PhD. Many of the spaces produced can be understood as a type of drawing in the way in which they illustrate, diagram, outline and document spatial relations. In this way, the work is as much about information as it is about inhabitation.

**Time And Duration**

In appreciating the dynamic condition of interiority, time becomes a significant dimension. The duration of activities and events that offer moments of interiority are integral to contemporary interior design practice. Installation and set design strategies have been adopted by many practices to inform event-based environments for temporary projects such as brand launches or pop-up spaces.

The consideration of the temporal can be observed in the documentation of projects by the highly successful London-based Interior Design practice, Studio Toogood. Their interiors demonstrate a strong narrative structure, with many projects exhibiting a communication focus arising from a brief to build brand awareness.

This collection of work, separated under different headings, illustrates

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¹ See Ewen McDonald, Biennale of Sydney: (the world may be) fantastic catalogue, 209.
² See http://studiotoogood.com/
a contemporary Interior Design practice that works across a number of different spatial operations. These shift between the more conventional domain of Interior Architecture (that of reforming existing built residential or retail spaces) to event-based environments that do not seek to reform, but rather generate a new spatial narrative.

Each project has a summarising list, including Location, Type, Client and Scope. Many works also include categories for Time, Collaborators and Numbers – the inclusion of which reveals the type of engagements, durations and relations in the work of this practice.

The time scales listed for the designs range from hours to permanent. It is this acknowledgement of duration that resonates with Suzie Attiwill’s ideas of ‘interiorisation’. She suggests that the temporal is an important consideration for Interior Design, stating: “Interior Design shifts from a practice necessarily equated with the design of inside space to a practice of interiorisation. This introduces time as a dynamic and provokes a re-conceptualisation of interior as temporal framing as distinct from a spatial enclosure.”3

Studio Toogood’s ‘Super Natural’ can be understood in this way. An exercise in styling and brand marketing that was open for a week, it combined a temporary eatery with an exhibition of furniture. Not so much concerned with the physical enclosure of its site, the design concentrated on projecting a convincing narrative that generated an experience for the participant through the collaborative engagement of interior designer, chefs and perfumer.

Spatial Sequence And Implied Narratives

Directing attention to the temporal aspects of the design of interiors brings into focus the sequential nature of these experiences. It is not hard to understand why Bernard Tschumi’s work in the 1990s had such a significant influence on Interior Design academics and students. It highlighted the perceptual aspects of architecture as sequences of spaces and events. It provoked substantial questions in relation to the representation of interior spaces.

A singular drawn perspective (the fundamental method for the representation of interiors) could be argued as a flawed technique. As a static image, it fails to communicate a participant’s experience of moving through a proposed interior. It may represent the materials and surfaces at a particular moment in time but can not deliver on the cumulative effect of transition and movement through time. A central argument in my Masters was that Interior Designers had adopted architectural methods of representation that did not adequately respond to conditions of interiority and that other methods could be developed.

More recently, advances in digital representation have led to the adoption of filmic processes that more adequately illustrate the temporal conditions of spatial experiences. Design presentations have adopted a storyboard approach – to the extent where Hollywood actors are photographed in front of green screens and their images then inserted into digital renders.


4. See http://studiotoogood.com/store/image/file/0m/d1/LDF_Super-Natural_web_16_Plink_1.jpg

5. Charlize Theron is one such actor used in the Capitol Grande images.
Film has had a significant influence on the way in which we design and inhabit spaces. Designers (and more broadly contemporary western society) have an established film literacy that influences our perception of daily experiences. We are not only familiar with specific filmic moments but also their narrative structure.

Narrative is a common device used in consumer-oriented spaces. It has the ability to move across mediums - from advertising image to product, and also the experience of physical spaces. It enables consistency and structure of communication.

The Dutch practice Concrete, design interiors for entertainment and seduction. Their project “The Supper Club” uses narrative to a degree that could be understood as being a completely choreographed experience. “One has no choice but to follow a particular route.”

Melbourne designers, Crowd Productions, use narrative and spatial sequence in a different way. They use a method of body storming, from “low resolution” mock up spaces through to careful and detailed ‘theatre set’ spaces to test detailed process and technology usability.” This method of spatial analysis privileges the programmatic and operation behaviours of retail and commercial businesses. It acknowledges the systematic, relational and temporal conditions.

The projects produced for this PhD often use an implied narrative. A process of using visual cues, material relationships or spatial sequences that are suggestive of a story or situation. This approach moves on from a process of controlled communication to a negotiation of activity and participation by its occupants.

Fiction

Much of the work in this PhD – installations, scale models and film sets – are fictional constructions. The film and television projects respond to stories and scripts prepared by our writer and director collaborators. The installation and scale models contain interwoven stories and moments that emanate from the collaborative design process of Making Distance. These are formed from the musings of spatial situations encountered in our daily lives that we feel are pertinent to the structure and spatial qualities of our urban experience.

Mike Nelson’s installation ‘Coral Reef’ has been an important reference. Described as “a specific yet generic space from the physical fabric of the city”, this detailed installation environment becomes “a sentence with no fixed language and a shifting syntax, allowing differing routes and varying conclusions by the visitors, who fast become the players in this elaborate set.”

Mike Nelson’s work is like a film set that you can walk through. It is located in a gallery context but it pushes you to suspend disbelief. The spaces tap into our spatial intelligence, presenting familiar scenes – maybe from film, maybe from first hand experience. There are no actors, but an implied occupation of space. The NY Times described the work as a “broken...
narrative”. This disjunction of spatial sequence is not an unfamiliar scenario within a contemporary city. As participants, we are adept at negotiating the intercutting of experiences to build continuity in our own spatial narratives.

The scale models produced over the time of the PhD have an alignment with the work of CJ Lim14 and Thomas Hillier15 who utilise narrative and literary structures in the production of speculative architectures at a similar scale and collaged process.

Thomas Hillier’s ‘Migration of Mel and Judith, Luxor’ is a model constructed within a domestic lampshade. The model presents a story of two characters and their new home. As an architectural model, it does not attempt to articulate the complete architectural form of the building or interior, but illustrates the fictitious activities and relationships of people and spaces through layered adjacencies and connections of lines and text. Although our models similarly fragment and collage specific spatial components and scenarios, we construct deliberate views through the use of mirrors or physical frames that can be understood as alignments.

CJ Lim’s hybrid collage models use literary narratives as a basis for spatial storytelling. They bring together existing stories such as ‘Alice in Wonderland’ to weave new imaginings of the city of London. Our work does not use existing literary sources. We use our own observations that we understand as typical spatial experiences in an urban setting. These often are ambiguous moments, or points of intersection or collision. We understand the models to be tools to examine spatial conditions and relationships. They are not propositional designs, but rather a diagrammatic compositing of spatial situations.

Fragments And Layers

A process of fragmentation and layering is used in much of the work of Making Distance. This is both a method and an outcome. This approach is intended to reveal complexity and build spatial relationships that resist enclosure and containment. The edges of spaces blur, fade, overlap, or disintegrate.

My interest in layered space has definitely been informed by my formative undergraduate education, occurring at the height of the deconstructivist movement in architecture. However, the most pertinent architectural influences are the John Soane Museum (1812) and Enric Miralles and Benedetta Tagliabue’s Calle Mercaders Apartment (1994).

The Soane Museum has a spatial density that is made through the collection of artefacts displayed on walls, columns and floors. I am most interested in the moments when the building surfaces visually and materially folds into the artefacts themselves. In this way, the interior becomes more like a visual field than a volume of space. The openings that cut through the various rooms allow multiple views and an expansion of spaces. The hinged panels that display paintings refresh the composition of walls.

The Calle Mercaders Apartment is of interest for two reasons: Firstly, the plan drawing is diagrammatic, almost map-like. It does not have a definitive hierarchy of line weights and was understood by Miralles as

15. see “Thomas Hillier” accessed 17 March 2016, http://www.thomashillier.co.uk/
an operative instrument, more so than a form of representation. In this way, it does not emphasise the defined volume of the apartment. Miralles understands the plan as a series of moving pieces that he likens to a game of chess.

Secondly, within the built space there are a number of material intersections, including an interchange between timber and tiled floor surfaces that project from one room to another. This constructs an extended threshold between spaces – an overlapping of program.

‘Dogville’, a film by Lars Von Trier was a key cinematic reference for this research. The film set is composed of some walls and furniture similar to a theatrical stage set, with white chalk lines outlining other scenery that is annotated with text naming the items drawn. An important concept in these constructions is the resistance to a completed cinematic image of a space.

We experience this space as viewers through a combination of actors, props, objects, text and drawing. The space is part diagrammatic and does not hide its edges or edit its junctions. This lack of completion of enclosure, and/or the revealing of elements and spaces beyond the immediate environment, are techniques used in the production of interiors in this research practice.

Urban interiors

All of the projects produced in the collaborative practice Making Distance sit within an urban context. They do not seek to address specific issues of urban space but, rather, look for opportunities and imaginings within it. Whether for brand awareness, commercial gain or for cultural or social purposes, an interior in a broader urban context is a tool for engagement, experience and information. There is an acknowledgement that a participant in this environment plays a key role in its construction – it is a negotiated space.

The architectural practice MOTOElastico is a compelling reference point here in their observation of a ‘borrowed city’, the private use of public space in Seoul. They conceptualise this scenario as a “Metropolitan Interior”, where the streets are understood as rooms and are furnished and customised by its users. The documented occupation of spaces within the city often produces interiority through i) activity, ii) temporary assembly of objects and materials, and iii) the relationships that are formed.

There has been a strengthened interest in the conjunction of Interior Design, interior spaces and urban design. ‘Interior Urbanism’ has become a popular term that is mostly associated with the examination of large-scale public interiors of contemporary cities. Universities have developed new course areas to service this interest and examine this further.

The relationship between urban public space and the expansion of personal or private space may be a contributing factor in the rise of the Interior Urbanism. Writing in ‘Arbitare’ magazine, professor of Digital Culture at Zurich University of the Arts Felix Stalder makes the observation: “In recent times, the very category of the ‘inside’ has become problematic. One simple reason for this is that its constitutive counterpart, the ‘outside’, seems to be quickly fading away.”

21. Politecnico di Milano and Escuela Politecnica Superior Universitaria CEU San Pablo, Madrid have recently set up the MUID Master in Urban Interior Design: Design of the Public Realm in Contemporary Cities.
22. Felix Stalder in Arbitare 520. 03. 2012 pg113 He identifies 3 developments that have brought this about: Climate Change – Through human intervention the whole biosphere has become our making. Distinctions of inside and outside are no longer relevant or valuable. Global Capitalism – Globalisation has the effect of absorbing and assimilating differences. Internet – “The personalization of our environment through internet capabilities – maps, Facebook, Google etc.”
Our urban centres have become more generic, particularly through global companies and brands that seek to provide consistencies in identity and experience. Inside and outside have become blurred and this has an effect on where the work of an interior designer begins and ends.

Elena Enrica Giunta suggests “The interior design discipline is called upon to enlarge its territories, to start considering cities’ interiors as fields of application. Interior design practice might generate a credible, independent, response to contemporary needs. It could develop visions of inhabiting suitable to the paradigms of our society: a permanent uncertainty where transition is a stable reality and liquidity is a permanent state.”

Diagram

Diagram is a significant tool and method used in the work of Making Distance. It is used in two ways:

1. As a graphic visualisation device to structure complex relationships of information that can enable extended collaboration.
2. As a method of spatial analysis and speculation that is both generative and operational.

Contemporary graphic visualisation processes inform the first application, with the work of Edward Tufte central to the analysis of this area. The second type of application draws from the significant lineage of work produced by Peter Eisenman, Bernard Tschumi, Stan Allen, James Corner and others over the last three decades.

Stan Allen’s interpretation of diagram is of particular relevance. He states, ‘the primary utility of the diagram is as an abstract means of thinking about organization...The diagram is not simply a reduction from an existing order. Its abstraction is instrumental, not an end in itself.’

This way of understanding diagram and diagrammatic methods is most relevant in the third project undertaken as a part of the Motel project whereby a standard format screenplay is expanded into a diagrammatic script.

Allen also states, ‘A diagram is not a thing in itself but a description of potential relationships among elements, not only an abstract model of the way things behave in the world but a map of possible worlds.’

This notion reflects the operative and interactive condition of the concluding works of the PhD that take the form of a scale model but resist a fixed representational status.

24. Edward Tufte interest and expertise is in the area of data visualisation.
Mobilising The Interior
Introduction

Immediately prior to the PhD, two projects Looking Back on Things and Occupying Space Now invited questions around the permanency and location of interior space. These projects used methods of physical occupation, material or object intervention, and the re-orientation of spatial relations through displaced views or rearrangement of existing elements to make new interiors. The works explored interior space as a relational condition that emphasises the interpersonal, social organisation of space – distinct from a conventional definition of ‘interior’ as contained space identified through the physical limits of walls, ceilings and floors.

This chapter discusses two projects, 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space and Carry On, which form the first phase of the PhD. These projects examine interior space as a mobilised state and experiment with liberating interior space from the stasis of a building enclosure and set physical location. The beginning of a design partnership with Anthony Fryatt titled Making Distance, the projects explore our shared interests, concerns, methods and overlapping approaches to the design of interior space, such as: the occupation of space, brand space and communication, image production, display, performativity, and ideas of ‘urban interior’.

This chapter comprises two parts, each providing an exposition of one of the two projects along with a summary of findings. The first project 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space is a full-scale installation located in the cargo compartment of a three tonne truck. The second project Carry On utilise a scale model to reflect on the outcomes of 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space.
3 Tonne 'o' Space
Mobile Installation For 'The State Of Design' Festival.

Agenda

3 Tonne 'o' Space was an evolving experimental space that sought to expand conventional boundaries of Interior Design practice/thinking by mobilising an interior space. Tested through the appropriation and occupation of a ubiquitous utilitarian environment (i.e. the back of a three tonne truck), this mobile space intentionally placed the interior in the public domain - a shifting urban context.

The title 3 Tonne 'o' Space deliberately framed the idea of space in units of weight rather than volume. This provokes a consideration of the interior in another dimension (thus providing the potential for transformations in form, activity and location) and resists a definition based on containment or enclosure.

Part of the 2008 'State of Design' Festival, the project presented an emphasis on process rather than product, prompted by the festival’s agenda - 'Design For Everyone' and 'Design As A Verb'. We set out to elucidate a process of design by producing a mobile interior that evolved over the duration of a week. The audience for the project was both the general public and our design peers.

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1. Buckminster Fuller made a similar proposition to challenge architectural conventions. Cedric Price suggested buildings have a use-by date - like foodstuffs in a refrigerator.
2. 'Design For Everyone' proclaims that 'Design is a Verb!' The driving force behind this event is to make design appear as accessible and appealing as possible, that it's about doing, being, making, crafting, thinking, shaping – a process, not an object; design is for everyone! In designing these events, program curator Fleur Watson has helped bring together the design community, giving the designers unique opportunities and a space for design in all its guises to interact directly with the public. With events ranging from exhibitions to public talks, design experiences and iconic design statements, 'Design For Everyone' makes its message clear.

Description

The project concept arose from a conversation between Anthony Fryatt and myself as we walked along A’Beckett Street towards the market for lunch. Anthony was recounting his weekend of moving house. His observations of the removalist vehicle parked temporarily on the street noted the transforming of its interior by the addition and removal of furniture items. This struck us as having strong potential as an interior space apt for manipulation or intervention.

Consider a van – a workhorse utilitarian vehicle such as a 3 tonne Mitsubishi Canter Van – as an exquisite white volume. Opening the double rear doors reveals a precise and defined interior 2.1 x 2.1 x 4.2 metres in dimension, its clean empty atmosphere starkly contrasting the cluttered and dirty exterior.

Without windows, and therefore no visual access, the van interior is hidden, anonymous and unknown. Across the world there are countless van interiors identical in their make-up, exact in their dimensions, matching in their same white internal material. Every day these vans are packed with a new composition of objects, a remarkable transformative interior that is sealed and hidden to the outside world.

A van interior when loaded and full is a complex collection and arrangement of objects, tightly packed, carefully stacked and slotted together, with often disparate items interlocking side by side. Its construction is a frustrating and playful game of design. In this state, it is a highly compressed, dense and impenetrable interior. Its very nature excludes us from viewing it in terms that we are used to.

The interior, if considered at all, is suggestive of impending events. It is a constantly shifting and moving interior. As well as literally being a mobile space, it imposes transformation. The actions of packing, transporting, and then unpacking objects into a new context forces both intentional and unintentional design, and the production of space at every moment. At its destination, the dense, hidden interior expands and reconfigures itself into its new setting. The van interior returns to its pristine empty state.
“It is our intention to use the metaphor of the van to explore the fluid possibilities of the design process and the dramatic changes this can bring about. Roger Kemp and Anthony Fryatt will take a 3 Tonne Mitsubishi Canter Van on an extended tour through Melbourne city. Travelling with them will be a densely arranged, hidden interior. At strategic points along the journey, the interior of the van will be unpacked and playfully reconfigured into a new volume – a temporary public street sculpture that will intrigue, engage and hopefully delight the public and design world alike. It will then be repacked into the van to continue its journey.” (Kemp + Fryatt)

Inside-Out: The Public Interior

The project commenced with the production of a photomontage. This constructed image was used to illustrate the intentions of the project and formed part of the proposal to Melbourne City Council. As a conceptual image for the project, it helped to prompt ideas of duration, spatial setting and mobility.

We found an existing truck to photograph and then layered multiple images of Anthony and myself in a range of actions or scenarios. The image superimposed on the side of the truck was photographed in Anthony’s studio, using furniture as props to suggest a domestic space.

The image suggested a living room inside the van that was on public display to the city. It was cropped at head-height to give the impression that there may be more space within the truck, above.
My foot projected out of the truck, presenting the illusion that the space is open to the outside. The multiple iterations of Anthony and myself in the entire image suggest not only an extended duration, but also time frames with multiple spatial scenarios and characters. The interior was envisaged as mobile and flexible, a space that expanded and contracted through shifting relationships.

**Re-positioning, Re-assembling**

One of our aspirations was to construct the interior as a sequence of spaces over the duration of the festival. This would be achieved by i) changing locations and ii) transforming the space via reassembly of the truck contents (removalist boxes, furniture, objects and occupants).

We set up removalist boxes in the studio to the volumetric dimensions of the truck’s cargo space and then re-configured them in groups, stacked into blocks and lines. Unpacking the boxes to explore variations in spatial configurations beyond the confines of the cargo compartment volume, we also dispersed them in a manner that anticipated the van space pushing into a surrounding context. This process of testing configurations of space at 1:1 with packing boxes was similar to the ‘body storming’ processes used by Crowd Productions³ as a spatial prototyping technique⁴.

Using video cameras and projectors, we conducted experiments to visually displace objects from one location to another. The removalist boxes were ‘filled’ virtually with projected images of objects that we had on hand in the

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³ Crowd Productions utilise a low-resolution mock-up of spaces, often with packing boxes. See crowd.com.au/how-we-do-it/

⁴ Crowd Productions extend this technique to full-scale spatial prototyping likened to set design. The space is then used to act out specific operational scenarios of the business or organisation.
studio, including paint cans, rollers and brushes. This use of illusory visual shifts \(^5\) was informed by my earlier project *Looking Back On Things* \(^6\) and examined the undermining of the van cargo space’s perceived depth and boundaries. The application of two-dimensional images, some projected and others printed, became an ongoing technique that was consistent with the approach of the initial photomontage.

Stacking boxes in rows and walls, we became aware that they blocked views through to the cargo space. We addressed this by cutting open and folding sections of the boxes, forming geometries that extruded or protruded from the conventional box shape. \(^7\) This gave an impression of the potential contents of the boxes. At times, they offered a view into another space inside the box, or all the way through to the space beyond. Additionally, the boxes were made to have an obscure or odd form, heightening a sense of wonder or intrigue.

**Constructed Settings**

Following the experiments with the removalist boxes, we turned our attention to other contents for the truck. Referencing the initial photomontage, a story of the interior was constructed by collecting and assembling second-hand furniture items and related props. This led to a more fictional setting – resembling a kind of design office space – and was mainly dictated by the furniture and props we could find.

We developed a type of mise-en-scène, utilising a table and drawer set with wood-grain laminate and gun-metal powder-coated steel legs, matching timber sideboards, an office chair, and a replica Breuer armchair. A pendant light to provide illumination over the desk, a filing cabinet, and a venetian blind suspended on the wall (suggesting a window opening) all supported a consistent image of an antiquated office environment.

All of the furniture items and props (including books, drawing files, an old computer, drawing tubes, a drawing board, and hard hats) were arranged in a way to suggest that the space was active and in use.

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5. Bruce Nauman’s ‘Live Taped Corridor’ and Diller and Scofidio’s ‘Bancroft’ informed the process of displacement.

6. ‘Looking Back On Things’ deflected views through space via perisopic devices as a means to re-assemble and create a spatial experience.

7. The decision to cut up and manipulate the boxes was in part a flow-on of my design methods used in earlier works around the time of my Masters. I would often begin projects by manipulating its material components – to draw out ideas through a process of ‘making’ (as distinct from a method of conceptualising or theorising) to build an idea. This aspect of the project is symbolic of the way in which our combined ideas and approach to design were being tested and integrated.
The re-use of found design, commercial and industrial materials (as well as objects and furniture sourced from op-shops) played a key role in the work. These contrasted with the ready-made truck interior environment. Upon inspection, they often contained highly crafted details and models that were woven through the installation. We believed that a certain ambiguity in the initial encounter was important; the choices of material and objects (whilst clearly related) also deliberately posed questions as to what type of interior space was being encountered.

Performative Space

Having tested the spatial configurations in the studio, we then hired a truck and transferred the furniture and props into its cargo space. The strange, hybrid site-office/design-studio began to emerge.

At this point, we became conscious of some key elements of the project. The performative aspect of the work became evident as we sat within the space. The image constructed in the photomontage had materialised. As occupants of the space, we began to take up the cues of this spatial scene.

We refined the arrangement of furniture and props to enhance the sense of activity. We took on a kind of quasi-acting role to support the narrative that was being built up through the props, location of the truck, and intention of the space.

Like the Occupying Space Now project, which required a playful participation in the space to activate new relationships, 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space extended this method towards a fictional type of space that worked best with
prompts from the participating designers to draw attention to particular aspects of the project.

In many ways, this is quite appropriate to interior design practice, where there is often a strong programmatic consideration that needs to anticipate the user of a space. These occupants perform a role that is synonymous with the function or intended use of the space (whether enabling, passive, conflicting or resisting).

Multiple Locations

The positioning of the van at various sites in the Melbourne CBD enhanced the performativity of the space. Finding the right space to park, then setting up, were integral elements in the performance process. The most successful location was Federation Square. Storing the truck stored overnight in a North Melbourne car park, we were required to pack all the objects/props (furniture, computers, models, drawings, packing boxes) in a way that would prevent things rolling around and crashing or breaking in transit. This packing process became more refined each time the van was installed at a site.

Parked in a loading zone on Swanston St from midday through to 11pm, the cargo compartment of the truck offered a view of the main intersection of Swanston and Flinders Streets. A significant Melbourne intersection, it hosts the adjacencies of the Flinders Street Railway Station adjacencies: a major transport hub, the thoroughfare for trams up Swanston Street, and the public plaza of Federation Square. There are significant numbers of tourists roaming around looking for information, people commuting to and from work, and a population of homeless people gathered around St Paul’s Cathedral and the steps to the train station.

Time and Duration

3 Tonne ‘o’ Space emphasised both time and duration by locating and relocating the constructed interior in different parts of the city at different times. Whilst responding to the design festival program, the project highlighted the idea that an interior might be defined as much by its duration as its location or spatial dimensions. As Jeremy Till states “...our experience of space is conditioned through time and memory, space and time should be considered together as dependant categories (in the discussion of architecture).”

It seems an obvious idea but it deserves to be stated definitively: a space changes over time. Light conditions, temperature, and activities literally change a space. People move in and out of it, influencing the activities played out and the associated emotions drawn from these. This durational aspect of space can be considered as multiple conditions over time – perhaps even multiple spaces.
Occupation and Participation

An invitation was given to the general public to participate in a design process in two ways:
1. To occupy the space of the van and thus contribute to the production of the interior/performance.
2. To actively involve themselves in design decision-making in relation to the interior as an ongoing speculation or inquiry.

Over the course of an afternoon, with the truck open and a ‘State of Design’ placard advertising it as part of the design festival, a steady flow of people stepped up onto the tailgate to have a look inside the van. Many had different reactions. Some wanted to experience it, look around, inspect all the pieces in detail and walk out. Others wanted to make sense of it. What was it for? How did it work and where did it come from? A few took the opportunity just to occupy it, literally using it as a place of respite in a busy urban intersection. Many wanted a moment of connection, an opportunity to engage in conversation – ranging across political, emotional, and social intents and dimensions.

A number of students from the Interior Design program at RMIT, aware of the project from other staff, came to have a look. This brought about a social dimension that effectively illustrated a community of design.

Over the course of the week, the interior became more dense. A proliferation of drawings and paper constructions made by participants and ourselves, in effect, produced the interior over the duration.

Narrative And Fiction

3 Tonne ‘o’ Space was ultimately understood as a fictional space. It set up a scenario that an audience could engage with via a background narrative. This narrative was quite fixed and representational: a design office situated in a moving vehicle.

Through my work in commercial design projects, I have become aware that an important part of designing interiors is thinking about the user of that space and how they will interact with it. The interior needs to support the actions and activities of the people occupying it. Part of this includes providing spaces that assist the tasks at hand, are able to be navigated, and provide information (such as brand or corporate direction, and message and organisational structures).

Telling a story through the design of an interior is a common approach to assist the space to be effective in its intentions. Often, when a narrative acts as a backdrop to an activity in an office building, this might be supported...
through design techniques such as scale, material, orientation, or spatial sequence (e.g. lift, reception, waiting, office).

In this instance, an implied narrative was offered via the props and arrangement of space. Furniture and objects provided the audience with a way into the space. They recognised certain relationships that acted as cues to potential uses and activities.

If we understand the interior to be a set of relationships in space, what then are the characteristics of these relationships? What makes it ‘interior’ as distinct from other categories (e.g. ‘exterior’ – perhaps connected, close, intimate, engaged)? These multiple interiors only exist for certain moments or durations of time – most likely associated with the activity and quality or engagement of the relationship.

The truck that we hired was far from the pristine ‘white box on wheels’ that we had anticipated. We decided to cover the outside of the van with sheets of Cor-flute to conceal all the dents and scrapes in the paintwork. As we thought more about the aesthetic of the truck and its anticipated movement around the city, we decided to add painted signage to the sides and back of the vehicle. We became interested in the image of the van within the city, recognising that borrowed techniques from media and branding brought authority and visibility to the installation. This added to the fictional dimension of the project.

Implications of Mobility

The key methods used in the project were mobility, appropriation, performance and transformation. The mobility of the truck allowed us to make an interior in various locations act as a temporary event within the city of Melbourne. This provided a shifting set of contexts and a continual negotiation of space.

3 Tonne ‘o’ Space brought together our thoughts of (and attitudes to) contemporary urban space, illustrating it as dynamic, image-rich, attention-seeking and illusive. Interiors in this broader urban context provided a backdrop to the daily dramas played out through activities such as shopping, working and socialising.

9. Edward Hollis discusses similar ideas of the dramatic ideas of domestic interiors in ‘The House of Life and the Memory Palace: Some Thoughts on the Historiography of Interiors.”
Carry On

Introduction

Carry On was the second project in this phase of work dedicated to interior mobility. The title of the project came from two ideas: firstly, the work was a scale model that was derived from the observations developed in the 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space project. It did actually ‘carry on’ the ideas developed in the previous project. Secondly, the work was produced for an exhibition in the UK11 and would be transported from Melbourne to Heathrow via ‘carry-on’ luggage.

3 Tonne ‘o’ Space had been a significant undertaking. It required a substantial amount of time and resources in preparation, production and performance. The simple fact that we were a part of the installation, occupying the space for five days, gave us an immersive, physical engagement with the project.

However, our experiences and resulting observations throughout the five days were not always readily documented through photographs or other means. We felt the need to make a work that enabled a more substantial reflection on the project, drawing out some key ideas and themes.
Description

A 6mm plywood box was made to the prescribed limit dimensions for carry-on luggage.\(^\text{11}\) It contained 4 main components:

1. An acrylic base-plate with a network of laser-cut lines, depicting streets, intersections and routes taken by the truck through Melbourne CBD.
2. Background images of buildings printed onto acrylic and laser-cut to give an indication of the city skyline.
3. Three scale models of 3 tonne trucks – each truck describing a different configuration of location and interior spatial arrangement.
4. A series of annotated images (including the project descriptor) housed in the cavity, allowing the box to be hinged together, closed for transport, and re-opened for assembly and exhibition display.

Opposite: Carry On – set up in the gallery space.
Discussion

Diagram Of Movement And Spatial Relations

The Carry On model began with a series of diagrammatic plan drawings. These constructed a network of lines, representing a sequence of spatial arrangements within the Melbourne CBD that were anchored by the three tonne truck.

The drawings set out three spatial scenarios encountered within the city:

1. The truck parked in a small laneway.
2. The truck located in the forecourt of a large public institution – the Exhibition Buildings.
3. The truck located adjacent to multiple building facades.

The drawings made use of solid lines (articulating the relative location of building facades) and dotted lines (pertaining to critical views from and towards the truck). This relational drawing enabled us to expand the context of 3 Tonne o’ Space into a larger urban proposition. We considered the inside of the truck as a dynamic spatial condition that would fold in and out of the backdrop of urban fabric. The drawings and subsequent model resonated as a diagram of curated urban space.

The drawings, translated to an acrylic sheet forming the base of the model, brought together fragments of the city in one sequential relationship that condensed our experience of the urban environment. The edited composition of lines had parallels to Guy Debord’s ‘Psychogeographic Guide Of Paris’ and, with the space inside the van understood as flowing into the surrounding urban public space, also offered a reflection on Nolli’s map. The final Cad drawing produced for the acrylic base-plate used a consistent line-weight, resisting an overt hierarchy of lines. This technique, influenced by the drawings of Enric Miralles, generates a network of lines that overlap each other, integrating a number of co-existent locations.

13. Giambattista Nolli’s ‘Map Of Rome’ 1784 represents public interior spaces as part of the greater civic environment.
Model As Reproduction

Marcel Duchamp’s ‘Boîte-en-valise’ was a strong influence in the production of Carry On. From an aesthetic reference point, we were interested in the way in which the model and containing box could be integrated: how they would hinge and fold out to provide both a background of images and a platform for the model trucks and building facades to sit on. We tested existing leather cases but ultimately decided on a plywood box split in half that could open up to make a platform. The plywood provided structural integrity, securely housing the acrylic base-plate (ground plane) and protecting it from fracturing during travel.

Carry On sought to re-make 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space, extending it through a shift in material and scale, and enabling us to reflect on the project as a larger urban proposition. In 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space, as designers we were active participants, located within the space, engaged in conversation, observation and the general tasks of the day (such as driving and organising furniture and objects). The Carry On model provided a shift in perspective, a view from above, and the opportunity to collect a number of spatial scenarios that arose as a result of the change in context and activity of the truck.

Dioramic Model - Scenic Compositions

Early architectural models by Diller and Scofidio were an influence on Carry On. We were specifically drawn to the diagrammatic and operational qualities of the ‘Slow House’ model. Carry On was a hybrid – diagram and diorama combined. Like ‘Slow House’, Carry On used a trajectory of lines that allude to the projection of views or anticipated movement through the space.

Carry On employed techniques of dioramas to provide scenic compositions of the truck in different spatial scenarios. Photographic images of building facades were slotted into the acrylic base plate to provide flattened backdrops as visual context. This approach offered up critical views. It occurred to us at the time that the simplicity of the model had a strong set-like quality.

15. Translated as “box in a suitcase”, the ‘Boîte-en-valise’ was a portable miniature collection of reproductions of Duchamp’s own work.
16. ‘Boîte-en-valise’ was in the form of a brown leather case.
18. Diller and Scofidio, ‘Slow House’, Long Island NY 1991 in the way it presents a spatial sequence from the rear view mirror of the car to the view out to sea.
Foreground / Middle-ground / Background

The two dimensional, compositional structure of foreground, middle-ground and background (associated with drawing and photography) introduced a strategy for looking at the model and reflected on some of the spatial relations in 3 Tonne o’ Space. Notionally, we considered the foreground to be the inside of the van with an immediate view out, the middle-ground as the surrounding context, and the wide view of the city as the background.

Each of the model trucks explored a different spatial relationship between the van and the surrounding urban environment:

1. The interior folding outward to the surrounding urban context.
2. The surrounding context slicing through the space of the truck.
3. An open, vacant space – ready for occupation.

In 3 Tonne o’ Space we intended to create a fictitious space – an occupation of space in the city. What became apparent was a layering of the image of the space in various locations, each of which produced a different visual backdrop. In many ways, we came to understand this as a type of visual image in which physical space – ‘interior’ – folded into its background, generating a new image each time.

As much as the truck placed in the city produced another space (when the doors opened), equally, the city itself seemed to advance into the space as people entered – as well as through incursive environmental conditions such as temperature, light, car lights, conversation and personality.

Layered Spaces And Fragments

Carry On offered up a way of reconsidering 3 Tonne o’ Space as a series of fragments collected to make a larger story. This prompted the possibility of interiors that did not require a full completion of a space – much like a film where fragments of different viewpoints can be stitched together to form an overall coherent story.

This begged the question: do we need to make every component of a space, or can incomplete fragments build a consistent image? This again relates to ideas in film-making, where certain aspects of a story or environment are implied...
but do not have to be shown to be understood. Similarly, in set design, strategic production and location of objects and props can suggest elements beyond the frame. Translating these ideas to Carry On, we evoked an imagined extension of the physical space through its audience and occupants.

**Appropriation Of Urban Space**

The use of the truck can be understood as an act of appropriation. The open cargo space of the truck – usually glimpsed by the passing general public as it was in the process of having goods loaded and unloaded for delivery – was seized as a space for occupation and inhabitation. Changing the way in which the truck would normally be used had the effect of claiming space within the urban environment – a way of ‘making room’ within the city. The ‘interior’ is then generated through an occupation and a use of space rather than through a conventional idea of ‘the inside of the van’. Lois Weinthal sees ‘interior’ in a similar way, discussing it as layers that are “stretched and skewed to overlap and share spatial relationships, as well as details of objects, such as the body that wears clothing but also occupies furniture, or private rooms that spill into public spaces.”

Carry On and 3 Tonnes ‘o’ Space explored the idea of ‘interior’ as a mobile condition – not just the form of an interior of a vehicle, but a new space cut and pasted into an urban backdrop. In packing up, moving the truck, then unpacking and setting up, it became an act of inserting this new space into the existing urban context.

One of the great outcomes of this project was that, although this interior in many ways was constrained by its dimensions, there was a sense that it had been freed: allowed to roam the city, take on a new vantage point, catch the sun in a new way, or bring different demographics of people through to engage in conversations and offer experiences.

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20. This notion of appropriation of space was later explored in a design studio titled ‘Project To Ride’ with Marco Benitez from Konkuk University in Seoul. The projects were enacted in the subway cars of the underground railway system in Seoul.

21. The idea of ‘making room’ is seen as an act of adding to an existing environment. This is posed conceptually as a distinction to the idea of urban rooms as a larger architectural gesture. See Katherine BNetts’ ‘The Room in Context: Design beyond Boundaries’. ‘Urban Rooms’ was the title of an undergraduate design studio conducted with Suzie Attiwill in 2009.

Reflection

The investigation into the mobility of interior space in the 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space and Carry On projects provided significant development of ideas and design methods which informed my practice and subsequent research projects. Working within a public urban domain was a shift from previous design projects that had generally been positioned in the more private sphere of commercial gallery spaces, or commercial tenancies of office towers.

As a 1:1 built work operating over the duration of 5 days, 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space was consistent with the approach taken in the ‘Urban Interior’ exhibition at Craft Victoria earlier in the year. Carry On drew on techniques of drawing and mapping established in earlier works from my Masters.

The two projects successfully knitted together the design sensibilities, research interests and methods of production employed by Anthony Fryatt and myself to form Making Distance. My interests in the negotiation of space, modes of occupation, and intervention all intersected with Anthony’s focus on media, brand and image in the urban context.

The borrowed furniture and props in 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space presented a consistent setting for the interior, leading to a type of fictional space. This became more pronounced throughout the duration of the project as we became more aware of the image that was being constructed. The photographic documentation of the space used the camera as a curatorial tool as well as a framing device to compose spatial scenarios.
Carry On also emphasised the scenic concerns within the work. Referencing the techniques of dioramas, it utilised two-dimensional background images similar to scenic flats used in theatre or film.

Working back and forth between two-dimensional images and three-dimensional space became a conscious and active pursuit. In reviewing the photographic images of 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space, we began to think about the space as layered, and often comprised of fragments that could be used to construct a visual scene.

The occupation of and participation in the space suggested a type of performativity supporting the production of the interior. This was in part consistent with the previous Occupying Space Now project at Craft Victoria, although the concepts were more extensively developed in 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space.

Both 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space and Carry On provided significant insights into ways of diffusing the boundaries between spaces, enabling a flexibility of interior relationships through a flow of material, activity, view and information.

Through them, we observed and embraced a complexity of spatial relations, identifying a central element of the work which would inform future projects.

The fictional dimension to the projects set up an implied narrative that offered a way of working with interior space – not bound by walls, but connected through a consistency of experience. This approach is consistent with business marketing and advertising campaigns that build a brand experience.

The work revealed an opportunity for an expanded role for an Interior Design practice: contributing to the design of public spaces of urban centres. These projects built on earlier work I had completed with the ‘Urban Interior’ research group and added to the body of work being produced by this community of designers.

The shift in medium and scale of the projects introduced the beginning of a method for reflection and further research development. The diagrammatic drawing used in Carry On identified a useful tool in articulating dynamic and layered spatial relationships. The merging of diagram and model allowed the work to remain a tool for ongoing dialogue between Anthony and myself.

A certain degree of improvisation was required in the production of 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space. The multiple locations and activities (together with the scale of the project) required a number of contingencies. We embraced this way of working as adding to its range of possibilities and implications.

There were some limitations to these first two PhD projects. 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space was most successful when located in areas of the city that were more populated and contained related or complementary activities – such as Federation Square, or parts of the ‘State of Design’ festival. It lacked sufficient activation of space when in other urban locations. As much as we tried to move out of the confines of a contained environment, the inside of the truck remained a dominant geometry and volume in the work.

At times I became uncomfortable with the central participatory role adopted in 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space. The participatory role shifted from the earlier Occupying Space Now project where I could play the comparatively simple role of ‘maker’. In 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space the role-playing evolved into a more detailed performance that tended towards entertainment or engagement.

23. ‘Urban Interior’ is a cross-disciplinary research group comprising of academic and design practitioners from Industrial, Landscape Architecture and Interior Design.
Summary

The projects discussed in this chapter were motivated by the desire to challenge the assumption that an interior space is necessarily a static immovable condition defined by the enclosure of an architectural container. This provocation provided an opportunity to examine Interior Design as a mode of practice that has multiple applications and locations.

The decision to work with a vehicle rather than within a building represented a significant shift in the way I had practised previously as an interior designer. Offering variations in context, audience, climate and participation, the truck delivered a spatial complexity that resisted the often controlled programmatic space of many commercial or semi-public interiors.

The combined interests, skills and knowledge established through collaborating on Making Distance offered new ways of thinking about (and working with) interior space. These shifts in practice initiated the discussion of project work in the following chapter, which deals specifically with: scenic strategies, layered space, ‘interior’ as a relational construct, and tools for spatial dialogue – all within a suite of set design projects for film and television.
Scenic Strategies 1

Proximities, Relations And Collaborations
Introduction

3 Tonne ‘o’ Space transported an interior into the public realm of the city. In a mobilised state, it tested the production of an interior that was not governed by a fixed location and examined the implications of a shifting, dynamic context. Carry On then attempted to capture and extend the concerns of the project through a remaking of 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space at model scale. The two projects developed an approach to the production of an interior, emphasising scenic compositions that communicated an implied narrative. This work initiated the formation of Making Distance.

This chapter continues the chronology of projects, providing an exposition of the development of Making Distance’s practice and research trajectory. Motivated by the techniques of implied narrative and scenic composition developed in 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space and Carry On, I introduced a new context for the practice: set design for film.

The work further explored Interior Design as a practice that can operate free from the restrictions of an enclosed or contained space. It foregrounded the investigation of Interior Design as a process of constructing relations – in this case, between actors, props, spatial conditions and scenes.

The first project Motel was a triptych of independent short films exploring ideas of time travel – a collaborative endeavour between Making Distance and three writer/directors. It developed an innovative approach to the communication of screenplays, the ‘rotated script’, which enabled an
extended dialogue between directors and set designers. It observed the operational constraints of film production, providing an insight into the temporary nature of the set and its relationship to camera.

The second project *Time, Distance, Duration* re-examined the spatial relations of the Motel set as a 1:1 installation, continuing the evolution of the ‘rotated script’ through animation of text and layering of film footage. This work played a similar reflective role to *Carry On* (i.e. remaking a previous work) and elaborated the diagrammatic techniques first employed in that project.
Motel

Set design for a triptych of short films.

Agenda

Motel centred on the production of a triptych of short films set in and around a common fictional location: an Australian country motel.

The aim of the research was to investigate modes of collaboration, and in particular:
1) how a trans-disciplinary collaboration between film-makers and interior designers might productively destabilise the established methodologies of film screenwriting and production;
2) how methodologies of multi-authoring in a screen-work move away from the primacy of the single directorial auteur; and
3) how a design-oriented focus on the concept of ‘interior’ may lead to spatial re-conceptualisations useful for screen-writing and directing practices.

A premiere screening of the Motel triptych took place at AFTRS in Melbourne on September 9th 2010. Motel comprised three short films written and directed by David Carlin, Paul Ritchard and Christine Rogers, featuring actors Syd Brisbane and Natalia Novikova, and designed by Roger Kemp and Anthony Fryatt (Making Distance).
Description

The Invitation

An email from David Carlin on the 6th August 2008 read: "I left a message on your office phone just now: I teach in the Media Program in the School of Applied Communication RMIT University. Together with two of my colleagues, Paul Ritchard and Christine Rogers, we have embarked on a practise-led (sic) research project involving the making of a triptych (sic) of short films - we are keen to collaborate with a designer on this project."

The email included an attachment with the following heading: "Motel - The place you go when time is short, to meet lovers grown strange; to slide between the future and the past; to watch dreams form and blow apart."

Carlin, Ritchard and Rogers were particularly interested in collaboration and were not concerned that we did not have experience in film and television design. Their focus was to bring different disciplinary perspectives and methodologies to the film production process. This collaborative structure would extend to other creative partnerships with actors, a cinematographer and a sound designer.

The directors had identified 'time' as a central concern for the three films. Their brief included the statement: "We are exploring time and its configuration within narrative; in particular representations of time-travel, both literal and figurative via memory." They were also interested in the notions of character, performance and identity, and intended to use the same
two actors to play the key characters in each film.

The outcomes for this collaborative research project would include: the film triptych, scholarly articles, and a web-based version of the work that could explore narrative layering and interactivity, together with documentation of the collaborative process.

I was immediately alert to the scale of the work and the need to get Anthony Fryatt to agree to join the team. He was hesitant, conscious that neither of us had worked in that arena and similarly wary of the scale of the commitment. This was a common dynamic in most projects we took on, where I would often take on projects and convince Anthony to agree. I have come to recognise this as part of the success of our collaboration. Once Anthony committed to a project, his drive to deliver a level of detail and outcome supported my initiating enthusiasm for each endeavour.

The Briefing

At a café across the road from the University, Anthony Fryatt and I met with the three writer/directors, David Carlin, Paul Ritchard and Christine Rogers. We discussed the objectives that had been outlined, focusing on ideas for the manipulation of space/time relationships. The collaborative structure for the project was not entirely clear (given our lack of film experience) but the conversation revealed consistencies and differences in thinking that made it a compelling proposition. The directors were interested to know what we wanted to achieve. Both Anthony and I discussed the previous works we had produced in 3 Tone ‘o’ Space and Carry On. We explained our approach to the design of interior space in these works, using fictional components and narrative, together with strategies of spatial collage and the considerations of time and duration.

I discussed the concept of ‘interior’ as a set of relationships that are not necessarily produced by a defining architecture (such as a building) and explained that this idea could be used to explore the spatial and temporal relations in the films. That the films were envisaged as presenting a displacement of time and space was of great potential. Anthony was interested in exploring the use of film and image in a more deliberate way.

The directors were a little surprised at how we had approached our previous work and intrigued by the ‘interior’ concept. They asked a number of questions on the differences and delineation between ‘interior’ and ‘exterior’. Their initial expectation was that we would design and build a motel room for a triptych of short films that had the potential to interlace or connect sequentially. With a better understanding our design process, that expectation shifted and an appreciation of the nature of the collaboration commenced.

Filmmaking - An Unfamiliar Medium

Filmmaking and set design was a new medium for Making Distance. I had previously used video documentation for the development of drawings in my Masters research; Anthony had a strong interest in photography and did
most of the photographic documentation of our previous work. We had both referenced the work of photographers Candida Höfer, Andreas Gursky, Cindy Sherman and Jeff Wall and filmmakers such as Michel Gondry, Spike Jonze and Wes Anderson in our Interior Design undergraduate teaching.

Many of the design studios I had conducted in the Interior Design program explored ideas of narrative, sequence of space, and disjunction. Often, the final project brief was for the design of a hotel – a typology of space that is an enduring and consistent setting for filmmakers. Films like ‘Memento’, ‘The Shining’ and ‘Lost In Translation’ immediately come to mind. These visual references inform the way in which we experience and inhabit these spaces.

I have consistently used storyboards in design studio teaching as a strategy for developing a brief for a project. A storyboard presents a typical or desired spatial experience for the occupant of a constructed design. Although these projects do not have any actors as such, it is important to visualise how occupants of a space would move through and engage with aspects of the design. The storyboard tests the way these sequences of space work, prior to building them at full scale.

Processes derived from film (such as storyboarding) have been in regular use and reference in design and architecture. Bernard Tschumi’s work in ‘Manhattan Transcripts’ and projects such as ‘Parc de la Villette’ in Paris offer filmic techniques as a way of designing space through analogous references to framing, cutting, and the strong influence of narrative. Diller + Scofidio’s renovation of the Brasserie Restaurant in New York employs video cameras to take a still image of people entering the restaurant; these images are then projected in multiples above the bar, integrating the filmic material into the built space and adding to its voyeuristic nature. The saturation of film image and language through design and popular culture conveys an obvious potential for overlapping and connecting issues. However the nature of these intersections as they could be applied to the Motel project was yet to be discovered.¹

Cinematic techniques have been an inspiration to many designers. Bernard Tschumi in ‘Manhattan Transcripts’ and ‘Architecture and Disjunction’ explored film montage techniques such as ‘jump cuts’ to propose sequences of space, event and movement. More recently, film techniques have had a significant influence on designers utilising sophisticated animation software to image their designs.

The Capitol Grand apartment building in South Yarra, Melbourne, uses high-resolution rendered images, together with carefully constructed photographs of Hollywood actor Charlize Theron, to build a narrative image to sell a lifestyle. This is consistent with the approach developed in the marketing of retail and service industries to generate sophisticated and desirable brand experiences.

The universal endeavour of Interior Design practice is to focus on the inhabitants of space from the perspective of personal experience. This is not unlike the way in which a writer, director, and cinematographer build a consumable image of a character’s experiences in a film.

¹. IDEA journal interior territories pg 113
Discussion

Spatialising The Screenplays – The ‘Rotated Script’

Having met and agreed to collaborate on the project, we received three draft screenplays:

Script 1: ‘Agency Time’ (by Paul Ritchard)²
Script 2: ‘The Papin Sisters’ (by Christine Rogers)
Script 3: ‘Spiral’ (by David Carlin)

These A4 documents included dialogue and contextual information about location, actions and camera instruction. Typically one A4 page equated to one minute of screen time.

Even though we had used storyboards in our teaching, the screenplay structure was quite foreign to us. The format was decidedly linear. It had no supplementary visual information and offered few clues as to the means of interlacing the three stories. It immediately made me aware of my strong reliance on visual media to reconcile spatial understanding and speculation.

Both Anthony and I recognised our need to draw all the textual information in the scripts into a more complex and layered representation.

The expectation of the directors at this point was still that we would begin to design the motel: choosing paint colours, carpet, fabrics and props for the space. Instead, we set out to prepare a new set of documents that would enable us to discover an overall strategy for a design process. We discussed this approach with the directors, saying that we wanted to slow down the process and investigate broader possibilities for our approach to the design.

We reiterated our interest in extending the conceptualisation of ‘interior’ within the triptych. "Where and how was interior defined and located? What sort of interior relations existed within each of the screenplays? And how might these be represented relative to the various filmic instruments of camera, set, lighting, sound, etc.?"³

Extending the diagrammatic drawing techniques we developed for Carry On, we reformatted the screenplay texts into a large, printed three metre diagram.

We also made two supplementary drawings: one of a motel room and one of a car (a significant location in ‘Agency Time’).

A preliminary diagram illustrated the structure and key elements of our ‘rotated script’ idea. The three screenplays were denoted as lines of narrative progressing from left to right, suggesting a parallel duration or time frame.

Three types of space were identified: interior, exterior and liminal⁴. Moments of time travel were also identified.

2. Film (1), ‘Agency Time’, is set in the mid 1960s but takes a leap forward in time via a customised silver Mercedes flying down the highway out of sight. Its occupants, travel consultants for a company called ‘Agency Time’, are looking for new holiday destinations but one of them ends up going too far and encountering a far less attractive future.

3. Ibid., 156.

4. Threshold ambiguous in dimension.

Film (2), ‘The Papin Sisters’, details the relationship between two lovers meeting in a highway motel room. As the script unfolds, we become aware that the characters are father and daughter and this event is enabled through a slippage in time. Time here is ‘impossible’ in the same way that it is ‘impossible’ for a father and daughter to maintain any kind of continuing sexual relationship. The intimacy of their relationship is toxic, and indeed this film takes place only in the motel room, suggesting a suffocating interrelatedness that cannot be sustained.

Film (3), ‘Spiral’, is set in the present day in a motel that has not changed its appearance since the late 1990s. The film tells the story of a journalist investigating a story about time travel who is reunited, after twenty years, through the eerie intervention of a geeky motel office clerk, with her first boyfriend. The time travel experienced by the protagonists of this story is metaphorical, as they seek to return to a love affair they shared half a lifetime ago.

In the words of David Carlin, one of the directors of the films, “This project constituted an activity of film making situated within a broader framework of research, or, viewed from the other direction, as a piece of research through self reflexive creative practice.”
The large format ‘rotated script’ laid out the three screenplays side-by-side with the text rotated ninety degrees. The re-orientation of text shifted the emphasis away from being a textual document (purposed for ease of reading) to a map-like document that required orientation. The scripts could now be unfurled and laid flat like a plan drawing made of text. The scale of the print in landscape orientation was also influenced by my Masters drawings (informed by Chinese and Japanese narrative picture scroll drawings). By rolling up the scroll from each end, a specific part of a narrative could be isolated in the ‘frame’ between the two rolls. This technique allowed us to discuss sections of the scripts in a way completely new to the film-makers.

Similar to a production designer identifying props within a script for procurement, we highlighted spatial conditions in the text and used a network of lines to illustrate connections across each of the films. Words, actions and phrases such as: ‘above’, ‘behind’, ‘underneath’, ‘through the window’ and ‘out on the highway’ were highlighted.
Stephen Holl’s diagrammatic analysis of inter-relational properties of modern urban complexities informed the ‘rotated script’. Holl’s correlational charts draw attention to the relation between things, rather than the object type. He states, “If the simple reconstitution of historic building types is frustrated by modern urban complexities, the interrelational (sic) properties of those complexities may be a way of rethinking urban form and program.” Holl’s charts begin with a series of ‘primary relations’ including ‘near’, ‘over’, ‘atop’, ‘under’ and ‘within’. These are layered together to generate more complex relations (e.g. ‘over within a within’ or ‘within atop’).

The ‘rotated script’ was a significant beginning – positioning interior ideas through the film and building up spatial complexity that could be used by the three directors. As much as the ‘rotated script’ presented a complexity of interior relations, it also “allowed the directors and designers to see where these scenes were located in relationship to each other – and critically – how they could be integrated into the broader narrative of the three films. The narratives were rarely linear, however the map-like quality of the rotated script allowed for spatial interconnections to be made by the designers and directors alike, both within the individual scripts and between the films.”

We came to realise that this approach to the script(s) was a significant departure from the norm. The standard film script format has a header for each scene that outlines the scene number, the location (e.g. ‘motel room’ or ‘highway’), the general time of day (e.g. ‘day’, ‘dusk’, etc), and whether it is an interior (‘INT’) or exterior (‘EXT’) scene. Since this clear binary between ‘INT’ and ‘EXT’ scenes is so well established in film production, the three

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7. ibid., 12.
9. ibid., 158.
writer/directors were initially concerned that the interior designers would only be interested in and equipped to design those scenes which had ‘INT’ written on the header – in which case, who would design the exterior scenes? ‘Exterior’ designers? Landscape architects? The way in which ‘interior’ was conceived by the designers (as a subjectively experienced environment, an inhabitation of that space) was a revelation for the film-makers. Suddenly, discussion of the interior space was not confined just to a motel room, office, or even the interior of a car, but now could extend those spaces far beyond their conventional boundaries. Even a conversation between two characters outside on an empty highway could be conceived as a kind of interior scene, an intimate zone containing the two of them, separate from the surrounding environment.

Thinking of interiority in this way (as a phenomenon born in the subjective experience of an inhabitant of a space – or, in this case, a fictional filmic character) was extremely productive in imagining how to express in cinematic terms the themes of emotional connection and distance that were increasingly found to resonate across the three scripts. In response to conversations between Anthony, the three film directors and myself, the ‘rotated script’ continued to transform and grow in content.
Two supplementary drawings illustrated these connected/distant relations with regard to a specific moment or potential scene. The car drawing presented a view through the front windscreen for the film ‘Agency Time’, registering a scale of proximity from close to distant. The area of the front seat was considered the closest space, the most immediate and intimate environment. The horizon offered the most distant location, and one which could symbolically indicate the past or future in the narrative. The liminal16 spaces were thresholds between interior and exterior, negotiable relative to dialogue, story and action.

The drawing of the motel room offered a similar illustration of relations through proximity, time, and movement. An important feature of both drawings was their transparency – not restricting our view to the room, but allowing us to consider the space beyond the walls. The concept and location of ‘interior’ is negotiated – determined by relationships experienced and imagined.

These drawings were successful in informing an increasingly layered and complex handling of the scripts. Different spatial qualities, such as ‘intimacy’, ‘distance’, ‘interior’, and ‘exterior’, were extracted and highlighted before being laid back into the increasingly visual script diagram.

Spatial Relations: Proximities
Mapping Actor Movements

The majority of action in each of the films was located in the space of the motel room. The three films were all set in different time periods - therefore requiring three different motel rooms. One set was constructed and then styled for three iterations.

The design of the plan was influenced by typical layouts of small hotel rooms or apartment spaces, with the bathroom adjacent to the entry door. This provided a short corridor at the entrance and enabled the full width of the space for the living/bedroom. The general layout of the motel room would remain consistent, but be dressed according to the requirements of each film.

Having established the layout, the three directors were asked to provide an indication of the aesthetic aspirations for their films by providing a list of precedent or influential works. The earlier discussions about interiority had influenced Christine Roger’s thinking as to the way in which ‘The Papin Sisters’ would be shot. She showed some excerpts from the Claire Denis 2002 film, ‘Vendredi Soir’ (‘Friday Night’). This film has a haptic quality, a strong visual intimacy that is brought about through the camera position, lighting, and choreography of actors’ movements.

Christine wanted ‘The Papin Sisters’ to have a quality of melancholy, with low colour saturation and a blurring of details in the room over time. The film would use minimal sound and evoke an erotic tenderness similar to ‘Vendredi Soir’. She was keen to focus on the positioning of actors in each scene through choreographic movement and close camera work to generate the desired qualities of interiority and intimacy.

An introduction to the work of Claire Denis provided a telling intersection with the ‘rotated script’, and the diagrammatic drawings and models. Denis’ approach to cinema is a process of montage or editing. She describes it as making “blocks of impressions or emotions (to) meet another block of impression or emotion” matched with a resistance to filling in the gaps for explanation. This approach resonated strongly with the implied narratives of ‘3 Tonne o’ Space and Carry On.’

A series of actor maps described the anticipated movement of the two actors in ‘The Papin Sisters’. It registered the paths that the actors would take through the set and identified specific items and locations – in this instance, the mirror in the bathroom, the curtain, champagne bottle and briefcase. Similar drawings were made for ‘Agency Time’ and ‘Spiral.’ This set of drawings extended our dialogue with the directors and allowed us to provide a contribution to decision-making in relation to camera position and movements.

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Ian Murphy, from University College Cork, describes the spatial qualities of the film as "haptic": "(Haptic) It is the manner in which the viewer's pretenses toward a distant, optical identification with the scene are renounced by a visual set-up that securely evokes the sensation of slipping into a dream. The surface plane of the screen is flattened, the framing is de-centered, the focus is fuzzy and shallow, the colors are blended into different shades of sepia and gray, and the lighting is so underexposed that large portions of the screen are blacked out."

13. Quote from interview with Claire Denis by Yol Miranda http://blog.waysofseeing.org/2010/06/claire-denis-on-narrative-in-cinema.html post: Claire Denis on narrative in cinema accessed 12.01.16 - “For me cinema is montage, is editing. To make blocks of impressions or emotions meet with another block of impression or emotion and put in between pieces of explanation, it’s boring. Again, I am not trying to make it difficult but I think, as a spectator, when I see a movie one block leads me to another block of inner emotion, I think that’s cinema. That’s an encounter.”
Diagram of anticipated movement of actors in 'Spiral'.

Diagram of anticipated movement of actors in 'Papin Sisters'.

Diagram of anticipated movement of actors in 'Agency Time'.

Views of 'Papin Sisters' motel room set.
Views of 'Agency Time' motel room set.

Views of 'Spiral' motel room set.
Making a Space for Film

In the first meeting with the directors on set, a question was posed: how do we get the camera and dolly into the space? One of the reasons the directors had not chosen an existing motel room to shoot the film was that the space needed to fit director, cinematographer, sound engineer, actors and make-up artist, as well as camera, lights, and other paraphernalia. An existing space would also not physically accommodate specific types of shots, including pans with the camera mounted on a dolly.

We built a motel room in the studio – with four walls, a door, a window, bathroom and all of its features. We quickly came to understand that this was unnecessary, given that the camera would really only capture perhaps a third of the space we had built. However, with our level of experience made it difficult to predict what would ultimately be seen in the frame. The issue was resolved by removing parts of the set to allow the dolly access. The shooting sequence was then organised to align with the set arrangements.

This was a significant moment, affecting conceptual thinking around the production of interiors as a set of relationships. We had made an enclosed space (something we had set out to avoid) which posed a distinction between the physical space of the set and the space captured in the moving image. When the camera and monitor were introduced to the space, we became more aware of the temporary nature of the set; that it was simply a means to an end, and the ‘end’ would be the moving image.

The role of the image in 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space and Carry On had been either as a development tool, or a medium for the documentation of a design. As much as we had entered this arrangement with an understanding that we were designing a set for a film, we were used to the designed space being the finished artefact.

Discussing these issues with the directors, we realised that the conceptual framework for production of interiors was already embedded in their approach, due largely to the engagement with the ‘rotated script’. The spatial relations would then unfold through dialogue, actors’ movements, camera manipulations, and lighting. Conditions of exterior could be manufactured by the camera emphasising distance, or through the removal of an item from a sequence or narrative. Interior conditions would be produced through closeness, intimacy and inclusivity, constructed via depth of field, framing, and content and tone of dialogue.

The directors’ attention was drawn towards the actors more than the set. Our relationship to the cinematographer, on the other hand, was strengthened; it was he who negotiated the set through the actions of the camera and assistance of the lighting crew.
Visual Trajectories – Mirror In The Bathroom

In the motel room layout, a mirror was positioned in the bathroom facing the door opening to the living space, directly opposite the window looking out to the highway. This provided opportunities for the directors and the cinematographer to set up shots through the mirror, reflecting back into the living area.

Echoing my earlier work with periscopes in Looking Back At Things, I was particularly interested in this element of the set. As with Looking Back At Things, the mirror provided a spatial shift – an increased depth, a multiplying of space – in this case, a layering of the bathroom into the living space. A conversation between the two actors shot in the mirror provided a connected relationship between the two positions within the set.

Although reflection is a common experience, the opportunities it provides for displacement and folding of perceived relationships is a productive tool in the making of interiors.15

15 There is an interest here with the works of Anish Kapoor - Sky Mirror, Dan Graham - Bisected Triangle Interior Curve and Adolf Loos’s American Bar.
Temporary Components

A number of additional temporary components were introduced to support the film production process. These were mainly in the form of polystyrene or cardboard sheets suspended from grip stands – intriguing elements that I likened to prosthetics, temporarily aiding the space to support the production of the intended image through the camera. This intrigue expanded to the lighting rigs, booms, and the structure holding up the scenic flats. I was reminded of the ‘Slow House’ model and the sea view suspended by an alligator clip on an armature attached to the baseboard of the model.

Behind The Scenes

The back of the set was equally fascinating. The complex lighting set-ups, the messiness of cabling, the eclectic mix of materials and painted surfaces from previous film productions, and the volume of space formed by the relationship of the set to the studio walls was compelling.

Motel provided an opportunity to test the concept of ‘interior’ in the context of film production. As interior-designers-turned-set-designers using ‘interior’ as a concept for spatial production, we brought a way of working that was unhitched from film-making convention, encouraging innovation in screenplay development (i.e. a new script format and means of engagement).

The strong hierarchical structure of the film-making process meant that we had most influence at the beginning of the process – at a type of briefing stage. The director role overlapped with our usual role in designing and our frustrations with the compromises necessitated by this prompted us to make another piece of work that would reflect more fully on the space of the motel set.
Time, Distance, Duration
Installation at Studio 1- Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne.

Agenda

*Time, Distance, Duration* set out to explore the time/space relations depicted in the *Motel* film triptych. It highlighted and reflected on: the use and production of narrative in forming interiors, the camera as a spatial mediator, the relation between interior and image, and the implication of time, duration and distance in concepts of interior.

Anthony had become interested in what he would describe as four phases of space in the film process: Imagination Space, Set Space, Camera Space and Screen Space. I was interested in continuing the development of the rotated scripts and remaking parts of the film set at 1:1 to exhibit significant relational conditions.

This project progressed the technique of retrospective reconsideration established in *Carry On*. However, instead of constructing a scale model, we made a 1:1 installation.

Description

The installation comprised: film shorts, prints of stills, scripts, diagrams and drawings, models, video cameras, television monitors, film props, 1:1 partial set constructions, and a public talk by the designers and directors.
The layout of flats replicated the alignment of significant components of the Motel set: the window looking out to the highway, the bathroom doorway, the bathroom mirror, and the image in the mirror itself. Footage was used from the films to project onto the flats, overlapping and passing through the window and door openings. Moving images filled the small panel representing the mirror.

The ‘rotated script’ was exhibited in its original three metre long format. Animated versions of the film scripts were also made and formed another layer of video projection over the scenic flats. Supplementary diagrams completed the range of media, isolating stills from the films and extracted text from the screenplays.

Discussion

Animating The ‘Rotated Script’

The ‘rotated script’ was a significant feature of the Motel project. It acted as an impetus for dialogue and was used up until the filming began. We were disappointed that the script was not used more during the filming process. This was in part due to the primacy of an established production process, as well as the significant time taken with actors and crew.

Nevertheless we continued to develop the script further, turning it from a creative tool into a documentation artefact. The second iteration of the ‘rotated script’ digitised the text and used a network of overlaid lines to highlight and connect the various sections.

A third iteration maintained the three screenplays as background bands of text running left to right. Words and phrases pertaining to a location, an object, or a spatial relationship were copied from the background text and layered over the bands to be read in a horizontal format. The size of the text was determined by perceived importance or duration in the narrative. This version of the script made the highlighted parts more visible and took its cue from data visualisation and infographic techniques.

The graphic composition also included grey or orange blocks layered through the text to suggest changes in the tempo of action and movement. This provided a type of graphic visualisation of time and duration.
Zooming into parts of the ‘rotated script’ allowed us to examine specific scenes via graphic works that combined stills from the films, sections of the script, and line drawings. The first graphic work isolated a sequence of stills from ‘The Papin Sisters’ that captured the two main characters. Dotted lines threaded between each still traced the direction of each actor’s line of sight. Other lines identified objects or locations, such as the mirror or front door.

Another series of graphic compositions was made, again using stills from a specific scene, but this time including extracts from the new ‘rotated script’. The diagrams opposite examined aspects of ‘Agency Time’ with a sequence of stills acting as a central linear composition. Drawn lines extending outwards to connect with extracts of the ‘rotated script’, linked film footage to sections of the text. Other lines connecting still images from the films registered distance or duration.

The layering of script and image was then tested in an animation process, which took text and graphics from the script and combined them with still and moving images from the films. The text was put in motion, scrolling across the page from left to right, or expanding and contracting. Still images appeared for moments and were replaced by further images in various locations as part of a moving graphic composition, presenting a dynamic visualisation of the screenplays that exposed the spatial relationships of the triptych.
Then she sees the way he is looking at her.

your photo.
INT. JANE'S CAR, DRIVING ON HIGHWAY

JANICE is driving, chatting to JIM sitting beside her.

JANICE: There's some crapshit story about people out here who believe in time travel. And since I'm the wacky feature girl now, since my political stuff got a little too, you know, political... I'm kinda safe out here in the boondocks...

JIM: Maybe I could be in it. We could travel back to when we were fifteen.

JANICE: She thinks for a moment he is joking. Then she sees the way he is looking at her and, despite herself, feels touched. She drives on a while. She pulls the car over to the side of the road and stops, considering.

THE HEAT OF THE DAY PRESSES IN. She drives on. She pulls the car over to the side of the road and stops, considering. With this confirmation she gets into the car and it pulls away. She reaches for the rearview at the car's top speed.

CINE comes to and places her hands on the steering wheel, switching it to drive, taking OVER THE CAR. She drives towards the ball of fire. The sun is emitting a high pitch squeal and then it extinguishes and the CAR IS SUCKED into towards the sun.

EXT. JANICE'S CAR, DRIVING ON HIGHWAY

JANICE is driving, chatting to JIM sitting beside her.

JANICE: There's some crapshit story about people out here who believe in time travel. And since I'm the wacky feature girl now, since my political stuff got a little too, you know, political... I'm kinda safe out here in the boondocks...

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THE HEAT OF THE DAY PRESSES IN. With this confirmation she gets into the car and it pulls away. She reaches for the rearview at the car's top speed.

CINE comes to and places her hands on the steering wheel, switching it to drive, taking OVER THE CAR. She drives towards the ball of fire. The sun is emitting a high pitch squeal and then it extinguishes and the CAR IS SUCKED into towards the sun.

They travel for a while. No words are spoken. VAN is lost in thought. CINE is hyper conscious of all that is going on without ever looking at VAN.
Installation As Spatial Diagram

*Time, Distance, Duration* performed a similar function to *Carry On*, providing an opportunity to explore aspects of the *Motel* project that had not been examined due to the constraints of the film production process. Unlike *Carry On*, this work was made at a 1:1 scale, allowing physical movement through it.

*Time, Distance, Duration* provided a shift from the linear film production process to a more open format of installation or exhibition. We were interested in building a space with multiple conditions, using a layering of text, spatial volume, projected image, photography, and viewing positions. Embracing a diagrammatic quality, we reduced the number of installation components, simplifying the materials and adding graphic elements, including printed image, text and lines. Positioning the installation against a black studio background, we were able to light the components in a way that promoted a sense of floating fragments or parts.

The principle components of the installation were scenic flats, replicating the film-set relationship of window, bathroom doorway and mirror. Each of these openings provided a visual connection and framed view of the adjacent space. Altogether, they offered a sequential trajectory from the distance of the highway to the intimacy of the mirror.

This spatial relationship was experienced by approaching the installation from the entry of the ACMI studio and moving through it towards the
mirror, which was constructed as projected footage from the *Motel* films. It captured the actors looking into the bathroom mirror, reflecting back towards the window.

The motel room drawing was enlarged and adhered to the back of the long scenic flat and rear face of the mirror. This provided another representation of a view back towards the window. Three media presented a layered condition, comprising the film experience, the physical space, and a drawing.

The raw plywood flats, suspended from the lighting grid and floating off the floor of the studio, emphasised a lightness or diagrammatic quality to the construction. The raw ply finish continued the aesthetic of the *Carry On* model. Sections of the flats were painted with a wash of white gesso to allow for projections of the animated script and excerpts from each of the films.

Still intrigued by the qualities of the back of the *Motel* set, we used the rear face of the two parallel flats to hold printed images documenting the process of film production. We were interested in making the construction and back-of-set an integral part of the exhibition, revealing the complexity of the production process.

**Reflection**

*Motel* provided a unique opportunity to work within the unfamiliar territory of film. An intensive engagement through the entire production process (beginning with the first drafts of the screenplays, through to the editing of the final triptych) provided us with a greater awareness of production techniques and roles of the directors and crew. It allowed us to make comparisons with our approach to interior design practice.

*Time, Distance, Duration* brought the work back into the more familiar realm of installation and exhibition, which enabled the use of a variety of media. It sustained our previously established approach of mounting a reflective project that explored the ideas of a completed work in a secondary form that shifted scale, medium or context.

*Motel* came about from an invitation to design a set. As an invited participant, the research into the concept of ‘interior’ and Interior Design...
practice needed to be negotiated and woven through the engagement. This was a different structure to other projects undertaken to this point, which had been initiated primarily by Anthony and myself as independent works to enable the examination of specific research interests.

*Time, Distance, Duration* acted like a built diagram of Motel. It was both explanatory (exposing parts of the film-making process) and experimental (expanding on techniques that had been employed previously). The project connected with contemporary scenographic practices.17

We did experience a level of frustration with the linearity of the film-making process. This invoked a comparison with the built environment as a multivariate condition.

The early stages of the Motel project provided a significant contribution to the investigation into concepts of ‘interior’. The production of the more public ‘rotated script’ provided a mediating artefact, similar to a design drawing that could be drawn over and added to (through text and notes, or a network of lines).

We were interested in the 1:1 production of the film sets and our role in the physical making of these. Previous projects initiated an approach to design through the physical production of interiors – some at 1:1 scale and other at model scale. From that, we were introduced to television studios used by Channel 31 (a local television network in Melbourne) which would later become the location for a number of other projects.

Film production has a strong hierarchical structure. We observed the clear separation of tasks and responsibilities in the production of the *Motel* films, despite these being made on a budget and requiring shared responsibilities. The role of the director as auteur concretises this hierarchy.

The singular authorship presents limitations to collaboration. We were able to de-stabilise this to some extent through the early stages of the project via the manipulation of the script. Our ability to influence other parts of the film production were limited once the delineated roles of lighting, sound, make-up, and cinematographer were set in motion.

In this way, the set designer plays a different role to the interior designer. In our first foray into film production we were interested to see if this was the usual scenario, and it prompted us to reflect on the role we have played in design projects prior to the PhD. Interior designers often consider themselves enablers and collaborators but, perhaps, their role is also not dissimilar to that of the film director.

Summary

The two projects discussed in this chapter were motivated by an interest in narrative and the fictional aspects of 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space, together with the scenic compositions of Carry On. The new medium of film production provided an appropriate arena for an extended exploration of the concept of ‘interior’ as a relational condition.

An innovative approach to the screenplay as a generative public artefact enabled an expanded dialogue between designers and directors. The installation work that followed adopted a scenographic approach to spatial design. This installation was understood as a form of built diagram, documenting multiple views and spatial conditions of Motel.

The network of relationships identified in the ‘rotated script’ and translated in the Time, Distance, Duration installation prompted a technique of layering space through overlapping fragments and views. The following chapter explores these methods further, as Making Distance moves into set design for a television series.
Scenic Strategies 2

Fragments, Layers And Intersections
Introduction

Motel took us into the heart of the film-making process, extending the exploration of interior concepts through set design for film. The ‘rotated script’ was developed as a tool for identifying interior relations and became a significant graphic-communication-and-collaboration tool used by Anthony, the directors and myself. Time, Distance, Duration extended the ideas and techniques established in Motel by moving them out of the film production process and into an installation-based work.

This chapter discusses three projects that continued the investigation of interior-making through the medium of set design. The three projects explored the idea of ‘interior’ as a dynamic condition constructed through temporal and spatial relations, constructing interiors by means of negotiated connections between spatial or material fragments.

The first two of these projects involved the design and construction of sets for a television series titled The Temperature’s Rising, where we employed a constructed model that acted as a brief for the screenwriters to develop their screenplays. Like the ‘rotated script’, the model functioned as a tool to generate dialogue between the scriptwriters, the directors, and us. The set was an assembly of fragments forming an urban intersection, and marked a return to our primary interest: interiors and urban spaces.

A more prescribed intersection was deployed in series 2 of the The Temperature’s Rising, using joinery and furniture components that required the actors and cameras to negotiate the set in order to construct specific relations identified in the screenplays. The third project, The Consulting Room, emphasised gaps and openings between parts of the set to examine ideas of spatial continuity where there was an absence of complete enclosure.
The Temperatures Rising 1
Television screened on Melbourne’s free-to-air community TV station C31

Agenda

This project explored the production of interiority through the spatial strategies of layering, intersection and composing of fragments. It addressed what we saw as shortfalls in the Motel project (where the interior had remained in physical terms an enclosed condition) and built on the more layered spatial qualities of Time, Distance, Duration.

Description

The television series explored issues of climate change. It ran for six weeks, combining drama, comedy, music, documentary and news segments. Our role was to design the sets and supply the props. The process included a commitment from us to assemble, disassemble, and supervise any alterations required throughout the duration of filming each week.

“We all know about climate change. We all know it’s important. We all know it might end life as we know it. We all know it’s hot. But what do we make of this? In many ways we are sick to death of hearing about it. We want to get on with living our lives. The point of The Temperature’s Rising is to describe these lives. To explore what it means to be living in the world at this time and in this situation. The series explores the importance of adapting to climate change and the difficulties in doing so, on a personal, everyday, immediate level and in distinctive and offbeat ways” 1

1. Extract from email from Leo Berkeley, 19 February 2011.
Having seen the sets produced for Motel, Leo Berkeley (a filmmaker and senior lecturer in the school of Media and Communications at RMIT University) approached us to design the set for The Temperature’s Rising. We agreed to work on the project, provided that we could continue to pursue our PhD research interests.

For Motel the directors asked for the design and construction of a motel room set. In a similar briefing, Leo wanted a café as the setting for the drama. He imagined an inside of a café with chairs, tables, counter and associated props. We resisted the idea of the café as a singular, confined volume of space and proposed instead an intersection – a space that allowed for multiple activities and spatial relationships – in which we could then generate interior conditions through connections and intensities of the space.

We referenced an urban intersection situated on the corner of a street and laneway. This provided a space with potential for a number of interactions related to the activities of café, street and laneway. Leo was also interested in combining material shot in external locations, which resonated well with our proposed approach. In his brief, Leo wrote:

“The intention with the set is to allow some segments of the program to be filmed there but to also allow the smooth creative integration of diverse segments filmed elsewhere. The idea I have been working with is to have the set as a café, where people can come and go, interact and talk. The advantages of this are that actors and non-actors can easily mingle. There is also the need for the series to have at least one regular person/host. This person could be the café owner, or the person who makes the coffee.

Within this location, there could be a window that is actually a Chroma Key green screen. This could be used for realistic or imaginative purposes. For instance, it could heat up during an episode or across the course of the series. It could also be used for transitions to other segments. I quite like the idea of multiple screens (of different shapes and sizes) available in the set that could be used for similar purposes.”

2. A chroma key, often referred to as a green screen allows the superimposition of images over the top of footage during post production.

3. From meeting with Leo Berkeley
The eventual set was comprised of two hinged flats that made the corner fragment between the laneway and the street. These were then extended on either side to provide additional scenery for the street space. A set of steps, doorway, shop window, and a platform that aligned with the top step height formed the basis for the café. An actor playing the role of the barista would move up and down the steps and through the doorway (to suggest service) while the actors playing the role of customers were seated at the table on the street.

The other end of the set contained a park bench positioned in front of a large signage panel that provided the setting for interviews to take place. At the end of the laneway, a Chroma key screen provided various superimposed images (added in post-production). These images ranged from photographs of Melbourne laneways (to extend the depth of the physical set) through to blurred moving images of trains (to support the drama narrative).

The set was dressed with photocopied images as material representation for walls. We were keen to express a shift in time and duration via material changes to the set. We had used a similar technique in *Time, Distance, Duration*, using enlarged prints pasted onto the flats. By pasting new images onto the set between filming scenes, we were able to represent a shift in time.
through material change. The set walls would thicken with the accretion of layers over the duration of the six episodes.

The television format utilised three cameras and was shot using live editing, through a mixing desk adjacent to the studio. The cameras were positioned in static locations:

1. Camera left – shooting diagonally across to the right of set.
2. Camera middle – shooting perpendicular to the set.
3. Camera right - shooting diagonally across to the left of set.

This camera set-up was quite different to that of the Motel film. We found ourselves continually asking the camera operators to adjust their framing to include, or cut out, areas of the set. With the live editing process, this was problematic, as there was limited opportunity to make these adjustments. In Motel, there were a number of takes and an extended period of post-production, which allowed us more time to negotiate these changes.

Discussion

Model As A Tool For Dialogue

A further significant difference between The Temperature’s Rising 1 and Motel was that there was no script at the time of the commissioning the project. We could therefore not use the same method of manipulating a script to inform conditions of interiority within the set. It would in fact be some time before the script was written – and some episodes were only finalised a week before shooting.

We therefore began the work with a scale model of the urban intersection. The model was made from simple materials: white card, foam core, and some photocopied images. The ‘preliminary’ quality of the model was a deliberate strategy on our part to provide the scriptwriters and director with an unfinished artifact that they were invited to manipulate. Our hope was that their screenplays would be informed by spatial scenarios generated through the physical rearrangement or removal of parts of the model.

The lack of material representation in the model also acknowledged that the set would be primarily blank flats, dressed through painting, material-cladding, and graffiti. We anticipated making more detailed material decisions while building the set in the television studio.

The model, like the ‘rotated script’, was designed as a tool to promote dialogue between the designers and scriptwriters. Demonstrating the
manipulation of components within the model, we were able to offer examples of different types of relationships and actions that could transpire within and because of the set.

This provided a way of working that allowed a considerable amount of improvisation in the construction phase – a process that was consistent with previous projects, where few drawings were made to represent a final design. Our collaborators were not given a rendering of the final design at the time we completed the work. The diagrammatic quality of the drawings (and in this case the model) offered a framework and a tool for dialogue, rather than an indication of a final design.

**Urban Intersection – A Constructed Situation**

The decision to give this set an urban focus was a conscious link back to 3 Tonner ‘o’ Space and Carry On. We were interested in constructing an urban setting, through which we could explore concepts of ‘interior’ as relational constructs beyond the defined limits of buildings.

The model and subsequent set were constructed as an intersection of urban fragments. These fragments (a section of street, entrance to a café, the start of a laneway, some signage, a lamp-post and a wall, bus stop sign, advertising hoarding, bench seat, cyclone mesh fence and steps) were understood as a kit of parts that could be re-arranged to support a variety of fictional scenarios. We also included props (such as a shopping trolley, rubbish bin, construction equipment, and bicycles) that could be used in conjunction with the set to contextualise scenes and characters.

The choice of fragments (rather than whole or contiguous elements) was to encourage a subjective drawing together of individual parts, constructed through selective relationships. The intersection was both a typology of urban space and, conceptually, a moment of exchange – a type of constructed situation. A negotiation of interiority occurred in this setting; the narratives derived from the screenplays were translated by the actors and their engagement with the set.

The notion of fragments, identified earlier in 3 Tonner ‘o’ Space, was also informed by the reductive qualities of the set design in Lars von Trier’s ‘Dogville’, a film that uses minimal scenery and props, as well as painted outlines to suggest rooms, streets and buildings. In the film’s gestural set, small sections of walls and furniture provide discreet settings for parts of the drama to play out. Von Trier gives just enough information through the selected components to suggest an American town during the great depression. His intention is to “force you to zoom in on the people”.

Ultimately, *The Temperature’s Rising* set was much more condensed than Von Trier’s ‘Dogville’ and, moreover, become inadvertently flat – partly due to the linearity of the street setting, but also to the size of the studio. We had envisaged that the set could have multiple arrangements; however the large format studio cameras, schedule of filming, and confinement of the small studio made it impossible to adjust the various parts of the set between scenes.

### Multiple Views

During filming, we began to realise that we had envisaged the framing of shots quite differently to nearly everyone else on set. While we were primarily focused on the spatial qualities of the set, the directors, camera operators and lighting operators were focused on the actors’ performances. The conventions for standard camera shots (long shot, medium shot and close up) are framed entirely according to the position of actors.

Often, cameras would pan so far left or right that the walls of the television studio would come into shot. Although we felt this could be resolved by more careful and deliberate framing of shots, it did usefully highlight a number of issues in this format for television pertaining to the relationship of the set design with the camera positions.

With the prospect of a second series in the making, these issues prompted us to focus our attention on how we could strengthen our influence of the actors’ spatial relations, as they occurred through the intersection of drama and space.
The Temperature’s Rising 2

Six episode television series aired on Melbourne’s free-to-air community TV station C31

Agenda

Our aim for The Temperature’s Rising 2 was to strengthen some of the design methods employed in the first television series – specifically, the use of the intersection. We felt that The Temperature’s Rising 1 had become too visually linear and lacked depth of view. The static camera positions and our inability to re-assemble fragments during filming had undermined some of the opportunities to bring about multiple relationships and a meaningful integration of drama and set.

We wanted to complexify the arrangement of space (by using multiple sightlines) and increase the depth of view (by layering materials). Responding to the lack of camera movement in the first series, we wanted to create conditions conducive to multiple camera positions and thereby ensure a more deliberate negotiation of the space.

Description

The Temperature’s Rising 2 resumed series 1’s themes of climate change examined through a combination of drama, comedy, music, documentary and talk segments. However, the focus for the second series was an investigation of what it means to be a member of Generation Y.
"We all know about Gen Y - they buy a lot of stuff, live with their parents, are always online and have short attention spans. But beyond the labels and stereotypes, what are the generation currently in their twenties really like? What’s on their minds, what do they do and care about? Are they really so different or is it just marketing spin? Coming soon, online and in six broadcast television episodes, The Temperature’s Rising is a show that explores these questions and sets out to challenge Gen Y assumptions."

Some key themes for the episodes began with the following statements by director, Leo Berkeley, and his group of screenwriters:

We buy a lot of shit
We live with our parents
We can do three things at once
We can’t wait
We’re always connected
We don’t care about climate change

This project began with a briefing from Leo. A setting for the drama had already been established – this time, a telephone call centre named ‘Mercury Rising Market Research Company – Y Division’. The set needed to encompass the call centre office space, a security office, and a music performance area for live bands. The set would feature a call centre ‘pod’, involving 3-4 people and a team leader. The workplace needed to have a small TV on a wall that would provide a transition device for interviews (conducted on location or in another studio). Band segments would be interspersed throughout the drama when incoming calls were put on hold.

We received draft screenplays for some of the episodes of the series but other scripts were to be finalised closer to the shoot. These early scripts enabled us to establish some constraints and a spatial layout for the call centre. We decided to separate the call centre ‘pod’, security office and the live music space into three independent sets, but re-used components across the three spaces.

The call centre ‘pod’ contained four central characters/actors. One had a managerial/supervisory role, while the others worked as a call team. With this structure in mind, we wanted the space to facilitate a close spatial relationship between the team and allow views of the supervisor overseeing them. The desks were configured to provide visual connections between call centre operators and allow direct dialogue to be captured by the cameras.

A minimalist palette of materials included plywood sheets for shelving and...
a few components from the previous set (the steps and one of the hinged corner flats). We also reintroduced the large timber window frame used in the Time, Distance, Duration installation.

Discussion

Models And Drawings

The Temperature’s Rising 1 model was composed as a series of fragments – a kit of parts – that could be assembled in a number of ways to generate multiple relationships between the actors and the space. As an interactive component in the drama, it relied on the screenwriters to look for possibilities in the variations of the model, in order to develop a diversity of specific relationships. Its effectiveness also required reassembling the fragments during filming.

The shortfalls in this approach to The Temperature’s Rising 1 drove us to adopt a different approach for its sequel. We again made a model (also composed of fragments) but this time it occupied a static position and was designed as an organisational tool. It would more actively negotiate the content of screenplays and direct the positioning of cameras relative to the set and the position of actors.

The model was supported by a series of drawings made on a whiteboard in the studio. These drawings unpacked the relationships between the various locations and characters. They clarified the different views that would be needed through the space and the dialogue that would need to occur between characters. While the model generated negotiated constraints for the design, the drawings were a more collaborative medium for developing relational scenarios between actors and set.

We had observed a disconnection between the actors and set through the lens of the camera in The Temperature’s Rising 1. These drawings were therefore an important addition to the process in The Temperature’s Rising 2, creating a more detailed dialogue between screenwriters and us.

We went on to make a number of further drawings on the whiteboard. This allowed Anthony and myself to work on the same drawing as an ongoing visual conversation. Sometimes this was done simultaneously; other times, drawings would be left on the whiteboard in the studio for the other person to either work on, or to notate for later conversations.
Layered Space

Frustrated by the lack of depth in the previous set, we made the call centre as an open, permeable structure, made primarily with blank, hollow-core doors. The open space allowed views through the entire set and provided an opportunity to shoot scenes that overlaid activities in the foreground and background. This encouraged the camera operation to be more articulate, zooming and refocusing to capture multiple actions and dialogue.

A plinth elevated the manager’s location in the set. This had two functions: to visually imply the status of the managerial role, and to ensure that the foreground did not entirely block the space behind. This visual ‘stacking’ of the space recalled my Chinese scroll-influenced Master’s drawings. The scroll drawings flatten and stack the perspective – similar to an isometric projection – allowing a view of a space unobstructed by the contents of the foreground. This perspective structure also reconciled the conjunction of multiple narratives and views occurring in the one image. 7

The layers in the set had the effect of differentiating zones of activity, which were the call centre operators’ desks, a transitional walkway, and the manager’s office. These layers built depth within the space and were considered porous, allowing a flow of activity and view through these zones.

Multiple Views – Composing Relations

During filming of The Temperature’s Rising 1, we realised that the types of relationships we were attempting to achieve through the rearrangement of fragments were actually being defined by others (i.e. at the mixing desk beyond the walls of the studio). The editing team upstairs had usurped our spatial operation in their live editing of the three camera views.

Our response in The Temperature’s Rising 2 was to restrict the size of the set and locate it in the middle of the TV studio. This provided space for the cameras to be positioned around more of the set and to have views simultaneously blocked and framed by a series of vertical partitions. In this way, the space dictated the locations of the cameras.

The structure of the set acted as a prompt for specific relations: i) between the

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The camera positioned at the back of the set allowing a shot of the manager working on his computer and talking to one of the operators.

Three cameras are positioned at the front of the set to capture the conversation between the call centre staff, ii) between the actors and camera, and iii) between the actors and the set. For instance, two of the call centre operators sat at desks perpendicular to each other. Their close proximity emphasised their relational connection. The third operator sat in the background to the right of the image, obstructed by a partition and the operator at the front of the shot. These relative positions supported the relationships of the operator characters within the narrative.

The camera view from the front of the set was the most open. It enabled an overview of the space that included all the actors at the same time, allowing all of the actors to speak together in one, unedited shot. Other camera positions provided more restricted views of individual actors working on their laptops and/or conversing with other characters.

**Incompleteness**

The set exhibited a deliberate ‘incompleteness’, created by a lack of enclosure or defined limits. Gaps between components (such as the desks or shelving) permitted views through to the cyclorama behind. The camera would ultimately eliminate some of this background through tight framing. Nevertheless, we were interested in allowing the gaps to be present.

The physical components of the space do not produce a complete space - contained and enclosed. This incompleteness is both resolved by the viewer connecting up the fragments and through the connecting narrative via the actors’ performance.

**The Consulting Room**

8. In this instance the cyclorama is a large piece of material stretched across the studio to form a concave background. It has a seamless curved junction between floor and wall to create an optical infinity.
Set design for an online video tutorial for student chiropractors in the School of Health Sciences at RMIT University

Agenda

_The Consulting Room_ was the last project in this suite of works made for the medium of film and television. This project focused on a refinement of the layering techniques developed in _The Temperature’s Rising 2_. Our approach was to resist the production of a contained interior room and, instead, build a series of relationships between props and furniture that actors could occupy and respond to. These relationships were then layered against partially completed sets, joinery, and the lit background of the studio itself. The requirement for a complete enclosure was seen as unnecessary, given that action and narrative in relationship to the fragments were the critical factors in constructing the space.

Description

_The Consulting Room_ provided a space for chiropractors and clients (actors) to demonstrate techniques and approaches to consultative and examination procedures. The documented demonstrations were then distributed online to undergraduate students. We therefore needed clarity in the setting to support students’ familiarity with a typical consulting room – its tools, procedures and spatial organisation.
As with The Temperature’s Rising I, we assembled a set of individual components to make the space; however, we minimised the number of components to see how little we could get away with in the representation of a consulting room. The components were isolated – intentionally separating them to form gaps and openings.

We settled on five distinct components of the set: a single wall, two backdrop screens, joinery items (including a desk and shelves), and props (including the examination bench and painted floor areas). The single wall provided a backdrop to footage that captured a patient’s walking style. Its vertical window opening suggested an adjacent space.

The studio walls were used as background screening devices, directing the viewer’s focus towards the patient and practitioner. The joinery items, the consulting bench, and associated props provided environmental cues, indicating an office/medical practitioner’s consulting room. The painted floor sections articulated a change in zone between the more administrative function of the desk and the procedural space of the chiropractic table.

Discussion

Continuity Through Relations

‘Continuity’ is a term used in the film industry to refer to the arrangement of shots to ensure consistencies in narrative, sequence and appearance of a film. ‘Continuity editing’ responds to the inherent discontinuity of the film production process. The idea of continuity has relevance to the production of interiors beyond the cinema. Enabling continuity of parts of a space can reduce the need for a defining enclosure. It can also be enriched through the enabling of specific views.
Both *The Temperature’s Rising 2* and *The Consulting Room* were open structures. The cyclorama positioned at the back of the studio operated as a ‘fill’ between objects or parts of the set. I likened the cyclorama to the use of clouds or mist in Chinese paintings, where the mist fills in between parts of the narrative, ironing out shifts or disjunctions in perspective or contextual relationships.

We experimented by extending parts of the set into the gaps. One example was the horizontal strips in the main wall. The strips pushed beyond the wall itself towards the cyclorama. This created a gestalt effect – a visual closure between the wall and the other components of the set. (This also chimed neatly with the notion that this project in particular represented a closure to the series of set design works, as we now looked to take on more self-directed project briefs.)

The position of the actors and the engagement in conversation produces the relational condition.

The horizontal strips in the wall deliberately extend past the end of the wall. This suggests a continuation continues into the void space towards the cyclorama.

The framed camera view of the set.

10. These strips had an importance to the functioning of the set as it allowed the chiropractor to visually measure the posture of a patient as they walked.
Reflection

The three projects discussed in this chapter supported the ongoing development of the practice, providing scope for Anthony’s and my parallel concerns and enquiries to be investigated through making. Each of the projects, residing in the medium of television production, presented variations in context, process, organisation and collaboration that proved challenging to interior production. This prompted shifts in our response each time, making us work harder to incorporate our interests and balance the needs of our collaborators with those of the PhD.

This balance (between the specific outcomes needed by our collaborators and our requirements to address specific dimensions of the PhD) had a significant bearing on the way we now understand research through a design process where multiple agendas are at play. In many cases, our work disrupted the flow of conventional processes through extension or complication. Equally, our collaborators disrupted our working methods and assumptions. This complexity needs to be embraced as a condition of an open-ended design process that is in continual negotiation.

Some key themes established and extended through this work are: i) the production of interiors as a condition of public urban space, and ii) the breaking down of ‘the room’ as a defined and enclosed entity.

Where 3 Tonne ‘o Space used the interventionist technique of importing an interior space into an existing public urban context, The Temperature’s
Rising 1 attempted to build interiority through the reconciliation of human activities (in this instance the drama) in relation to specific parts of the urban fabric. The project enabled and activated this curated assembly, which was both subjective and temporary. In this way, it continued the quest to challenge the notion of an interior as a formal enclosure.

The use of fragment changes across each of the projects became more controlled and formalised in The Consulting Room. There, a more deliberate assembly of parts promoted connection, but also generated gaps and overlaps. The intentional breaking apart of enclosed space into fragments and layers produced permeability, allowing multiple views, changes in depth, and a flow between spaces. This prompted me to think further about ideas of ‘interior’ that stretch and extend relative to the strength of relationships produced.

At this point in the PhD, the model was adopted as a primary tool for collaboration and conversation. There is an important difference between models as a mode of representation and models that engage conversation or even participation. The latter activates a relationship between collaborators. This is important to our practice; it supports an open-ended process that is in continual negotiation.

The role of the model in the work also reflects a broader question for me, in relation to media use in the discipline. Drawings and models are primarily used as representational devices; even preliminary drawings and models work in this way. This sets up a particular relationship, which supports the financial imperatives of many practices. In our practice, we would like to use design as a tool for engagement between people and to see what can be made from it.

When looking at the The Temperature’s Rising 2 set through the television monitor, it occurred to me that it had a close resemblance to the drawings I made in my Masters. I had a sense that the drawing had now been built. This moment crystallised my understanding of the trajectory of thinking from the Masters into the PhD. References to Chinese scroll drawings had carried through to these projects with the use of the cyclorama as a visual translucency, equivalent to the mist which fills narrative gaps in these paintings.
Summary

*Time, Distance, Duration’s use of fragments (derived from the Motel set)* inspired our approach to the projects discussed in this chapter. Each project examined the use of component parts (fragments of space) as a method for constructing multiple relations. The layering of materials, spaces, actions and scenes was a primary technique for the production of these interiors.

The projects allowed us to refine these techniques alongside the use of models and drawings, which acted as tools for conversation between our collaborators and ourselves. The spaces can be understood as constructed situations, consistent with the approach to *3 Tonne ‘o’ Space*. The refinement of techniques through the iterative structure of the projects provided a greater confidence in the practice and clarified some questions around the role of drawing and model-making within the discipline.

At the conclusion of *The Consulting Room* project, we made a decision to move away from the work in set design. We felt that this incursion into film and television production had run its course and we were no longer learning from it. The underlying desire to work more freely on a project through a self-initiated process prompted the production of two models which are discussed in the next chapter.
Constructed Relations

Interior Assemblies
Introduction

The previous two chapters gave accounts of the second phase of projects, all working in the realm of film and television. These five projects enabled an exploration of interior through set design and offered a collaborative engagement with film and television practitioners.

Motel introduced us to the screenplay, something we perceived as a linear and reductive artefact. It prompted an expanded documentation that revealed through mapping, the multiple and overlapping relations of characters, spaces and objects. These documents provided the basis for the production of interior conditions in the films.

Time, Distance, Duration enabled us to combine our relational approach to making interiors with the scenographic techniques learnt from our incursion in film production. The iterative procedure of a second project that reflects on the previous consolidated a design method initiated in the first phase of work between 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space and Carry On.

The two series of The Temperature’s Rising and The Consulting Room presented further complexities in the production of television that led to the application of techniques of fragmenting and layering space to achieve multiple views and relations.
The work discussed in this chapter constitutes the third phase of projects in the PhD, where we moved away from the medium of film and television to a focus on the production of models. As self-initiated projects, the complexity of extended collaborations, external processes and required outcomes of the previous commissioned works are reduced allowing us space to reflect on the previous work and consolidate our methods.

The two projects, Complexity and Fullness and Quick/Slow Transition, continue to explore the use of fragments, which invite the assembly of an interior through constructed relations. Quick/Slow Transition, the concluding project of the PhD, operates in a similar way to Carry On and Time, Distance, Duration as a reflective project. It acts as a sequel to Complexity and Fullness, reusing and reassembling physical components from the previous model together with parts from Carry On and other works.

Quick/Slow Transition presents the somewhat fictional world of Making Distance as a conversation tracking through the duration of the PhD - moving through a reassembled and reimagined urban interior.
Complexity and Fullness
Scale model exhibited at Form Gallery, Perth, Western Australia.¹

Agenda

In this work we consider urban space as dense and continuous. More specifically we take a position that retail space is ever present in a contemporary urban condition. It is a medium of space that we move through and inhabit as part of our day-to-day activities.

Complexity and Fullness continued our scenographic approach using the model as a tool for a conversation. The work is a composition of relations of fragments derived from our collective experiences of urban retail spaces. The model offers an arrangement of abstracted scenes; becoming an interior that is simultaneously reflective, propositional and imaginary.

Description

Retail Space - An Urban Medium

During a walk through the Melbourne Central shopping complex, Anthony and I discussed the spatial experiences associated with the shopping complex. An observation was made that retail space is embedded in much of our urban environment. As Rem Koolhaas stated in his seminal book The Harvard Design Guide To Shopping, “everything is melting into shopping”².

¹. Complexity and Fullness was a creative work that was made for a group exhibition at Form Gallery in Perth in 2012. Titled An Interior Affair: A State of Becoming, this international exhibition was a component of the Interior: A State of Becoming IDEA Symposium hosted by Curtin University’s Interior Architecture program.
². This exhibition was particularly pertinent to us given the curators had set out to explore “the world of interior as a state of constant and dynamic becoming” and through the medium of exhibition, “connect the research ideas with a broader public beyond scholarly publication.”
³. The exhibition contained work from local and international academics that use design practice to produce creative work as a basis for their research.
This description by Koolhaas prompted us to think about the retail condition as a ‘medium of space’ occupying a middle condition, something that was flexible, surrounding and had a capacity for transmission.

We were interested at this point in the way that ‘retail space’ in broader terms evades the physical constraints of the boundaries of building tenancies through advertising media and consumer participation.

Retail space, although having a very specific intent — that of consumption — is a complex and full experience. It actively uses spatial experience, personal interaction, still and moving image, text and other devices to engage and activate its occupants.

Within this complex medium, the act of ‘display’ plays a pivotal role in the early seduction and subsequent desire that fuels the social and monetary exchanges upon which commerce ultimately relies. Understood in the broadest sense, display becomes an arresting spatial tactic and site of encounter that is complex and multi-layered in nature.

We identified the active condition of ‘display’ not only as conveyer of information or conspicuous presentation but also as a significant moment in the access to and engagement in an interior that is in constant production through a process of exchange: a state of becoming.

‘At the heart of reciprocal exchange between people lie the twin drives of desire and sacrifice: one person’s desire for an object, and another’s willingness to give up (sacrifice) the object for that desire or its representation (another object or token).’ (Kemp + Fryatt)

The production of the model began as an assembly of offcuts and discards from other projects built in a small corner of my office. The remains of a door header to The Temperature Rising I set provided the base ply platform for the assembly of component parts made from card, mirror acrylic and printed media. A photocopy image of a highway pinned to the wall behind was unrelated but conveniently provided an image that could be read as a view to the broader urban environment.
The model was taken apart and re-built in our meeting room space utilising a large table. The increased working space allowed us to stretch cotton thread through the model to document significant sight lines. This process influenced the addition of smaller platforms that were positioned away from the central base platform.

The assembly of fragments positioned on the base ply platform included:

- Translucent façade (this takes its form from a shopfront and purposefully obscures the space beyond to generate intrigue).
- Folded white wall surface gives a material layer (a vertical surface suggesting display that allows a shadow play from the objects in front).
- Hinged mirror (a vertical mirror plane that can be shifted to provide changeable reflected images. As the mirror opens up, it reveals a view of the sky giving a sense of an extended or more distant view).
- Frames (offer controlled views through the space that highlight specific spatial scenes including the position of display devices in front of backdrops).
- Acrylic streetscapes (are positioned on the main platform to fold the image of the city back through the retail space).
- Graphic markers (The black markings on the ground plane denote the previous location of model parts. The silver wedged shaped card indicates specific trajectories through the space).
- Display (is formed from folded card and positioned relative to the frames and backdrops).
- Floating platforms (provide fragments of urban fabric suggestive of edges or corners, material junctions or framed views).
- A sequence of episodic photographs (track out from the model documenting changes to the model itself over time).
Scenic Assemblies

The model is a site of ongoing assembly. Some of the components are fixed including the façade, the folded wall and the placement of the episodic images whilst other parts of the model can be moved and shifted to construct specific relationships. The model is understood to be in constant production through reassembly over time. The interior is brought about through the selective interpretation of relations between these parts.

The following images and text describe some of the relationships assembled in the work:

Edited Views

In the image below, shows the silver wedged shaped card intersects a frame indicating a trajectory towards the blue folded card form (which we also imagine as a piece of display joinery within this retail context). The frame is used as a visual editing device isolating a part of the space, in this case we draw our attention to the composition of the folded card and surrounding objects including the red and white striped post and the edge of the mirror. Shifting the position of the frame is likened to a zoom lens on a camera. Here, we are interested in a close view of the joinery as a heightened experience.
Doubled Space.

The image above shows the square mirror, which captures the reflection of the objects in front including the acrylic streetscapes. The mirror is hinged, pivoting off the backboard of the model that allows us to make adjustments to generate different views and relations in the space. The mirror doubles the space whilst compressing and merging the street and the retail space. The boundaries of interior and exterior are no longer defined by the architectural enclosure and instead are negotiated through the assembly and reassembly of fragments.

The image right shows the back of the hinged mirror. There are two further hinged panels that can be opened like a book. The middle, or second, panel contains a photographic image of clouds. It is transparent allowing a view through to the third panel behind. This panel, which is pressed against the backboard, is another mirror that captures the previous cloud image. This mirror also captures the space around the model, in this case the gallery in Perth.

Material relations

Each of the island platforms plays a role in constructing relations through the model. Being mobile they can be adjusted to generate different types of connections including distances. In the above image a fine-mirrored angle stands on the surface of one of the island platforms. It performs in three ways:

1. It makes a connection to the platform in the distance through a consistency in material and form.
2. It defines an edge that is suggestive of a junction detail extracted from the central plinth.
3. It captures a slither of the viewer, drawing them into the space of the work.
Discussion

Model As Collaborative Tool

Consistent with previous projects, this model is a collaborative tool enabling a conversation through making. It performs parallel operations: i) for Anthony, the model is a diagram and assembled image, and ii) I use it to construct relations through the negotiation of position and orientate to negotiate space. We therefore look at the model in different ways, adding and moving parts to assemble a different scenario each time. The arrangement is then assessed through each person’s critical lens.

The work moves through multiple transformations as we search for alignments in our understanding and aspirations. There is an acknowledgement of specific moves that we understand to have a clarity and conviction for our individual and collective interests.

The model can be understood as both diagrammatic and experiential. It has an operative function, ‘a device for thinking’. The island platforms invite participation through looking in different ways through the model, between fragments and via a bodily movement around and through the work. In many ways we understand the previous sets, drawings and models to be all the same activity. As much as we were collaborating on projects and responding to the requirements of the external brief, the work was always viewed in the same way.

This model operates at multiple scales; in fact we would claim that it is scaleless. The work attempts to hold small details and extended views in combination. The fragments are at times recognisable as representations of parts of the urban fabric, these fragments ground or contextualise the work. The other pieces play off these attempting to resist, expand and flip specific relationships.
Quick/Slow Transition
Scale model exhibited at Bus Projects gallery.

Agenda

Quick/Slow Transition expanded the spatial assembly developed in the previous project, Complexity and Fullness. It presents a fictional construction of an urban space that is derived from our collective urban experiences together with aspects of previous projects. The selective collection of fragmented moments constitutes a transitional interior constantly in the process of production.

Description

The project began with a photograph taken when walking along Lt. Latrobe St, Melbourne. The photograph (see right) uses two mobile phones and a mirror made to the same dimensions of a phone. The image is a sequence of reflections of the building facades projected through the mirror and captured on the one phone and then through the lens of the second phone.

The projection of image through the three individual devices produced a spatial depth through layering and repetition that would provide us with a visual brief for the project. The distorted and recursive image was made for the catalogue that preemped the production of the model that would be exhibited in the gallery a few weeks later.
Quick/Slow Transition, like Complexity and Fullness uses a central platform, however in this instance splits the platform to form a junction and opening that allows a view through to the underside of the model. A series of small mirrors are fixed to stands and can be relocated and adjusted to provide multiple reflected views.

The assembled fragments include:

- A photographic image (a reflection of me walking along a street in Melbourne transporting a ply box to Craft Victoria as a part of the Occupying Space Now project).

- A transparent acrylic folded sheet (which stands in front of the image and produces a reflective plane that captures both the photographic image and the reflection of the model and surrounding room).

- Two card frames (taken from Complexity and Fullness sit on the central platform and offer an alignment through the model towards the acrylic plane).

- Two of the city streetscapes (originally made for Carry On are located on one edge of the model alongside the translucent shop front from Complexity and Fullness).

- A detail image of street markings (from a street in Seoul which we use as a type of billboard image and connects to the sequence of repetitive images of material details positioned on the wall behind the model).

- A black acrylic surface (replicates the void of the adjacent cut in the platform and provides a deep reflective surface to capture other views).

- Black crosses (denote imagined viewing positions through the model as if on street level).

The model uses parts of individual works made prior to the formation of Making Distance including the use of two repurposed periscopes from Looking Back on Things, and an image reference to a London Underground station. Consistent with the previous work, the model does not have a specific scale.
Discussion

A Sequel To Complexity And Fullness

Throughout the PhD, we have made pairs of projects that have a successive relationship: (3 Tonne ‘o’ Space and Carry On), (Motel and Time Distance Duration) and (The Temperature Rising 1 and The Temperature Rising 2). In each of these relationships the second project has a reflective dimension whilst extending the ideas and concerns of the first through a shift in medium or context.

This structure continues in this phase of work. Quick/Slow Transition refines and expands the techniques developed in Complexity and Fullness to move beyond the scenario of retail space into a broader urban context. It replaces the island platforms with distributed mirrors that allow an adjustment of relationships through a visual editing and re-composition.

Quick/Slow Transition breaks away from the structured rectangular format of the retail space in Complexity and Fullness by splitting the baseboard providing an intersection of parts that resists a singular orientation of the work. The sub structure is revealed as extending timber arms radiating out that suggest continuation.

An Instrument For Interior Assembly

The use of the models has changed through the duration of the PhD. The first model, Carry On, was seen as a reflective tool that allowed Anthony and I to think about what had occurred in the previous project. The Temperature’s Rising 2 model invited collaboration through providing our collaborators with a collection of parts that could be rearranged to construct a number of scenarios and relationships.

The Complexity and Fullness and Quick/Slow Transition models make a further shift, by communicating our thinking and making process through the work itself allowing others to look through our eyes. In this way Quick/Slow Transition is an instrument for making relations that we use and others can participate in. In this instance the fragments are fixed and the mirrors become the device for negotiation and assembly.

The height of the Quick/Slow Transition model and its position in the gallery support this role as enabling other people to participate by looking through the mirrors, across the reflective surfaces and through the gaps and frames. Quick Slow Transition presents a more expanded view connecting up with the view through the gallery window and to other sections of the gallery. The combined purpose of model and device aligns with the work of Smout Allen whose research focused architectural practice foregrounds a process of making. They discuss their drawings having ‘a dual function of examining and narrating’ a site. Similarly Quick/Slow Transition presents an examination of a process of making interior through assemblage and a fictional view through it.
To Smout Allen

‘design through drawing and making can be considered a haptic experience where the physical act of piecing together ideas in two and three dimensions allows one to come into close contact with the very matter of the problem. This is especially relevant in a design approach that is not entirely question led, where one hopes to provoke a freethinking attitude that allows for and embraces spontaneous and serendipitous events.’

The use of the floating platforms also effects an extended physical participation in the work. The position of the platforms and the negotiated view through the alignment of components requires multiple viewing positions and location of the body around and through the model.

*Quick/Slow Transition* did not require any pre-emptive drawings to plan out the model. The project began with a conversation and was then manifest directly through the iterative approach to the assembly of the model. The ideas are literally built through the production of the model.

This aligns with Smout Allen’s comments about the serendipitous. Rather than carefully planning for a specific outcome, *Quick/Slow Transition* is derived through a number of physical actions including mistakes, opportunities and negotiations. The serendipitous is built into our methods of design – in fact we rely on it, knowing that the opportunities that will unfold through the production of the work will be more compelling than any pre-emptive planning.
Reflection

*Complexity and Fullness and Quick/Slow Transition* enabled us to work in a more focused way, without the distraction of the broader collaborations and external timelines of the previous projects.

The two models draw on the methods and techniques established in the previous projects, assembling fragments of space as an arrangement of abstracted scenes. The construction of these relationships occurs via a visual assembly – a scenographic negotiation of space. Both projects prompted a bodily encounter with the work through the negotiated viewing positions defined by the frames, mirrors or alignments.

As the models were built, the terms of agreement were established relative to the success or serendipitous outcomes. Decisions were made through trial and error, arrangement and re-arrangement. The minimal planning of the work highlighted its improvisation, a method consistent through much of the work in the PhD.

In many ways Quick/Slow Transition captured the practice of Making Distance in a single piece of work, editing the dense and multivalent urban condition to isolate compelling relations - an interior assembly.

The black cross indicates a position looking towards the building facade.
The clear acrylic sheet offers multiple reflections. This element of the model references the spatial condition in glazed shop fronts. The multiple views build a thickness and complexity of space.
Conclusion
"If the Interior was a map, it was a fantastic one; if it was a mirror, a fractured and dim one; if it was framed, it did so in a purposefully incomplete manner. The interior became a place to tell stories, but not stories that made sense...."1

A Relational Approach To Interior Design

This PhD was motivated by two interconnected concerns: the development of my own practice, and a desire to contribute to the discipline of Interior Design.

My practice exists primarily within an academic environment. My priorities focus on designing and educating designers. Much of my own design work is motivated by the desire to fold it back into my teaching.

Having graduated from an undergraduate degree in Interior Design, I spent some time working in a variety of commercial practices. I returned to the academy and undertook a Masters to reflect on an idiosyncratic drawing practice I had developed that was instinctive but unclear in its role. The Masters allowed me to appreciate this practice and its contribution, relationship, and relevance to Interior Design.

In the process, I came to realise that my drawings were a tool for locating myself within a space, constructing a relationship between an existing environment and myself. This work emphasised a relational understanding of an interior through the selective editing of aspects of the space, which were then documented through the drawing.

Subsequent creative works (made prior to the commencement of the PhD) shifted my practice from a concentration on drawing and mapping to making physical interventions into spaces. Two projects, Looking Back On Things and Occupying Space Now, constructed interiors within existing spaces using a procedure of re-viewing or re-orienting the spaces. These projects (like the previous Masters drawings) I understood as relational constructions and they led me to further investigate a relational approach to Interior Design through a PhD.

The first phase of work in the PhD, Mobilising The Interior, investigated an interior released from the constraints of a building structure and envelope. 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space demonstrated a performative approach to constructing relations in space by foregrounding ourselves (the designers) as participants in the designed space. The work generated a fictional quality that was informed by the establishment of an implied narrative. This provided a structure for consistencies in the overall setting of a design office in the back of a truck. A significant finding was that an interior could be constructed through a story or fiction.

The reflective model Carry On assisted me to understand how these ideas might play out in a more extensive way across the city. I began to appreciate that this approach was relevant to a larger urban application.

The second phase of the research, Scenic Strategies, carried the research into the world of film and television. It consolidated the collaborative practice

Making Distance, and provided us with the unique opportunity to expand our collective research of interior-making into the production of sets, which seemed particularly relevant following the fictional aspects of 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space.

The Motel film had a significant impact on the practice. It required us to explain our concept of ‘interior’ to filmmakers who would ultimately adopt this relational framework in the direction of their films. The loss of control after production of the script was disconcerting (given our usual authorship of the work); however, we came to realise that our role as designer/s had in fact already been implemented – through the production of the script as a performance brief.

The irony of constructing the motel room set as an enclosure was not lost on us, particularly after we had spent so much time working through the scripts to ensure that the relational framework was met. I now appreciate that part of the reason for this was a lack of physical context in the television studios. Previous projects all had existing conditions to respond to: 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space (the truck and city), Looking Back On Things (the gallery and related works) and Occupying Space Now (the intersection of gallery and retail space).

The subsequent installation Time, Distance, Duration at ACMI resolved some of these issues by using the material of the film-making process (the layout of the set, the scripts, and the footage) to generate an environment that we could work back into – constructing relationships through multiple views and spatial and material exchanges.
The television studio was a new environment, devoid of any material and physical context. I understand now that this influenced our approach to the next project ‘Temperature’s Rising 1’, leading to the creation of an urban intersection that supplied its own context (as a series of fragments that could be reassembled to generate multiple relationships and spatial scenarios).

Although ‘Temperature’s Rising 1’ was a successful outcome for the television directors, we were frustrated by the limited changes made to test the interior as a relational construct. ‘Temperature’s Rising 2’ was therefore a response to this self-critique. Reflecting on ‘Time, Distance, Duration’ we took a less representational approach, constructing a set that was much more reliant on the actors, their roles and their dialogue to establish the space.

In retrospect, the approach to ‘Temperature’s Rising 2’ resolved our earlier problem with the void of the television studio. The relationship between actors became a central focus, informing the layout of the space. Through this, the space was made porous, allowing multiple views and connections between actors and spaces – and incorporating the cyclorama. The subsequent Consulting Room set refined these techniques.

The third and final phase of the research, ‘Interior Assemblies’, returned the work to self-initiated projects. ‘Complexity And Fullness’ and ‘Quick/Slow Transition’ took up the strategies and techniques developed in the set design projects, whilst returning to the urban setting of 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space and ‘Carry On’.

‘Complexity And Fullness’ evoked a continuous city, dissolving traditional boundaries of buildings and streets. This work returned to a model as a site of speculation, where techniques of reassembling, repositioning and reviewing constructed relationships between parts of this continuous urban space. An interior was constructed through the selective connection of fragments. The model was a tool to demonstrate these constructed relations.

‘Quick/Slow Transition’ extended the relational construction to a broader urban space. It imagined space as a re-assemblage of personal spatial experiences, many of which had occurred through the process of the PhD.

The PhD extended my relational approach to the design and production of interiors. It enabled a shift from a drawing practice that was individual in nature to a highly collaborative practice with an expanded range of tools and techniques that I now appreciate in three categories:

- Drawings, that seek to ‘draw out’ relations in spaces and offer an appreciation of dynamic conditions, perceived and experienced.
- Models, that are simultaneously speculative and reflective (a discursive medium for engaging collaboration).
- Constructed Situations, that observe complexity and celebrate simultaneity.
Collaboration

Collaboration has been a key objective for this research. The most obvious and significant collaboration has been between Anthony and myself in the form of the combined practice Making Distance. This practice was formed to facilitate two research enquiries (‘Mediated Interior’ and ‘Negotiating Space’) through a central body of work. It brought together two designers, operating within the academic context of a University, in the pursuit of a body of practice-based research.

In many ways, the collaboration was a conversation about Interior Design. This occurred through ongoing verbal discussion but – more importantly – through making. Retrospectively, we both recognise the different roles we have played in this collaborative practice. Some have been consistent throughout; others have transformed over the time of working together. The consistent roles within the practice arise from our different personalities and align with our respective PhD titles.

For much of the duration of the PhD, I have taken the role of instigator and manager of the projects (a type of negotiation role). I have set up the projects by initiating an engagement with external parties including State of Design (3 Tonne ‘o’ Space), University of Brighton (Carry On), the Media and Communications department at RMIT University (Motel, Temperature’s Rising, Consulting Room), TASMEEM (Display Tactics), and the Interior Design Educators Association (Complexity And Fullness). This aspect of my contribution began in part due to Anthony only recently joining the Interior Design program. I had already completed a Research Masters and was ready to make the next step into a PhD. There was a significant impetus on my part to build connections and opportunities for an ongoing practice. Nevertheless, while I was responsible for instigating and setting up projects, Anthony brought an important critique to the structure, alignment, and process for the work.

This required a significant amount of trust on Anthony’s behalf: trust that what I had planned was going to work and could be achieved. Anthony was used to the two-stage commercial approach of resolving a project at the planning stage and then implementing it. In contrast, I was setting up projects based on a hunch, not really knowing whether they would work or not.

This scenario was pronounced in the first project 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space. The project embraced our two concerns: i) it made an interior that was not within a building (Roger), and ii) it made a space that was in flux (Anthony). I had not really thought much beyond collecting the truck and all the props, setting up, and seeing how things went. Anthony was more cautious, wanting to be clear on our expectations of what was going to happen. The challenge for Anthony was to find a way of working within the open-ended structure that I had set up for the work.

If, as I suggested, we are to understand our collaboration as a kind of conversation, it could be said that I begin the conversation and Anthony concludes it. This is often the case in the production of the work. We have a
running joke about Anthony running 10 minutes late – which is true. I have often been in the position of attending a meeting with an external group and having to begin the conversation without him. By the end of the project, it is invariably Anthony that is motivating me to spend a few more hours past midnight finishing a model, or resolving an image.

Decisions are reached in a number of ways. We usually come to a consensus about what we are going to do and decide upon a framework for the project. We make parts of the work independently and other parts simultaneously. For example, in developing the script for Motel, I marked up the script to highlight the spatial relations. Anthony then transformed this document into the larger networked diagram, which we then worked on together to form the final ‘rotated script’. We understand this as a method of ‘passing on’, where one of us builds up a component of a project for the other to expand or reinterpret (and therefore move it beyond individual preconceptions).

This ‘passing on’ can occur simultaneously. In the Quick/Slow Transition model, Anthony prepared the baseboard for the model and I gathered a collection of materials to construct the other built components. Having made the stands to bring the model up to bench height, the base became a platform for selective construction: one of us would make and place a component, and the other would respond by positioning, assessing, removing, adding or exchanging components. I understood this as a negotiated arrangement – building relations between parts of the model.

This process would occur over several days. It allowed us to continue working on the model between other commitments and, often, I would come back the following day to find a complete shift in components. There is little verbal discussion through this part of the process; most of the discussion occurs at the beginning to set up an agreed framework, and then at the end as a reflective conclusion to the work.

Over the duration of the PhD, the collaboration has remained stable and is understood by both of us to have strengthened. Anxieties in respect to roles and outcomes in the earlier projects have been replaced by familiarity and expectation.

The establishment and development of this collaborative practice with Anthony Fryatt has been a significant outcome of the PhD. What began as an idea on our way to lunch has grown into a successful partnership for the past six years. The PhD has driven a significant amount of work to be achieved over that time, including 10 creative works, 5 major graduate exhibitions, and the delivery of international talks and workshops.

Extended Collaborations

We deliberately extended this collaborative approach beyond Anthony and myself into an engagement with the writer/directors, cinematographers and crew of the film and television projects.

In some respects, these relationships could have been that of ‘client’ but became instead a collaborative partnership. We were not financially
remunerated for these works; so we were able to negotiate the terms of the project to incorporate our own interests (i.e. the two research trajectories of the PhD’s).

The negotiated demands established at the beginning of the projects required us to develop tools and techniques to ensure that collaboration could occur. In *Motel*, these included the ‘rotated script’ (tool) and slowing down the decision-making process (technique). Moving into the new arena of filmmaking, we were acutely aware that we had one opportunity to influence the production process – and that this was before we delivered a set of design drawings. The ‘rotated script’ was a significant invention. It allowed us to destabilise the conventions of the screenplay and move it from singular to multiple authorship.

The extended collaborations of the PhD (particularly in *Motel*) gave us confidence in drawing others into the work and shifted our perspective on authorship. This was most evident in the collaborations initiated through INDEX.

**Contribution**

My initial question (‘Does the design of interiors need to be confined to the inside of buildings, or even be defined by an architectural enclosure?’) was always a rhetorical one. It was a provocation – and a response to the retreat towards the faux-certainty of bricks and mortar by many within the discipline through the adoption of the term ‘Interior Architecture’. My response is a retort (articulated through design) and a contribution (expressed through practice) to an ongoing debate within the discipline.

The PhD has maintained a significant connection to my role as an Interior Design educator. The outcomes of the research have and will continue to provide a contribution back to the students in the form of: i) design studio teaching and ii) curriculum development (via new course work planned for the Interior Design Program at RMIT University).

The central aim of this research has been to develop an expanded practice of interior design. The projects form a precedent for others to follow with a similar interest and commitment to collaboration. It offers a series of tools and techniques that others can test and extend.

**Future Practice**

Taking advantage of the momentum of the PhD and the confidence built through it, we plan to strengthen connections with our international peers, making new collaborations and relations outside of our current setting. We also recognise a commercial trajectory for the work.

Making Distance is understood as a conversation through making. As much as this conversation attempts to reconcile the complexities of current discourses of Interior Design, urbanity and its inhabitants, it is also a space of fiction, celebrating idiosyncrasies of the everyday. This duality is important for the work to remain relevant and compelling.
Bibliography
Literature

Interior:


**Spatial relations:**


Cinema / Scenography:


Drawing/Graphics:

Spatial Sequence / Narrative / Navigation:


Urban / Retail:


Design Research:


Practices and Projects:

Drawing (Diagram and Maps):
Christo and Jeanne-Claude (the aesthetic and structure of proposal drawings that include text, collage, painterly image and drawing)
David Hockney (analysis of spatial proximities eg Pear Blossom Highway)
James Corner (mapping as a representation of spatial relations and narratives)
John Wolsley (Uelises mapping techniques including narrative structures to present an image of landscape)
Perry Kulper (research into role of drawing in architecture)

Models:

CJ lim (narrative form in architecture - spatial short stories of the city)
Shin Egashira (1:1 installations)
Smout Allen (use of models for the exploration of ideas – research practice)
Thomas Hillier (narrative driven speculative scaled models)
Duchamp (the valise)

Spatial / Relational:

Doh Ho Suh (the re-making of space, mobility of space and interiority of artefacts)
Jan Family (improvisation of materials and objects to construct spatial relations and narratives/Richard Long (the production of space through inhabitation/occupation/participation)
Abelardo Morell – (Utolises camera obscura techniques to project image of exterior space into interior spaces.)

Studio Toogood (design of interior environments including styling, brand with emphasis on creative direction with a strong narrative)

Vitto Acconci -Mobile Linear city 1991 (truck installation)

Richard Serra - Tilted Arc (Renegotiation of space, path and access)

Nendo - 1%@IL2007

Guise - {display systems}

Layered Spaces:

John Soane - House Lincoln's Inn Fields (layered space offering multiple viewing distances and relationships)

Diller and Scofidio – Brasserie (layering of viewing positions and mediums)

Enric Miralles - Calle Mercaders Apartment (1995) (Fragmenting of space through changes in surface material – texture and pattern)

Guise - Corner apartment NoI, 2007 http://guise.se/works/page/3/

Jessica Stockholder - Sam Ran Over Sand or Sand Ran Over Sam 2004 Rice University Gallery, Houston, Texas, USA

Campaign - Alfred Dunhill The Momentary Project, 2010 (temporary installation for New York fashion week) http://www.campaigndesign.co.uk/work/dunhill-momentary-project/

Narrative

Mike Nelson – The Coral Reef (Labyrinthine installation that explores fictional space with narrative sequence)

Bernard Tschumi - Manhattan transcripts project (narrative sequences constructing spatial form)

Campaign - Selfridges Fragrance Lab London 2014-09-21 http://www.campaigndesign.co.uk/work/selfridges-2/

Thomas Hillier – Collaged models

Concrete (interiors for entertainment with an emphasis on the experiential)

Cinema/video/scenography:

Bruce Nauman - Live taped video corridor (negotiation of distance)

Cindy Sherman (scenographic image that creates a narrative through scene and context.)

Dan Graham (spatial play between inside and outside – positions in space.)

Diller and Scofidio - Slow House Project, North Haven, New York, Scale model 1/4”=1’ (cinematic sequence of spaces)

Lars Von Trier – Dogville (theatrical aesthetic and diagrammatic form of the set design)

Other relevant interior practices:

Wonderwall (approach to design representation through models)

Martí Guixé (playful approach to retail, hospitality, event spaces eg. Camper Shoe stores)
Nendo (immersive and graphic qualities in design of retail spaces)
Concrete (interiors for entertainment with an emphasis on the experiential)

Local interior practices:

Edwards Moore – (“The presentation of two different views simultaneously”.
http://edwardsmoore.com/?page_id=87)
Foolscap Studio – (The Richmond weekender 2013 GTV9 Studio Site
Bendigo Street Richmond)
Moth – (Penthouse Mouse)
Right Angle Studio – (The Office Space)
Sibling – (Y3k)
The Projects We Do Together – (Testing Grounds)
Crowd (Body storming processes)
The 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space project, developed for the 2008 State of Design festival Melbourne, was a mobile and evolving series of experimental performance spaces exploring interior design within the confines of a 3 tonne truck.

The project was an attempt to challenge the assumption that an interior space is a static and immovable environment defined by its containing walls. Instead it sought to expand the conventional boundaries of interior design in the public realm through the appropriation and occupation of a ubiquitous utilitarian mobile environment (the back of a 3 tonne truck).

The mobility of the truck allowed us to take the interior to various locations within the City of Melbourne and act as a ‘pop-up’ event across the design festival program. This approach situated the work within a shifting urban context and made it visible to a diverse audience.

An invitation was given to the general public to participate in a design process in two ways:

1. Occupying the space of the van and thus contributing to the production of the interior/performance.
2. Actively involving the participants in design decision making in relation to the van interior as an ongoing speculation or inquiry.

The emphasis of the project was on process rather than product. The brief for the festival was framed as ‘Design for Everyone’ and ‘Design as a Verb’. We set out to communicate a design process by producing the interior over the duration of a week (there was also an extended period of testing and experimentation prior).

The audience for the project was both the general public and our design peers. A significant contribution came through conversations and experiences with both groups as we attempted to respond to the questions, challenges and reflections offered up.

The open rear box of the truck, usually viewed by the passing general public in the act of loading and unloading goods for delivery, was taken on as an interior space for occupation and inhabitation. The two designers of the project were located inside or close to the truck engaging the general public in conversations about design as a process. Over the duration of the week long festival contents were moved around within and outside the truck producing a continued review and change of spatial structure and relationships. This transforming interior...
also changes through an increasing accumulation of materials, objects, audiences, and contributions including food, drawings and artifacts built on site. The re-use of found design, commercial and industrial materials as well as objects and furniture sourced from op shops played a key role in the installation. These were contrasted against the readymade truck interior environment and upon inspection often contained highly crafted details and models that were woven through the installation. A certain ambiguity in the initial encounter was important, this combination in material and objects whilst clearly related, also deliberately posed questions as to what type of interior space was being encountered.

Particular attention was paid to the narrative and its context when selecting material and objects, specifically the relationship of the truck to a design festival context and the wider city. Key themes emerged that the installation either considered or alluded to 1) the aesthetic language of a commercial truck 2) a type of design studio 3) a site office 4) the language of installation/event/performance 5) borrowed techniques from media and branding to bring authority and visibility to the installation.
Selected Sites:

Royal Exhibition Building, Carlton – External forecourt coinciding with Design:Made:Trade fair - Daytime

Trades Hall, Carlton - Covered Carpark - coinciding with Iron Chef event - Evening

City Square, Melbourne - Public northern end of area of square – Daytime

Ladro Restaurant, Fitzroy - 2 hour street parking- coinciding with Design ‘O’ Pizza dinner- Evening

Federation Square, Melbourne - Kerbside Loading Zone St.Kilda Road – Daytime and Evening

37 A’Beckett Street, Abaris Print Works - 2 hour street parking - Is Not Magazine Retrospective and Peter Bennetts Photographer - Recent Work Exhibition

11-13 Warwick Street, North Melbourne – Laneway - Breakdown Party

Also spotted at various impromptu parking meters throughout the Melbourne CDB
Project Details:

3 tonne Mitsubishi Canter Van
Promotional signage
Cardboard packing cases
Paper and card artifacts - various
Printed images - various
AV and Projection
Furniture: desk, chairs, display vitrine, file cabinet
+ assorted
Objects: various design and construction office
equipment, books, clothes, suitcases, pendant lamp
2 designers + guests and public
Carry on was produced for a conference exhibition ‘Occupation: Negotiations with Constructed Space’ hosted by Brighton University, UK. 2009. The project was a critical reflection upon the previous installation 3 Tonne ‘o’ Space and continued to explore the spatial relationships and negotiation within the urban city. It was understood to be simultaneously both reflective and propositional and included descriptive and analytical imagery, models and text.

The work consisted of a model and series of printed images concealed within a wooden carry box that could be unpacked and assembled as an exhibit piece. The name of the work was a reference to the carry on baggage allowance given by airlines, as the intent was for Roger to personally carry the work to the UK in order to set it up. This came about both as a pragmatic response, but also to allow the piece to act as an analogy to the mobility and performativeness of packing and unpacking that took place in the truck project. In this case the international carry on allowance given by Qantas for international flights: Length 56cm (22in) + Height 36 cm (14in) + Depth 23cm (9in) = Total linear dimensions 115cm (45in) became a starting point and a defining constraint for the design.

Materially the work was made of a ply carry box that split open to reveal a collection of scenic parts that included scaled trucks, fragments of buildings and an abstracted city grid or ground plane into which a number of spatial scenarios were etched. It also included printed images of 3 tonne ‘o’space in various sites. Unpacked and re-assembled it diagrammed out the relationship of the truck to the city in various sites and considered spatial concerns such view, approach and engagement; foreground and background context; edges, thresholds and layering of sites. The approach was understood to be both analytical, in that relationships between sites and truck were depicted, and scenic in that the viewer was drawn in and encouraged to engage with various different types of encounters with the trucks.

(view from above v’s the full complex images produced form close up)

Project Details:

1 no. ply timber carry box (560x360x230 closed / 720x360x115mm open)
2 no. etched acrylic inserts
3 no. Mitsubishi Canter Vans (scale approx. 1:50)
3 no. printed elements for vans
9 no. acrylic cutout building with applied transparent images (various scales)
6 no. printed images and text 540x320mm
1 no. air ticket ticket MLB to LHR return
For the past 30 years INDEX, the annual graduate exhibition of Interior Design at RMIT University, has been held in a diverse range of sites. The spaces have ranged from empty commercial tenancies, dry docks, abandoned factories to inner city warehouses.

INDEX is a significant undertaking. It begins with the acquisition of a site that is determined primarily by location and cost. The sites will usually require adjustments to services (electricity, lighting, plumbing) and accessibility.

It is a highly collaborative exercise. It brings together students, friends, academics, builders, sponsors and industry partners and engages with local communities, prospective students and alumni. Anthony Fryatt and myself held the joint role of coordinating the production of this exhibition and event between the years of 2009 and 2013.

What has become apparent at the conclusion of the PhD is that the evolution of INDEX over these five years reflects the development of the work of Making Distance over that time. Our ambition for INDEX has increased over that time by extending its format as exhibition and opening party to an occupation of space over time that provides multiple engagements for its participants.
An transdisciplinary film project

Motel: A Film Project. 3 Writer. 2 Actors. 1 Motel.

A couple sit, pace the floor, or make love on the disheveled bed. She leaves in a car, driving beyond the future. He arrives from the past, and can only stay half an hour. In Motel three short films explore the spaces of an anonymous motel room, and the spaces of a relationship and time-travel.

The Motel project commenced in 2008: it centered around the production of a triptych of short films set in and around a common fictional location, an Australian country motel. This project constituted an activity of film making situated within a broader framework of research, or, viewed from the other direction, as a piece of research through self-reflective creative practice.

The aim of the research was to investigate modes of collaboration; and in particular:

1) to discover how a trans-disciplinary collaboration between film-makers and interior designers might productively destabilize the established methodologies of film screenwriting and production;

2) to explore methodologies of multi-authoring in a screen work that move away from the primacy of the single directorial auteur; and

3) to examine how a design-oriented focus on the concept of ‘interior’ may lead to spatial re-conceptualizations useful for screen-writing and directing practices.
The Film Makers

In Motel, contrary to more conventional film production, there were a number of deliberate rules or obstructions that were introduced in an attempt to disrupt established methodologies.

1) each writer/director (David Carlin, Paul Ritchard and Christine Rogers), none of whom had ever worked together before on a creative project, were separately to write a script for a narrative fiction film of less than ten minutes, set in and around a ‘motel’ locale, to form part of a triptych;
2) each script was to feature two main characters, a man and a woman;
3) the six different characters in the three films were to be played by the same two actors (Natalia Novokova and Syd Brisbane);
4) the final form of the triptych was to involve either the inter-cutting of the three stories or their sequential screening as ‘companion pieces’ together constituting a whole, with this decision to be made in post-production; and
5) the only pre-determined narrative link between the scripts was to be the motel locale.

Interior Designers

Interior designers Roger Kemp and Anthony Fryatt joined the Motel project at a point when the scripts were already drafted. Deliberately sought out to offer up an approach different to that of a specialist film production designer, they brought to the project a particular attention upon the concept of ‘interior’, rather than a focus upon aesthetic and stylistic production issues.

Treating the scripts almost as found objects led to a negotiation of spatial relations presented through the scripts. This allowed critical spatial relationships between actors, objects and sets to be understood through levels of proximity and intimacy that were generated through a process of interiorizing or exteriorizing spaces. From this the implication of time, duration and distance in interior environments could be considered and manipulated.

This conceptual framework was then introduced back to the writer/directors and the now present cinematographer, Robin Punkett, via design techniques such as drawings and diagrams and spatial layouts of the scripts in a manner that became referred to as the ‘rotated script’.

The effect of this was a slowing up of the production process that avoided an immediate interpretation of the scripts into production sets and locations. It became more a process of negotiation between the two fields, where process or methodology became significant outcome.
Production
The production process took place over several weeks in different film studios and location shoots that included a country motel and Victorian rural roads. Each writer acted as director for their own scripts, Robin Plunkett was the cinematographer throughout, with the interior designers now occupying a territory that sat somewhere between art direction, construction and set decorators. As well as the actors there was also a moderately large production crew.

A complete motel room was constructed within one studio for significant sections of the shooting (Roger’s script was completely shot this way, the other two were more varied). This allowed each of the scripts to be located within a common room that through redecoration and styling allowed the three directors to allude to different time periods for their respective part of the triptych.

A desolate rural road was used to shoot a number of moving and stationary scenes for Ritchard’s script using two 70’s period cars. This was supplemented with extended scenes shot within the car interiors using a second large studio.

Carlin’s script was shot equally using his iteration of the studio based motel room set and an actual motel. For this the motel reception was largely adapted and intercut with shots of the exterior areas of the Motel, there were a series of car scenes shot on surrounding roads and lastly a smaller third studio was used for reshooting close ups sections to intercut with the location shoot.

All footage was shot on a single digital camera using a variety of techniques including handheld, tripod, dolly and track.

Postproduction editing was undertaken by Anna ###, with a number of different arrangements of the scripts trailed until it was finally agreed that each script would be shown in their entirety, as opposed to intercut. The order was the Papin Sisters,
A premiere screening of the Motel film triptych took place at AFTRS in Melbourne on September 9th, 2010.

The three films making up the triptych are:

- **'The Papin Sisters',** written and directed by Christine Rogers:
  
  'A woman waits, naked, in a motel room, for her lover to join her. He slips between time, and is traveling with his younger body. He enters the room, short on time and determined not to continue this illicit and dangerous liaison.'

- **'Spiral',** written and directed by David Carlin:
  
  'A journalist arrives at an out-of-the-way motel chasing a story on time travel, and experiences an uncanny reunion with a boyfriend from her teen years, while the hacker motel clerk attempts to manipulate reality.'

- **'Agency Time',** written and directed by Paul Ritchard:
  
  'In 1968 time travel has just been privatised. Cine is to undertake her first “travel” under the guidance of Van. Things go horribly wrong as she is hurled through time and space. She come back momentarily to seek revenge.'

Project Details:

1 no. studio set of fictional motel room with ensuite bathroom (3 no. iterations set in different non-specific decades)
1 no. Motel location, Seymour Victoria (including partial reception refurbishment)
1 no. partial studio set of above motel reception
Various Road locations around Victoria
1 no. Volvo 164 circa 1969-75
1 no. Mercedes W114 circa 1968-76
1 no. Toyota Celica? Circa
Various furniture, props and costume
1. INT. MOTEL OFFICE

An infinite spiral.

Camera pulls back to reveal the spiral is the pattern in the centre of a vinyl record on a turntable playing on a motel office counter. Music playing: Some old sixties bossanova or similar. Motel décor might also hail from the early sixties.

Beyond the open door, a car appears along the road, pulls in and parks.

JANICE, the thirty-something (on a good day) driver sits a moment in the car, continuing an animated mobile phone conversation.

She gets out, still on the phone, clutching a laptop bag and kicking the door shut with her foot.

JANICE

...yeah, well, whatever! Its just supposed to be kooky interesting like, y’know, David Byrne kooky interesting. If I get jackshit then go with Jane’s puffthing on the Dalai Lama and fucking happiness, alright? Byee.

She shoves the phone in her pocket and walks into the office.

The young guy, JULES, working behind the counter has obviously been listening. With wild black hair, looking like a geek on holiday, he’s the dude who runs the turntable.

JANICE

I had a booking, name of Freoli.

She hands him her credit card. He looks at it and breaks into a broad grin.

JULES

Hi.

His enthusiasm is somewhat wasted on her. She looks at the row of keys waving in the breeze.

JANICE

It is fucking hot, isn’t it. Scuse my French. Do you sell beer?

JULES

Gotta kettle in the room.

This compensation is small indeed.

JANICE

You heard anything about a conference out here somewhere?

JULES, tapping her name into keyboard, stops to look up.

JANICE

Time travel theme?

JULES

(grins) Nope.

He, playing the computer keyboard as if it is a musical instrument, can barely maintain a smirk. She looks like she wants to punch him.

Janice is unimpressed - the guy is unsettling her. She takes a key from the row and turns for the door. She starts to feel like she has forgotten something important - she can’t think straight.

JULES

(stating a fact)

You like muesli!

JANICE

(paying no attention)

Yes, I like muesli.
they travel for a while

in the room.

a key

a picture of us:

a photograph of them

across the years

her face

right there.
This installation, located at studio 1 Australian Centre for the Moving Image, Melbourne, explored the time/space relations depicted in the project titled Motel: a triptych of short films by the interdisciplinary team David Carlin, Paul Ritchard, Christine Rogers, Anthony Fryatt and Roger Kemp.

One of the aims of the Motel project has been to explore the creative potential of interdisciplinary collaboration; for the film-makers, working with interior designers rather than a specialist film production designer, as would usually be the case, has provoked a challenge to the way the film scripts have been developed and interpreted before the film triptych was shot, and enabled fresh perspectives on key aesthetic and stylistic production issues. The distinct conceptual approach the interior designers bring to the concept of interior, in particular, has meant that the process of visualizing the film’s settings has expanded into a dialogue as to how this idea of interior can be brought to bear on the narrative themes of intimate connection and distance that run through the triptych.

For the interior designers, working in the hitherto unfamiliar realm of film production has prompted new perspectives on the idea of interior that is by definition central to their practice and research. These are; the use and production of narrative in forming interiors, the camera as a spatial mediator, the relation between interior and image, and the implication of time, duration and distance in interior environments.

Within the 3 films time is explored through ideas of time travel, duration, extension and compression. Distance is a significant driver in the work considering spatial relations between intimacy to infinity. The installation comprised: Film shorts, prints of stills, scripts, diagrams and drawings, models, video cameras, television monitors, film props and partial set installations. It investigated the various media based spaces defined as imagination space, set space, camera space and film/screen space.
Motel

This Motel project commenced in 2008 and will be completed in 2010. It centers around the production of a play set in and around a disused federal motel, an Australian country motel.

“...vast, empty, spaces where the rules of the game no longer apply.”

There is an assortment of themes to investigate such as landscape and architecture, history and tourism, and time and space. The project is being undertaken by a group of Australian artists and is supported by the Queensland Arts Fund.

By Penny Fruit
2 black painted mdf pedestals
700mm H x 1500mm L X 300mm W.
Supplied by RMIT University

3000mm L x 1000mm H plywood panel on 19x38mm pine frame suspended by nylon cord from lighting grid. Overlaid with graphic print on paper.

3 Monitors and 3 DVD players top mounted to 3 black painted mdf pedestals 700mm H x 300mm L X 300mm W.
Supplied by RMIT University

2 Floor mounted data projectors
Supplied by RMIT University

1 camera monitor on tripod
Supplied by RMIT University

2400mm L x 1800mm H plywood 'picture frame' panel on 19x38mm pine frame supported on timber legs and support suspended by nylon cord from lighting grid.

1200mm W x 2400mm H ply panels on 19x38mm pine frame supported on timber legs and support suspended by nylon cord from lighting grid.

800mm W x 1000mm H ply panel on 19x38mm pine frame supported on timber legs and support suspended by nylon cord from lighting grid.
Project 2.3
The Temperature’s Rising

The Temperature’s Rising is a TV series produced in 2010 for screening on Melbourne’s free-to-air community TV station C31. The Temperature’s Rising combined drama, comedy, music, documentary and news segments in an entertaining and innovative media melting pot.

“We all know about climate change. We all know it’s important. We all know it might end life as we know it. We all know it’s hot. But what do we make of this? In many ways we are sick to death of hearing about it. We want to get on with living our lives. The point of The Temperature’s Rising is to describe these lives. To explore what it means to be living in the world at this time and in this situation. The series explores the importance of adapting to climate change and the difficulties in doing so, on a personal, everyday, immediate level and in distinctive and offbeat ways.”

An overall scenario for the set is an urban street / lane that allows transition from outside café seating to inside café and provides a series of urban fragments that introduce further narrative potentials of the street.

These urban fragments including a lamppost, metro train sign, bus stop sign, advertising hoarding, ticket window, bench seat mesh fence and steps. We imagine that props such as a shopping trolley, rubbish bin, construction equipment and bicycles would be used in conjunction with the set to contextualise scenes and characters.
Project 2.4

The Temperature’s Rising was a TV series being produced in 2011 screening on Melbourne’s free-to-air community TV station C31. It will also be distributed widely online. The Temperature’s Rising will combine drama, comedy, music, documentary and talk segments in an entertaining and innovative investigation of what it means to be a member of Gen Y.

We all know about Gen Y - they buy a lot of stuff, live with their parents, are always online and have short attention spans. But beyond the labels and stereotypes, what are the generation currently in their twenties really like? What’s on their minds, what do they do and care about? Are they really so different or is it just marketing spin? Coming soon, online and in six broadcast television episodes, The Temperature’s Rising is a show that explores these questions and sets out to challenge Gen Y assumptions. Much of the drama in this series occurs within the ‘Mercury Rising Market Research Company – Y Division’. The set presents a corporate call centre that brings together the various workers and managers in conversations and activities that explore issues relating to perceptions and assumptions of Generation Y.

The desks are configured in such a way as to provide visual connection to each call center operator and allow direct dialogue. The camera is positioned collecting up the third party view of the conversation. Visual depth of the space is generated through a layering effect via the alignment of furniture, partitions, shelving and an elevated platform for the managers office. The set for the band scenes is comprised of a series of triangular painted plywood sheets that hang from the lighting grid. The intention here is to create a clustering of objects that present a ‘thickening up’ of space through and around the musicians whilst being set against the infinite background of the white cyclorama. The cut between the call center drama and the musical performances occur through the use of iPods by a character or when a caller is placed on hold.
This set was designed for an online video tutorial for the School of Health Sciences at RMIT University. The consulting room provides a space for actors/chiropractors to demonstrate techniques and approaches for consultative and examination procedures used in the education of undergraduate students.

There are four main components of the set: a series of walls and screening devices, joinery items including a desk and shelves, props including the consulting bench and painted out floor areas.

The long section of wall provides a backdrop to a part of the footage that captures a patient’s walking style. The wall has a slit window opening that allows light into the space suggesting an external context.

The other walls are used as background screening devices to assist in directing the viewer’s focus towards the patient and practitioner. The joinery items, the consulting bench and associated props provide cues as an office/medical practitioners consulting room.

The painted floor sections articulate a change in zone between the more administrative function of the desk and the more procedural space of the chiropractic table.
Poster artwork for the ‘In The Pines’ program of events at Federation Square 1-25th December 2011. The image as an A3 poster was pasted up around Federation Square and the adjacent train lines. The image is a response to the song ‘In the pines’.
In this research project we consider retail as a medium of space that we move through and inhabit as part of our day-to-day activities. Retail space, although having a very specific intent — that of consumption — is a complex and full experience. It actively uses spatial experience, personal interaction, still and moving image, text and other devices to engage and activate its occupants.

Within this complex medium, the act of ‘display’ plays a pivotal role in the early seduction and subsequent desire that fuels the social and monetary exchanges upon which commerce ultimately relies. Understood in the broadest sense, display becomes an arresting spatial tactic and site of encounter that is complex and multi-layered in nature.

At the heart of reciprocal exchange between people lie the twin drives of desire and sacrifice: one person’s desire for an object, and another’s willingness to give up (sacrifice) the object for that desire or its representation (another object or token). This research identifies the active condition of ‘display’ not only as conveyer of information or conspicuous presentation but also as a significant moment in the access to and engagement in an interior that is in constant production through a process of exchange: a state of becoming.

The work examines the production of interiors that is brought about through an engagement by the occupant with implied narratives and settings. These spatial scenarios are manifest via the layering and arrangement of scenic devices, including constructed sets, props, and image.

Suspension of disbelief and an acceptance of the ‘unreal’ is often a necessary participatory condition in this work. The assembly of fragments, objects and actions intentionally seek to activate the role of the participant as author of their own experience.

The exhibited model is a site from which a series of artefacts and images are produced using techniques including Complexity and Fullness.
photography, projection, diagramming and storyboarding. These images and artefacts are then worked back into the model, which in turn increasingly becomes more complex and multi-layered in nature. The model and artefacts are brought together offering up an arrangement of abstracted scenes; becoming an interior that is simultaneously reflective and propositional.

This installation-based project follows on from a series of built works including models, film and public interventions that are part of an ongoing research enquiry into the production of interiors through the use of scenic strategies.
This project examined ideas of ‘display’ as an arresting spatial tactic and site of encounter. The etymology of the word ‘display’ suggests a link to the idea of folding out, a flexing or bending. The 1:1 installation set in the grounds of the Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha, Qatar and built as a part of the TASMEEM conference, explored the active condition of display not only as conveyer of information or conspicuous presentation but also as a significant moment in the access and engagement of an interior.
This work discusses the city as a medium of space we transition through and inhabit as part of the everyday, a complex and full urban interior that is simultaneously a banal and fantastical experience. Far from a fixed condition this urban interior is constantly in a process of production, assembled and affected by the built environment, objects, information, media and personal interactions that we encounter.

This understanding of the urban emerges from a series of built works including models, film and public interventions that are part of an ongoing research enquiry into the production of interiors through the use of scenic strategies. The work examines the production of interiors that is brought about through an engagement by the occupant with implied narratives and urban settings. These spatial scenarios are manifest via the layering and arrangement of scenic devices, including constructed sets, props, and images located in or drawn from the city.

Suspension of disbelief and an acceptance of the ‘unreal’ is often a necessary participatory condition in this work. The assembly of fragments, a mise-en-scène of objects and actions intentionally seeks to activate the role of the participant as author of their own performative experience. This interior simultaneously becomes both real and fictional, a mediator between the self and others.

Bus Projects
25-31 Rokeby Street,
Collingwood, 9th-26th April 2014
Completed Project List:

‘Quick/Slow Transition’, constructed model in curated group exhibition, Bus Projects gallery 25-31 Rokeby Street, Collingwood, April 2014.


‘INDEX’, RMIT Interior Design Graduate Exhibition, 23 Wills St, Melbourne, November 2012.

‘Complexity and Fullness’, constructed model in curated group exhibition, Form Gallery, 357 Murray Street, Perth, 7 September to 6 October 2012.

‘INDEX’, RMIT Interior Design Graduate Exhibition, 79 Ireland St, West Melbourne, November 2011.


‘The Consulting Room’, set design for online video student tutorials School of Health Science, RMIT University, 2011.


‘INDEX’, RMIT Interior Design Graduate Exhibition, 64 Sutton St, North Melbourne, November 2010.


‘Motel’, Production Design and Art Direction Film of 3 short films. 2009


Associated writing and lectures:

Journal articles:


Conference papers:

Carlin, D., Rogers, C., Ritchard, P., Fryatt, T., Kemp, R., 'Motel: A Couple, a Bed, a Table, a Chair, and the Unseating of the Auteur' 2010 ASPERA Screen Education and Research Conference. University of Sydney. 7th to 9th July 2010. (Presented by David Carlin)


Talks and lectures:

Invited Lecture and Laboratory Leader: TASMEEM, Virginia Commonwealth University in Doha, Qatar 10 – 17th March 2013.

TTP (Time Transcendence Performance) conference, Monash University with Fryatt, A., Rogers, C., Ritchard P., Carlin, D. Floor talk at installation at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI) October 3, 2009

Invited lecture and collaborative design studio 'Projects to Ride' and lecture with Konkuk University GSAK Seoul South Korea. 2009